

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH THE USE OF
CUE CARD AT GRADE EIGHT OF SMPN 4 YOGYAKARTA
IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2015/2016**

E-JOURNAL

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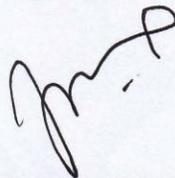
APPROVAL SHEET

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**Improving Students' Writing Ability through the Use of
Cue Card at Grade Eight Of SMPN 4 Yogyakarta
in the Academic Year of 2015/2016**

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Abstract: The aim of this research was to improve the students' writing ability at grade eight of SMPN 4 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2015/2016 using cue card. This research was categorized into Action Research (AR) employing the four steps namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The types of the data were qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation during the process of the research. The quantitative data were obtained from tests and questionnaires. The scores of the tests were analyzed by using descriptive analysis in the form of mean scores and the questionnaires were analyzed by counting the frequency and the percentage. In reference to the actions conducted in two cycles, the use of cue card improved the students' writing ability as justified in the following results. First, the students' motivation in learning writing increased. They seemed more enthusiastic during the teaching and learning process. They also actively participated in class activities by asking some questions. Second, there was a significant improvement from some aspects of writing such as content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. The students' writing score also increased. It can be seen from the comparison between the means of each score from the pre-test to the post-test. Based on the students' writing scores in pre-test and post-test, the gained score for the content was 4, the organization was 5, the vocabulary was 5.5, the language use was 11, and mechanics was 1.5.

Key words: writing, cue card, students

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas 8 SMP N 4 Yogyakarta pada tahun ajaran 2015/2016 dengan menggunakan *Cue Card*. Penelitian ini dikategorikan ke dalam penelitian tindakan yang menggunakan empat tahap yaitu, *planning*, *action*, *observation*, dan *reflection*. Tipe data yang digunakan adalah data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Data kualitatif diperoleh dari wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi selama proses penelitian. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui tes dan kuesioner. Nilai tes dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif dalam bentuk nilai rerata dan kuesioner dianalisis dengan menghitung frekuensi dan prosentase. Terkait dengan tindakan yang dilaksanakan dalam 2 siklus, penggunaan *cue card* meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa seperti ditunjukkan dalam hasil penelitian. Pertama, motivasi siswa dalam belajar menulis meningkat. Mereka tampak lebih antusias selama proses belajar mengajar. Mereka

juga aktif berpartisipasi di kelas dengan menanyakan beberapa pertanyaan. Kedua, terdapat peningkatan dalam beberapa aspek menulis seperti isi, organisasi, penggunaan bahasa, kosa kata dan mekanik. Nilai menulis siswa juga meningkat. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari perbandingan antara rerata tiap nilai dari pre-test ke post-test. Berdasarkan nilai menulis siswa pada pre-test dan post-test, nilai perolehan pada isi adalah 4, organisasi 5, kosa kata 5.5, penggunaan bahasa 11, dan mekanik 1.5.

Kata kunci : menulis, kartu, siswa

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Introduction

Indonesian curriculum has stated that English is one of the compulsory subjects that have to be taught in Junior and Senior High School. There are four skills in English. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To be competent in English, the students should have a good ability to use those four skills. To be able to communicate in English, writing is important to master. That is why students should learn writing as one of the important skills. Harmer (2004: 3) states that it is worth remembering that most exams, whether they are testing foreign language abilities or other skills, often rely on the students' writing proficiency in order to measure their knowledge.

Junior High School students are different from adults or Senior High School students. They need more motivation and guidance from the teachers to write in English. Writing is complicated for students. It is because it requires some rules such as how to explore and express the idea, how to manage paragraph become coherent and cohesive paragraph, how to put appropriate punctuation and diction, how to construct and expand the idea.

This also happens to be the case found in the eighth grade of SMPN 4 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2015/2016, especially grade VIII-E students, where most of the students had difficulties dealing with writing a text in English as their second language. They lacked of motivation in learning writing. Their writing score needed to be improved. Based on the observations, interviews, and pre-test, the students' problems were caused by several factors related to the teaching and learning process. The teaching and learning process consists of some aspects. They are students, teaching method, class management, learning activity, atmosphere, and media.

Media needs to be implemented to solve those problems. Brown, Lewis, and Halcleroad (1983) state that the functions of media are: (1) to save time; (2) to stimulate interest; (3) to encourage students' participation; (4) to provide a review; (5) to help students learn communicate ideas visually; (6) to provide a medium for individual or group reports; and (7) to make a classroom dynamic, relevant, and

attractive. Brinton (2001) states that media help teachers motivate the students. One of the media is cue card. Bazo (2007) states that cue cards are small photos or pictures that are stacked onto the cards.

Research Method

The research was categorized as Action Research (AR). It was conducted in the second semester of SMP N 4 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2015/2016. The subjects of the research were 34 students of Grade VIII E. The research procedure followed the model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 9). The steps were planning, action, observation, and reflection. There were two kinds of the data in this research. They were qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were obtained by doing observations, interviews, and documentation. The quantitative data were obtained from the tests and questionnaires. The scores of the tests were analyzed by using descriptive analysis in the form of mean and the questionnaires were analyzed by counting the frequency and the percentage. The validity of the data was obtained by applying democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity.

Research Findings

This action research study was conducted in two cycles. The research findings and the discussion show that the students' writing ability of Grade VIII E at SMP N 4 Yogyakarta improved through cue card. The media could facilitate students to improve some aspects of writing such as content, language use, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. It also could increase students' motivation. They also actively participated in the learning process by asking some questions.

During the implementation of the cue card, the students became more enthusiastic. The cue cards were in the form of pictures, photos, picture series, and vocabulary cards. The students got explanation from the teacher, did the writing tasks, and produced recount texts. After that, they got feedback from the teacher.

Table 1: Finding of Cycle 1

Before the actions	After the actions of cycle 1
Developing ideas	
The students could not bring their ideas out easily. They could not imagine the story.	The students could develop the ideas easier because there were pictures and clues. They could construct the sentences better.
Students' motivation	
They were bored and less motivated	They were motivated in learning

during the class.	writing. They seemed so happy and interested with the pictures. They also became active in the class by asking questions.
The use of media	
The teaching and learning process lacked the use of media. The media used was just slides and white board.	The media used was cue cards. It consisted of pictures, picture series, and clues which were used for different activities. Besides, slides and white board were also used to support the teaching and learning process.
Students' writing activities	
The students lacked of writing activities and got less chance to practice writing in the class.	The students were given some writing activities such as arranging jumbled word and sentences, making sentence based on pictures, cloze exercises, and making recount text based on the jumbled picture series. The students looked very enthusiastic in doing the tasks.
Teaching and learning process	
The teaching and learning process were monotonous and lacked of fun activities. They were also less encouraged to work in groups.	The teaching and learning process became interesting because the use of cue cards media. The students not only listened to the teacher's explanation, but also did the interesting tasks. There were also some jokes during the class to make the students fresh. They were asked to work in pairs and groups, so they could have discussion and shared their knowledge.

Table 2: Finding of Cycle 2

Before the actions	After the actions of cycle 2
Vocabulary mastery	
The students lacked of vocabulary mastery.	The students learned about vocabulary using pictures. They looked so happy and enthusiastic. Moreover, they also got vocabulary lists related to the topic so they could know the new vocabularies. They were also asked to consult dictionary and to bring their own every meeting.

Students' awareness about dictionary	
Few students brought dictionary.	Most of the students brought their own dictionary. They were allowed to use manual and online dictionary. They became independent to find the new vocabularies from their dictionary.
Students' grammar	
The students had difficulties in understanding the concept of simple past tense. They also confused to translate the sentences.	The students already understood about simple past tense by having some practices. They also got feedback on their work. Besides, they got explanation of grammar using cue cards so they became easier to understand the material.

To strengthen the qualitative data, the result of the pre-test and a post-test were used. The Table 3 shows that the mean score of post-test was higher than the mean score of pre-test. The first aspect was content. In the pre-test, the mean score was 24.5 while in the post-test, the mean score was 28.5. Thus, the gained score from the content aspect was 4. The second aspect was organization. In the pre-test, the mean score was 15 while in the post-test, the mean score was 20. Thus, the gained score from the organization aspect was 5. Then, for the vocabulary aspect, in the pre-test, the mean score was 12.5 while in the post-test, the mean score was 18. Thus, the gained score was 5.5. The next aspect was language use aspect. In the pre-test, the mean score was 11.5 while in the post-test, the mean score was 22.5. Thus, the gained score was 11. The last aspect was mechanic. In the pre-test, the mean score was 3.5 while in the post-test, the mean score was 5. Thus, the gained score was 1.5.

Table 3: The Comparison of Students' Mean Score in Pre-test and Post-test

Test	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanic
Pre-test	24.5	15	12.5	11.5	3.5
Post-test	28.5	20	18	22.5	5
Gained Score	4	5	5.5	11	1.5

Based on this table, all aspects show a significant improvement. The improvement is presented in Figure 1.

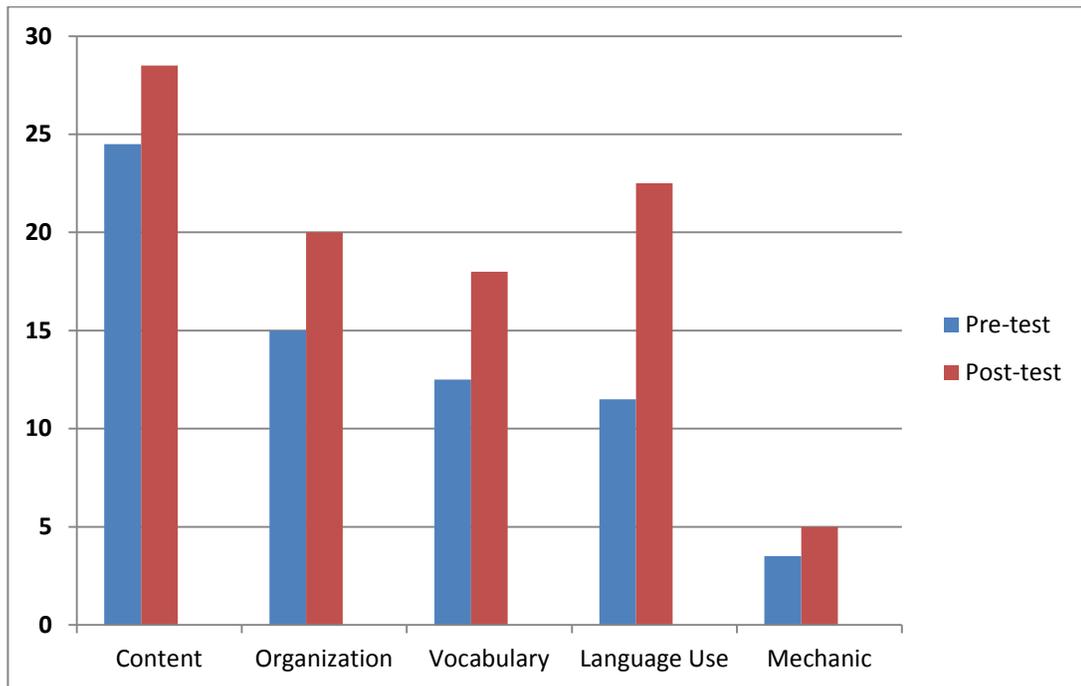


Figure 1: The students' mean score in pre-test and post-test

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that cue cards successfully improved students' writing ability. First, the use of cue cards improved students' writing motivation in learning writing. Besides, it also engaged the students' attention and interest during the teaching and learning process. Moreover, they actively participated in the class activity by asking questions related to the material. They were not afraid of making mistakes because they would get feedback from the researcher and chance to correct their mistakes. Second, the implementation of cue card in the teaching and learning process improved the students' writing ability. It also enabled the students to express the ideas. The students had a significant improvement in some aspects of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. It can be seen from the students' scores that there was improvement of students' score from pre-test test to post-test. Thus, the implementation of cue card is believed to be an effective media to improve the students' writing ability.

In brief, based on the result of this research, cue card can be used by all teachers in every school to teach writing because it is very beneficial as media to be implemented in the writing teaching and learning process.

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