**Improving Grade VII Students' Writing Skills
Through the Use Of Dictogloss Technique at SMP N 2
Sentolo, Kulon Progo in the Academic Year of 2016/2017**

**Aji Budi Rinekso**
**Siti Mahripah**
**ajibudirinekso1@gmail.com**

**Abstract:** This research aimed to improve the writing skills of grade VII A students at SMP N 2 Sentolo, Kulon Progo through the use of dictogloss technique in the academic year of 2016/2017. The study was categorized as action research that consisted of two cycles. Both of the cycles consisted of three meetings. This research used the action research procedures proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. The data collection technique used in this research were observations, interviews, survey, and tests while the instruments used in this research were an observation checklist, an interview guideline, a questionnaire, and tests (questions). The data were qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data were collected through observing the teaching and learning process, interviewing the English teacher, the students, and the research collaborator. On the other hand, the quantitative data were collected through distributing questionnaires to the students and conducting tests to assess the students' writing performance. The qualitative data were analysed by assembling the data, coding the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes while the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive quantitative analysis. The results of the research proved that the implementation of dictogloss technique in the writing teaching and learning process was able to improve the students' writing skills. The qualitative data suggested that the students were able to generate their ideas easily and subsequently they were able to produce well-organized texts with proper mechanics. In addition, they also gave positive responses towards the lessons. During the teaching and learning process, the students showed their enthusiasm in joining the learning activities. Moreover, based on the quantitative data, the students' writing mean scores showed improvements. The mean of the students' writing scores improved from 9.16 in the pre-test to 13.06 in the progress-test, and to 16.81 in the post-test.

**Keywords:** Action research, improving, writing skills, dictogloss technique
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## Introduction

Writing is an important skill that should be mastered by students. Firstly, writing enables the students to express their ideas in form texts. Secondly, a good ability in writing helps the students to finish their assignments, examinations and even join an essay competition. Thirdly, writing is widely used for some purposes in the academic and formal institutions, so it will be very useful when the students continue to higher education.

Furthermore, writing is the most complex macro skill since it involves the use of knowledge and skills. In the process of writing, students should have adequate

knowledge of the topic that will be executed. Thus, they should have proper writing skills. Firstly, they need to decide the title of their texts. Secondly, they need to make outline of their texts. Thirdly, they should develop the outline into paragraphs. This is called as drafting. Lastly, they need to revise their drafts and then refine their texts. Moreover, the students' writings will be assessed based on some aspects such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.

However, seventh grade students of SMP N 2 Sentolo still had some problems related to writing skills. In fact, it was not easy for the students to write a paragraph even a sentence. They needed a long time to think about what they would write and how to write their ideas. Besides, the students still had some problems both on macro and micro skills of writing such as incorrect spelling, inappropriate diction, grammatical errors, random ideas and some of the writings were not in line with the topic of the text.

Based on the situation above, it seemed that the problems were related to the teaching technique. Students needed a way to learn writing easily. They needed helps in expressing the ideas and developing paragraphs with their own sentences. Dealing with those reality the researcher believed that dictogloss technique was appropriate to be implemented in the teaching and learning process of writing in order to solve those problems.

Dictogloss technique is an English learning technique that involves listening skill and writing skill. This technique facilitates the students in catching keywords and reconstructing texts. Besides, this technique allows the students to work together with their friends in discussing the topic of the texts. This technique can be the first step in helping the students to be autonomous writers.

**Research Method**

This research was categorized as Action Research (AR). This research was conducted in February-April 2017 in the second semester of SMP 2 Sentolo 2016/2017 academic year. The subject of this research were students of VII A at SMP N 2 Sentolo. The total of the students were 32. The research procedure followed the model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart in Burns (2010: 9). The steps were reconnaissance, planning, action, observation, and reflection. This research used qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were collected through observing the teaching and learning process, interviewing the English teacher, the students, and the research collaborator. On the other hand, the quantitative data were collected through distributing questionnaires to the students and conducting tests to assess the students' writing performance. The qualitative data were analysed by assembling the data, coding the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes while the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive quantitative analysis in the form of mean. The validity of the data was obtained by applying democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity, and dialogic validity. Thus, the reliability of the data was gained from time triangulation, method/technique triangulation, and researcher triangulation.

## Findings and Discussion

There were two cycles in this research. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. In addition, each cycle covered planning, actions, observations, and reflection. During the implementation of the actions in every meeting, the researcher used dictogloss technique to improve students' writing skills. Besides, he also gave the students handouts and worksheets of today's materials, exercises, pictures as clues, videos as complement materials, games to break the students' boredom, and practice of words pronunciation.

The research findings and the discussion show that the students' writing skills of the grade VII A at SMP N 2 Sentolo improved through the implementation of dictogloss technique. The learning activities in every stage of dictogloss technique helped the students to write texts easily. The students could write better texts gradually. In addition, dictogloss technique could encourage the students' motivation in writing English texts.

The following table shows students' writing improvement before action, the implementation of cycle 1 and the implementation of cycle 2.

Table 1. The Finding of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

| No | Aspects | Before Actions | Actions | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Content (students' writing ideas) | Most of the students wrote sentences with random ideas. Especially in descriptive text, most of them mix the sentences between identification and description. | In the first step of dictogloss technique, the researcher explained the generic structure of the texts, signal words, punctuation, capitalization, and how to develop paragraph before he led the students to discuss a topic of a text. | Many students wrote sentences with better ideas arrangement. They could distinguish sentences for identification and description | The students were able to develop their writing appropriately and were relevant to the topic of the text. The students were able to develop ideas sequentially and appropriately. The sentences were related each other and it made sense. |
| 2. | Organization (developing paragraphs) | Most of the students only wrote one paragraph and it only consisted of 3-4 short sentences. | To help the students develop paragraphs, the researcher provided worksheets (consisting of picture, keywords column, generic structure columns, and feedback column) to the students in the second step of dictogloss technique (dictation). | Many students wrote 2 paragraphs and each paragraph consisted of 4-5 long sentences. The organization of their texts looked better. | The students were able to produce well organized texts. The ideas of the texts were arranged well and the structure of the texts looked clearly. |
| 3. | Vocabulary | Most of the students only wrote 3-4 short paragraphs (in average, it was around 30 words) | During the implementation of dictogloss technique, the researcher gave more list of new vocabularies which were related to the topic of the text were provided. | Many students were able to write 7-9 long sentences in two paragraphs (in average, it was around 50 words) | The students were able to write 2 paragraphs and each paragraph consisted of 6 long sentences. Their paragraphs consisted of more various words. |
| 4 | Language use (grammar, diction, adjective and adverb) | Most of the students wrote some sentences with incorrect grammar (especially simple present tense). Some students wrote sentences with inappropriate diction. Many students wrote sentences with incorrect use of adjective. | To improve the students' grammar mastery, the researcher gave exercises about grammar to the students in the first step of dictogloss technique before discussing a topic of a text (warm-up). During the implementation of dictogloss technique, the researcher provided the students list of words which had similar pronunciation and letter e.g. white with, which which. The researcher also explained the meaning and the pronunciation of those words. Before reading the texts (in the dictation step), the researcher also explained the differences between adjective and adverb to the students. The researcher gave examples of sentences which used adjective and adverb. | Many students still wrote some sentences with incorrect grammar (especially simple present tense) but they could write complete sentences (it consisted of S – V – O). Fewer students wrote sentences with inappropriate diction. Many students still wrote sentences with incorrect use of adjective. They still often wrote adjective phrases in reverse order. It happened because the sentences of their first language. | The students wrote sentences with better grammar. The grammar mistakes were decreased. In average from 32 students there were around 20 students who wrote sentences with better grammar. It was not totally correct grammar in the whole of the students' texts but at least the students showed their progress in using correct grammar. The students also wrote sentences with appropriate diction and correct use of adjective and adverb. |

| 5. | Mechanics (spelling and punctuation) | Most of students wrote some words with incorrect spelling. The students often forgot to put comma and full stop in their sentences | Before reading the texts (in the dictation step), the researcher provided the students script of words and told them the pronunciation of each words. The researcher explained how to use correct punctuation before asked the students to write texts. | Many students still wrote some words with incorrect spelling but they words still could be understood. The students wrote sentences with better punctuation. They put full stop after they wrote a sentence | The students were able to write sentences with better spelling. Almost of the sentences were written with correct spelling. In average from 32 students there were around 20 students who wrote sentences with better spelling. The students were able to write sentences with better punctuation. In average from 32 students there were around 25 students who had better punctuation. Although it was not totally correct punctuation in the whole of the students' texts but the mistakes were significantly decreased |

To support the qualitative data, the result of the pre-test, progress-test, and post-test were used. The following chart shows students' mean scores in the pre-test, progress-test, and post-test.
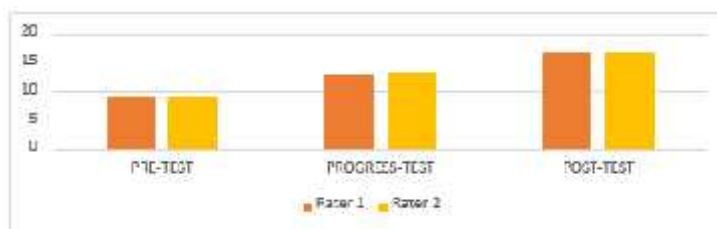


Figure 1. The Improvement of Students' Writing Scores

Based on the chart above, the students got 9.16 (rater 1 and rater 2) in the pre-test. Then, the scores increased to 13.06 (rater 1); 13.31 (rater 2) in the progress-test and 13.81 (rater 1 and rater 2) in the post-test.

**Conclusions**

According to the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that students' writing skills were improved after the implementation of the teaching and learning process using dictogloss technique. The students' writing skills were improved gradually in every meeting. Keywords became one of the dictogloss components that helped students to develop their ideas into sentences easily. Besides, the students had warm-up stage which allowed them to discuss such topic in order to open their mind and reconstruction stage which allowed the students to write texts with their own views in order to grow the uniqueness of their writings. In addition, the learning activities in every stage of dictogloss technique enhanced the students' motivation to write English texts.

In brief, based on the result of this research, dictogloss technique can be used to teach writing by all English teachers since this technique can help students to develop their ideas into sentences by utilizing keywords and allow the students to write texts with their own views.

# REFERENCES

Burns, Anne. 2010. *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching*. New York: Routledge.