

# USING PROCESS WRITING APPROACH TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF MTS STUDENTS IN WRITING A RECOUNT TEXT

Amirudin Latif

Muhammadiyah University of Metro

**Abstract:** This study was intended to improve the ability of the MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian in writing a recount text by using process writing approach. They were guided to write recount texts through the five-step writing process namely prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The result showed that the students' ability in writing recount texts was improved. In the end of Cycle 2, there were 22 out of 30 students who obtained score  $\geq 60$ . Hence, the process writing approach is very effective to improve the students' ability in writing recount texts.

**Key words:** process writing approach, writing, recount text

Writing is considered as the most difficult and complicated skill to be learned compared to other language skills. Nunan (1992 : 35) argues that learning to write fluently and meaningfully is considered the most difficult of the macro skills regardless of whether the first, second, or foreign language. In line with Nunan, Richard and Renandya (2002 : 303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language ( L2 ) students to master. The difficulty lies not only in organizing and generating ideas, but also in translating ideas into readable texts. The skills involved in writing are highly complex, so L2 students have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on.

The assumption that writing is difficult skill is proved by the fact that many problems encountered in the teaching and learning writing. The example of the problems happened in MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung. Many students found some difficulties in learning writing. The

difficulties affected the students' writing achievement. A preliminary study conducted on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 shows that only 9 out of 30 students from grade eight were able to reach KKM in writing recount text. It means that 21 students or 70 % from the total still fail to pass the writing test. The minimum passing grade (KKM/ *criteria ketuntasan minimal*) stipulated in the schools around Pubian district is 60.

Based on the preliminary study, it is discovered that the students' difficulties in writing are caused by some problems: First, they did not know how to begin to write a simple recount text. Second, they wrote a recount text with an incorrect sequence. Third, they felt confused in using verb 2 and punctuation correctly. Fourth, most of them were able to write some simple sentences but they did not know how to arrange them into a text .

The problems stated above may be caused by some conditions. First, the teacher did not make a plan for teaching writing concerning objective, instructional strategy, instructional material, instructional media, teaching procedure,

and evaluation. Second, the teacher assumed that the correctness of the students' writing product was focused on the grammatical rules, not on the communicative aspect of the students' writing. Therefore, the students' writing was considered correct if only it was produced in good grammar. Third, writing is taught rather than learnt. This means that the teacher dominates the classroom activity. The students just listened and followed the instruction given by the teacher so that they could not experience with their writing skills. They were not led to experience with their writing skill through writing process activity. Fourth, the teacher has insufficient mastery of strategies in helping the students to write.

Concerning with the problems faced by the students of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung, the researcher as one of the English teachers in the school tries to find solution to work out the problems. The possible solution is that the teacher should use appropriate technique which can lessen the students' difficulties so that the students' ability in writing a recount text will be improved.

The researcher was interested in applying process writing approach as a solution for the students' problem in writing a recount text. This approach was chosen on the basis of its effectiveness in involving the students fully in the process of producing their piece of writing right from the start until finish.

The process writing approach has a lot of benefits for the students' writing. Brown (2001:335) mentions some benefits of the process writing approach namely focusing on the process of writing that leads to the final product; helping students to understand their composing process; giving the students time to rewrite and write; and placing central importance on the process of version.

This approach can overcome the students' problems in writing a recount text by following the five stages of writing namely prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

In the prewriting stage, the students are guided to make an outline of a recount text before writing a draft. It is very helpful for the students to organize their writing. Oshima and Hogue (2007:54) state that outlining is one of the techniques in prewriting and used as the best way to organize a paragraph. It is plan of building of a paragraph like building a house that all rooms and windows are placed well. If the plan of a paragraph is well-done, it will assist the writer to organize his/her thoughts or ideas in that paragraph with a good organization. It is a plan to organize paragraph development dealing with a topic sentence, some supporting details, and a concluding sentence. Hence, making an outline before writing a draft can overcome the problems in organizing the text and avoid writing the text with incorrect sequence.

In the drafting stage, the students are ready to write a first draft based on the general plan made in the prewriting (Smalley, et al., 2001:8). The students are guided to organize ideas based on the outline. They are guided to explore their ideas written into sentence forms and to develop a topic by constructing sentences in good parts of a recount text that has orientation, series of events, and reorientation. Hence, The drafting activity can help the students overcome their problems in starting to write a simple recount text and in arranging sentences into a readable text.

In the revising stage, the students are guided to revise their first draft. The revision is aimed at providing the students opportunities to improve the text content and organization (Johnson,2008:196). The

revising activity is done using the revising guideline to help the students improve the quality of the recount text they have produced in the drafting stage to be a well organized text with good content.

In the editing stage, the students are guided to fix grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors (Johnson, 2008:196). The editing activity is done using the editing guideline to solve the students' problems in sentence structure, word choice, grammar, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling). In the publishing stage, the students are given chance to publish their final writing by reading aloud.

Referring to the suitability with the students' problems in writing recount texts, the researcher used process writing approach to improve the ability of the eighth graders of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung in writing a recount text.

## Method

The research design of this study is collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR because the researcher involves an English teacher of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian as a collaborator who helps his job in this study.

This study was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Lampung Tengah. The school is located at Jl. Pramuka No. 99 Segala Mider Pubian Lampung Tengah. It has 85 students spread in three classes. Grade seven consists of 25 students, grade eight consists of 30 students, and grade nine consists of 30 students. The school was selected as the setting under some considerations. First, the researcher is the teacher of that school, so he was responsible for helping the students to improve the students' writing ability. Second, the researcher wanted to show an

alternative technique for teaching writing skill.

The subjects of this study were the eighth grade students of the second semester in the 2010/2011 academic year. The reason of choosing this class as the subjects of the study is based on the result of preliminary study conducted on August 4<sup>th</sup> 2010. The result shows that 21 out of 30 students got score in writing recount under KKM stipulated in the school, while the minimum passing grade (KKM) is 60. The students felt difficult to get ideas to write. They also did not know how to begin to write. Even, when their ideas came, they did not know how to develop ideas into a readable text.

Dealing with the problems encountered by the students in writing recount text, consequently the implementation of process writing approach to overcome the problems was needed. The process writing approach was implemented by following the five steps of writing process.

In the prewriting stage, the teacher taught the students how to make an outline of a recount text. Before teaching the students how to make the outline, the teacher showed the students a set of picture series related to the beach to help them get ideas to make an outline. Then, the teacher asked the students some questions related to the picture to lead them to make an outline of recount text. After asking some questions, the teacher wrote the students' answer on the board. He wrote the answers in the form of an outline of recount text. In this way, he intended to give the students the example of making an outline of recount text. After giving the students the example of an outline, the teacher gave the students another set of picture series related to Syawal. Then, he asked the students to work in groups to make an outline based on the picture series.

In the drafting stage, the teacher gave the example of writing a draft. He modeled how to write a draft based on the model of outline in the prewriting stage. After giving the sample of a recount text to the students, the teacher leads the students to understand the text that has been written. He explained the generic structure of the text. He also asked the students to mention verb 2 in the text to make them understand the tense used in the text. Besides that, he asked the students to underline the connective conjunction in the text to make them know how to sequence the events. After leading the students to understand the text, the teacher asked the students to work in groups to write a draft of recount text based on their outline in the prewriting stage. He then monitored the students' activity in writing a draft of a recount text. He instructed the students not to miss some important points in the outline when they wrote a draft of recount text.

In the revising stage, the teacher lead the students to process of revising by asking them some questions related to the students' previous draft. The questions aimed at bringing back the students' attention to their previous draft. The questions included *What do you think about your draft? Can you understand what you wrote?* The students gave response: *I don't know sir. Little sir.* Then, the teacher told them that they were going to revise their draft. All students looked confused what the teacher meant by revising. He then distributing the revising guideline. The revising guideline was given as follows.

1. Does the text consist of orientation, events, and reorientation?
2. Does orientation include when, where, who, what, how, and sometime Why?
3. Are the events relevant with the topic?

4. Are the events sequenced in good order?
5. Does reorientation refer to back to some information in the orientation?

After distributing the revising guideline, the teacher explained about what he meant by revising. He also explained the revising guideline distributed to the students. Then, he modeled the students how to revise the text using the revising guideline. He leads the students to revise the wrong text by breaking it into an outline to make them feel easy to revise the text. After modeling how to revise the text, the teacher asked the students to work in groups to revise their draft and rewrite the revision result of their draft.

In the editing stage, the teacher leads the students to the process of editing by asking some questions. The questions aimed at reminding them about the previous lesson. The questions included *Have you revised your draft? Is your draft improved?* The students gave response *Yes sir, we have. Little sir.* Then, he told the students that they were going to edit their revised draft. Next, he distributed the editing guideline to the students. The editing guideline was written as follows.

1. Does the text use simple past tense?
2. Does the text use the correct verb 2?
3. Does the text use the correct "to be" of past tense?
4. Does the text use the correct time signal of past tense?
5. Does the text use the correct choice of words?
6. Is every word in the text written in correct spelling?
7. Are the capital letters written in correct spelling?
8. Does the text use the correct punctuations?

After distributing the editing guideline, the teacher explained about what he meant by editing. He told the students that editing is checking the mistakes in grammar, choice of words, spellings, capital letters, and spellings. He then explained the editing guideline and the points in it. After that, he gave the example how to correct the wrong verbs, spellings, capital letters, and punctuations. After giving the example of editing, the teacher asked the students to work in groups to edit their draft and rewrite the editing result of their draft.

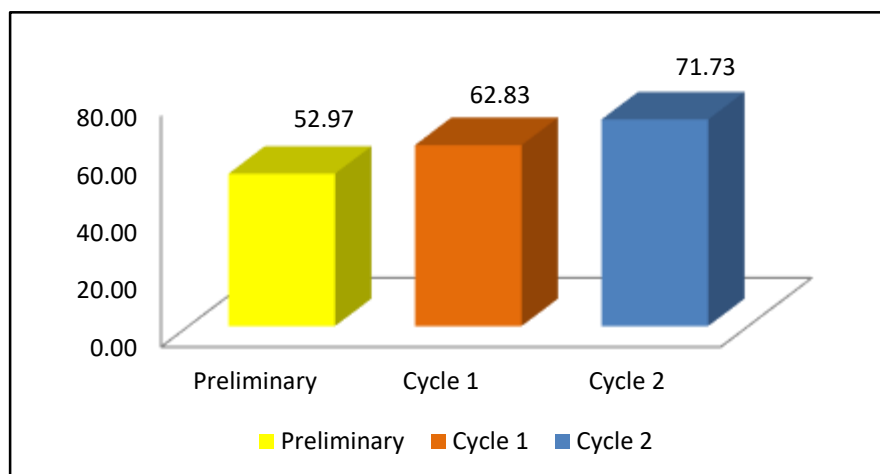
In the publishing stage, the teacher asked the students to publish their final group writing by reading aloud. After one group finished reading their

group writing, other groups gave comments and suggestion.

The students' ability in writing recount text was examined in the writing test. Their writings were scored using analytic scoring rubric of recount text. The action was considered successful if 70% of 30 students obtained score  $\geq 60$ .

## Results

The result of the students' writing shows the significant improvement both in mean scores and in individual scores. The students' mean score in preliminary study was 52.79. It increased to 62.83 in Cycle 1 and 71.73 in Cycle 2. The improvement of students' average score is described in the following diagram.



The number of the students who got  $\geq 60$  in preliminary study was nine students (30%). It increased to fifteen students (50%) in Cycle 1 while the other fifteen students got  $60 <$  due to the bad quality in writing recount text. Some mistakes happened in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and

mechanic. The same treatment which was given in Cycle 2 with additional exercise of revising and editing increased the number of the students who got  $\geq 60$  to twenty two students (73%). The improvement of the students' individual score is described in the following table.

NO.	Ranged Scores	Preliminary study		Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
		Number of Students	%	Number of Students	%	Number of Students	%
1.	40 - 49	14 students	47%	-	0%	-	0%
2.	50 - 59	7students	23%	15 students	50%	8 students	27%
3.	60 - 69	8 students	27%	6 students	20%	6 students	20%
4.	70 - 79	1 student	3%	8 students	27%	6 students	20%
5.	80 - 89	-	0%	1 student	3%	10 students	33%
6.	90 - 100	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%
Total		30 students	100%	30 students	100%	30 students	100%

Based on the improvement of the students' average score and individual score, the process writing approach has been successful to help the eighth graders of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung in writing a recount text. The students' ability to write recount text has increased. It was shown from the quality of the recount text they produced in the end of the action. They only made some trivial mistakes in mechanics. It concludes that the teaching and learning of writing recount text through process writing approach has improved the students' writing skill.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings obtained in two Cycles, it can be concluded that the process writing approach which improved the ability of the eighth graders of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung followed the five steps in writing process namely prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

The prewriting stage consists several steps namely giving picture series to the students, asking some questions to the students related to the pictures, giving the model of an outline of recount text using the students' answer, giving the students another set of picture series, and

asking the students to make an outline of recount text based on the picture.

The drafting stage consists of several steps namely giving the model of recount text based on the outline made in the prewriting stage, leading the students to understand the text in terms of generic structure and language features, asking the students to write a draft of recount text based on the outline they made in the prewriting stage.

The revising stage consists of several steps namely giving the students the revising guideline, reading the revising guideline for the students, giving the example of revising in the form of an outline, giving the students the revising exercise, asking the students to revise their draft and rewrite the revision result of their draft.

The editing stage consists of several steps namely giving the students the editing guideline, giving the example of editing by editing the wrong text, asking the students to do the editing exercise, asking the students to edit their draft and rewrite the editing result of their draft. The publishing stage assigns the students one activity namely publishing by reading aloud.

Additionally, the result of the data analysis shows that process writing approach is successful in improving the

ability of the eighth graders of MTs Muhammadiyah 02 Pubian Central Lampung. The success is shown by the achievement of the two criteria of success which dealt with the students' participation in the teaching and learning process and the students' writing score. Concerning the result of the students' writing, in Cycle 1, there were 15 (50%) out of 30 students who got scores  $\geq 60$  with average score 62.83. In Cycle 2, there were 22 (73%) out of 30 students who got scores  $\geq 60$  with average score 71.73. In short, the process writing approach is very effective to help the students improve their ability in writing a recount text.

### Suggestions

In accordance with the findings of this study, some suggestions are addressed to English teachers who encountered the same problems in the teaching of writing, the same characteristics of the students and schools and also to the future researchers.

For English teachers, on the basis of the effectiveness of the implementation of process writing approach in the teaching of writing, English teachers are suggested to use this as an alternative strategy. However, there are some aspects which should be considered in implementing this approach. First, English teachers should set the time allotment in every stage carefully. A careful arrangement of time can help the students to relax in the entire activities. Second, the teachers should give instructions as clear as possible in every activity so that the students are able to the task. Third, the model given to the students should be explained in detail so that the students can follow the model

well. Fourth, the teachers should give the revising and editing guideline to the students for revising and editing activity so that they can revise and edit their draft easily. Fifth, the teachers should control all the students during their working time. They need to be given intensive guidance in every stage. Sixth, the teachers should give the tasks to the students not only group tasks but also individual ones. Giving the group tasks allows the students to communicate with others so that the low students can cooperate with the high students and giving individual tasks allows all students to get involved in the teaching and learning process. The weakness of this study is only assigning the students in group tasks. In result, the low students only depended on the high students.

For future researchers who will conduct the same field of the study, this study can be used as an alternative reference in implementing the strategy. However, it is recommended to future researchers to consider some points as follows: First, it is better to give socialization about the process writing approach to familiarize the students with the approach since it is still new to them. Second, it is important to give model of every stage of process writing approach to enable the students to do the task easily. Third, it is suggested to apply outlining technique in prewriting activity since it was proven that it was effective in generating ideas. Fourth, it is advised to employ another genre for the enrichment of this approach. Fifth, it is recommended to use a more interesting media to build the students' knowledge of the text. Last, it is suggested to develop a better procedure of the presentation of process writing approach.

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