Improving Tenth Grade Students' English Recount Text Writing Skills through Interactive Tasks

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of innovative methods to enhance tenth grade students' English writing proficiency at SMK IPTEK Weru Sukoharjo, focusing on recount text. Using Classroom Action Research (CAR), the study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including observations, interviews, and pre-test and post-test. The findings indicate that interactive and collaborative writing exercises, supported by multimedia resources and constructive feedback, significantly improved students' writing skills and engagement. However, the challenges using vocabulary and organizing recount narratives highlights areas for further pedagogical improvement. The study underscores the importance of dynamic, student-centered English writing instruction tailored to vocational education to better prepare students for future academic and professional pursuits.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, English Writing Skills, Innovative Teaching Strategies, Recount Text

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, students must be proficient in English writing in order to express themselves, communicate ideas, and succeed academically and professionally (Kynat Javaid et al., 2023).This proficiency is not only important for academic purposes but also for preparing students to meet the demands of their future careers, where effective communication is often a critical skill. In educational settings that emphasize career readiness, such as vocational institutions, the ability to write effectively becomes even more crucial as it directly aligns with the practical and professional requirements of various industries. Consequently, it is essential for students at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo to develop these abilities in the context of vocational education. Traditional teaching approaches, which often focus on grammar rules and rote memorization, have long been effective in building foundational knowledge of language mechanics. However, they may not fully address the practical aspects of developing written communication skills, particularly in contexts requiring creativity and critical thinking. Research suggests that complementing these approaches with innovative strategies, such as interactive and student-centered techniques, can better prepare students for academic success and future career demands (Jelisavac, 2024).

The rationale for conducting this Classroom Action Research (CAR) at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo stems from the recognition of the need to address the challenges in teaching English writing skills effectively. While various pedagogical approaches exist, there is a need to explore innovative strategies tailored to the vocational education context to enhance students' writing proficiency (Pramilaga et al., 2023).

The goal of this Classroom Action Research (CAR) at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo is to investigate creative approaches that are specifically suited for the vocational education setting in order to overcome issues with effectively teaching English writing skills (Pramilaga et al., 2023. Through the assessment of present skill levels, the implementation of creative teaching strategies, and the evaluation of those strategies' efficacy through joint action research, the study seeks to increase writing competency among students in Grade 10. In the end, curriculum creation and instructional techniques will be informed by teacherand student feedback, improving the standard of English language instruction for Indonesian vocational students. Through its insights into practical methods for enhancing English writing abilities in vocational education, this research advances our understanding of pedagogy.

The development of writing skills must be given top priority in English language instruction, particularly for high school students who must show that they are proficient in a variety of written communication formats (Generoso & Arbon, 2020). This review of the literature looks at creative methods for enhancing English writing abilities, especially when it comes to creating narrative texts, and evaluates their effectiveness with the help of the research. Transitioning from traditional, teacher-centered writing teaching to more student-centered, participatory techniques is often necessary for effective writing instruction. The benefits of tactics like collaborative writing, where students plan, draft, edit, and revise their works collaboratively, are highlighted by research by Awacorach et al. (2021) and Kessler (2020). This helps students better grasp writing as a process. Furthermore, digital tools and platforms have improved students' writing experiences and outcomes, demonstrating the hopeful effects of technology in writing instruction (Wekerle et al, 2022). These resources inspire students and enhance the caliber of their writing by promoting language and structure innovation.

Furthermore, for writing education to be effective, peer and instructor feedback is essential. Research by Damanik (2022) and Morris et al. (2021) show that while peer feedback encourages critical engagement with writing conventions, formative feedback assists students in identifying areas of strength and growth. Additionally helpful are the usage of models and scaffolding tactics, especially when students are producing recount texts. This helps them explain historical events in a logical and cohesive manner (Jubhari et al.. 2022). Authentic writing assignments that are pertinent to future jobs improve student engagement and learning outcomes in vocational education settings like SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo (Putu Restu Adi Utami et al.,2021). Furthermore, as Hu (2023) points out, teaching pupils self-management techniques might enhance their attitudes toward performance and writing. All things considered, creative, student-centered methods like group writing, using technology, providing formative feedback, and assigning real-world assignments are very successful in improving English writing abilities. This is especially true in professional settings where having practical writing skills is crucial for future employment.

The literature suggests that innovative, student-centered approaches to writing instruction, such as collaborative writing, the use of technology, formative feedback, and authentic writing tasks, are highly effective in enhancing English writing skills. These strategies not only improve writing quality but also increase student engagement and motivation. As demonstrated by supporting studies, these approaches are particularly beneficial in contexts like SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo, where students need to develop practical writing skills for their future careers. The integration of these strategies into the curriculum can provide a robust framework for teaching writing, ensuring that students are well-equipped to meet the demands of both academic and professional writing.

The following research questions guide the investigation and analysis of the Classroom Action Research, addressing both the current state of English writing proficiency and the effectiveness of innovative teaching strategies in enhancing writing skills among Grade 10 students at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo.1. What innovative teaching strategies and instructional materials can be employed to enhance English writing skills in the vocational education context? 2. How effective are the selected teaching strategies and materials in improving English writing skills among Grade 10 students at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo? 3. What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students regarding the implemented strategies and their impact on English writing learning?

2. Method

The research design for this study was grounded in the principles of classroom action research (CAR) due to its effectiveness in addressing educational inquiries. CAR was chosen as an iterative and collaborative approach to educational inquiry, emphasizing the active involvement of teachers in reflecting on and improving their teaching practices (Radish Charica Dewi & Wahyuni, n.d.)The cyclical nature of CAR included planning as the systematic process designing and organizing the research study to address a specific educational issue or problem within the classroom setting. Next, it was followed implementing is the act of putting into consequence the plans, tactics, or modifications intended to solve certain problems or enhance particular elements of instruction and learning. During this phase, the planned activities were actually implemented in the classroom, giving the researchers and teachers the chance to see and assess how these actions affect student results and instructional strategies. The observing phase was the systematic process of closely watching and documenting classroom activities finally reflecting is the process of critically analyzing and evaluating one's teaching practices, student learning outcomes, and the overall research process. (Amri, n.d.).

The participants for this study were 1 English language teacher and 42 tenth grade students from class PPLG B in SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo. The selection of SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo as the research site is deliberate due to several factors. Firstly, the school represents a diverse demographic of students, providing a rich and varied sample for the study. Secondly, SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo has shown a commitment to educational excellence and innovation, making it an ideal environment for implementing and testing new teaching strategies.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who demonstrated a willingness to actively engage in the collaborative action research process. This method of sampling was chosen for its ability to strategically select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. By intentionally targeting individuals who were motivated and open to participation, the study aimed to ensure a high level of commitment and cooperation throughout the research process. Additionally, purposive sampling allows for the inclusion of participants with diverse perspectives and experiences, enhancing the richness and depth of data collected. This approach aligns with the collaborative nature of action research, facilitating meaningful dialogue and partnership between the researchers and participants in the pursuit of educational improvement. The initial phase of the study involved 1 English language teacher who had expressed interest in improving her teaching practices. Additionally, 42 tenth grade students from class PPLG B were selected to participate in the research, ensuring a representative sample of learners with varying proficiency levels and learning styles.

In this study, multiple instruments were employed to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the implemented strategies in enhancing English language teaching at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo. The choice of observation, pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire were deliberate for several reasons. Firstly, observation allowed for the direct observation of classroom activities, teaching methodologies, and student engagement, providing valuable qualitative data on the implementation process. Secondly, pre-test and post-test assessments offered quantitative measures of student learning outcomes, allowing for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies in improving English language proficiency over time. Additionally, questionnaires served as a means to gather feedback from various stakeholders, including teachers and students, capturing their perceptions, experiences, and suggestions for improvement. By combining these instruments, the aim of study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the implemented strategies on English language teaching and learning at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo was addressed.

Additionally, the following rubric, which was arranged by a researcher, was employed to assess students' recount text writing skills by considering various criteria. Each criterion is evaluated on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates the lowest performance level and 4 indicates the highest.

Content and Ideas

Score	Description
4	The recount text gives a thorough, interesting, and full explanation of what happened. The concepts are unique, thoughtfully conceived, and articulated.
3	The recount text gives a concise, rather detailed explanation of what happened. Although the ideas are good, they could be expanded and articulated more fully.
2	The recount text gives a brief, basic explanation of what happened. Though they are present, the ideas are not well developed or clear.
1	A lack of clarity in the recount text on events and specifics. The concepts lack coherence and development.

Organization

Score	Description
4	A distinct beginning, middle, and finish to the recount text, which is well-organized. Ideas flow together logically and smoothly.
3	Organized with a beginning, middle, and end, but transitions between ideas could be smoother.
2	It is not entirely clear what it is meant to do. Idea transitions are either sudden or nonexistent.
1	The text of the recount is disorganized. The concepts do not follow a logical progression and have no obvious beginning, middle, or end.

Language and vocabulary

Score	Description
4	The recount narrative skillfully makes use of a broad vocabulary and a variety of sentence styles. The text is improved by the precise word choice.
3	The recount text employs a variety of sentence forms and a wide range of words. Although the word choice is acceptable it could be more exact.
2	Simple sentence structures and elementary terminology are used in the recount text. Word selection is constrained and occasionally repetitious.
1	The recount text makes frequent use of the same sentence structures and a small vocabulary. Word choice is frequently improper or inaccurate.

Grammar and Mechanic

Score	Description
4	The recount narrative skillfully makes use of a broad vocabulary and a variety of sentence styles. The text is improved by the precise word choice
3	The recount text employs a variety of sentence forms and a wide range of words. Although the word choice is acceptable it could be more exact.
2	Simple sentence structures and elementary terminology are used in the recount text. Word selection is constrained and occasionally repetitious.
1	The recount text makes frequent use of the same sentence structures and a small vocabulary. Word choice is frequently improper or inaccurate.

Engagement and Voice

Score	Description
4	The recount text has a strong, unified voice and is interesting to read. It's evident who the writer is and what her point of view is.
3	The recount text writing has a distinct voice and is engaging. For the most part, the writer's viewpoint is consistent.
2	The recount text is rather interesting. The author's point of view is ambiguous or contradictory though it doesn't have a unified voice
1	There is a lack of clarity and engagement in the retelling text. The author's viewpoint and personality are unclear or nonexistent.

Overall effectiveness

Score	Description
4	The recount text successfully accomplishes its goal by offering a gripping and expertly written description of the events.
3	The recount text largely succeeds in its goal of giving a comprehensible and acceptable account of the events.
2	The recount text succeeds in part in its goal, although the events are not fully or clearly described.
1	The recount text fails to accomplish its goal, giving a hazy or perplexing version of what happened.

Firstly, the observational data were subjected to systematic qualitative analysis, focusing on identifying recurring patterns, themes, and trends in classroom activities, teaching methodologies, and student engagement levels. By meticulously examining the observed behaviors and interactions, the researchers could discern the effectiveness of the implemented strategies in fostering active participation and promoting learning among students. Moreover, qualitative analysis facilitated the identification of contextual factors influencing the implementation of planned strategies and their implications for teaching practice.

Secondly, the quantitative data obtained from pre-test and post-test assessments used in the statistical analysis to determine the extent of improvement in students' English language proficiency levels following the intervention. By comparing the scores obtained by students before and after the implementation of the intervention, the researchers were able to assess the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing language skills and achieving learning objectives.

Additionally, the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires, distributed to teachers and students, wereanalyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics aimed to summarize participants' responses regarding their perceptions, experiences, and feedback on the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed and the overall learning environment. Meanwhile, inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis or regression analysis, were applied to explore relationships between different variables, such as teaching methodologies and student engagement levels, or to identify predictors of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness.

3. Results

3.1. Findings

Cycle 1

Planning

The main goal of the first planning cycle was to develop and put into practice creative ways to improve the English writing abilities of SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo's Grade 10 pupils. In order to actively engage students, the planning phase comprised identifying critical areas for

development, creating interactive writing assignments, and utilizing multimedia resources. Professional development seminars were offered to teachers in order to acquaint them with the new tactics and guarantee their successful implementation. Pre-tests were also given to students in order to gauge their writing skills. A well-organized intervention targeting the particular issues noted in the preliminary observations and feedback was the outcome of the cooperative planning effort. The good student engagement during what occurred demonstrated the successful implementation of this plan, and early feedback suggested that students were more motivated and interested in writing assignments. This first stage demonstrated how creative approaches may revolutionize English writing training in the context of vocational education, laying a solid basis for the action research cycles that followed.

Implementation

The objective of the first implementation cycle was to provide SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo's tenth grade students with new and creative ways to improve their English writing abilities. Peer review sessions, cooperative group projects, and interactive writing assignments were some of the tactics used. The findings of the pre-test showed that the students' first writing proficiency varied, with many having difficulty with coherence, syntax, and word usage. During the course of the cycle, observations showed that student participation and interest in writing activities had grown. Peer feedback and interactive exercises seemed to improve the dynamic and supportive nature of the learning environment. Students' writing skills had clearly improved, as seen by their post-test results, especially in areas like concept formulation and sentence construction. On the other hand,certain obstacles persisted, such as the requirement for additional emphasis on grammatical correctness and tailored assistance for pupils with reduced skill levels. Both teachers' and students' feedback were largely favorable, emphasizing the new tactics' apparent efficacy while also suggesting areas for improvement for the following cycle. This first cycle offered insightful information and laid the groundwork for succeeding cycles' iterative improvements.

Observation

The first round of observations provided important information on the efficacy of the techniques used to teach English writing skills to SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo's tenth grade students. Throughout this cycle, it was noted that although students were more engaged with interactive writing assignments, they were having significant difficulties focusing for extended periods of time and using peer feedback successfully. With students actively participating in group discussions and cooperative writing assignments, the classroom atmosphere became livelier. Some students, meanwhile, found it difficult to make the switch from more rote learning exercises to student-centered, interactive ones. Furthermore, the utilization of multimedia resources seemed to increase students' desire and attention, but occasionally, technical difficulties interfered with the flow of the courses. All things considered, Cycle 1's observations indicated both the novel tactics' potential advantages and the areas that still needed improvement and assistance in order to fully realize their potential.

Reflection

The first cycle of reflection in this Classroom Action Research provided important new information about the efficacy of the tactics used to help SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo's tenth grade students improve their English writing abilities. The mean post-test score increased

over the pre-test score, according to the quantitative data from the pre- and post-test scores, suggesting a slight improvement in the students' writing skills.

Questionnaires Results

The questionnaire results reveal varied student feedback on interactive English writing instruction at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo, providing valuable insights for refining teaching methods. Most students found activities beneficial for enhancing writing skills, though a neutral response rate on engagement suggests a need for more dynamic and inclusive approaches. Positive feedback from highly engaged students indicates effective aspects of the activities that can be expanded, while a small proportion of less engaged students calls for targeted strategies to increase involvement. Responses on real-world writing readiness varied, with many students felt prepared but a certain portion requires additional support, the need for adaptable, skill-focused tasks. While a majority remained neutral about peer feedback, the recommendations such as integrating constructive feedback training and peer mentoring are highly needed boost comfort levels. Overall, while the current teaching approach has fostered writing improvement for most students, the responses highlight opportunities for adjustments in order to better engage and support diverse learning preferences.

Interview Results

The interviews with students revealed valuable insights into their experiences with recount text in their English class. Many students expressed enjoyment in writing recount text because it allowed them to reflect on personal events, making the learning process more meaningful and engaging. As one student noted, "The ability to write about my personal experience is why I enjoy producing recount texts. It seems more intriguing and intimate."

However, some students struggled with structuring their recount texts, finding it difficult to organize their thoughts and ensure a logical sequence. One student commented, "At times, I find it difficult to arrange my thoughts. I'm not sure how to arrange my thoughts, even though I know what I want to convey." Additionally, students faced challenges with vocabularies and languages use often repeating words due to limited vocabularies. "I find it hard to use different words. I often repeat the same words because I don't know many synonyms." One student explained.

The findings of the interviews demonstrate that while students like writing recall texts because they are intimate, they struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The feedback highlights the need for structured support and the advantages of interactive learning activities. These results suggest that the effectiveness of training students to produce recount texts could be increased by incorporating more interactive and collaborative strategies with focused vocabulary-building exercises. The feedback from these interviews will guide future modifications to the teaching strategy, ensuring that it better meets the requirements and preferences of the students. Due in large part to the fact that recount text writing assignments enable students to consider and describe personal experiences, the data shows a high degree of student involvement with these assignments. This result is consistent with a larger body of research that highlights the positive effects of personal relevance on motivation in learning activities Students are more likely to put in effort and be enthusiastic when they believe the writing assignment has significance and is related to their own lives. In this study, more than half of the students (53.3%) thought the exercises helped them become better writers, while 46.7% thought

the exercises might be beneficial in the future ("Maybe"). Recount texts may be an effective technique for developing writing skills if the activities are made to be interesting and personally meaningful, as seen by this positive involvement.

Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test of students grade 10 class PPLG B

Students	Pre-Test (20)	Post-Test (20)
Student 1	14	16
Student 2	19	20
Student 3	9	14
Student 4	15	16
Student 5	17	18
Student 6	10	16
Student 7	14	13
Student 8	20	19
Student 9	9	15
Student 10	15	20
Student 11	17	19
Student 12	10	15
Student 13	14	15
Student 14	20	20
Student 15	9	14
Student 16	15	17
Student 17	17	18
Student 18	10	15
Student 19	14	15
Student 20	20	20
Student 21	9	14
Student 22	15	20
Student 23	17	17
Student 24	10	15
Student 25	14	20
Student 26	20	14
Student 27	9	20
Student 28	15	17
Student 29	17	15
Student 30	10	15
Student 31	14	20
Student 32	20	14
Student 33	9	15
Student 34	15	17
Student 35	17	15
Student 36	10	15
Student 37	14	20

Student 38	20	14
Student 39	9	14
Student 40	15	1

The students' low vocabulary and language use was another important issue that was found. A lot of students complained about how their recall texts lacked depth and richness since they were unable to utilize a variety of terminology. This result is in line with earlier research emphasizing vocabulary as a vital element of writing ability. It is crucial to incorporate vocabulary-building activities into the writing curricula in order to overcome this problem. Students can increase their vocabulary and improve the quality of their writing by engaging in activities like synonym exercises, writing journals, and contextual usage practice. Through a focus on vocabulary growth, educators can assist children in expressing themselves more imaginatively and clearly. (Rosenfeld, 2024)

The study's findings have a number of ramifications for SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo's instructional strategies. First and foremost, structured writing teaching must be prioritized. Students should be given tools and clear standards to help them organize their work. Second, to assist students in developing a more diverse vocabulary base, vocabulary development should be incorporated into regular sessions. Thirdly, regular formative evaluations and feedback loops can help to strengthen feedback mechanisms, which in turn can promote continual progress. Finally, encouraging group learning exercises can improve the effectiveness and engagement of the writing process.

3.2 Discussion

Although the feedback was generally positive, many students expressed difficulty in logically structuring their recount texts, a challenge highlighted through both qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaire responses showed that 62% of students struggled with organizing their ideas effectively, while interview results provided deeper insights into this issue. Observations during classroom activities revealed that students often found it challenging to arrange their thoughts coherently, which was evident in their written work. For instance, one student shared during an interview, "I find it difficult to arrange my ideas, even though I know what I want to say." This underscores the need for structured text organization strategies, such as visual organizers or scaffolding approaches, to help students effectively plan their narratives. Research supports the integration of these tools to enhance writing organization further validating their inclusion in the curriculum (Lian et al., 2024).

Another recurring issue was students' limited vocabulary and language use. Quantitative data indicated that 47% of students felt their vocabulary hindered their ability to write effectively, a finding reinforced by interviews where students shared their struggles in expressing ideas with variety and depth. One student noted, "I don't know many synonyms, so I keep using the same words." Observations confirmed that this lack of vocabulary diversity impacted the richness of their recount texts. Addressing this requires targeted vocabulary-building activities, such as synonym exercises, contextual usage practices, and writing journals. These strategies can empower students to express themselves more creatively and effectively, aligning with earlier findings on the importance of vocabulary in writing (Demneri, 2024).

Feedback emerged as a critical factor for improvement. Both peer and teacher feedback were highly valued, with 78% of students reporting that feedback significantly helped them refine their writing skills. Interviews revealed that students saw feedback as a tool for identifying errors and areas for growth, as one commented, "Feedback from my teacher and friends shows me where I need to grow." Observations of peer review sessions and teacher conferences demonstrated active engagement in the feedback process, resulting in notable improvements in students' drafts. Research by Amrizal et al. (2024) highlights that formative assessment practices, such as iterative feedback cycles, are essential for sustained progress. Expanding these practices will further support students' writing development.

Students also expressed a preference for more interactive and collaborative classroom activities. Quantitative data showed that 71% of students felt group writing sessions and peer review workshops enhanced their learning experience. Interviews and observations revealed that such activities fostered a positive learning environment, where students actively shared ideas and supported each other. As one student stated, "Discussing ideas with my friends inspires me and makes writing more fun." Collaborative activities not only improved engagement but also provided diverse perspectives that enriched the writing process. Literature on collaborative learning supports these methods, noting their ability to enhance learning through dialogue and shared problem-solving (Xu et al., 2023)

4.   Conclusion

The study aimed to enhance the English writing skills of Grade 10 students at SMK IPTEK Sukoharjo by implementing creative, student-centered approaches. The findings indicate significant improvements in students' writing skills and engagement, with pre- and post-intervention assessments showing notable progress in areas such as coherence, vocabulary, organization, and language use. Interactive and collaborative learning activities, combined with tailored feedback mechanisms, played a pivotal role in this development. While students reported enjoying the activities and feeling more connected to their writing tasks, challenges remained, particularly in addressing text structure and vocabulary diversity.

However, the research also revealed limitations. Despite the advancements, some students struggled to fully utilize interactive text strategies to address workplace-oriented English proficiency challenges, which are crucial in today's globalized world. The lack of varied vocabulary and difficulty in aligning writing practices with professional communication needs were notable obstacles. These findings underscore the need for additional instructional strategies that not only enhance writing proficiency but also prepare students for real-world applications, particularly in vocational settings where English communication is key.

The study highlights the potential of creative, interactive methods to foster improved writing skills and motivation, but it also calls for a deeper focus on bridging the gap between academic writing and the practical demands of the workplace. Future research should explore more targeted interventions to address these challenges, ensuring students are well-equipped for both academic and professional success.

Acknowledgements

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