



Improving the Quality in Writing Descriptive Texts of Madrasah Aliyah Students Through Directed Writing Activity Strategy

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Abstract

This study was intended to improve the tenth graders' quality in writing a descriptive text at *Madrasah Aliyah* through the Directed Writing Activity strategy. Its design was action research consisting of 4 stages, namely planning the action, implementing and observing the action, and reflecting on the action. Its subjects were class X consisting of 31 students. There were 3 instruments used to collect the data needed, i.e. fieldnotes, portfolios, a scoring guide, and questionnaire. The criteria for success of this study were (1) all students participated in the teaching and learning process, (2) all students got score of equal to or more than 3 in each aspect of writing. The findings indicated that in Cycle 1, the study did not meet the criteria of success. Concerning the first criterion, it was only 99% students following the teaching and learning process. One student was absent from the first meeting. In connection with the second criterion, 18 students (58.06%) had achieved a score of equal to or more than 3 and the rest, 13 students (41.94%) got scores below 3. Because the first cycle did not meet the criteria of success, so the researcher carried out the second cycle. All students (100%) participated in the teaching and learning process. In addition to the second criterion, all students got score equal to even greater than 3 in each aspect of writing. From the findings, it can draw the conclusion that the directed writing activity is being able to upgrade the quality in writing descriptive texts of students.

Keywords: writing, descriptive text, irected writing activity strategy

Introduction

Writing is an activity that records ideas, thoughts, and feelings in the form of papers to be read by others. Writing plays an important role in our personal and professional lives. Writing can assist the students who have problems in speaking and it is one way for self-enhancement of the students' learning style (Raimes, 1983). According to Hadfield and Hadfield (1990), writing is different from speaking. In speaking, someone can acquire the skill naturally as he/she grows up, but writing needs to be learned since someone could not acquire writing skills naturally. This phenomenon is sometimes still ignored and gets less attention from the teachers and learners both in secondary schools and tertiary levels of education. This is because of the belief that writing is the most difficult skill among other skills such as listening, reading, and speaking. Thus, teachers should need to find an effective approach to overcome such a problem. Due to the fact that almost all learners face a lot of difficulties associated with writing, the usual problems are found in choosing the appropriate words, and formulating grammatical sentences because writing requires the ability to master the rule of sentences, vocabulary, and knowledge of mechanics.

In relation to the response above, the researcher gave a questionnaire to the students of class X. From the result of the questionnaire, the researcher finds some problems faced by the students. The students' problems are: (1) the students do not know how to write a word since the way in pronouncing it is different from its spelling; (2) the students are not used to writing in English although they have learned grammar; (3) the students are rarely asked to do a writing task because writing is not tested in National Examination (UN). Such condition leads the researcher to have an opinion that there might be something wrong with the technique and strategy applied during the teaching and learning process. That condition needs to be reviewed and to be overcome. Better teaching needs to be pursued to solve the problems and to improve the students' writing proficiency. The use of appropriate media is indispensable. In other words, hopefully a method can reduce the students' errors in using language components through practicing and exercising. In this case, there are some studies conducted by the teachers who tried to explore the strategy in teaching writing.

Based on the National Standard of Education in Indonesia which is issued by the National Standard Board of Education (BSNP), the learning of English in Senior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Atas/SMA*)/Islamic Senior High School (*Madrasah Aliyah/MA*) level is targeted in informational aspect. In this aspect, students are expected to have the ability in accessing knowledge with the language skill they have learned. Furthermore, the demand for 2006 curriculum enables students to use writing as a means of communication in their daily life. To achieve competence, students are expected to be able to write various text types of English. Here, the researcher selects a descriptive text as the genre

being taught using the DWA strategy. Descriptive text is selected as the text being taught because students have been taught how to write descriptive texts when they were in Junior High School. Besides that, the descriptive text is the first text that is taught in the second semester and in the first chapter following narrative text, and news item text.

In this research, students will write a description of a person. *The physical appearance* and *the characters* are the features to describe a person. Physical appearance is the person's physical condition or appearances which can be seen and touched. The physical appearances that can be used to describe a person are: height (tall, short), body (slim, thin, plump, fat, skinny, muscular), age (young, old, teenager, in 20s, in 30s, middle age), hair (long, short, bald, straight, curly, wavy, black, red, brown, blonde), face (round, oval, square, wrinkles, pale, bearded, shaved), eyes (big, round, blue, brown, green, slanting, mellow), and nose (plug/flat, pointed/sharp).

Characters of a person are a person's qualities and habitual behavior. The person's characters that can be used are: careful/careless, intelligent/stupid, confident/shy, extrovert/introvert, generous/stingy, diligent/lazy, talkative/quiet, and neat/messy. Students also can use the adjectives: active, cheerful, determined, energetic, friendly, humble, humorous, sensitive, stubborn, smart, charming, discipline, and elegant. It is stated briefly when students describe a person, the readers can grab the meaning and draw the picture in their minds.

The researcher would like to use Directed Writing Activity Strategy as a strategy to improve the quality in writing of descriptive text. Here, in the DWA strategy, the teacher not only guides them in doing writing tasks but also gives modeling in each phase considering that they never do write tasks before. This DWA strategy also gives the opportunity for students to work in groups and pairs because they are beginners and rarely asked to do writing. In addition, the DWA strategy adapts the process of writing too. Furthermore, since the students of this school are not used to writing in English, so the prewriting phase in the DWA strategy are developed into three stages they are: selecting the relevance topic which the students have known; formulating questions and answers to specify their topics; and make outline to help them develop the topic.

Hence, the DWA strategy applies some instructional stages such as selecting the topic, formulating the questions and answers, and writing the outline. Those stages are aimed to help students generate and cope possible writing topics. In this pre-writing phase, students are asked to classify and determine the topic based on the theme. After students have determined the selected topic, then teacher displays some pictures related to the topic they select. Next, students are asked to formulate questions and answers in group. Grouping is proposed to help them enrich the questions and answers. Those answers to questions formulated, later will become a guideline to make outline.

In the DWA strategy, students are asked to change their piece of writing with a partner after the teacher gives modeling how to edit it. The teacher also

provides students with editing guidelines. It is purposed to avoid subjectivity in editing their friend's work. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the DWA strategy also includes process writing. It means that although students are directly guided by the teachers during they compose a piece of writing in formulating questions and answers and in revising part, they still follow the writing process phase. Hence, the implementation of the DWA strategy hopefully can give a positive impact on students' attitudes toward writing in English. It means that the DWA strategy is expected to be able to encourage students to write the descriptive text so their qualities in writing are able to improve. Besides, the strategy can set and increase students' willingness to writing. For this reason, the researcher would like to apply the Directed Writing Activity (DWA) strategy in this school to improve the quality of writing a descriptive text.

Research Method

The research design in this study is action research. According to Mills (2003), action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher, researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching and learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. Elliot (1991) states that the fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge. He explains that the improvement of practice consists of realizing the values which constitute its ends, for instance justice for legal, patient care for medicine, and education for teaching. Because action research is done by teachers in their own classroom, action research is called classroom action research.

The design of classroom action research used in this study is following the steps of the action research spiral proposed by Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (2007), (see Figure 2.1). The cycle consists of four steps: planning, acting (implementing), observing, and reflecting. In planning, the researcher has to consider the problem which needs to be solved and gives the strategy as the solution to the problem. In acting stage, the strategy is implemented during the teaching and learning process. In observing stage, the collaborator has role as an observer. He will collect and record the data during the implementation of the strategy in the teaching and learning process. Then reflecting is done by drawing the conclusion of the action research. This stage is used as consideration to revise the plan when the researcher needs to begin a new cycle until the criteria of success are achieved.

Before implementing the action research, the researcher begins the research with the preliminary study to identify the real problems in the classroom during the teaching and learning process, especially in writing

activities. It also used to find out the general description of the students' ability in the study of English subjects.

After the preliminary study was done, the researcher will conduct the study by following the action research procedure which begins from planning the action, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The classroom action research procedure adapted from Kemmis and Mc. Taggart cited in Koshy (2007) (see Figure 2.1)

The researcher conducted a preliminary study to identify the problems of the process of teaching and learning writing in the class. The researcher took the data by giving the task to write a descriptive text about a famous person and by giving the questionnaire to those 31 students of class X.

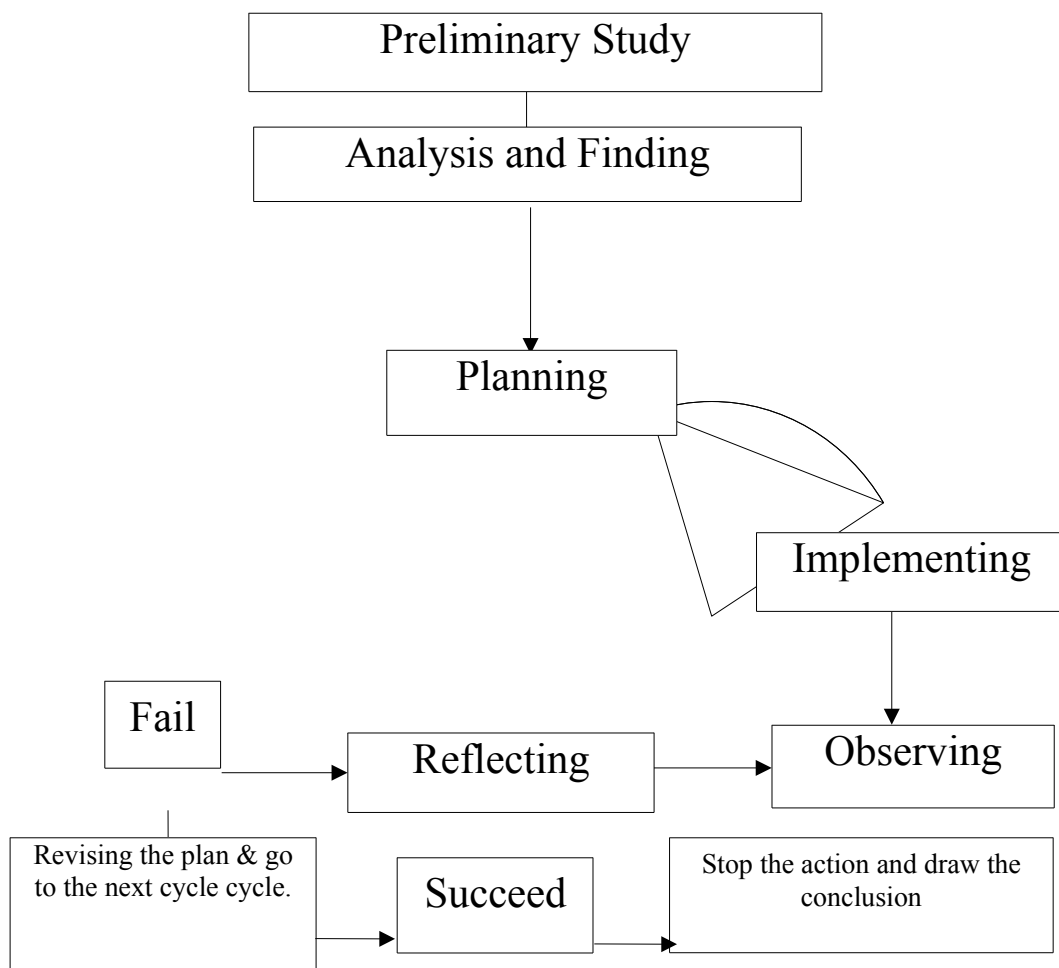


Figure 1. the action research spiral proposed by Kemmis and Mc.Taggart cited in Koshy (2007)

The result of the preliminary study revealed some problems have occurred in the class. First, students' writing quality is not satisfactory, because they do not know how to write a word since the way of pronouncing it is different from its spelling. Second, students are not used to writing in English although they have

learned grammar. Third, students are rarely asked to do writing because writing is not tested in the National Examination (UN).

All the data from the preliminary study will be used as the basic consideration in planning the action to be employed. After the preliminary study has been conducted, the researcher begins the research with the following procedures: planning the action, implementing the action, and reflecting.

Planning the action refers to the classroom instructional strategy to be developed in the study to overcome the instructional problems (Latief, 2010). The researcher has prepared the DWA strategy as the strategy of instruction for learning writing. In this stage, the researcher and collaborator make the lesson plan based on the findings such as preparing teaching strategy, instructional material and media.

The teaching strategy that will be revised tried out, and tried again is the DWA strategy. The steps applied in the DWA strategy are focused on (1) selecting the topics; (2) formulating the questions and answers; (3) writing outlines of the descriptive texts; (4) writing drafts of descriptive texts; (5) revising the drafts of descriptive texts; (6) editing the drafts of descriptive texts. Whereas the instructional material and media used in this study are the pictures of the favorite person in their school.

In implementing the action, the researcher takes the role of a practitioner who will carry out the implementation of the strategy based on the lesson plan, and the collaborator will be an observer during the teaching and learning process. To get the same view of implementing the action, the researcher trains the collaborator to use the strategy of the DWA strategy. It is expected that the collaborator will understand thoroughly and be able to use the strategy well. The focus of the action is on the implementation of the DWA strategy in writing descriptive text.

In collecting the data, the instruments used are field notes, questionnaires, and portfolios contain students' writing. Each of these instruments has its distinctive function and features. Field notes are employed to record students' responses about the teaching and learning process using that strategy, the classroom atmosphere, and evaluation of physical setting of the class, and other unexpected facts. The components are the descriptive part which includes interpersonal relationship and account of events (who, when what was done); and the reflexive part, which includes the observers' personal feelings or impression about the events, comments, decision and problems, record ethnical issues, and speculating about the data analysis (Ary, et al, 2006).

A scoring guide is used to score students' final composition after the implementation of the DWA strategy. It is adapted from Cohen (1994). It consists of 4 aspects of writing namely; content, organization, language use, and mechanics (see Table 1).

Portfolios contain students' writings that will be done before, during and

after following the process of writing. Portfolios as instruments will be used to file the students' works in each meeting of the writing activities. It will also be used to evaluate progress. It is employed to know the students' progress in writing. So that by the end of the implementation of the action, there will be five kinds of students' work. They are students' work at each stage such as outlining stage, drafting stage, editing stage, revising stage, and students' final composition. This portfolio contains evidence of both process and product.

The questionnaire is used to get information from the students how much the strategy that will be applied can motivate the students to actively involve during the teaching and learning process especially in doing writing activities.

Criteria of success are used to measure the effectiveness of implementing the strategy during the teaching and learning process. Two criteria of success are set in this research. The first is that all 31 students in the class participate in the teaching and learning process. This can be known from field notes and questionnaires. The second is that students' composition achieves the score greater than or equal to 3 of each aspect of writing (see the scoring rubric in Table 2.1). The score of their writing is determined by their quality in writing that scored using scoring rubric adapted from Cohen (1994).

The quality of writing is scored from four components: content, organization, language use, and mechanic, with the lowest score 1 and the highest score 4 for each component of writing assessed. Each score refers to an indicator provided, multiplied with 4 in content, 3 in the organization, 2 in language use, and 1 in mechanic (see Table 1).

Table 1 the Writing Rubric Adapted from Cohen (1994)

Components of writing	Weight	Scores	Descriptor
Content	4x	4	The person is clearly described with details
		3	The person is described as fair details
		2	The person is described with somewhat details
		1	The person is described with no details
Organization	3x	4	The paragraph is well organized and perfectly coherent
		3	The paragraph is fairly organized and generally coherent
		2	The paragraph is loosely organized and incomplete sequencing
		1	The paragraph is lacks of logical sequencing

Language use - Vocabulary - Grammar	2x	4	The paragraph has no inappropriate vocabulary and shows good control of grammatical items
		3	The paragraph has a few inappropriate vocabularies and shows occasional slips in the grammatical items but not disturbing comprehension
		2	The paragraph has some inappropriate vocabulary and shows frequent grammatical errors disturbing comprehension
		1	The paragraph has many inappropriate vocabularies and shows consistent, serious grammatical errors causing misinterpretation
Mechanics	1x	4	The paragraph has no errors in spelling capitalization or punctuation
		3	The paragraph has a few errors in spelling, capitalization, and/or punctuation but the paragraph is still easy to read
		2	The paragraph has some errors in spelling, capitalization and/or punctuation and the paragraph is still readable
		1	The paragraph has many errors in spelling, capitalization and/or punctuation and the paragraph is hard to read

Reflecting is the final step to determine the success of the implementation of the action. The researcher compares the result with the criteria for success. If all criteria of success have been met, the action is stopped. Otherwise, revising and improving the plans must be done to be implemented in the next cycle.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The instruments used were field notes and portfolio. The presentation of the findings of the study is in accordance with the criteria of success determined, i.e. the students' participation in the implementation of the DWA strategy, and the students' final products.

The Students' Participation

As a result of field notes, many students complained about rewriting activities. The students have many grammar errors and mechanic errors. Time allotment is not enough to finish the entire task considering the students' ability in English mastery. In addition to points to take into account, field notes exposed some good points. The students are more interested in doing the writing task. The students pay attention fully to the teacher's explanation related to the implementation of the DWA strategy and ask questions when they do not understand the explanation or when they get confused in doing the writing task. The teacher helps students willingly and gives modeling in every phase. The teacher answers all the students' questions related to the implementation of the DWA strategy.

The Students' Final Product

The data on the students' final product was obtained from the students' portfolios. The data were analyzed using analytic scoring rubric in which each aspect of writing has different weighting. The inter-rater assessment was also used to avoid subjectivity. Concerning the students' final product, the criterion of success affirmed that all students should achieve a score of equal or more than 3 of each aspect of writing. The result of the analysis showed that 18 students (58.06%) have achieved a score of equal to or more than 3 and the rest, 13 students (41.94%) got scores below 3.

Concerning each aspect of writing, the result of data analysis indicated that the students made an improvement when it is compared to their scores in the preliminary study. From Figure 4.1, it was apparent that in the aspect of content, the average score improved from 1.13 in the preliminary study to 3.87 in Cycle 1. Then, in relation to organization, the students made improvements from 1.03 to 3.735. Regarding the language use, vocabulary and grammar, the students' progress are from 1 in the preliminary study to 2.58 in Cycle 2. On the last aspect, mechanic, the students' score improved from 1.03 to 2.915. In addition, language use was still the most difficult to master by the students since it obtained the lowest score among others following mechanic aspect.

Average Score of Each Aspect of writing in the Preliminary study and Cycle 1

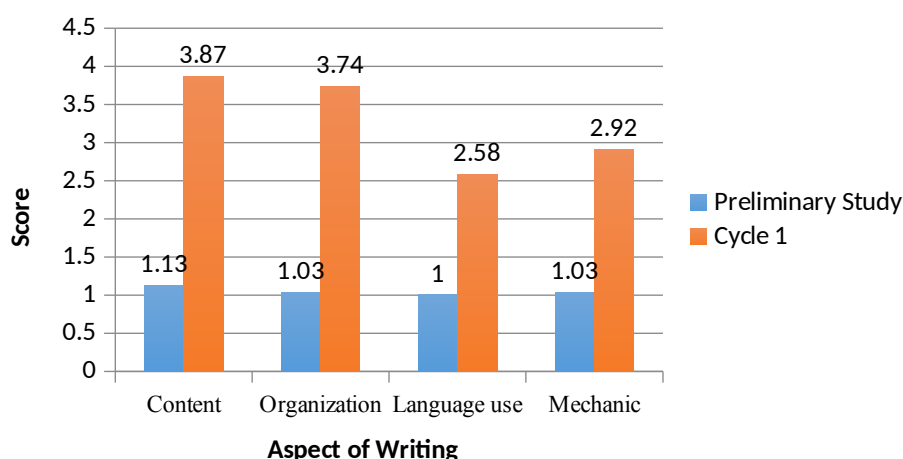


Figure 2 the Students' Average Score of Each Aspect of Writing in the Preliminary Study and in Cycle 1.

Since there were 2 raters assessing the students' final products, there was a need to estimate the reliability of the scores. Following Pearson Product Moment formula, it was found that the reliability value of the score was .95. The score of .95 was classified as quite high, meaning that the scores could reflect the true performance of the students.

However, to know the students' final scores, it was necessary to analyze the students' products from phase to phase of the implementation of the DWA strategy. It means that they did prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Samples of students' products are presented in Appendix 4g. For this purpose, the work of student number 3 is used as an example. At the prewriting phase, he made an outline based on the Questions and Answers as it was suggested in the modeling stage. His outline as shown in Figure 3.2.

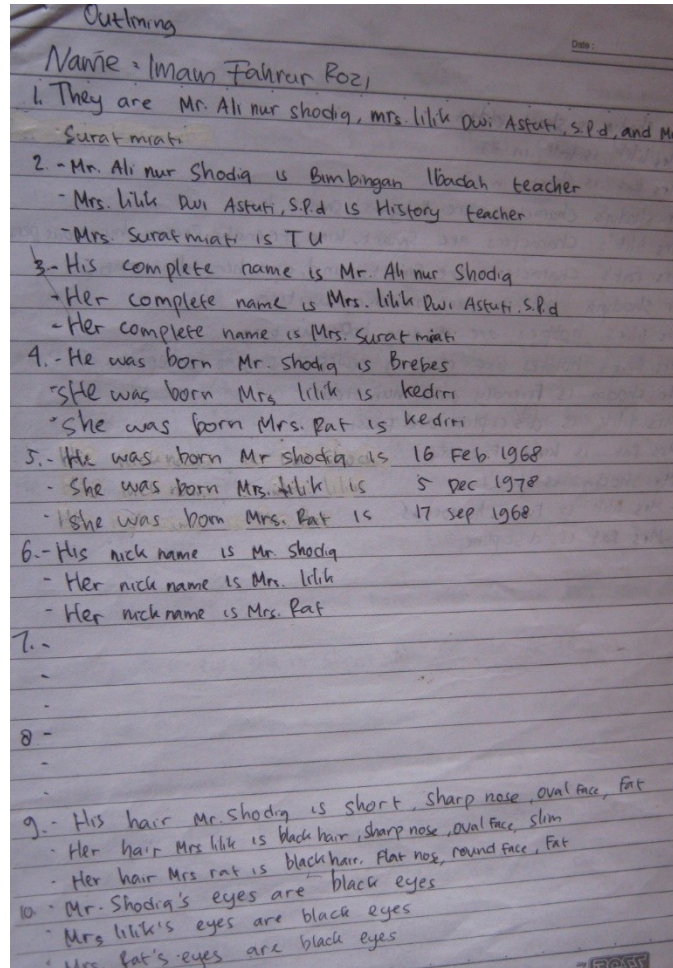


Figure 3. Sample of Student' Work at the Prewriting Phase (Outlining)

At the drafting phase, he arranged the outline into paragraphs in accordance with the generic structure of the descriptive text, they are opening statement, a series of paragraphs, and concluding paragraph (Figure 3.3). In the next phase, revising, the student made the revision of his draft in terms of content and organization. he revised the draft by doing three kinds of revision. First is cutting something out, it means throw away the part(s) in the draft which is not relevant to the topic or it only repeats what has been mentioned before. Here, he cut the name *Mr. Ali Nur Shodiq* in the second sentence to be *He*.

Drafting

Mr. Ali Nur Shodiq, Mrs. Lilik Dwi Astutik, and Mrs. Suratmanti are teacher. Mr. Ali Nur Shodiq is Bimbingan Belajar teacher. Mrs. Lilik Dwi Astutik is History teacher, and Mrs. Suratmanti is T.U.

Mr. Ali Nur Shodiq was born in Brebes, 16 Feb 1968. His nickname is Mr. Shodiq. ~~Mr. Shodiq~~ ^{he} has black hair and short. His nose is sharp, oval face, fat, and black eyes. ~~he is~~ ^{he has} short. Now his old is 43 years. ~~he has black eyes / his eyes are black.~~

He is smart, friendly person, and humorous. He like reading, and writing.

Mrs. Lilik dwi astutik was born in Kediri, 5 dec 1978. Her nickname is Mrs. Lilik. Mrs. Lilik has black hair. Her nose is ~~flat~~ ^{sharp}, oval face, slim, and black eyes. She is short. Now her old is 43 years. She is smart, kind, friendly person, and humorous. She like reading and writing.

Mrs. Suratmanti was born in Kediri, 17 sep 1968. Her nickname is Mrs. Rat. Mrs. Rat has black hair ^{along}. Her nose is flat, round face, fat, and black eyes. She is short. Now her old is 43 years. She is smart, and kind. she like reading and playing computer.

Mr. Shodiq is friendly person. I like him because he is smart, and humorous. Mrs. Lilik is discipline person. I like her because she is humorous, friendly, kind, and smart. Mrs. Rat is friendly person. I like

Figure 4. Sample of Student's Writing at the Drafting and Revising Phases.

Second is adding something; it means adding a word phrase, sentence, even paragraph to support and sharpen the ideas in the draft. He added the word *long* to complete the sentence *he has black hair*. The last is moving or rearranging something, it means to change the order of the sentences of the paragraph. Here, he changed the order of uncompleted sentence of *black eyes* become *he has black eyes* and so on. At the editing phase, he/she edited his/her draft in terms of grammar, vocabulary, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling (Figure 3.4).

Name: Imam Fahrur Rozi working in MA-ARAH

Mr. Ali nur shodiq, Mrs. lilik dwi astutik, and Mrs. Suratmiami are ~~teacher~~ ^{working in MA-ARAH}. Mr. Ali nur shodiq is Bimbingan Belajar teacher. Mrs lilik dwi astutik is History teacher. And Mrs Suratmiami is TU.

Mr. Ali nur shodiq was born in brebes, 16 Feb 1968. His nick name is Pak Shodiq. He has black and short hair. His nose is sharp. He has ^{oval} Face. His body is fat. He has black eyes. Now, he is forty three ^{years} old. He is smart, friendly person, and Humorous. He likes reading Book.

Mrs. lilik dwi astutik was born in Kediri, 5 Dec 1978. Her nick name is Bu lilik. She has black and long hair. Her nose is sharp. She has oval face. Her body is slim. She has black eyes. Now, she is forty three ^{years} old. She is kind, smart, and Humorous. she likes writing book.

Mrs. Suratmiami was born in Kediri, 17 sep 1978. Her nick name is Bu Raf. She has black, wavy and straight hair. Her nose is flat. she has ^{round} face. Her body is plump. She has black eyes. Now, she is forty three ^{years} old. She is diligent, kind, and Frindly.

Pak Shodiq, Bu lilik, and Bu Raf, ^{all of them} they are Friendly people, I like them very much.

Figure 5 Sample of Student's Writing at the Editing Phase

After doing editing, students should finish their final draft. They should also write their own final composition based on the topic given. Figure 6 below showed the student's final product both in group and individual work. The score is given to individual works.

MY TEACHERS IN MA-AR

Mr. Ali nur shodiq, Mrs lilik dwi astutik, and Mrs Suratmiami are working in MA-ARAHMATI. Mr. Ali nur shodiq is Bimbingan belajar teacher. Mrs lilik dwi astutik is History teacher. And Mrs Suratmiami is Typist.

Mr. Ali Nur shodiq was born in Brebes, 16 February 1968. His nick name is Pak Shodiq. Mr. Shodiq has black and short hair. He has sharp nose. He has oval face. He has black eyes. He is fat, and tall. He is forty three years old now. Mr shodiq is smart and friendly person. He loves reading book.

Mrs Lilik Dwi Astutik was born in Kediri, 17 september 1968. Her nick name is Mrs lilik. Mrs lilik has sharp nose. She has oval face. She is slim. She has black eyes. She is tall. She is also forty three years old. Mrs Lilik is smart and kind. She loves reading book.

Mrs Suratmiami was born in Kediri, 5 December 1978. Her nick name is Mrs Raf. Mrs Raf has flat nose. She has round face. She is fat. She has black eyes. She is short. She is thirty eight years old. She is smart and kind. She loves operating computer.

The things I like from Mr. Shodiq in his discipline and smartness. Mrs. Lilik is kind but I don't like her because she is fussy. Where as Mrs Raf has so much because she is kind and Humorous.

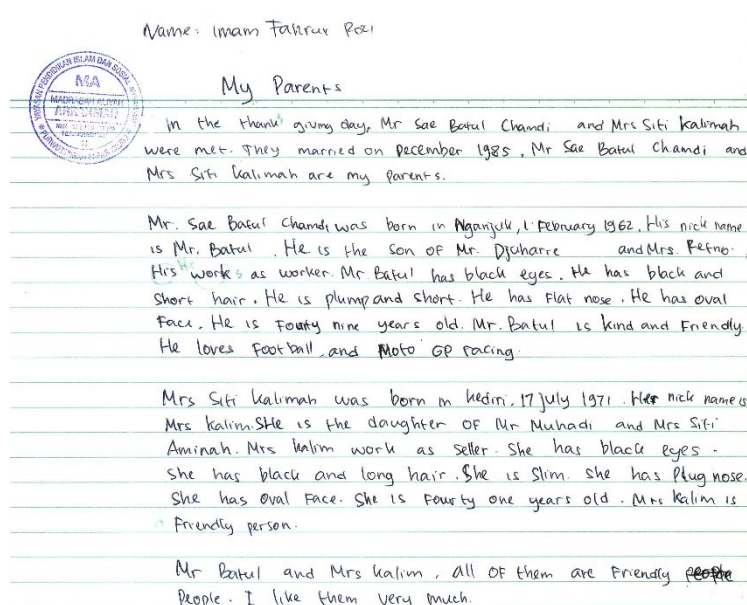


Figure 6 Sample of Student's Writing in Group and Individual Work

The main reason that caused the failure of the implementation of the DWA strategy was students' mastery of language use and mechanic. Their mastery was still poor so that they often made mistakes. The implementation of the DWA strategy only succeeded in improving the students' quality in writing descriptive text especially in terms of content, and organization. While for language use and mechanic, 13 students (41.94%) from 18 students (58.06%) still got scores below 3. Concerning the indicator of success which affirmed that all students got score equal to or more than 3, it can be inferred that the indicator has not been achieved yet.

2 Finding in Cycle 2

The exercises contained three kinds of activities, namely (1) choosing the correct word; (2) filling in the blanks with the correct word; (3) editing the texts focusing on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. In choosing the correct word, students were provided ten sentences where each sentence contained two or more pronouns. In filling in the blanks, students were assigned to fill the uncomplete paragraphs. The paragraphs were taken from one of the student's writing in first cycle. Whereas in editing the text, students were asked to edit their student's writing which was taken from the poorest writing found in the first cycle.

2.1 The Students' Participation

As a result of field notes, many students did not complain again the rewriting activities because the meeting was reduced into three; they are formulating questions and answers, drafting-revising and editing, and final

drafting. Language use, especially grammar, still becomes a big problem for students although they have been given some language use exercises (see Appendix 5c). In addition to points to take into account, field notes exposed some good points. All of the students have followed all procedures in the DWA strategy enthusiastically. The students' writing has also improved so much. The students are also able to correct their friends' writing without any guidance from the teacher.

2.2 The Students' Final Product

The result of the analysis showed that 31 students (100%) have achieved a score of equal to or more than 3 (see Appendix 6c, Appendix 6d). Concerning each aspect of writing, the result of data analysis indicated that the students made an improvement when it is compared to their scores in Cycle 1. From Figure 3.6, it was apparent that in the aspect of content, the average score improved from 3.87 in Cycle 1 to 4 in Cycle 2. Then, in relation to organization, the students made improvements from 3.375 to 3.9.

Regarding the language use, vocabulary and grammar, the students' progress are from 2.58 in Cycle 1 to 3.11 in Cycle 2. On the last aspect, mechanic, the students' score improved from 2.915 to 3.55. Still, language use was the most difficult to master by the students since it obtained the lowest score among others following mechanic aspect.

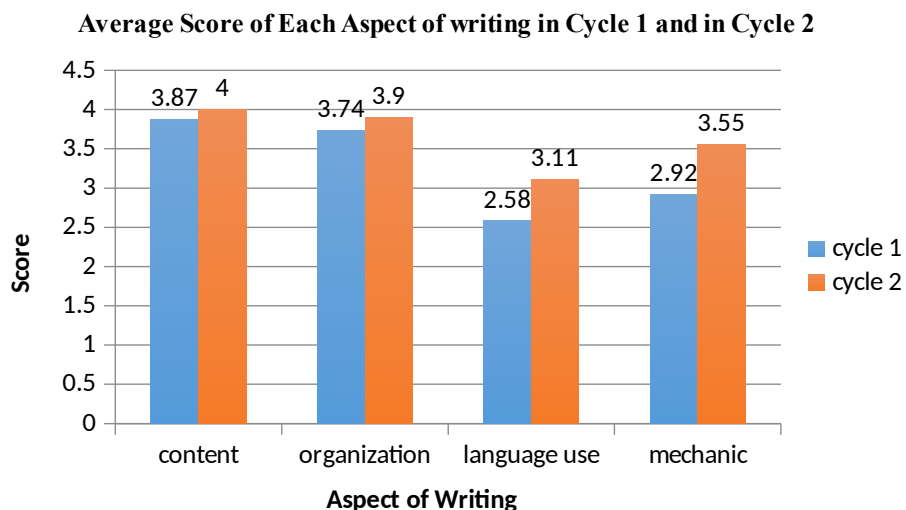


Figure 7 the Students' Average Score of Each Aspect of Writing in Cycle 1 and in Cycle 2.

Since there were 2 raters assessing the students' final products, there was a need to estimate the reliability of the scores. Following Pearson Product Moment formula, it was found that the reliability value of the score was .89. The score of .89 was also classified as high, meaning that the scores could reflect the true performance of the students.

However, to know the students' final scores, it was necessary to analyze the students' products from phase to phase of the implementation of the DWA strategy. It means that they did prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Student number 3 kept used as an example. At the prewriting phase, he formulated questions and answers. There was no modeling in cycle 2. The students referred to their writing in cycle 1. The student' formulation of questions and answers was shown in Figure 3.7.

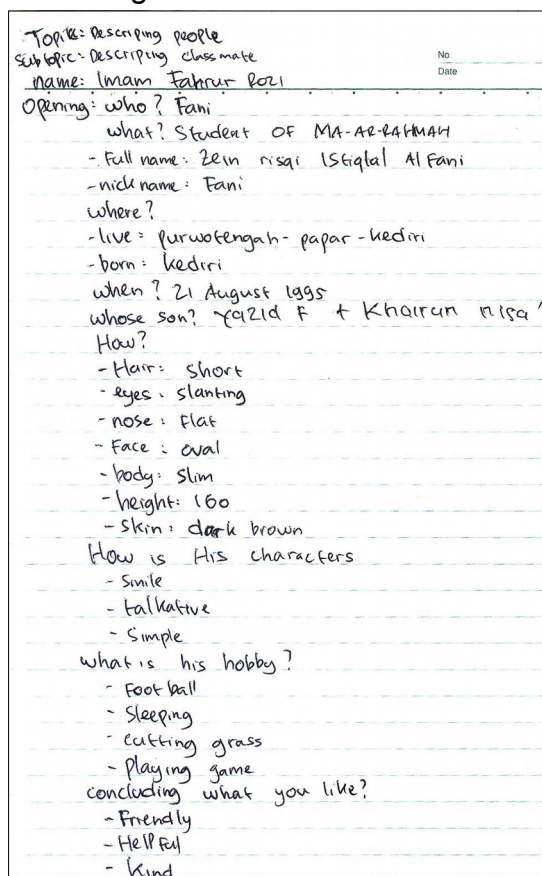


Figure 8 Sample of Student' Work at the Prewriting Phase (Formulating Questions and Answers)

At the drafting phase, he arranged the formulation of questions and answers into paragraphs in accordance with the generic structure of the descriptive text, they are opening statement, a series of paragraphs, and concluding paragraph (Figure 3.8). In the next phase, revising, the student made the revision of his draft in terms of content and organization. He revised the draft after getting feedback both from his peer and the teacher. Revision was done in three activities. First is cutting something out, it means throw away the part(s) in the draft which is not relevant to the topic or it only repeats what has been mentioned before. Here, he cut a word phrase *the only child* and changed with *the son*. He also cut the verb *smile* that is put after to be *is*.

Second is adding something, it means adding a word phrase, sentence, even paragraph to support and sharpen the ideas in the draft. He added some sentences in the first paragraph. His peer suggested *I met him when we were in elementary school. We were in the same school at that time.* But he added a sentence *I met him in Students Training Program (MOS/Masa Orientasi Siswa).* The last is moving or rearranging something, it means change the order of the sentences of the paragraph. Here, he changed a word phrase *his body* to be the person's name *fani*.

At the editing phase, he/she edited his/her draft in terms of grammar, and vocabulary only (Figure 3.8). In this case, he did not edit the draft in terms of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. As a result, in his final draft (Figure 3.9), mistakes in terms of punctuation and capitalization were found (*21th* instead of *21st*, *Football* instead of *football*, *Playing game* instead of *playing game*, *because*, instead of *because*).

Drafting

I have a friend. His name is Fani. He is a student of MA-APPATMATI.

His full name is Zein Risqi Istiqbal Al Fani. His nickname is Fani. He lives in Purwokengah-Papar-Kediri. He was born in Kediri, 21 August 1995. He is the only child of Mr. Yazid Fauzi and Mrs. Khoirun Nisa'. His hair is black and short. His eyes are slanting. His nose is flat. His face is oval.

His body is slim. He has height 160 cm. His skin is dark brown.

Fani is smile, talkative, and simple. He loves playing football, sleeping, cutting grass, and playing game. I like him because he is friendly, helpful and kind.

Figure 9 Sample of Student's Writing at the Drafting, Revising and Editing Phases.

My Closefriend

I have a friend. His name is Fani. He is a student of MA-APPATMATI. I met him in Students Training Program (MOS / Masa Orientasi Siswa)

Zein Risqi Istiqbal Al Fani is his full name. His nickname is Fani. He lives in Purwokengah-Papar-Kediri. He was born in Kediri, 21th August 1995. He is the son of Mr. Yazid Fauzi and Mrs. Khoirun Nisa'. His hair is black and short. His eyes are slanting. His nose is flat. His face is oval.

Fani is slim. His height is 160cm. His skin is dark brown. Fani is talkative and simple. He loves playing football, sleeping, cutting grass, and playing game. I like him because, he is friendly, helpful and kind.

Figure 10 Sample of Student's Final Drafting

To conclude, the implementation of the DWA strategy only succeeded in improving the students' quality in writing a descriptive text. Concerning the indicator of success which affirmed that all students got score equal to or more than 3, then it can be inferred that the indicator has been achieved.

In addition, to evaluate the implementation of the DWA strategy, the researcher utilized a questionnaire which consisted of 10 questions. The statement covered 2 aspects, namely the students' feeling to the implementation of the strategy (statement 1-2), and the effects of the strategy for their writing (statement 3-10).

Referring to the result of the data analysis which was carried out on the basis of frequency count, it was found out that the students responded well to the implementation of the strategy in their writing class except statement number 3. To the statement number 3 "writing class by applying DWA strategy is very interesting", 8 students (41.93%) chose neither agree nor disagree. The rest (statements 1, 2, 4-10), most students opted agree.

The Students' Responses to the Questionnaire in Percentage

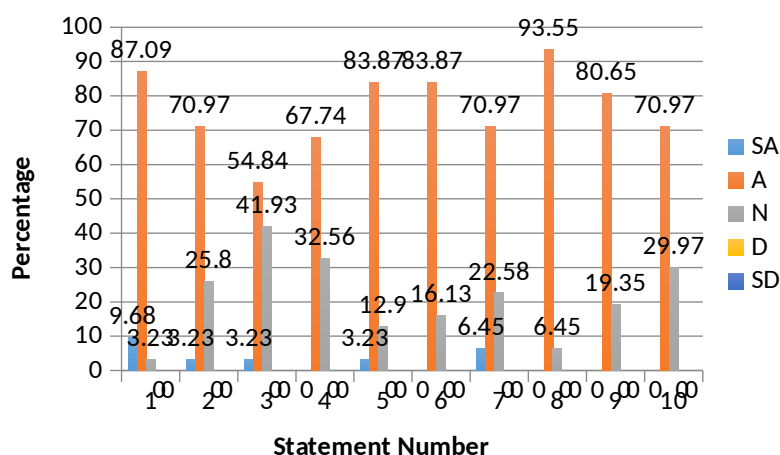


Figure 11 the Students' Responses to the Questionnaire in Percentage

Based on the research findings from the teaching and learning process in the second cycle, the researcher could draw some final conclusions.

First, the implementation of the DWA strategy had the appropriate steps as follows: (1) helping students in selecting ideas when they get difficulty what to write, (2) helping students in selecting the match questions and also the answers based on the topic they choose, (3) helping students arrange the sentences before they write their draft in the form of outline, (4) asking students to write their rough draft, (5) giving and explaining a model of revising, (6) assigning students to revise their friend's rough draft in a group and peers, (7) having students to rewrite their drafts, (8) giving and explaining a model of

editing, (9) assigning students to edit their friend’s draft in a group and peers, and (10) having students to rewrite their final drafts.

Second, the DWA strategy was more appropriate to help beginning writers in improving their quality in writing. This was proved from the result of field notes, and the average score of students’ final product in two cycles. The students’ average score improved significantly after implementing the DWA strategy. Each aspect of writing increased. In terms of content, the average score was only 1.13 in the preliminary study; it then increased 3.87 in Cycle 1, and perfectly 4 as the highest score in Cycle 2. In terms of organization, the average score was 1.03, improved significantly 3.375 in Cycle 1, and 3.9 in Cycle 2. Although language use still got the lowest score among all it also increased. The average score of language use increase from 1 in the preliminary study to 2.58 in Cycle 1, and then 3.11 in Cycle 2. The mechanic also got the lowest average score after language use. The average score was 1.03 in the preliminary study, improved 2.915 in Cycle 1, and improved again become 3.55 in Cycle 2 (see Figure 4.1).

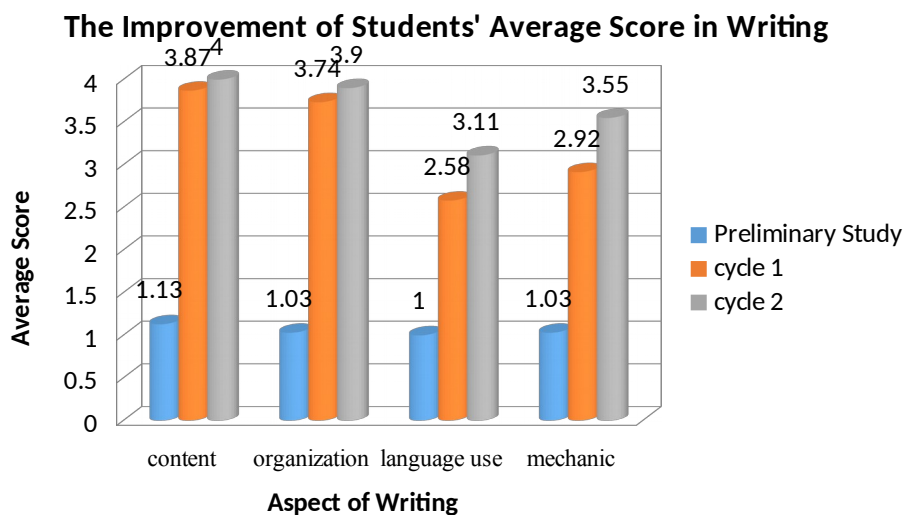


Figure 12 the Improvement of Students’ Average Score in Writing

In a nutshell, considering the findings of the study which have met the criteria of success determined two cycles were considered enough to assure the quality in writing descriptive texts which were done by *Madrasah Aliyah* students.

Discussions

The implementation of the DWA strategy is appropriate in improving the quality in writing especially for beginning writers, like students in this school because they got modeling in every phase. Each phase will be detailed as follows:

Pre-writing according to Blanchard and Root (2004) is the first phase and

the hardest part of writing, mainly in getting started. Prewriting phase is a phase to get students ready to write. It includes any experience, activity, or exercise that motivates a writer or a student to write. It stimulates thought for getting started. In relation to this study, the researcher applied to select ideas, formulating questions and answers and outlining.

In selecting the ideas, the teacher gave the topic “describing people” with subtopic “describing favorite teachers”. As modeling, the teacher presented and distributed some pictures of their favorite teachers at school. Then, they formulate questions and answers under teacher guidance, and so did the outlining. The findings showed that in the first cycle, the students still got difficulty in translating the word from Indonesian into English. They tended to translate word by word.

In the second cycle, when the students were asked to describe their classmates, the problem reduced a little because they had had experience in the first cycle. Their answers were more complete since they really knew who would be described. Outlining was skipped in the second cycle considering they had known the generic structure of the descriptive texts which includes opening statements, a series of paragraph, and concluding paragraphs.

Drafting is the second phase. It is the phase in which students focus on transferring their ideas done on paper. Grenville (2001) states that the first draft can be rough and wrong so in order students’ writing do not end up in thin, flat and cliché, they should write the things we have known. Adding to Grenville’s opinion, Smalley, et al. (2001) states that in writing the first draft, the writer may not be concerned overly with the grammatical correctness; rather than the writer should focus more to get the ideas down on paper roughly.

The third phase in revising. Grenville (2001) proposes three activities done in the revising phase, namely, cutting something out, adding something where you need, and moving or rearranging something. In this phase, both in the first cycle and second cycle, the researcher gave a guideline in what should be revised to each student. Seow (2002) states that revising is done to improve the whole content and organization of ideas so the reader can grab the ideas clearly. In terms of content, the students were permitted to omit sentences, add sentences, and change the position of the sentences. While in the terms of organization, the students were suggested to consider connectors.

The last phase is editing. Editing is the process of putting the piece of writing into its final form. Editing involves looking closely at individual sentences for technical correctness, grammar, spelling, punctuation, mechanic, and effective structure and word choice (Seow, 2002). In line with Seow, Grenville (2001) states that editing means making your piece as reader-friendly as possible by making the sentences flow in a clear, easy-to-read way. It also means bringing your piece of writing into line with accepted ways of using English: using the appropriate grammar for the purposes of the piece,

appropriate punctuation and spelling, and appropriate paragraphing.

In this study, like in the revising phase, the students were also given a guideline for editing both in the first cycle and the second cycle. At this phase, the students checked the sentences to assure that they were grammatically and mechanically correct. The students edited their writing in small groups. Firstly, the teacher explained and gave guidance on what part should be edited based on the guideline they had, afterward, they were given chance to edit their friend's writing.

To put it briefly, going through the four phases of the directed writing activity strategy (prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing) makes students able to improve the quality of their descriptive texts.

Conclusion

The implementation of the DWA strategy in improving the students' quality in writing encompasses several procedures: (1) giving topic to be selected, (2) giving model how to formulate questions and answers, (3) assigning students to formulate their own questions and answers, (4) modeling how to make outline, (5) assigning students to make their own outline, (6) assigning students to write their first draft based on their outline, (7) giving model how to revise the draft in terms of content and organization, (8) assigning students to revise their draft in group, (9) giving model how to edit the draft in terms of language use and mechanic, (10) assigning students to edit their draft in group, and (11) assigning students to write their own draft.

The implementation of the DWA strategy also has some positive impacts on the teacher's side. By applying the DWA strategy, the teacher could measure her students' ability in learning English. She could know her students' problems in particular aspect of writing. She also could help students express what comes into their mind in the form of writing.

Furthermore, the result of the data analysis showed that the DWA strategy is successful in improving the students' quality in writing descriptive texts. The success was indicated by the students' participation in each activity and the improvement of the average score in Cycle 2 compared to the preliminary study.

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