Students' Writing Ability by Using Freewriting Technique

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Abstract: The aim of this research was to enhance students' writing ability of the eighth grade through the utilization of Freewriting technique. This research is classified as classroom action research (CAR). the subjects of this research were the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunung Agung Tulang Bawang Barat in the academic year of 2020/2021. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and quantitative data analysis. This study was conducted in two cycles, each cycle consisting of four sessions. Based on the analysis of the survey, students improved their writing ability by using free writing techniques based on cycle 2 quantitative and qualitative data. The average score for cycle 1 was 60.38, but for cycle 2 it was 70.86. Moreover, this improvement can also be seen from qualitative data, such as the results of the students' observation sheet from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The mean score of cycle 1 was 6.70, while the mean score of cycle 2 was 7.32. It showed that the students seemed to be more confidence and motivated began to write. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of Freewriting technique can improve students' writing ability and activity.
Keywords: *Action research, Writing, Freewriting technique*

INTRODUCTION

Language is like a flag for each country. There are several languages in the world. Language is certainly considered one among many tools to communicate. The purpose of communication is to send a message from the author or speaker to the reader or listener. English is the one of the global language. English is one of the compulsory subjects included in the national curriculum. Language skill is divided into productive skills and receptive skills. In the curriculum of junior high school, receptive skills cover listening skill and reading skill while productive skills cover speaking and writing abilities (Jamaliah, 2018: 31).

Writing is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. In writing, people share their ideas, opinions, views or experiences in written form. Learning writing is important, because, nowadays, technology becomes a foundation of communication. The majority of the activities involve writing activity, such as when they want to send messages through letter, mobile phone, or making business letter through e-mail. Especially, for students, mastering writing skill is very

important. Therefore, for making a good paper, they need to have a good skill in writing. To be able to master writing skills, the students need to practice more and counseling with the teachers at school. In writing, the students try to use a language in oral form as well.

Writing is a more complicated skill because it deals with many aspects related to writing, such as vocabulary, grammar, content, and mechanics which have to be mastered to be able to produce good writing. It is not only about how the students can produce sentences but also how they can combine words by words and sentences by sentences grammatically and structurally. Even though writing is very important, especially for Indonesian students who should master four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) that have to be mastered since junior high school. Writing skill is considered a difficult assignment.

FRAME OF THEORY
Concept of Writing

Writing is a form of communication that allows human beings to put their feelings and thoughts on paper to arrange their knowledge and ideas into convincing arguments, and to deliver meaning through well-constructed textual content by combining phrases and sentences. In writing, it involves not simply producing phrases and sentences on the way to produce a piece of writing, however, additionally, we ought to be able to write a related collection of phrases and sentences which are grammatically and logically linked. Supported by Mustapa (2013: 729), writing is a complex process in which the writer faces many components which include content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, coherence, and unity. It is likewise a kind of process where the author considers the choice of phrases and thoughts to be expressed that are logically and related.

According to Maximilian and Ajeng (2017:2), writing is an interest to record and to communicate the author's thoughts, consisting of the primary concept and key details, to the readers through using letters, words, phrases, and clauses to shape a sequence of related sentences with a purpose to make the readers consider something, or do something, or both. In writing, it gives people an opportunity to discover their thoughts and collect facts and make the readers think or do something like what the author writes about.

Harmer (2004:12) stated that the process of writing is a way of looking at what people do when they compose written text. Thus, writing is the process of expressing the writer's ideas and thought by using the structure and vocabulary to combine the ideas which will use as a means of communication. Writing is not only talking about writing our ideas, minds but also in writing there is the process of writing to produce written form and make people interested. As stated by Harmer (2004:5) that in the process of writing has four main elements: Planning, Drafting, Editing, and Final version/draft.

Components of Writing

Based on Hughes in Sianna and Syawal (2017:52) in analytic scale, writing has five components, namely:

1) Content; the content of writing should be clear to the readers so that the readers can understand the message that is conveyed and gained from the content of the information itself.

2) Organization; Organization in writing includes coherence, order of importance, general to specific or specific to general, chronological order, and spatial pattern.

3) Vocabulary; One of the requirements of good writing always depends on the effective use of words. In the personal description, word plays a dual role: to communicate and to evoke; and then, to the readers, it is to perceive and to feel. In such a description, word values in the association are more effective than those mainly in communicating information.

4) Language use; Language use in writing involves correct usage endpoints of grammar such as verbs, nouns, and agreement. Specific nouns and strong verbs give a reader a mental image of description.

5) Mechanics; the use of mechanics is due to capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appropriately. This aspect is very important since it leads readers to understand or recognize immediately what exactly the writer means. The use of favorable mechanics in writing will make the readers easy to understand the conveyed ideas or the messages that are stated in writing.

Purpose of Writing

Writing performs a critical position in most fields and has been considered as a means for overcoming troubles, developing connections, and setting up relationships. (Loan 2017: 270) According to O'Malley and Pierce in Maximilian (2017: 3), there are at least three purposes in writing:

1) Informative writing
   This type of writing is clear, accurate, organized, thorough, and above all fair. This type is used to share knowledge and give information, directions, or ideas/feelings to the readers.

2) Expressive writing
   Its main purpose is to produce stories or essays based on the observation of people, objects, and places and may include creative speculations and interpretations, and also to make connections to others and to contribute to human thought and culture and to establish and deepen human contact.

3) Persuasive writing
   The writer's goal is to change the minds of the readers or at least to get the readers to question their position on a debate and consider the writer's point

of view. In persuasive writing, the writers attempt to influence others and initiate action or change.

Process of Writing

According to Linse (2005:101-103) process of writing is especially appropriate for ESL or EFL young learners;

1) Prewrite

   In this important first step, children are allowed to prepare to write and to collect their thoughts and ideas. If done properly, it can help the children to write without any hesitation or worry.

2) Write

   In this step, children write down all of their ideas. They do not worry about form or correctness or even the order. The objective is to get the ideas on paper as quickly as possible.

3) Revise

   In this step, the initial piece of writing is examined and reworked so that the ideas are logical and flow together.

4) Edit

   In this step, learners (with the help of their teachers, caregivers, or classmates) proofread their work to make sure that there are not any content errors or grammatical or spelling errors.

5) Publish

   In this step, the writing piece is rewritten in a published or presentable form, in a student-make book, on special paper, and/or on a computer so that it can be displayed or shared.

Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is teaching the students how to express their ideas or imaginations or experiences in written form. Teaching and learning writing is very important because it is one aspect of language skills and one of the subject matters in English that should be learned by students. Brown (2000:19) stated that teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the condition for learning. Furthermore, Brown (2000:19) stated that teaching may be defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know about or understand.

The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning, and it is often a formidable and time-consuming task to find ways to motivate students that will achieve the academic goals which have been established for the course. Brown (2001:340) added that as a facilitator, the teacher offers guidance in helping students to engage in the thinking process of composing but, in a spirit of respect for student opinion, must not impose his or her thoughts on student writing.

The teacher should maximize her/his role in learning writing. Furthermore, Tribble (1996:5) states as teachers, we have to find ways of helping our students to decide on their priorities and then agree on what the focus of a learning program will be. It means that a teacher does not only teach the students how to write but also he or she should be able to help the students in finding some ideas or themes about what they will write so that his or her students' writing ability can be improved optimally and they will become better writers.

Freewriting

Freewriting is a writing technique in which the use of this technique the students can write something that comes into their minds, freely and quickly without preventing. It is supported through Hedge (2005:74) Freewriting technique has been referred to as speed-writing or quick writing due to the fact its essential feature is writing as fast as possible without preventing. Tarmizi (2007: 3) additionally declared that freewriting is the perfect manner to get phrases on paper and the fine all-around exercise in writing that I know. To do a free writing exercise, it became truly to be able to write without preventing for ten minutes.

Herayati (2019:757) said that during freewriting, the writers do freewriting, they choose a topic, sit down and write anything sentences come into their minds approximately the topic. In the article, Nurfiryalianti (2014: 2) added that freewriting can become training or warming up for students in making writing wherein very appropriate with the beginner in sharing their understanding withinside the shape of writing. The Freewriting technique means the writers write anything involving their minds or their feelings. It can take them to loads of locations in writing something on paper. It is supported via way of means of Brown (2001:80) coaching writing as a thinking process in which learners expand their thoughts freely and openly.

According to Dunifa (2017:85), there are varieties of Freewriting technique, are: (1) unfocused Freewriting: the author chooses the subject and is unfastened to shift from subject to subject, often that is used to generate thoughts for a piece of writing on any topic of the author's choice; (2) focused Freewriting: the author focuses interest on a specific subject, regularly in response to an assigned task.

The procedure of Freewriting Technique

Brown (2001:350) mentioned some procedures of Freewriting as follows:
1) From your list of changes, choose one idea that interested you.
2) Write the idea at the top of a clean sheet of paper.
3) For ten minutes, write about this topic without stopping. This means that you should be writing something constantly;
    a. Write down everything that comes to your mind.
    b. Do not judge your ideas.
    c. Do not worry about your spelling and grammar.

d. If you run out of things to say, continue writing whatever comes to your mind.

Advantage of Freewriting

Clarkson in Nurfiryaliati et.al (2014:4), explains several advantages of the Freewriting technique, as follow:

1) Makeing you more comfortable about writing.
2) Helping you get around your inner critic, the one telling you cannot write.
3) Helping you to release inner anxiety.
4) Helping you discover topics to write about.
5) Helping you improve your formal writing.
6) It is fun.

In addition, Hedge (2005:67) said that the advantage of Freewriting is that it helps the student to discover the things they can write about within a general theme. It also obliges students to redraft, thereby highlighting the importance of redrafting in the process of composing.

Based on the explanation above, the writer assumes that using the Freewriting technique in writing gives some benefits for the students. The students can become more comfortable when they are writing because they can write freely and openly. This technique can release the students' anxiety in writing because of the use of vocabulary, grammar, etc, and also it can help the students to redraft their writing.

Disadvantages of Freewriting

Besides the freewriting technique has some advantages, it has disadvantages also. Absa (2018:41) conveyed that using the freewriting technique in writing are also has some disadvantages of Freewriting those are:

1) The writer stops repeatedly, writes briefly, and is always looking around. He/she never seems to concentrate for more than a few seconds at a time.
2) The use of an eraser, liquid paper or scoring out of whatever has been written indicates a writer with perfectionism as his/ her ideal.
3) Since a quiet class is usually required for this task, the talker is immediately noticed above the silence of the classroom, either as the buzz from the back of the class or audible words coming from the corner.
4) The writer has another piece of paper on which is written a topic, title, and even some notes or a plan. He/she can be seen copying or referring to it frequently.

METHOD

The writer used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to improve students' writing ability through the Freewriting technique. Classroom action research is research conducted by a teacher in the classroom itself through self-reflection, to improve the performance as the teacher, so that the students learning outcomes will be increased. As Burns (2010:2) stated that an action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your teaching contexts." Additionally, action research is simply of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situation in which the practices are carried out.

Data Collecting Technique

In collecting the data in this research the writer used test; the first was a formative test (it was used to measure the students' achievement in each meeting of the learning process), the second test was summative (it was used to assess the students' learning at the end of each cycle and non-test) and non-test; the writer used included observation sheet, it was used to know about the situation and the progress in learning and teaching process of each meeting.

Research Instrument

    1. Formative Test

A formative test is an achievement test to determine the success of the learning process which is performed by the teacher, to obtain feedback from the teaching efforts undertaken by teachers. The formative test was used to know students' achievement in writing ability and it was given to the students at the end of learning activities from each meeting.

    2. Summative Test

A summative test is used to assess the students' writing ability. The test was given at the end of each cycle. The writer used the writing test in conducting this research. The writer gave the students some topics based on the syllabus which was used in the teaching and learning process then asked them to make a composition based on the topic they had chosen.

    3. Field Notes

Field notes are detailed descriptions of events, people, actions, and objects in the setting. The notes are created by the teacher during the act of conducting a field study to remember and record the behaviors, activities, events, and other features of an observation. Field notes were intended to be read by the writer as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied. The notes constituted the whole data collected for a research study [e.g., an observational project] or contributed to it, such as when

field notes supplement conventional interview data or other techniques of data gathering.

4. Observation Sheet

The observation sheet was used to observe the students' learning activities during the learning process in each cycle. The students' observation sheet was concerned with the students as the subject in implementing the technique. It was given to know the students' activity in every meeting.

The technique of Analyzing Data

Data analysis is the point where statements or assertions about what the research shows are produced (Burns, 1999:153). In this research, two types of data will be collected, namely quantitative data and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed by using the mean statistical formula, while qualitative data were analyzed by using the descriptive qualitative method.

Quantitative data analysis was used to analyze data from instrument tests. The result of data analysis was a kind of quantitative data which was described in descriptive by calculating individual completeness and classical completeness. For qualitative data analysis was obtained through direct observation of students' activities during the learning process. It was noted using an observation sheet of students' activities.

Individual Completeness

In counting the score of students' learning completeness, the writer used the formula:

$$SS = \frac{Score\ Obtained}{Maximum\ score} \text{ x } 100$$

In which:
SS   : Students' score

Based on the minimum criteria of mastery learning *(KKM)* of English at SMP Negeri 2 Gunung Agung Tulang Bawang Barat, the students were said to pass the learning of English if the score was more than or equal to 65.

Classical Completeness

In counting the score of classical learning completeness, the writer used the formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{number\ of\ passed\ students}{total\ of\ students} \text{ X } 100\%$$

In which:

$\underline{x}$: Mean score

Based on the determination in SMP Negeri 2 Gunung Agung Tulang Bawang Barat, the class was said to be complete if the number of the students who achieve the minimum criteria of mastery learning *(KKM)* was more than or equal to 70%.

RESULT

Teaching writing through the Freewriting technique can improve students' writing ability and activity. During the teaching-learning process, the students showed their interest to participate in the lesson conducted. They were seemed actively involved in the classroom activities by doing an instruction with an action. They enjoyed the lesson. There was also an improvement in the students' scores. It improved from 60.38 in the first cycle to 70.86 in cycle 2.

Based on the result of learning writing at the eighth grade improved from cycle 1 where there were 13 students or 44,83% who passed KKM (65) while in cycle 2, there were 21 students or 72,41% who have passed the KKM (65). It can be concluded that the implementation of the Freewriting technique in cycle 2 was better than in cycle 1.
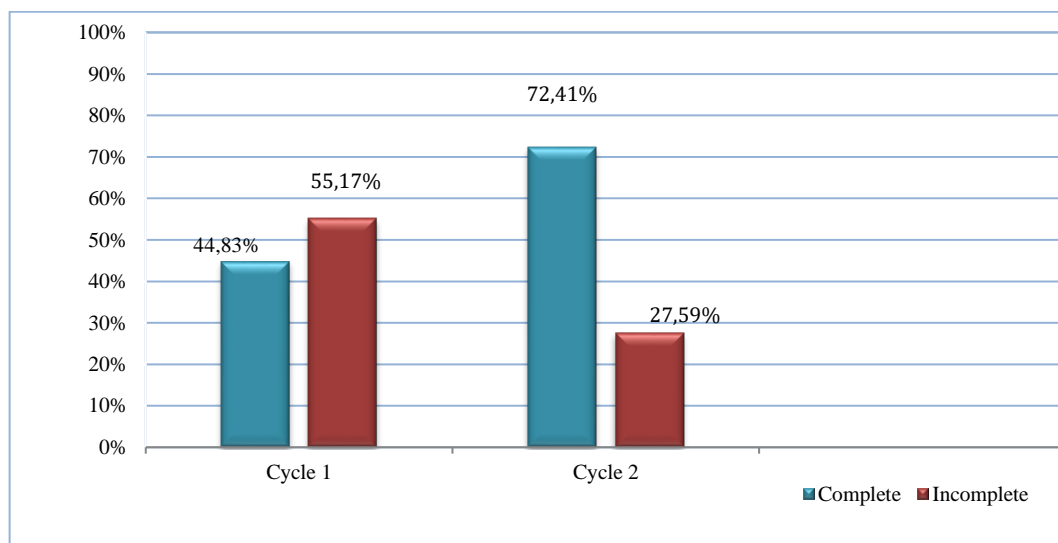
Picture 1.
Improvement of Learning Result of Writing Ability in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

DISCUSSION

Based on the observation of this research which had been done by the writer, the writer concluded that the students in SMP Negeri 2 Gunung Agung Tulang Bawang Barat, they got difficulties when they were writing a text in the class, mostly; they were difficult in expressing their ideas or opinions. Although they had many ideas or opinions for their writing, they could not express it in their writing; they felt confused and did not know how to write it in a sentence form. This problem

was caused by they have limited knowledge about the components of writing. Someone has to be able to mastery the components of writing so that he/she can produce good writing. There are five components in writing; those are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. The students must know about the five components of writing so that they can produce good writing, the teacher also has to teach about those to the students at school.

From this problem, the writer tried to solve the problem by doing a treatment to the students in the school by using the Freewriting technique. The Freewriting technique is a technique where the students can generate their ideas, feelings, opinions freely. According to Hedge (2005:74) stated that Freewriting is a technique that has the main purpose of generating ideas. It tries to overcome the problem of writer's 'block'. It means that this technique can help the students to generate their ideas or minds. The objective of this technique is the students will be given the freedom to write everything that comes in their minds and their feelings, they will be easy to get their ideas which they will share on a paper, and also they will be given the directions on how to produce good writing based on the components of writing.

The first component of writing is the content. Content is how the students develop the idea related to the topic, and the idea has to accurate detail. Content refers to the substance of writing, the experience of the main idea (unity). Content is very needed because without good content, writing does not have a meaning and the reader would not interest to read it. By using the Freewriting technique in writing, the students can make good content, because in the Freewriting technique they can express their ideas freely and openly. They can generate their ideas or experiences, and their ideas will be more interesting to the readers, and not be monotone.

The second is organization. Organization refers to the logical and connective organization of content. It is scarily more than an attempt to piece together all collection of facts and jumble ideas. In the organization needed a fluent expression, ideas clearly stated and supported with appropriately organized paragraphs or section logically sequences (coherence) connectives appropriately used (cohesion). At the first, students were difficult in making organization, when they were writing they only focused on what they had to write, they did not pay attention to the organization too much, but after they had done the task in every meeting, they become more paid attention to the organization in their writing with the limited time they had been given. Their organization became better than before.

The third one is vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the selection of words about the idiom choice which are suitable with the content. It begins with the assumption that the writer wants to express the ideas clearly and directly. Therefore, before they express their idea, they have to enrich their vocabulary as much as possible. The students still had limited vocabulary that made them feel confused when writing, they did not know the meaning of some words in English. In using

Freewriting, they had limited time to finish their task, meanwhile, they needed many times to search the meaning in a dictionary, therefore, and they only used what words they knew in English. Many students used words that were not appropriate. From the problem, before doing the next task, the writer explain some examples of text which would they write, the writer asked the students to understand the meaning of the text and find the vocabulary that they had not known, also invited the students to brainstorm first about the topic they had chosen. After some text they had written, their vocabulary became better than before.

The fourth is language use. The language used refers to the use of correct grammatical in paragraph form and synthetic pattern of separating, combining, and grouping ideas in words, phrases, clauses, and sentences to bring out the logical relationship in paragraph writing. Language use in writing is also needed because language use is used to reduce misunderstandings between the reader and the writer. The students still often made mistakes in using grammar and synthetic patterns in writing; they did not know which was the correct grammar and synthetic pattern they had to use for their writing. Based on the writer's observation during the students were writing by using the Freewriting technique, after they had finished their writing, the writer told them how to use the correct grammar in writing, after some text they had written, it could be seen they grammar were better.

The last component is the mechanic. Mechanic refers to the use of graphic conventional of the language, i.e., the step of arranging letters, spelling, punctuation, capitalization words, and paragraphs by using knowledge of the structure and some others related to one another. In the class, when the students were writing, the writer observed them, when there was a mistake of the spelling, the use of punctuation, and capitalization words, immediately, the writer told them to correct their spelling or punctuation.

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that the use of the Freewriting technique in writing is a good technique to improve students' writing ability. The Freewriting technique helps the students to think of topics to write about. Just keep writing, follow threads where they lead and the students will get to ideas, experiences, feelings, or people that are just asking to be written about. Finally, and perhaps most important, the Freewriting technique improves their writing. Besides the statements above, the improvement of students' writing skills also can be seen from the result of the students' writing test in the class.

The result of students' writing ability test from two cycles showed that the implementation of the Freewriting technique could improve students' writing activity and ability. It can be concluded by analyzing the students' mean score of each cycle. In cycle 1, the mean score of the test was 60.38, while in cycle 2, the mean score of the test was 70.86, the improvement of the mean score in cycle 1 and cycle 2 was 10.48. Also, the result of students' learning activity in the class showed that there was an improvement from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The mean score of students' learning activity in cycle 1 was 6.70, and in cycle 2 the mean score was 7.32. The

improvement of students' learning activity from cycle 1 to cycle 2 was 0.62. Based on the result of students writing ability and activity, the data showed that the students had an improvement in writing ability and activity.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the students' mean score was improved in the second cycle. The writer can conclude that the implementation of the Freewriting technique in teaching writing could improve the students' writing ability and activity at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 2 Gunung Agung Tulang Bawang Barat in the academic year of 2020/2021.

CONCLUSION

After researching teaching English writing at the Junior High School, it can be shown that the implementation of the Freewriting technique can improve the students' writing ability and activity. There were several improvements reached by the students, not only on their academic scores but also on their behavior in the teaching and learning English process. For improving students' writing ability, the writer would suggest that the teacher should apply the Freewriting technique in teaching writing. The teacher has to tell first to the students clearly about what the Freewriting technique is and how to use the technique when they are writing. The teacher also should know about the students' background of knowledge because this technique uses limited time so that the teacher can adjust how long the time for the students to finish their writing task by using this Freewriting technique. The teacher should master the materials well, explain the materials clearly, and give some examples of the materials to the students so that they can understand the materials clearly.

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