The Implementation of Mnemonic Method to Improve the Primary School Learner's English Writing Skills

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Article Info

Abstract

The problems of this research were the learners' difficulties to express their ideas into a simple English sentence. The learner low motivation while learning English was also one of the influential factors. This research aims to find out how mnemonic method could improve the learners' writing skills in the primary school during learning English. The subjects consisted of fifth graders of Integrated Islamic 5 Primary School, Semarang. The applied method in this research was quasi experimental research. The findings showed the learners' writing skills were improved after being intervened by the mnemonic method. The learners were motivated and were not afraid to express the ideas into simple sentences. The writing skill in experimental class obtained better than that of the conventional class as well as than learning achievements. The post-test results showed the learners' scores were higher than the standard after being intervened by mnemonic method. It was 80. It could be concluded that the mnemonic could improve the learners' skills to write the simple English sentences.

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INTRODUCTION

Cimermanova (2018) argues that writing, speaking, reading, and listening skills are the required skills to learn new language. A language learner could not communicate properly without mastering vocabulary and writing is a skill in a more productive language skill (Ayu, 2017). It is supported by Fasih et al. (2018) that writing is a more productive skill to produce masterpiece. Writing covers several components such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. One of materials attached on the learners' writing skills at primary school is writing a descriptive text with simple sentences. Pranata et al. (2018) stated that writing skill has important roles in educational world. This skill success in following a learning is also determined by writing skills.

Descriptive test is a text describing an individual's or an object's specific features. In the descriptive text materials, learners are expected to be able to describe something with simple sentences. Based on the observations and the findings, several problems were found especially concerning writing simple sentences.

The problems consisted of grammatical mistakes and incorrectness to work on the questions. It was due to low vocabulary skills of the learners and insufficient facilities such as insupportable textbooks and less attractive learning process and media. To overcome the problems, there is a need of a method to make it effective.

Mansyur (2015) argues that an effective learning is a learning that allows learners to learn easily and joyfully. Thus, the learning objectives could be achieved. One of the strategies to improve writing skills is mnemonic method. Mnemonic method is a strategy to facilitate individuals to memorize. Winoto (2017) found that music-typed and figure-typed mnemonics were effective to improve the learners' English vocabulary masteries. Sudirman et al. (2017) also found that keyword-typed mnemonic was effective to improve English vocabulary memorizing skill. Mnemonic strategy is a required strategy for writing skill.

Madani et al. (2017) found that mnemonic method applied for the experimental group led to a better result than the control group intervened by conventional method. 14 mnemonics have been classified for each type. The first one is the *peg* letter mnemonic. It is a simple method to remember something by changing it to a certain number-alike form. For example, assuming the number zero as if it was a ball. The second method is keyword mnemonic. It is a method that takes the first or the last sound and syllable which are similar. It could be done either from the mother tongue or foreign language. For example, a student named "Darwin". From the name, learners could use keywords to remember, i.e. "Dark and Wind". Learners could also add visual figures that have darker colors. Third, locus-mnemonic method that applies certain place names to remember. This technique is useful to remember anything concerning with subjects. By using this technique, learners could fully memorize any new engaged things.

The fourth method is acrostic mnemonic method that uses the first letter of a word representing information of certain material to be remembered. For example, "every good kid is good", each first letter of each word can be taken into E, G, K, G. Fifth, acronym mnemonic method, it is a method to take the first letter to remember something. For example, an Indonesian acronym of MEJIKUHIBINIU could facilitate learners to remember the rainbow colors.

In Indonesian language, the rainbow colors are *merah, jingga, kuning, hijau, nilla, and ungu* (red, orange, yellow, green, indigo, and purple). Sixth, rhyme mnemonic method, it is a method by singing a nursery rhyme that contains moral values. The music tone in a song could be used as a learning strategy so the learning process runs effectively.

The seventh method is elaboration mnemonic. It is a method to ease learners by remembering the important words such as complex spelling. The eighth one is spatial cluster mnemonic method. It is a method to memorize words by writing down words in a

certain pattern to be easily remembered. Ninth, finger mnemonic method, it is a method to learn numbers or days in a week, month, or year. The tenth is figure mnemonic method, it is a method to motivate and attract learners to memorize well. It is done by using figures or objects so that the information could be internalized properly.

Eleventh method is semantic mnemonic method. It is a method to organize sentence semantically so that it could be stored properly in the brain. Thus, it could be a long-term memory. For examples, the words such as animal consists of cats and dogs, furniture consists of tables and chairs, flower consists of roses and jasmines. The twelfth, story-retelling mnemonic method, it is a method in which the learners are asked to connect the targeted words into a story topic.

The thirteenth method is physical response mnemonic method. It allows learners to move their bodies with a certain manner to easily remember a material. Fourteenth, physical sensation mnemonic, it allows learners to discuss concerning with physical matters. For example, in this method, when learners study new words such as *cold.* The learners can feel the sensation when they learn the word.

From the mnemonic methods described, music and narration mnemonic typed methods were considered the most suitable to the research purposes. Both method types were selected to reach the objectives of writing descriptive text. Madani et al. (2017) argued that music and narration mnemonic methods could improve the learners' language skills by having joyful learning process.

It is in line with a study conducted by Anggraeni (2016). She found that nursery rhyme could be a medium of learning process since its simple language and dynamic tempo. Nursery rhyme tells about a world that belongs to children's experiences. Thus, the primary level education learners could develop their imaginations.

Wijayanti (2016), in her research, argued that teachers could use rhymes as the media to create a more creative and interactive learning process so that learners could easily understand the given materials. It is supported by Samad (2015). He argues that teachers should be able to manage their teaching-learning activities to create proper learning interaction toward the learners.

Chandra (2015) describes the stages in preparing the objective-based learning context. They are preparing the learning materials and media; regulating the time allotment; preparing the textbooks, the rhythm, and the rhyme; and regulating the space for the learning process.

By considering the *pronunciation*, in each learning process could be done by inviting the learners to listen and read, repeat, and train to sing the rhymes. Teachers could also provide written lyrics of the rhymes. Dealing with this, the note was given attractively in the form of a learning-oriented game. Teachers could also compare their mother tongues. It allowed learners to be aware of each meaning of the given word. Thus, learners would be more confident to show off in front of the class individually, collectively, or in pair since they had understood each meaning in the given sentence.

Garryn et al. (2018) created several nursery rhymes that could be used as the primary school learning media. The song is *"If you are happy and you know it, Hokey Pokey, to little Indians, The wheels on the bus, There was an old lady who swallow a fly, London Bridge is Falling Down, Head Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Twinkle-twinkle little stars, Old Me Donald had a farm, Good Morning 2x, ABC, Bingo, Months, Day of the Week, I have a Cock, That is, Can You Touch Your Toes, Are You Sleeping/Studying, My Eyes, My Ears, My nose, My Mouth, The Bear Went Over The Mountain.*

The novelty of this research deals with the research variables. In this research, the researcher aims to improve the learners' learning skills. It is different to the previous studies that were general. The research objectives are to improve the Bunayya Integrated Islamic Primary School learners' writing skills, to improve their understanding about the material, to improve their English learning motivation, and to enrich their English vocabulary mastery.

METHOD

The research was a quasi-experimental research with non-equivalent control group design. Before being intervened, both groups were pre-tested. It was done to find out the pre-condition before being intervened. Then, after being intervened, both groups were post-tested. It was used to find out the post-condition of the groups. In this research, the experimental group was intervened by using mnemonic strategy. In another hand, the control group was taught by conventional method in the form of monotonous learning that was based on the learner worksheet. The study was carried out within four meeting for each group. Musical mnemonic and narration mnemonic were the typed methods that were used in this research.

The subjects consisted of fifth graders of Integrated Islamic 5 Primary School, Semarang. From the discussion and recommendation of the teachers, supported by the scores of the learning process, the 5A class was chosen as the experimental group. In another hand, the 5B class was chosen to be the control group. This research was done in two stages: initial stage and quantitative stage. The initial stage consisted of observation and learning and research instrument validation. The instrument of try out question test was used to take experimental and control group data. It was done to find out the validity and reliability of the data. The quantitative stage covered initial skill test and final skill test of students. The data was analyzed to find out the improvement of writing skill on the learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were in the learners' writing skills in the learning taught by the mnemonic method, as presented in the Table below. Each analysis aspect of both groups could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. T-test of Learning Achievement

	Independent Samples Test				
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	2.82	34.00	.010	7.12	2.62
Equal variances not assumed	2.71	25.23	.009	7.12	2.52

Based on the Table 1, it is known that t-test of the learning achievement obtains a t-count value 2.821 and a t-table value of 2.714. Thus, it is 2.821 = t-count > t1-α = 2.714, thus H_0 is denied. Thus, the earning achievement average scores taught by mnemonic method were higher than those taught conventionally.

The average score results were in the forms of English sentence writing skills taught by mnemonic method. They are presented in Table 2. Each analysis of English simple sentence writing skill aspect of both groups could be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. English Simple Sentence Writing Skills

Components	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Average	67	80	67	72
N-gain	2.6		1	
% of standard mastery	70		17	
The Minimum Standard Mastery	72		72	

Based on the data displayed on Table 2, the experimental group's writing skill was improved after being post-tested. From the experimental group, the learning achievement average result showed a percentage of 70% learners reached the minimum standard mastery. From the percentage, 14 learners had reached the minimum standard mastery while 6 learners had not reached the minimum standard mastery with an average score of 80. The experiment results of the post-test showed many learners reached the minimum standard mastery.

From the control group, the learning achievement average result showed a percentage of 17 % learners reached the minimum standard mastery. From the percentage, 2 learners had reached the minimum standard mastery while 16 learners had not reached the minimum standard mastery with an average score of 72.

In Figure 1 the problem in writing skills by applying mnemonic method has shown a good writing in a simple sentence. Here is one of the works of writing a simple sentence by applying mnemonic method as presented in Figure 1.
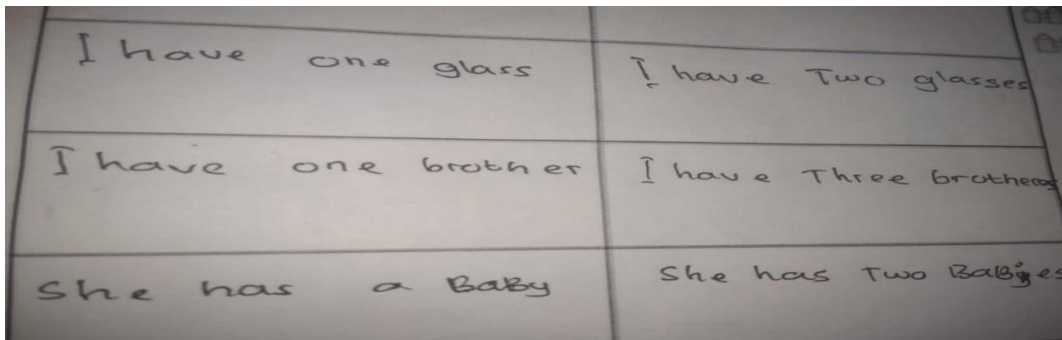
Figure 1. The Works of Mnemonic Method Student

On the Figure 1. The work of student shown creative making a simple sentence. Based on the test, the variance of experimental group was better than control group. The mnemonic method would surely develop writing skill of the students. Here is one of the works of conventional in Figure 2.
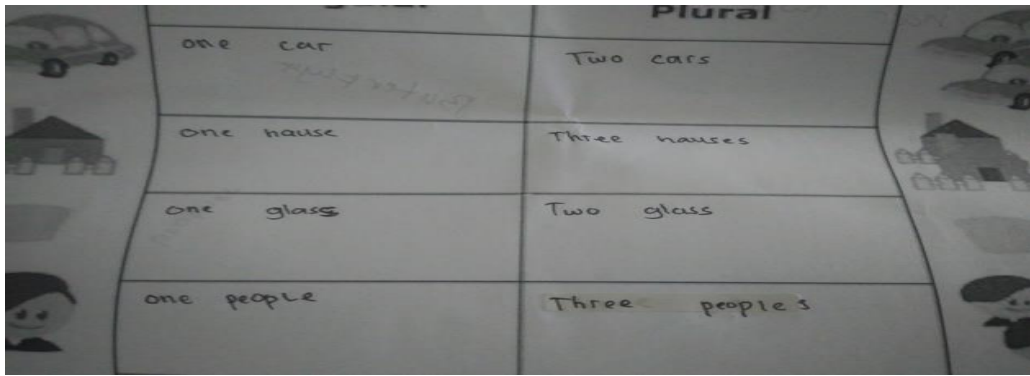
In Figure 2. is the result of conventional student writing skills.

Students only make a simple sentence as much as they can, while in a Figure 1 student are able to answer question in detail. The learners taught by mnemonic reached the minimum standard mastery. Based on the classical standard mastery test, the experimental group proportion had reached the minimum standard mastery. Besides that, the researchers also conducted the average difference test of both groups' simple sentence skills.

Based on the experimental group's average result about the English simple sentence writing skills, the experimental group was better than the control group. It was caused by the influence of music media during the learning. It made the learners could easily understand the materials. The joyful learning model surely facilitated learners to remember something.

Learning by using mnemonic method is also supported by Bahranmi (2019). He found that learners taught by music mnemonic method had significant improvement, proven by the post-test, then those taught conventionally. Maghy (2015) studied the mnemonic method effectiveness in school teaching-learning process. This research showed learners taught by mnemonic method could reach better results than those taught by conventional writing method. It is also strengthened by Burhayani (2013). He showed that the mnemonic method could facilitate learners so they could improve their vocabulary. When learners had low vocabulary skills and they had excellent vocabulary, they would be able to write simple sentences. The teacher would only need to guarantee the learning activities to be joyful and comfortable, to trigger curiosity, and to be relevant with the learners' necessities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that writing simple sentence for the fifth graders of Integrated Islamic Primary School Bunayya could be improved by mnemonic method. It could be accepted since the learners' writing skills in the simple sentences gained improvement. It was also known from the initial data that the pre-average score of the learners was 69, lower than the minimum standard mastery score, 70. However, after being intervened by mnemonic method, the average score was 80 or higher than the minimum standard mastery score.

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