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Implementing the Learning to Read: Reading to Learn Strategy for Enhancing Proficiency in Writing English Texts.

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to improve students' writing skills by using the Learning to read: Reading to learn strategy. This classroom action research took class XII MIA MAN 2 Tanah Datar students as objects using 2 cycles with planning, observation, reflection and revision steps. The findings of this research show that by implementing the Learning to read: Reading to learn strategy, it is able to increase students' enthusiasm and activeness in the teaching and learning process and also improve their writing skills. This can be seen from the results of observations and their writing scores which increased from pre-cycle, cycle 1 and cycle 2. The average score of student learning outcomes in the pre-cycle was 47% completeness, while in cycle 1 the result was 79.4% completeness and in cycle 2 their completion increased to 85.2%. The results of this research are effective in improving students' writing skills, and can increase students' enthusiasm and activeness in the teaching and learning process. Apart from that, the results of this research also show that the use of this method can make a positive contribution to improving the quality of learning. With an increase in the average value of student learning outcomes, this indicates that this method has the potential to be applied in other learning contexts to improve the quality of education.

ABSTRAK

Peneltian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa dengan menggunakan strategi Learning to read: Reading to learn. Penelitian Tindakan Kelas ini mengambil objek siswa kelas XII MIA MAN 2 Tanah Datar dengan menggunakan 2 siklus dengan Langkah-langkah perencanaan, pengamatan, refleksi dan revisi. Hasil temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dengan menerapkan strategi Learning to read: Reading to learn ini mampu meningkatkan antusiasme dan keaktifan siswa dalam proses belajar mengajar dan juga meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari hasil pengamatan dan nilai menulis mereka yang meningkat dari pra siklus, siklus 1 dan siklus 2. Nilai rata-rata hasil belajar siswa pada pra siklus adalah 47% ketuntasan, sedangkan pada siklus 1 hasilnya adalah 79,4% ketuntasan dan pada siklus 2 ketuntasan mereka meningkat menjadi 85,2%. Hasil penelitian ini efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa, serta dapat meningkatkan antusiasme dan keaktifan siswa dalam proses belajar mengajar. Selain itu, hasil penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan metode ini dapat memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran. Dengan adanya peningkatan nilai rata-rata hasil belajar siswa, hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa metode ini memiliki potensi untuk diterapkan dalam konteks pembelajaran lainnya guna meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran.

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A. Background of study

Mastering writing is a crucial component in English education, holding equal importance to three other essential language skills: listening, speaking, and reading. Whether it's for individuals using their native language or for speakers of foreign languages, writing plays a pivotal role (Harmer, 2004). Despite its significance, writing is often considered a challenging skill and tends to be overlooked by educators. A further complication arises in the classroom setting, where the interconnection between reading and writing is frequently dismissed, despite the inherent link between these two skills. Nevertheless, Harmer (2007) contends that reading texts can serve as excellent models for writing activity. The apparent negligence towards writing skills may be rooted in the difficulties students face when composing texts. Reading and writing are distinct tasks that go beyond physical activities, involving the recognition and application of meanings (Rose et al., 2003). These tasks are intricate, requiring the identification and utilization of language patterns. Students encounter challenges in organizing ideas coherently, translating them into phrases, and structuring sentences into cohesive paragraphs.

Moreover, there is a lack of consensus among educators on the most effective strategy for imparting reading and writing skills. The complexity of these tasks demands a comprehensive approach that addresses the unique challenges posed by each, ensuring that students develop a solid foundation in both skills.

Recently, the majority of research pertaining to the Application of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn has primarily centered on three aspects that exhibit limited relevance to endeavors aimed at enhancing students' proficiency in composing English texts. Firstly, investigations delving into the Application of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn predominantly expound on theoretical contexts associated with specific theories. Secondly, research within this domain tends to delve more extensively into the role of Reading to Learn in supporting general active learning. Thirdly, studies addressing the Application of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn frequently gravitate towards text analysis, often neglecting its potential correlation with the capability to craft job application letters in English. Consequently, there remains a lacuna in research concerning the intersection of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn and the enhancement of English text writing abilities, particularly in the context of job application letters, necessitating further exploration.

This study aimed to analyze the application of Learning to read: Reading to learn Strategy in an effort to improve the ability to write English texts. This research was carried out at one of the madrasah aliyah which was chosen because it has a representative learning environment and students who have the need to develop writing skills in English subject. To achieve the objectives of this research, the main focus of the study was focused on answering questions regarding the process of improving students' ability to write job application letters through the Reading to Learn strategy. This is important to make a real contribution to developing students' English language skills and preparing them to enter an increasingly competitive world of work.

Related to the facts above, it can be deduced that the mastery of writing skills constitutes a pivotal element in the process of learning English for students. Regrettably, this particular skill is frequently perceived as challenging and tends to be marginalized in educational practices. Students commonly encounter difficulties in structuring their thoughts cohesively into written form, progressing from individual phrases to coherent paragraphs. Moreover, educators have yet to identify optimal strategies for imparting effective instruction in reading and writing skills. Current research on the Application of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn predominantly centers on overarching theories, the role of Reading to Learn in facilitating active learning, and text analysis. The nexus between this framework and the proficiency to compose job application letters in English remains an underexplored domain. Consequently, this study endeavors to scrutinize how the implementation of Reading to Learn can enhance English writing abilities, particularly within the context of job application letters, with the ultimate goal of providing tangible contributions to preparing students for the increasingly competitive situation of the professional world.

B. Review of Related Literature
1. Leaning to Read: Reading to Learn Strategy
The Reading to learn strategy is defined as a system of literacy teaching

strategies that allows students to quickly learn to read and write at a level appropriate to their age and level of study (Rose, 2005). This strategy was developed to support reading and writing skills throughout the curriculum (Rose, 2006). However, it must also be useful for teaching English as a foreign language context (TFEL) as applied in Indonesia.

Learning to read: reading to learn was developed by David Rose from Sidney University Australia based on the social scaffolding learning theory initiated by Lev Vygotsky. The theory tells that the proximal development zone concerns the area that lies between an individual's independent capabilities and the maximum potential attainable with assistance from a professional peer or instructor (Pinter, 2006). Scaffolding is a special type of assistance that helps students to move towards new skills or understanding concepts (Gibbons, 2002; Ediger, 2001; William, 2005), so that if teachers provide good and sufficient scaffolding in teaching, students are expected to be able to learn easily and able to achieve a higher level of understanding and conceptual knowledge about reading and writing activities or skills.

Scaffolding itslef has a cycle of *prepare*, *respond* and *elaborate* which is the basis of the Reading to learn strategy (Rose, 2008). The description is that learning takes place from the teacher preparing students for a task, to students carrying out learning tasks until the teacher explains what they have learned.
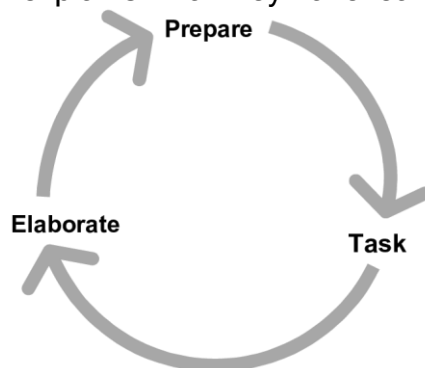

Figure 1. Scaffolding Cycle

2. Learning to read: reading to learn Cycle
a. Prepare before reading

Preparation before reading is a stage that directs students to the genre and field of text (Joyce et.al, 2008). This stage supports all students to follow the text with a general understanding as it is read to them (Rose, 2007;2008). At this stage the teacher builds a context that will provide opportunities for students to experience and explore the cultural and situational aspects of the social context of the target text. (Feez, 2002). This stage is carried out by providing the background knowledge students need to understand the text, briefly explaining what it is about and then summarizing what happened so that all students can understand (Acevedo & Rose, 2007).

This stage is important for helping students access background knowledge that can facilitate subsequent reading, providing specific information necessary for successful information, stimulating student interest, setting student expectations,

and modeling strategies that students can later use themselves (Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Waring, 1999). This allows all students to follow the text with a general understanding as it is read, without having to struggle to find out what is happening at each step, or struggle to decode the letter patterns of unknown words (Rose et.al, 2003; Rose, 2008). Before preparing students to learn using the Reading to Learn strategy, teachers must plan the teaching and learning program carefully and precisely. As stated by Waring (1999) detailed program planning provides teachers with a well-constructed guiding framework.

b. Detailed reading

The detailed reading stage is the stage where the text is read in detail by both the teacher and the students (Rose, 2008). Detailed reading guides students through the text as demonstrated by Grabe and Stoller (2001). At this stage, the teacher supports all students to read each sentence in one short passage. Students are prepared to read each sentence in a short passage, through three preparatory prompts: a summary of the meaning of the entire sentence in sensible terms, which is then read by the teacher; positional cues that tell learners where to look for words; and the meaning of words in general or terms that make sense (Rose: 2008). Rose identified that students must then reason from the meaning of the cue to the actual arrangement of words on the page and students are always encouraged to identify the order of words, which they then mark by highlighting or underlining when they have successfully identified the order of words. The meaning can be elaborated, by defining technical or literary words, explaining new concepts or metaphors and discussing students' relevant experiences. This Strategy for Detailed Reading allows all students in the class to read a passage with complete comprehension, and to understand how the author has structured it.

c. Prepare before writing

The preparation before writing is a stage that involves writing the words highlighted in the previous stage (Joyce et.al, 2008). This stage is a preparation for students to proceed to the joint rewriting stage (Joyce et. Al, 2008). Preparing before writing is important as stated by Murray (1982 see also Cooper, 1990) that inadequate time for prewriting can make students frustrated in writing activities. In preparing before writing students plan exactly what they will write, based closely on the passages they have studied in Detailed Reading (Rose, 2008). Once all students can read a passage with fluency and comprehension, they prepare to write a new text that is closely patterned on it.

d. Joint rewriting

The joint rewriting stage is the stage where the teacher supports the class to write new text that is patterned on the reading text (Rose, 2008). Notes that have been written on the blackboard in preparation before writing activities provide a framework for students to write new text together on the blackboard with teacher guidance (Rose and Acevedo, 2006). Acevedo and Rose state that with factual texts, the content of the reading text, in notes, is rewritten in wording that is closer to what students would write themselves, with the teacher providing whatever language resources they need, and guiding the construction. Even though the new

text column is the same as the original, the language pattern may be poorly written. It provides a powerful scaffold for all students to acquire sophisticated language resources from accomplished writers (Acevedo and Rose, 2007).

e. Individual Rewriting

Individual rewriting is the stage where students individually practice rewriting the same text that they have rewritten together (Acevedo and Rose, 2007). Students practice writing new texts using the same patterns as reading and rewriting texts together. Before students are expected to write independently, a further preparatory stage is provided, in which they individually practice rewriting the same text they have already written. (Joyce et al, 2008). For factual texts, this may involve removing the combined text from the board, but leaving notes, which students use for their own texts and more experienced students can practice independently, allowing teachers to provide more scaffolding support for weaker students (Rose and Acevedo, 2006).

f. Independent writing

The independent writing stage is a stage that students use to practice what they have learned from the previous stage of writing independent texts (Joyce et.al, 2008 and Rose and Acevedo, 2006). All these preparation stages enable all students to successfully write new texts, using what they have learned in the previous stages (Rose, 2008). These are the assignments that assess students, whether they are research assignments in society and the environment, reports in science or essays in English.

The stages above, note taking in detailed reading, preparation before reading, joint rewriting, independent rewriting and independent writing, support students to write a lot.
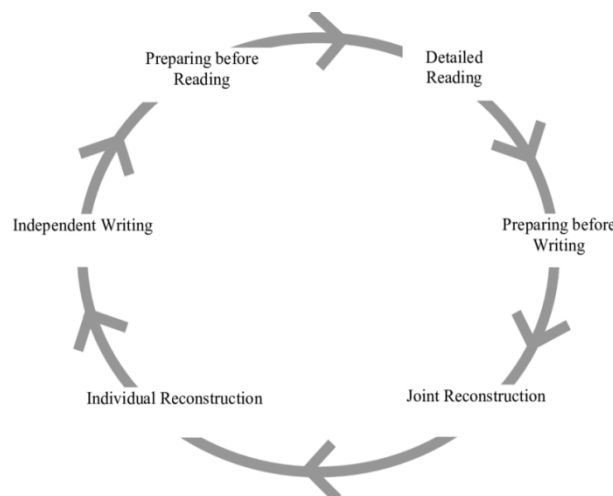

Figure 2. Cycle of Learning to read: Reading to learn

3. Reading and Writing Activities in Reading to Learn Strategy

Reading and writing are unique types of tasks, because they involve not only physical activity, but recognizing and using meaning (Rose et.al, 2003). Reading

and writing are highly complex tasks that involve the recognition and use of language patterns at three levels.

- At the text level, readers must recognize what a text is about and how it is organized, for example pieces of information in factual text.
- At the sentence level, we must recognize how words are arranged in phrases, and what each phrase means, such as who or what the sentence is about, what they do, where and when.
- At the word level, we must recognize the meaning of each word, and how the letters are arranged into patterns that spell the word. (Rose, 2008)

To read with fluency and comprehension, all of these patterns must be recognized and interpreted simultaneously. Likewise, to write successfully, we must have all these language patterns.

- At the text level, the writer must be able to select all the factual text elements, and arrange them into a coherent sequence.
- At the sentence level, we must choose words that suit the topic and arrange them in meaningful phrases.
- At the word level, we must have the right variety of words to choose from and know how to spell them. (Rose, 2008).

C. Research Methodology

This research was conducted under classroom action research method which is an examination of teaching and learning activities in the form of actions that are deliberate and occur in a class simultaneously (Arikunto et al, 2006). This research cycle was carried out based on recycling classroom action research (Arikunto, 2006). The research subjects were 34 students of class XII MIA 1 MAN 2 Tanah Datar. This classroom action research design consists of 2 cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, implementation, observation and reflection.

In the planning section, the teacher prepared components such as: setting a research schedule, creating learning tools, preparing examples of job application letter texts, designing assignment forms, prepared assessment plans. Then the teacher carried out research for the first and second meetings. Then the teacher carried out observations involving colleagues who was also English teacher. Observations were carried out to collect qualitative data that described student activity and enthusiasm, changes in teacher performance, student achievement results, quality of learning and changes in classroom atmosphere. The next stage was reflection. At this stage the teacher examined what had happened, what had been produced or what the problem was in the cycle being implemented.

The instruments used were tests and teacher observation sheets in the field. Tests were used to collect data in the form of student writing results. Questionnaires were used to determine students' perceptions of the teaching and learning process and observation sheets were used to collect data about activities in learning and implementation of the teaching and learning process.

Research data collection was carried out during the teaching and learning process using the instruments mentioned above. Data analysis was carried out in three stages, namely through data reduction, data exposure and data conclusion. The data was

analyzed using descriptive statistics to see the percentage and average value of individual students' learning mastery calculations. The criteria for student activity according to Dimyati and Mudjiono (2006) were grouped into 4 ranges, namely 1%-25%= very little, 26%-50%= a little, 51%-75%= a lot, and 76%-99%= a lot. The learning outcomes tested after one cycle was processed with simple statistics to determine the average value. Students were stated to be complete if they have reached the minimum completion criteria (KKM) limit that had been set, namely 81. Data comes from observations were analized by using descriptive analysis,

D. Result and Discussion

From the pre-cycle learning results that were obtained and after students being treated with the learning to read strategy applied in cycle 1 with two meetings and cycle 2 also with 2 meetings on the Job Application Text material, the results were obtained as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Student learning outcomes

Cycle	Students who reached score ≥ 81		Students who reached score < 81		Avarege Score	Clasical Completeness
	Jumlah	%	Jumlah	%		
Precycle	16	47	18	52,9	79	47%
Cycle 1	27	79,4	7	20,6	93	79,40%
Cycle 2	30	85,2	4	11,8	85	85,20%

Before starting cycle 1, the researcher gave students an initial test in the form of a reading and writing test regarding the job application text. The test results showed a classical completeness percentage of 44.11%. This shows that a small number of students already have basic knowledge in writing job application texts. This could be because students have already learned about writing at a previous level. However, students did not understand the correct elements that need to be written in a job application text.

In cycle 1 students were given an explanation of the basic competencies of a job application letter and the teacher provided motivation by explaining to students that if they could write well, they would get many benefits. Then students were divided into 6 groups and given an explanation of the function, structure, linguistic characteristics and criteria for writing job application texts.

After that, students were given an example of a job application text and the teacher read the entire contents of the text. Then the teacher helped students understand the text in detail starting from sentence by sentence, phrase by phrase to word by word (scaffolding). The teacher asked questions about the job application text, when the students answered the teacher appreciates them by giving praise to raise the students' enthusiasm for learning. After students understood the entire content of the text, the teacher then prepared students to rewrite the text by only providing the key words. One of the students was then asked to go in front of the blackboard to create a new sentence with the help of hismher friends.

Then the teacher asked students to work in their groups to rewrite the sample text of the job application letter in their own style. The teacher went around from one group to another to help if there were students who had problems rewriting the text. The text

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of the job application letter that had been rewritten by the students in their group was collected by the teacher. After that, the teacher and students concluded the lesson material and the teaching learning process closed by providing reflection to the students.

At the second meeting, students no longer worked in groups. The teacher returned the texts they had collected in the first meeting. This aimed to enable students to know the results of the work they have obtained. Then students were asked to write again the text of the job application letter that they wrote in groups, but now they had to write the text themselves. Students were given time to create sentences for 15 minutes, correct the spelling of words for 15 minutes and wrote the entire job application letter for 10 minutes.

After students had finished rewriting the sample job application letter provided by the teacher, then students were asked to write their own job application letter based on the examples of job vacancy advertisements provided by the teacher. The teacher asked students to first gather ideas for what they would write so that the application letter they wrote becomes more interesting to read. In this activity the teacher helped students how to write a job application letter according to the structure and language characteristics of a job application letter. After that, the teacher asked the students to check the draft of the students' writing and asks them to edit it to make it better. After editing, they collected the text of their respective job application letters to the teacher.

After all the activity steps were completed the teacher and students reflected on the day's learning. The results of the reflection showed that individual completeness had not been achieved, and there were still aspects of writing job application letter texts that need to be improved. In general, students did not understand the structure of the text of a job application letter and students were not very able to make the text of their job application letter interesting to read. Some students also experienced difficulties in writing job application letter texts with correct grammar, choosing good vocabulary and also lack originality in their writing. For the reasons above, it was necessary to do the following things: (1) Provide an example of a job application letter text that will be easier for students to understand; (2) Provide further explanation to students of the correct structure of the text of a job application letter; (3) Provide students with an understanding of the criteria for writing a job application letter to make it more interesting; (4) Motivate students to be more active in group activities and not be embarrassed to ask questions if they have difficulties in writing; (5) Guiding students classically, in groups and individually so that students could write the text of a job application letter as expected. In cycle 2, all reflection results were corrected and improved to get better results by improving the design of the learning process and implementing the learning process well and perfectly. From the implementation of cycle 2, the percentage of student learning outcomes appeared to have increased, which initially was only 47% in the pre-cycle, increasing in cycle 2 was 79.40% and in cycle 2 it was 85.20% of students achieving higher learning outcomes than KKM 81. And based on observations made by fellow teachers, it was clear that students' enthusiasm in the learning process was as follows:

Table 2. Recapitulation of student learning activities

No	Activities observed	Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 1	Meeting 2
		%	%	%	%
1	Students who were enthusiastic about various activities in teaching learning process	52,9	64,7	79,4	85,3

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2	Students who were active in group discussions	29,4	35,3	47	52,4
3	Students who were active in asking questions and expressing opinions	29,4	38,2	50	55,9
4	Students who were active in answering questions	23,5	41,2	44,1	52,3
5	Students who enjoyed teaching learning process	64,7	70,6	85,2	84,1

From the observation results table above, it can be seen that the percentage of student enthusiasm and activeness increases at each meeting. For example, the number of students who were enthusiastic about various PBM activities, which was initially only 52%, increased to 85.3%. This is caused by teachers who always appreciate students' responses and work so that students become more active. Likewise, the number of students who are active in group discussion activities has also increased. Because the encouragement given by their teachers and friends made them want to be involved in group activities from 29.4% to 52.4%. In terms of courage in expressing opinions and asking questions in the learning process, the figures have also increased. It has been proven that this learning activity is also able to increase students' self-confidence to express opinions and not be embarrassed to ask questions about what they do not understand, as shown by the increase in figures from 29.4% to 55.9%. The 23.5% of students who were active in answering questions at meeting 1 increased to 52.3% at the end of cycle 2. Likewise, the students who felt happy with the learning process, which was initially 64.7%, increased to 84.1%.

E. Conclusion

This study has important significance because it highlights the success of the "Reading to Learn: Learning to Read" program in improving students' ability to write job application letter texts. The observed improvement in student learning outcomes creates a strong basis for stating the effectiveness of the program. Furthermore, the existence of strong motivation for students to be more active in writing activities is a crucial factor in developing their communication skills. Data showing an increase in the number of students who achieved or exceeded the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM) to 85.2% provides a positive indication of the program's impact on learning outcomes. Even though there are a number of students who have not reached the KKM, the average learning outcome score of 85 indicates the overall quality of the program. The importance of these findings not only covers academic aspects, but also involves student participation in Problem Based Learning (PBM). Student engagement in activities such as discussions and questions and answers show that the program not only increases knowledge, but also develops collaborative and problem-solving skills, providing a solid foundation for further educational development.

The results of this research have very significant implications in the context of teaching writing job application letters using the Reading to Learn approach. Research shows that this method successfully improves students' writing skills, with significant improvements in their learning outcomes. This approach is also able to motivate students to be more active in writing. These findings indicate that as many as 85.2% of students succeeded in achieving or exceeding the minimum graduation standard (KKM) of 81, a proud achievement. Although there are a small number of students who still need additional help, this shows that the Reading to Learn approach provides significant benefits in improving students' writing skills. Apart from improvements in

learning outcomes, student involvement in learning, such as discussions and questions and answers, also reflects the positive impact of this approach in exploring students' potential and enthusiasm for learning. This research provides an important contribution in the development of more effective learning strategies to improve students' writing abilities.

This research has several weaknesses that need to be noted. First, the focus of the research was only carried out in one madrasah, so the generalization of the findings is limited to that context and may not be able to represent the variations that exist in other madrasas or different educational environments. In addition, the sample size involved in this research was relatively small, consisting of only 36 students. This can affect the validity and reliability of research results. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample scope by involving various madrasas and increasing the number of participants. In addition, considering additional factors such as students' socio-economic background or the use of additional materials in learning can also provide deeper insight into the impact of implementing the Reading to Learn strategy in improving English text writing skills.

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