

**USING PROCESS APPROACH IN TEACHING GUIDED ESSAY WRITING
FOR YEAR 6 PUPILS**

NOR AZUANEE BINTI MUKHTAR

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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NOR AZUANEE BINTI MUKHTAR

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All praises to Allah the Almighty
To my beloved husband, mum, dad, and my adorable children

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to investigate the use of the process approach to teach guided essay to primary pupils. This study is to explore the problems faced by the pupils in writing guided essay and to identify the effects of using process writing in teaching guided essay. This study implemented the classification scheme of Quasi-experimental design adapted from Cresswell (2008) which deals with a single group test for the post-test, treatments and pre-test. Two sets of questionnaires were designed for the pupils and the teachers to answer. At the same time interviews were also conducted. These instruments were used as tools to examine the influence of teaching and learning essay using the process approach on the pupils. Sixty pupils from year 6 and five teachers were selected to participate in this study. The pupils were asked to write guided essays and the essays were marked using the assessment marking scheme of the *UPSR* format. Initially, by referring to the pre-test conducted, the pupils were unable to write their guided essay due to their weakness in idea organization, word choice and sentence fluency. However, after 4 weeks of treatment lessons, results in their post-test showed the improvements in the guided essay writing. To conclude, using process approach in teaching guided essay to primary pupils is an effective method. Although it might take longer durations to evaluate its effectiveness, with the teachers and pupils co-operation it can be achieved.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pendekatan proses dalam pengajaran karangan berpandu kepada murid-murid sekolah rendah. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka masalah yang dihadapi oleh murid-murid dalam penulisan karangan berpandu dan juga untuk mengenal pasti kesan-kesan penggunaan pendekatan proses dalam pengajaran karangan berpandu. Kajian ini melaksanakan Skim Klasifikasi reka bentuk Kuasi-eksperimen yang diadaptasi daripada Cresswell (2008). Ia adalah ujian yang melibatkan kumpulan tunggal untuk pra ujian dan post ujian. Dua set soal selidik telah direka bagi murid-murid dan guru-guru untuk dijawab dan pada masa yang sama temuduga turut dijalankan. Instrumen reka bentuk ini telah digunakan sebagai alat untuk mengkaji pengaruh pengajaran dan pembelajaran menulis karangan berpandu menggunakan pendekatan proses terhadap murid-murid. Enam puluh murid-murid dari Tahun 6 dan lima orang guru telah dipilih untuk mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Murid-murid telah diminta untuk menulis karangan berpandu dan karangan tersebut telah ditanda berdasarkan skema penilaian format UPSR. Pada mulanya, dengan merujuk kepada pra- ujian yang dijalankan, murid-murid tidak dapat menulis karangan berpandu kerana kelemahan mereka dalam organisasi idea, pemilihan perkataan dan kefasihan ayat. Walau bagaimanapun, selepas 4 minggu kelas rawatan, keputusan pasca ujian mereka menunjukkan peningkatan dalam penulisan karangan. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan pendekatan proses dalam pengajaran karangan berpandu kepada murid-murid sekolah rendah adalah kaedah yang amat berkesan. Walaupun ia mungkin mengambil tempoh masa yang lama untuk menilai keberkesannya, dengan kerjasama guru-guru dan murid-murid ia boleh dicapai.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Writing is a skill which enables pupils to convey their thoughts and feelings. elenk (2007) stated that in classroom practice, the general objective in teaching writing in classroom is to develop the pupils' ability so that they will be able to express clearly their thoughts according to the materials given. In Malaysian primary school, writing has been introduced in a form of guided essay. Recently, teachers in schools are trying to shift to various methods in teaching the skills due to the realizations of its importance as well as the pupils' achievements' levels which do not show much developments in term of grades. At primary levels, out of the four language learning skills, writing skill has been selected to be used as a tested skill in the examination. This contributes to too much focus and attention given to the skills compared to the other skills.

We are aware that writing has been a major problem among teachers and pupils at all levels of schools, both in primary and secondary level. White and Arndt (1991) mentioned that the current trends adapted by teachers in teaching writing are focusing and at the same time trying to facilitate the pupils' developments as what has been shown and seen as 'good writing practices' rather than just instruct pupils to produce a good product of writing. Teachers in the later years did not see the

important role in observing the pupils' development skills at the production levels (Bejarano et.al. 1997).

This study investigated on three focuses of idea organization, word choice and sentence fluency in order to develop and create pupils with full understanding of the language used. Teachers started to realize that teaching and learning the writing skill need to be more meaningful and more effective in enhancing pupils' understanding. Now, there are attempts to adapt and implement the product approach in teaching writing so that pupils will able to understand and experience their participation rather than copying and following accurately the written works from teachers. Previously, teaching and learning the skill was focusing on accuracy due to the significant importance given to obtain grades by the pupils as well as to maintain certain school reputations and standards of the public exam.

1.1 Background of Study

Writing is one of the four major components in language learning. In Malaysian setting where English is regarded as the second language learnt in schools, the process of teaching and learning the skill has become even more crucial. To prove whether students or pupils are mastering the skill is by their ability to project their ideas, ability to organize their ideas and opinions and towards the higher end, they are able to summarized, synthesized and criticized using the language skills which they acquired.

Most pupils at primary levels are having problems in writing and composing. They find that it is difficult for them to produce their ideas and they are unable to think of something which is interesting to write. On the teachers' side, teaching pupils to write is a real challenge in school because of various constraints and one of them is the hardness to wake the pupils' mind settings because of our method in

teaching and learning the skills is still exam-focused which emphasized on the accuracy in producing the language especially in written form.

Teachers especially those who are teaching Year 6 pupils are more concerned on the product rather than focusing on developing the pupils' writing skills. But recently, teaching writing has begun to shift from focusing on the written products to an emphasis on the process of writing in producing essays. This is due to the failure in developing pupils writing ability even after their sixth year of primary studies. By this, teachers start to realize that the product approach which has been used for a long time does not working on shaping the pupils' writing fluency what more when it comes to accuracy.

According to Chitravellu (2006), process writing is students-centered and the teacher's role is to create an environment so that the pupils will want to write and learn about writing. Recently, there has been a paradigm shift in the field of primary school's pupil-writing. In order to make the pupils gain interest and start to develop as well as gather informations, generate ideas, discuss, interact and produce a piece of writing, the process approach has been recommended as early as when they reached Year 3 where teachers to suggest, encourage and facilitate pupils in producing the written products.

Most English teachers in school generally discovered that they encountered problems in getting and making their pupils to like writing. It is more difficult to get the pupils to create and construct sentences correctly due to their low proficiency in vocabulary and sentence constructions. These students also faced with difficulties in organizing their ideas which then enable them to write sentences with a good flow. Although the necessary skills mentioned have been thoroughly taught in the classroom, pupils have so far failed to meet the expectations. Their level of proficiency is clearly reflected in the final ends of the primary school level, the *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) and their regular monthly tests.

There has been a movement of awareness on teachers at primary school to change the methods of teaching writing especially on the guided essay since there has been no changes. In fact when we refer to the statistics given by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia, there has been a decreasing in the values of pupils who able to achieved A grade and also an increased in the number of pupils who failed (with E grade).

Teachers are now shifting from product approach to process approach in writing. However, they need really understand the process writing approach before start to implement the approach within the classroom so that teachers may find ways to help Year 6 pupils to improve their guided essays' writing skills. This Study focused on certain areas of guided essay writing. Idea organization, word choice and sentence fluency were the three areas of study. It looked into the teachers' role, pupils' learning styles and stages in the process writing approach

This study took place in a primary school in Kulai district. It involved 30 pupils from Year six. Five teachers who teach Year 6 and have at least 5 years experience in teaching were also involved. This school was chosen because of its unique location, which is a sub-urban school. Rather than having an urban school or rural school. This school is in between both which for some people tend to neglect the problems faced by the school within this area. Too much focus was given to rural schools which said to be very low in the level of English learning but the fact that the sub-urban schools are facing the same problem. This study was focusing on using process approach in writing guided essay by Year 6 pupils.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The status of English language in our educational system is as the second language learnt in schools at both levels of primary and secondary levels. This is why, teaching and learning English is not an easy process. According to Brown (2000), in order to master the English language, students need to be sufficiently

exposed to all of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Language teaching in our school context is currently focusing on the teaching and learning the four main skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the standard of English among Malaysian children is still not reaching the expectation despite of learning English for several years. Malaysian students are still weak in English, especially in their writing skills. They are still poor in many language aspects when producing written works.

Writing has always been a difficult skill for the local pupils to master because the English language itself is a second language practiced in the local setting. As stated by Voon Foo (2007), the ability to write is important because teachers need to see whether the pupils understand the basic concept and ideas in learning before they develop to the next stage. Even though the language has played a very dominant role especially when the Malaysian Ministry of Education has claimed the English subject as a compulsory subject and used to be the medium of instruction in teaching science and mathematics in schools, still, mastering the language, especially the writing skill has become a big problem to the pupils (Ambigapathy, 2001). It is realized that writing is an important tool in language learning because teachers will be able to measure the pupils' levels of understanding using this productive skill.

Johnson (1996) and James (1998) raised that the product approach which known as a method of asking the pupils to write essays and ask them to hand in the final product to be corrected by the teachers seems not to be effective anymore. It does not provide the pupils with opportunities to learn from their mistakes through the learning process. Furthermore, the main problem of pupils in primary school is that, they are lack of fluency due to their poor ability in vocabulary. This then will lead to the problems in essays' arrangements and flow of the whole essays.

Teachers as direct-related people in teaching must be able to evaluate pupils in schools development and progresses in their essays' writing skills. This 'teacher-centered approach' has limited the pupils' interactions among the peers and too much

teacher's interferences will restrict pupils' production of writing. Teachers are unable to spend enough time for the teaching of other skills since writing has been a problem among pupils for such a long time. Pupils will only expect assessments from their teachers and from the teachers' side; they are expecting pupils to correct their works.

Process writing approach helps pupils to go through the four stages before they come out with the final products. The stages of planning, editing, revising and re-write will enable pupils to understand more what they are producing. These stages will enable the pupils to have a better experience on the topic assigned and at the same time will gain their experiences based on their background knowledge which they already possessed. By having a mutual relationship between teachers and pupils as well as among the pupils, this will result a better quality writings rather than just copy and paste the inputs given by the teachers.

1.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The key of this study was focused on using process writing approach in writing guided essays by Year 6 pupils. As shown in Figure 1.1, the main frame of this study was focused on the three main effects of the Year 6's process writing approach, which were; the idea organizations, the word choice and on the sentence structure. These three areas were based on the marking scheme provided in the *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) used by the primary teacher to assess pupils' essays.

The stages, which involved in applying the process writing were on 3 stages; planning the ideas, drafting and lastly, pupils were to produce their ideas in the form of writing. This study also looked into other elements and views such as pupils' learning styles which were based on the pupils' levels of proficiency. There were two levels of pupils involved in the study. They are the pupils with 'high to moderate'

level of language proficiency and the second level was the pupils with ‘ moderate to low’ language proficiency.

Teachers also play significant roles in teaching writing using the process approach. The roles played by the teachers in product approach are different from the process approach. Teachers are not merely work as a component in teaching and learning as people who are just providing the sources to be used in the classroom. In the process approach, teachers are playing the role of facilitators and also motivators to the pupils.

Teachers and pupils’ perceptions were also the focus of this study. As people who directly involved in the teaching and learning process, it is important to learn their perceptions on level of acceptance as well as how these affected people perceived the teaching and learning using the process approach. We also learnt the impact on the process writing approach in helping the writing proficiency among the pupils and the level of acceptance among teachers and pupils.

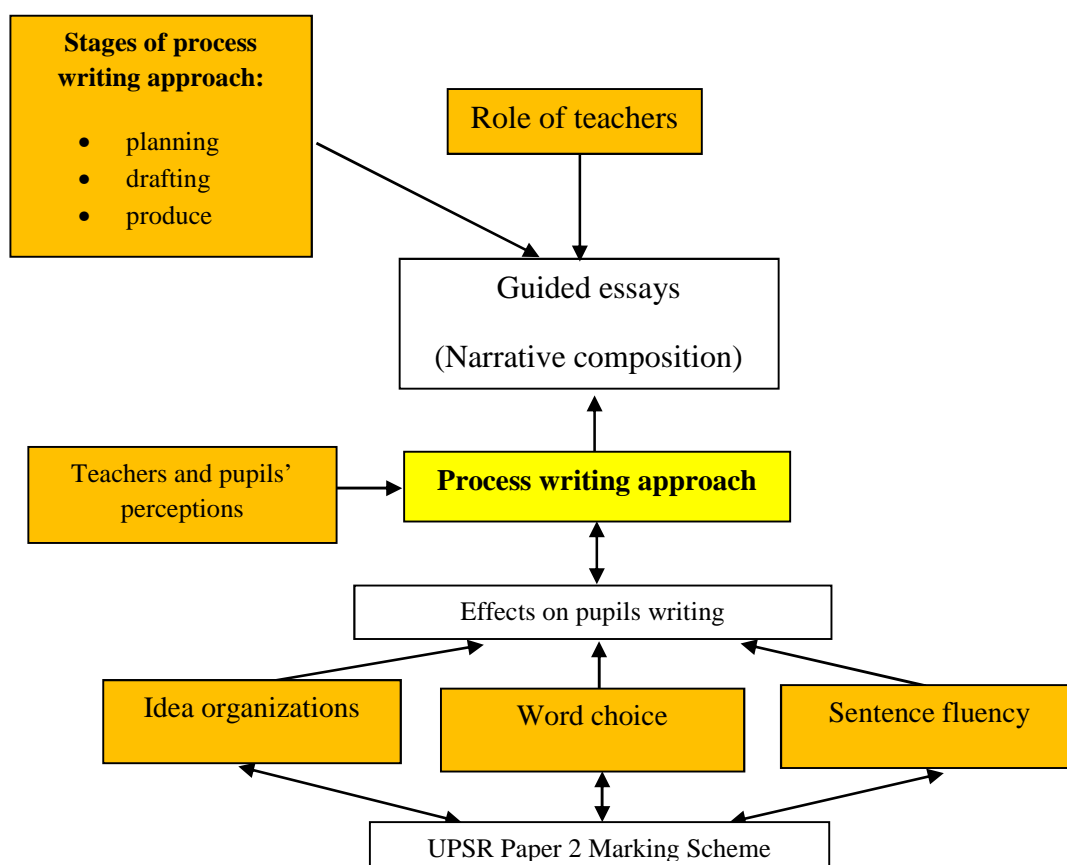


Figure1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

1.4 Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the problems faced by Year 6 pupils when writing guided essay.
2. To identify the effects of teaching guided essay writing using process writing approach
3. To study teachers' and pupils' perceptions towards teaching guided essay using process writing approach.

1.5 Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the problems faced by Year 6 pupils when writing guided essay?
2. What are the effects on Year 6 pupils' guided essay in using process writing approach?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers and pupils towards using process writing approach in writing guided essay?

1.6 Scope of Study

This study focused on using the process approach in teaching guided essay writing on Year 6 pupils from a primary school in Kangkar Pulai. This school was selected because the variations of its pupils in term of their levels of language proficiency. The location of this school, which was in the sub-urban area of Johor Bahru City contributed to this variation of its pupils. Looking at the socio-background of the pupils, majority of them are from middle-low income family with low educational backgrounds. The awareness on certain aspect of education is not being put into focus of the family.

Thirty Year 6 pupils were chosen to participate in this study with five teachers. These Year 6 pupils from two classes were chosen due to several justifications in term of their level of maturity of the primary level pupils in their skill of writing. These 30 pupils (15 from each class) have the same level of language proficiency of moderate to low. The teachers involved were also those who are teaching Year 6 classes. They were the people who really understand the various approaches in teaching and learning and the levels of effectiveness of the approaches.

This study looked into these 30 Pupils' and the 5 teachers' perceptions of the application of process approach used in teaching the guided essay writing in teaching and learning the writing skills. Either this approach benefitted these effected pupils or this approach was just an experimental approach just like other approaches in language teaching. The teachers' roles also played a significant part in this approach. In the product approach, teachers were the one who will provide all the inputs and pupils will simply copy exactly as taught by teachers.

As mentioned; the focus of this study was on three aspects of Year 6's essay writing. They were idea organizations, word choice and sentence fluency. This study was also to learn about the stages in process writing approach and its relation to these three areas. Through various sources, there are many stages involved in the process writing approach. But for this study, only planning, drafting and producing, the three stages of process writing approach were looked into.

Data gathered from this study were analysed accordingly using qualitative and quantitative methods. Other than using pre-test and post-test as a mode of gathering the data, teachers and pupils were also given a set of questionnaire and interviews was used as tools to seek their perceptions on using the process approach in writing exercises.

The duration of this study was within 6 weeks for the pre-test and post-test. While another 2 weeks were allocated for conducting the questionnaires and interviews. So, the total duration of this study was 8 weeks.

1.7 Limitations of Study

Although this research was carefully prepared, there were a few limitations. The study was not reflects the overall Year 6 pupils' levels of language proficiency as well as their skills in writing because it involved only 30 pupils. This study did not have any intention to generalize the approach used to teach Year 6 pupils used by the teachers. The intention was just to look into the contexts of study, whether the targeted approach was suitable in the targeted aspects.

The Year 6 pupils of the two classes have various levels of language proficiency. Only 30 pupils were selected to be part of this study with the ability between moderate to low proficiency level of English. These 30 pupils were chosen based on their proficiency test or *Ujian Pengesanan* which was held in March at the school level. The pupils did not reflect the real ability in language proficiency of the whole populations of this school.

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the process writing approach on the guided essay writing skills of the selected Year 6 pupils. The focus areas of the guided essay writing were on three areas; idea organizations, word choice and also on sentence fluency. Other areas such as grammar and other skills of

language learning (listening, speaking and reading) were not being discussed in this study.

1.8 Definition of the Terms

In this study, there were a few terms related to the focused area. They were as follows:

1.8.1 Guided essay

It is a writing in which is often written by an author. In this scope of study it is a written product of Year 6 pupils. It is written according to the words given as guides as well as pictures to be referred by the pupils.

1.8.2 *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR)*

It is a national examination taken by all pupils of Malaysian school at the end of their sixth year in primary school. This examination is a must to all Year 6 pupils and it is prepared and examined by an agency that constitutes the Ministry of Education which is the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate. Pupils are required to take five subjects with an additional test of an aptitude test.

1.8.3 *Ujian Pengesanan*

This is a test designed for Year 6 pupils of the selected school for this study. It is meant to test the pupils' levels of proficiency in the five subjects of *Bahasa Malaysia Penulisan, Bahasa Melayu Pemahaman*, Science, English and Mathematics.

1.8.4 Process Approach

It is an approach to teach writing which emphasis on the creativity of the writer. This process also stresses on the development and progress of writing and not just on the end product. According to Tribble (1996), under this process, there are multiple elements of developments and progresses to be applied such as brainstorming, organizing ideas, planning, drafting, redrafting, revising and editing.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

Teachers are now starting to adapt the process writing approach in school. There has been an awareness and realization that writing is a skill which need be sharpened and enhanced in a longer time. In order to be assured pupils understand, there is a need to inculcate or adapt the background knowledge as well as the pupils' experiences in teaching this skill.

Now we are trying to adapt the process writing approach. This might take a longer duration to teach the pupils but teachers perceived this approach as a better and more teachable in a long term of teaching and learning. Pupils will understand better and at the same time know and understand what they are writing. Unlike before, they were merely copied and pasted the format as told by the teachers. This is the time to shift to a better approach since we are now in the transformation period from exam based to skill based learning.

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