

WRITING FROM A MODEL:
A CASE-STUDY OF FOUR LOW PROFICIENCY
ESL LEARNERS

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**My Loving and Faithful God,
for giving me wings to soar above the boundaries.**

DEDICATION

To the most important people in my life:

my parents, Cheok Swee Beng and Cheang Siew Lan,

my husband, Jeff,

my children, Laura, Benjamin, Brandon,

my sister and my best friend,

Amy.

ABSTRACT

This classroom-based study sought to investigate whether the use of model passages as support for writing could help improve the writing performance of low proficiency ESL students. The investigation was limited to the teaching of one type of writing – expository writing – through a “reading → analyzing → writing” approach.

The approach was developed as a classroom treatment through the following stages: reading of a model passage, analyzing of its syntactic and rhetorical forms and rewriting of the passage on a related topic using the parallel writing technique. Prior to this treatment, the subjects worked on the Initial Writing task. After three weeks of treatment, the subjects worked on their Final Writing Task. These pre- and post-treatment writing samples were then graded and analyzed to study the effectiveness of the models as an aid to the writing process.

The subjects involved in this study were student teachers undergoing a 3-year diploma teacher education course at Institut Bahasa Melayu Malaysia (IBMM), currently in their 3rd semester of their course of study. Of those who scored less than 50% in their English Language paper taken during the end-of-semester examination, four were randomly selected to participate in this study.

The results indicated that learners using the “reading → analyzing → writing” approach based on model passages improved in their writing performance, particularly in the areas of organization, language use and content development, and that the approach did help meet the learners’ various writing needs.

Findings from this study show that models provide powerful input and contribute significantly to students' own participation in the writing process. The most obvious pedagogical implication of this study is that the use of models and the analysis of them can aid students in developing their writing processes. Thus, writing instructors who are interested in teaching writing, which is formally correct and appropriate, ought to use models in teaching prose forms.

ABSTRAK

Kajian berdasarkan bilik darjah ini bertujuan untuk memeriksa sama ada penggunaan teks model sebagai penyokong penulisan dapat membantu meningkatkan pencapaian dalam penulisan bagi pelajar yang rendah penguasaan ESL. Kajian ini terhadap kepada satu jenis penulisan, iaitu, penulisan ekpositori, melalui proses "membaca → menganalisis → menulis".

Pendekatan bilik darjah ini melalui peringkat-peringkat berikut: membaca teks model, menganalisis bentuk sintaksis dan retorik teks tersebut dan menulis semula teks berdasarkan tajuk yang berkaitan, dengan menggunakan teknik penulisan persamaan. Sebelum didedahkan kepada pendekatan ini, subjek kajian ini diberikan tugas awal, iaitu, menghasilkan satu sampel penulisan awal. Selepas didedahkan kepada pendekatan selama tiga minggu, subjek kajian diberikan satu lagi tugas, iaitu, menghasilkan satu sampel penulisan muktahir. Penulisan pemulihan pra dan pos ini kemudian dinilai dan dianalisis untuk mengkaji keberkesanan model-model sebagai alat membantu dalam proses penulisan.

Subjek yang terlibat dalam kajian ini adalah guru-pelatih yang sedang mengikuti latihan keguruan diploma selama tiga tahun di Institut Bahasa Melayu Malaysia (IBMM), yang kini berada di semester tiga. Empat pelatih yang mencapai rendah daripada 50% dalam Kertas Bahasa Inggeris semasa peperiksaan hujung semester telah dipilih secara rawak untuk tujuan kajian ini.

Hasil dapatan menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan pendekatan "membaca → menganalisa → menulis" berdasarkan teks model, telah membantu meningkatkan

pencapaian dalam penulisan, terutama sekali dalam aspek organisasi, penggunaan bahasa dan perkembangan isi. Pendekatan ini juga dapat membantu memenuhi pelbagai keperluan pelajar dalam bidang penulisan.

Hasil dapatan kajian ini membuktikan bahawa penggunaan teks model memberi input yang berkesan terhadap penglibatan pelajar dalam proses penulisan. Implikasi pedagogi yang ketara dalam kajian ini adalah penggunaan teks model dapat membantu pelajar-pelajar dalam penulisan mereka. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan bahawa guru boleh menggunakan model untuk mengajar penulisan yang berkesan.

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