

## STIMULATING STUDENTS' AUTONOMY IN WRITING THROUGH WEEKLY REPORTS

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The objectives of this research are to find out whether the use of weekly reports could stimulate students' autonomy in writing or not, and to find out whether or not the use of weekly reports can improve students' ability in writing. This research used pre-experimental method. The population of this research was the third semester English students of Cokroaminoto Palopo University in 2016/2017 academic year. The population consisted of 230 students in six classes. Each class consists of around 30 students. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling technique. So, the sample of this research was 30 students. The data of students' autonomy was obtained by questionnaire and writing test used to see the students' writing ability. The data was analyzed by applying inferential statistics with t-test. The result of data analysis showed the mean score of the result of questionnaire was 75.7 which classified as good. The mean score of pretest was 56.47 classified as fair while the mean score in posttest was 77.53 classified as good. The t-test value was 13.44 while the t-table was 2.045 at level significance 0.05 with degree of freedom was 29. It means that the t-test was greater than t-table that was  $13.44 > 2.045$ . Therefore the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. It could be concluded that the use of weekly reports could stimulate students' autonomy in writing and also improve students' writing ability.

Key Word: Weekly Reports, Students' Autonomy and Writing

### 1. Introduction

In learning English, there are four skills need to be mastered. Those are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four skills mentioned are divided into receptive and productive skills. Reading and listening are receptive skills, while Speaking and writing are productive skills.

Writing as a productive skill means the ability to express idea, feeling, opinion, imagination, and knowledge into written form more freely. Although it seems to be more freely, in fact, writing process is still considered as one language skill that is most difficult to perform. Many complicated requirements should be included to produce good writing result.

Even though writing is difficult, like the other skills it is also can be learned. By applying good teaching technique, teacher can help students to be good writer. Nevertheless, applying a good technique in teaching writing does not always show success. Some students are just motivated to study under the teacher guidance. It becomes a problem because frequently writing is relegated to the status of homework (Harmer, 1991: 24).

Helping students to make good writing needs time. Even though English has become one subject which is taught as a compulsory subject in schools, the time for teacher and students to spend in the classroom is limited. Considering this fact, it is important to stimulate the students to study autonomously. So that, they can be more independent and active in their own learning.

Condition of the students that is described above shows that autonomous learning is becoming more important nowadays. Holec (1981: 3) states that autonomy can be described as the ability of learners to take charge of their learning. From the opinion above, learners should have skill and be able to stand on their own feet. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the learners do not need the role of the teacher. However, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is still needed, but the learners should minimize their dependence on their teacher.

The teachers as facilitators and motivators have to find out the way to make their students be autonomous. "Teachers can help students to take responsibility for their learning by providing opportunities and strategies for learning independently and by encouraging them initiate and actively participate in their own learning" (Kesten, 1987). It can be stated that in stimulating students' autonomy, the teacher still has role.

There are several activities and techniques that can be used as a media to stimulate students' autonomy. The first activity is self-report which is suggested by Wenden (1998: 79-95). Self-report is a way to get information on how students approach a learning task and help them aware of their own strategies.

The second activity is tuning in which is suggested by Scharle and Szabo (2000). This activity has main goals in focused listening and identifying difficulties. It used for intermediate level. Its language focus is stress, intonation, and pronunciation. Usually what the teachers will prepare is tape recorder speech or dialogue from text book. This activity helps students distinguish their problem with listening. Also setting a double task may help some students to focus their attention better.

The third activity is writing diaries which suggested by Thanasoulas (2006). Alongside diaries students can also benefit from putting pen to paper and writing on their expectations of a course at the beginning of the term, then reporting on the outcomes of a course at the end of the term. So, it seems that these activities are bound to help learners put things into perspective and manage their learning effectively.

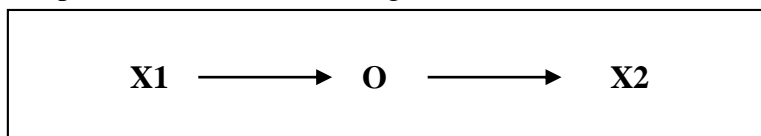
Then another activity is weekly-report which suggested by Husain (2003). Husain (2003: 102) states weekly report as record of work which can encourage learners to

report whether they study in self-access learning center, in laboratory, or in computer using internet, and how many times they have studied there. Weekly report was used as media for taking data of the effectiveness interdependent approach in learners' way to learn autonomously.

The researcher chooses the fourth activity because by using weekly report, students are given an opportunity to reflect on their new knowledge, ask questions about unclear ideas, and explore the value of question asking itself. In addition, "weekly report can be a way to encourage learner reflecting on their own knowledge, to organize their ideas in preparation for instruction, and to prepare for exams and review sessions" (Etkina, 1999). It can be stated that by using weekly report, the students can be aware of what they have found in the class, conveying their ideas toward the particular subject, telling about difficulties and problems that they face in studying.

## **2. Research Method**

The researcher employed pre-experimental method. It investigated the use of weekly report in stimulating students' autonomy in writing. The design was pretest – experimental – posttest as in the following:



*Figure.1 The design of pre-experimental research*

Where: X1 = pretest

O = treatment

X2 = posttest

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this research was the third semester English students of Cokroaminoto Palopo University in 2016/2017 academic year. The population consisted of 230 students in six classes. Each class consists of around 30 students. In determining the sample, researcher applied purposive sampling technique. The total number of sample was 30 students. Based on the reason that the students in this academic year has been studying several types of English text, they were assumed to have knowledge about hortatory exposition and were able to compose hortatory exposition.

### **Instrument of The Research**

There are two kinds of primary instrument which are used in this research, namely writing test and Questioner. Writing test is used for pretest and posttest. The pretest was used to see the students' former writing ability. Then, the treatment was given by using weekly reports. After that, posttest administered to see the effect of the treatment. Questionnaire was used to know the students' autonomy, especially in writing. Questionnaire consists of five categories students' responses; always, often, sometimes, rarely, never.

### **Procedure of Collecting Data**

#### 1. Pretest

The researcher assigned the students to write three paragraphs hortatory exposition entitled "Can Indonesian Idol Guarantee One to be Talented Singer?".

#### 2. Treatment

The researcher explained about components of writing to the students. In this meeting, the researcher also explained to the students about weekly reports. The second meeting, the researcher explained about the punctuation, in terms the use of punctuation and capitalization to the students. The third meeting and the fourth meeting, the researcher conducted sharing session. In these sessions, the researcher discussed about the typical questions that were asked by the students and also the problems that students wrote in their weekly reports. The researcher stimulated the students to find solutions in solving their problems.

#### 3. Posttest

The researcher assigned the students to write hortatory exposition, entitled "Should Facebook be Banned in Indonesia?". They wrote at least three paragraphs in 90 minutes.

#### 4. Questionnaire

The researcher used questionnaire for autonomous students to find out about students' autonomous learning skill after treatment, for knowing whether there is effect of writing weekly report toward their autonomous learning skills. This questionnaire consists of twenty statements and divided into seven parts. Responses to the statements are organized into response point on the scale: 5; Always 4; Often 3; Sometimes 2; Rarely 1; Never.

### **Technique of Data Analysis**

The data from pretest and posttest were analyzed in inferential statistics using t-test. The steps that were be taken as follow:

1. Scoring the students' writing composition in pretest and posttest by analyzing the English writing elements as stated below
  - a. Content.

Score	classification	Criteria
9-10	Very good	Knowledgeable, substantive, etc
7-8	Good	If the composition contains few errors of the central purpose, unity, coherence, and continuity.
5-6	Average	If the composition contains some errors of the central purpose, unity, coherence, and continuity.
3-4	Poor	If the composition dominated by errors of the central purpose, unity, coherence, and continuity.
1-2	Very poor	If the central purpose, unity, coherence, and continuity of composition are all incorrect

- b. Organization.

Score	classification	Criteria
9-10	Very good	If the words, sentences, and paragraphs line up easily from a clear pattern.
7-8	Good	If the composition contains few errors of words, sentences, and paragraphs line up easily from a clear pattern.
5-6	Average	If the composition contains some errors of words, sentences, and paragraphs line up easily from a clear pattern.
3-4	Poor	If the composition dominated by errors of words, sentences, and paragraphs line up easily from a clear pattern.
1-2	Very poor	If the words, sentences, and paragraphs pattern of all composition are all incorrect.

- c. Vocabulary.

Score	classification	Criteria
9-10	Very good	If the composition contains wide range of vocabulary using effective words.
7-8	Good	If the composition contains occasional errors of vocabulary but the meaning not obscured
5-6	Average	If the composition contains frequent errors of vocabulary but meaning not obscured

3-4	Poor	If the composition dominated by errors of vocabulary and the meaning confused
1-2	Very poor	If the vocabulary of composition are all incorrect

d. Language use.

Score	classification	Criteria
9-10	Very good	If the grammars of the composition are all correct.
7-8	Good	If the composition contains few errors of grammar
5-6	Average	If the composition contains some errors of grammar
3-4	Poor	If the composition dominated by errors of grammar
1-2	Very poor	If the grammar of the composition are all incorrect

e. Mechanic

Score	classification	Criteria
9-10	Very good	If the punctuation, capitalization of the composition are all correct
7-8	Good	If the composition contains few errors of the punctuation and capitalization.
5-6	Average	If the composition contains some errors of the punctuation and capitalization.
3-4	Poor	If the composition dominated by errors of the punctuation and capitalization.
1-2	Very poor	If the punctuation and capitalization of the composition are all incorrect

- To analyze the data from the questionnaires of autonomous students, the researcher applied this step: Data from questionnaires whose response are categorized into 5 scales always for the highest frequently item, the scale categories are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

The scoring system is completely given below

Scale category	Frequently
Always	5
Often	4
Sometimes	3
Rarely	2
Never	1

### 3. Findings and Discussion

There are two findings that present by the researcher. First is The Students' response toward the statement in questionnaire and The use of weekly reports. The data analysis shows that the use of weekly reports could stimulate students' autonomy in writing. It was proved by the mean score of students' questionnaire about autonomous students, which can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The mean score of students' questionnaire about autonomous students

Mean Score	Classification
75.7	Good

Based on the table above, the mean score of students' questionnaire about autonomous students was 75.7, which is classified good. It can be concluded that the students are at good level of student autonomy.

After calculating students' mean score, the score that students got from questionnaire about autonomous students can be classified into some criteria and percentage as follows:

Table.2 The rate of frequency and percentage of the students' autonomy

No.	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very good	91-100	-	-
2	Good	76-90	16	53,33
3	Fair	61-75	14	46,67
4	Poor	51-60	-	-
5	Very poor	<50	-	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data of table. 2 above shows that there were 16 (53.33%) students were at good level, and 14 (46.67%) students were at fair level. It can be concluded that most of the students were stimulated to be autonomous students.

The use of weekly reports could also improve the students' writing ability. It was proved by the result of the students' mean score and standard deviation of pretes and posttest, which is presented in the following table:

Table.3 The mean score and standard deviation of the students' writing ability in pretest and posttest

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pretest	56.47	1.94
Posttest	77.53	1.5

Based on the table above, the students' writing ability in pretest was 56.47 classified as fair and 1.94 for standard deviation, in posttest the mean score was 77.53 classified as good and 1.5 for standard deviation. It can be concluded that the mean score of students' writing ability in posttest was higher than pretest.

The distribution of frequency and percentage of students' writing ability in pretest and posttest can be seen in the following table.

Table.4 The distribution of frequency and percentage of students' writing ability in pretest and posttest.

No	Classification	Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
			F	%	F	%
1	Very good	86-100	1	3.33	5	16.67
2	Good	71-85	2	6.67	18	60
3	Fair	56-70	12	40	7	23.33
4	Poor	41-55	15	50	-	-
5	Very poor	≤ 40	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data of table 4 above shows the percentage and frequency of the students' writing scores in pretest and posttest. It can be seen in pretest scores that 1 or 3.33 percent student got very good score, 2 or 6.67 percent students got good scores, 12 or 40 percent students got fair scores, and 15 or 50 percent students got poor scores. It can be concluded that writing ability of second grade students of SMA Negeri 4 Makassar was at fair or average level.

While in posttest, based on the table of final score, 5 or 6.67 percent students got very good score, 18 or 60 percent students got good scores, and 7 or 23.33 percent students got fair score. It can be concluded that the writing ability of the students was at good level after giving treatment.

In order to know whether or not the pretest and posttest are statistically different at the level of significance 0.05 with degrees of freedom ( $df = n-1$ ), where  $n$  = number of students (30), the researcher applied t-test statistical analysis. The following table shows the result of the calculation.

Table. 5 The t-test of the students

Variable	t-test	t-table
X1-X2	13.44	2.045

Table above shows that t-test was higher than t-table. It could be concluded that there was significant difference between the result of pre-test and post-test.



The result of the statistical analysis at the level of significance 0.05 with degrees of freedom (df) = N-1, where  $30 - 1 = 29$ , indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean score of post- test (77.53) and the mean score of pre-test (56.47). In addition the t-test was greater than t-table that was  $13.44 > 2.045$ . Therefore the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (Hi) was accepted.

From the analysis above, the researcher concluded that there was a significant difference in teaching writing through weekly reports to stimulate students' autonomy in writing and to improve students' writing ability.

## **Discussion**

### 1. Students' questionnaire about autonomous students

To see the level of the students' autonomy, the researcher using questionnaire about autonomous students adapted from Naiman et al. (1987) in Husain (2003: 207-208). The questionnaire was given after applying treatment four times to the students. The result of students' questionnaire showed that the students were at good level of autonomy. This was proved by the mean score 75.7, classified as good. At this stage of autonomy, the students could reflect their own knowledge; they could be responsible with what they need to learn and how to overcome the problems that they faced in learning.

### 2. Students' achievement in writing

In this research, the students were given pretest to see the students' writing ability. The pretest took 90 minutes. At the pretest, the researcher asked the students to write at least three paragraphs hortatory exposition entitled "Can Indonesian Idol Guarantee One to be Talented Singer?". From students' essay, the researcher found the problems that most of the students faced. The explanation about the problems was described as follows:

#### *a. Content*

In terms of content, the students had problem in stating their ideas clearly. The example of this problem can be seen as follows:

Can Indonesian Idol Guarantee One to be Talented Singer

*Indonesian Idol is a competition to find talent in Indonesia and the judges will select the talented participants. and when graduated in the selection back every week. to obtain a very talented participants and become the champion.*

*but after a lot of famous people like. because it is reraly found after becoming champion. they will return with each activity before they become champions in Indonesian idol.*

The essay above was written by one of the student. Related to the content aspect of writing, the student did not state the ideas clearly. It can be seen from the thesis statement which was supposed to announce the issue concern, in this case about whether or not Indonesian Idol can guarantee one to be talented singer. Instead of stating her argument, the writer just explained about what Indonesian Idol is.

*b. Organization*

Can Indonesian Idol Guarantee One to be Talented Singer

*Indonesian Idol is one place search trace for people in Indonesian. but we have to go along selection can to become with together.*

*We compare with the other singer, such as; Rossa and Krisdayanti. Participants of indonesian Idol are not lose from three of Diva. We can see from how they sings a song. But participants of Indonesian Idol are not too famous, if we compared with three of Diva.*

*therefore it is not forever Indonesian Idol participants will be famous like all the other singers because he was famous at the time only finalist.*

In organizing ideas, the students did not put their ideas based on the order. Take the essay above as an example. The writer did not put their ideas orderly. The ideas jumped from one to another without good of flow. There was no connection between the thesis statement and the arguments. This problem made the readers get confused with ideas that the writer was going to say.

*c. Vocabulary*

In term of vocabulary, the students had problems in vocabulary, in which the students are lack in vocabulary. They made some mistakes in word choices or dictions. Some examples of the students' mistakes in word choices were

1. "race of sing" instead of "singing competition",
2. "self confident" instead of "self confidence".

Indeed, the use of vocabulary is one of the important prerequisites to have a good an effective writing. The lack of vocabulary makes someone sometimes fail in conveying their ideas because he faces difficulties on how to choose the most appropriate word which equivalent with Indonesian words. Ediger (2000) states (as cited in Etkina, 1999) that variety in selecting words to convey accurate meanings is

necessary in speaking and writing, the outgoes of the language arts. Corona et.al (1998) also concured (as cited in Etkina, 1999) that at any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident.

*d. Language use*

General problems encountered by the students in their writing were caused by the students' were lack in mastering English grammar. Some evidence of the students' mistakes as follows:

1. The misuse of possessive adjective such as "with all they ability in singing", instead of "with all their ability in singing"
2. the misuse of auxiliary such as "for that, they are follow", instead of "for that, they follow"
3. the use of modals such as "we must to join the contest", instead of "we must join the contest"

This means that the students could not express their idea by using language correctly and effectively. This fact is similar with Harmer's (1991) statement that people who learn language encounters a number of problems, especially with the grammar of the language which can be complicated and which can appear confusing (Rasyid, 2005: 18).

*e. Mechanic*

It has been stated by Nunan (1989) in Rasyid (2005: 84) that some of the successful writing prerequisites are mastering the mechanics of letter information, mastering and obeying convention of English spelling and punctuation, using the grammatical system to convey one's intended meaning. The students, however, from the result of pretest showed that the students still had problems in using mechanic items in their writing, such as spelling and punctuation, and also the capitalization.

1. The example of spelling of words such as "reraly" instead of "rarely", "cause" instead of "because".
2. The problems of punctuation such as "can be popular.and can be" instead of "can be popular and be".
3. The problems of capitalization were the use of capitalization for the first letter of the first word in sentence, such as "therefore not all participants" instead of "Therefore not all participants".

For overall findings, from questionnaire, it was found that the students were at good level of autonomy. This was proved by the mean score of students' result (it can be seen in table.1 and 2). For writing achievement, based on the posttest, it was found that there was improvement. It was showed by the mean score and t-test value (it can be seen in table.3 and 11). As explained before that the low achievement of students in writing was because they just were stimulated to write and learn under their teacher's guidance. Fazey and Fazey's (2000) study (as cited in Ustunluoglu, 2009) claims that the students are likely to self-regulate or take responsibility for learning when the motivation comes from an external source, such as a teacher. The teachers see themselves as taking almost all responsibility because they perceive that the students lack of self motivation and responsibility of their own learning.

#### 4. Conclusion

There are some conclusions related to the findings and discussions they are: The third semester English students of Cokroaminoto Palopo University in 2016/2017 are at good level of autonomy in writing after the application of weekly-reports. It can be stated that the use of weekly reports can stimulate students' autonomy in writing, beside that The students' writing ability after the treatment where the students were taught by weekly reports was better than before treatment. It means that the use of weekly reports in teaching writing can improve the students' writing ability.

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