

English paragraph Writing at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai

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Abstract

This community service aims to educate the students at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai about English paragraph writing in four English class meetings conducted twice a week. 14 eighth grader junior high school students participated throughout the whole program. The activity applied lecture and game as the teaching method with one pre-test and one post-test. The topics during four meetings included vocabulary building, sentence writing, and paragraph writing. The game integrated cards with English words with five categories such as subject, predicate, object, complement, and connectors. The result shows (1) Overall, the students experienced increased scores from the Pre-Test to Post-Test (2) More specifically, half of the participants successfully answered half of the questions right during the Post-Test (3) Furthermore, the participants of the community service shows comprehension on vocabulary building, sentence writing, and paragraph writing. However, creating new sentences and a new paragraph are still considered challenging. For the word level questions, students showed maximum pre-test scores 10/10 and 5/10 increased into post-test scores 10/10 and 9/10. While for the sentence level questions revealed maximum pre-test scores 3/5 into 5/5. In contrast, paragraph level questions are mostly left unanswered for both pre-test and post-test. In other words, the English paragraph writing community service meets the expectation and is successful to some extent.

Keywords: Second Language Writing, English Sentence Writing, English Paragraph Writing.

INTRODUCTION

English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia, with that said, the amount of time students are exposed to the language is limited. In other words, students are arguably only having time practicing English in the classrooms compared to outside of the classrooms. The lack of time allocated for practicing English outside of the classroom is due to the status of English as a foreign language. That is why teachers need to maximise the learning process. This community service is about English and focuses on writing skill in English class.

Based on early observations before conducting the community service, it can be observed that English language teaching at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai is done primarily focused on reading skill through different English texts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the exposure to writing skill is considered limited. This current community service aims to fill that gap by bringing English paragraph writing as the topic in class.

The urgency of learning how to write in English is essential for students because English has been remained as Internasional language. With that said, acquiring English writing skill will be useful for facing real world challenges nowadays. Moreover, it is important for the students in navigating academic and professional life. That is why English teachers should balance the language skills in English class by teach writing seriously.

Several previous related community services specifically on the topic of English sentence and English paragraph writing have been done. First, Asmarani (2018) did “*Model Paragraf Hamburger untuk Penulisan Berbasis Foklor Bagi Siswa SMA Madisiswa Semarang*” Secondly, from the same author, Asmarani (2019) also explored similar topic with different approach with “*Traffic-Light Paragraph Sebagai Model Penulisan Berbasis Foklor Bagi Siswa SMKN 6 Semarang*”. Lastly, one of the most recent community services has been conducted by Sutrisno (2024) about “English Sentence Writing for Kids at

SDN 1 Unggulan Pulau Morotai. All these three previous activities shared commonality in terms of the emphasis on teaching the students about writing skill or how to write in English.

Therefore, this particular community service continues to explore the issue of English writing in different levels of education and with different levels of writing skill. This current activity focuses on “Paragraph Writing at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai” or junior high continuing previous community service by Sutrisno (2024) about sentence writing at elementary school.

METHOD

The activities are conducted in four meetings including lecture, game, and scaffolding through visual aids and discussion. The lecture method is needed to make sure the students fully recognize the new materials being delivered. And then the game is essential to decrease boredom and increase motivation in learning. Moreover, scaffolding using visual aids is helpful to attract the attention, while discussion enable a place for students to ask questions and build their curiosity through questions and answers

The lecture method is important in order to make sure all the participants of the community service have the same understanding of the materials. Meanwhile the game method is also necessary to balance between the lecture and the game throughout the amount of materials being delivered. The game also functions to find out whether or not the students understand the concepts.

The treatment method with four class meetings is applied in order to find out the difference between before and after the treatment. This particular method is useful to find out the progress of the students involved in community service. In terms of the four class meetings, it can be argued to be a better method compared to one class meeting. This is because the multiple meetings in class enable the students to be exposed to the materials being delivered throughout the process.

The community service was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Morotai in May 2025 for four class meetings. The activity consisted of one pre-test that took place at the first meeting. It then continued with four class meetings with the materials related to the test. Then it finally closed with a post-test at the last meeting.

The data gathered through pre-test and post-test were analyzed qualitatively by looking at the patterns of scores from the students. Pre-test and post-test during the community service can be a reliable source of data as the comparison functions as the indicator of wheather or not the treatment has been impactful. All the data then explained and elaborated descriptively and analytically to present the progress of the students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First Meeting: Pre-Test & Vocabulary Building

The first meeting involved two agendas, pre-test and then followed by vocabulary building as the material. The pre-test was conducted with the total participants of 18 students. The questions on the pre-test were comprised of 40 items in 5 sections. The sections are (1) matching the word and the meaning, (2) write the meaning of the words, (3) arrange the scramble sentence, (4) write correct sentences, and (5) arrange a scramble paragraph and write a five sentence paragraph.



Figure 1. First meeting (1) Students take the pre-test (2) Teacher explain the pre-test

Pre-Test is an important part of the overall activity considering previous community service by Sutrisno (2024) only consisted of four class meetings with a test at the end. Therefore, reflecting on such related activity, this current service for the community looks at the existence of Pre-Test as an integral part to track students' progress. With such consideration, the questions on Pre-Test and Post-Test are intentionally identical. This is because the same questions can enable a fair and relevant comparison between the test taken before the first class meeting and after the fourth class meeting.

After taking the pre-test, students then go through the first lesson of four lessons in four meetings. It started with vocabulary building where students are exposed to 80 words in a total of 5 categories namely subject, predicate, object, complement, and connectors. The words were written down on color coded papers where each of the categories has its own signature color representing their category. This aims to help the students remember the vocabulary through visual aid of papers they can touch with the English words and Indonesian words and colors they can see.



Figure 2. (3,4) lecture and scaffolding through visual aids & discussion about vocabulary building

The game took place after the lecture and scaffolding. Each meeting consisted of each different game. For the first meeting, the game was about matching the English words with the Indonesian words written on the color coded papers. This game helped to make sure the students could build their vocabulary after being exposed to new words on the papers through the game. The students were spread into four different groups taking different word categories simultaneously. The category then moved from one group to the others until every group played all the categories. The categories being played were subject, predicate, object, and complement or better known as S-P-O-C.



Figure 3. (5,6,7,8) Students in four different groups matching English word and Indonesian words

It can be analyzed from the first meeting that students' ability in remembering new words and then matching the English words with the Indonesian words are varied. Therefore, it is important to highlight that distributing students in different group is essential to make sure the balance of the group members. Furthermore, the students seemed to enjoy the game due to the sense of gamification and competition.

The list of Vocabulary

Subject	Predicate	Object	Complement	Connectors
I	do	the homework	in the evening	and
You (singular)	watch	the news	this morning	but
We	cook	the dinner	tonight	then
They	sing	the song	on monday	or
You (plural)	record	the video	on the phone	because

He	buy	the grocery	once a week	although
She	read	the book	at the library	therefore
Radit	write	the short story	in the bedroom	however
Anisa	bake	the birthday cake	in the kitchen	moreover
Aldi & Indah	visit	the museum	on the weekend	for example
The king	drink	the ice tea	at the cafe	in addition
The queen	eat	the breakfast	at the restaurant	meanwhile
The police	capture	the culprit	at the market	next
The army	protect	the sea	everyday	besides
The teacher	collect	the test paper	at 12 o'clock	nevertheless
The student	submit	the assignment	on time	so
The doctor	check	the patients	at the hospital	since
The fisherman	catch	the catfish	at the fish pond	as a result
The merchant	sell	the rice cooker	in the store	in conclusion
The farmer	harvest	the cucumber	in the garden	finally

The questions for Pre-Test and Post-Test

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Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi: Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat

Name (Nama):

Find the word and the meaning (Temukan kata dan artinya)

1. watch a. menulis 6. harvest f. melindungi
2. drink b. meminum 7. collect g. memanen
3. read c. menonton 8. protect h. mengunjungi
4. catch d. membaca 9. visit i. memanggang
5. write e. menangkap 10. bake j. mengumpulkan

Please write the meanings of these words (Tulislah arti kata-kata berikut ini)

1. cook (.....) 6. check (.....)
2. buy (.....) 7. do (.....)
3. record (.....) 8. sing (.....)
4. capture (.....) 9. eat (.....)
5. sell (.....) 10. submit (.....)

Arrange the Scramble Sentence (Mengatur kembali kalimat acak)

1. Radit - in the bedroom - the short story - write
2. The cucumber - the farmer - in the garden - harvest
3. On time - submit - the student - the assignment
4. The breakfast - eat - the queen - at the restaurant
5. On the phone - record - you - the video

Please write five correct sentences (Tulislah lima kalimat yang benar)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Arrange the scramble paragraph (Mengatur kembali paragraf acak)

He wants to touch it, but his mother says no. - A woman sells bright flowers, but a man sells spicy food. - A small child sees a monkey, so he smiles. - He is still happy because he is in Indonesia. - The market is busy, and many people walk around.

Please write a paragraph with five sentences in simple present tense

(Tulislah satu paragraf yang terdiri dari lima kalimat dengan pola kalimat simple present)

.....
.....

Second Meeting: Sentence Writing



Figure 4. (9,10) Students learned to make sentence with S-P-O-C

The agenda for the second meeting focused on sentence writing. Students were introduced to the concept of subject-predicate-object-complement once again. Unlike the first meeting where the emphasis was placed on the word level, the second meeting highlighted the sentence level understanding. Students were expected to grasp the idea of how to put the selected words based on the correct order to create a grammatically correct sentence with appropriate meaning.

The use of English words written on the cards was aimed to create a more interesting and motivating learning environment. Sutrisno (2024) did similar color coded cards with English words for the community service focusing on English sentence writing at SDN 1 Unggulan Pulau Morotai. Moreover, another related community service conducted by Husen (2024) incorporates cue cards as the medium for learning about speaking and writing in English. Such an approach has been argued to be effective when conducted at SMA Negeri 10 Tidore Kepulauan focusing on practical skills such as presentation and conversation in English. That is why it can be argued that the use of cards is useful.



Figure 5. (11,12) Students played the sentence game

In addition to that, students then were instructed to play the game using the color coded papers with English words written on them. The goal of the game on the second meeting was creating as many sentences as possible with all the cards with the category subject, predicate, object, and complement. Therefore, in order to do that the game cannot be played simultaneously. The students were split into four different groups then taking turns to play the game. It is important to mention that the groups consisted of different people with the ones during the game session on the first meeting.

Furthermore, analytically speaking, through the game students have shown their understanding of the grammar requires in English sentence. Moreover, students also have demonstrated their comprehension on the sentence logic, in other words, they did not only follow the color coded orders of the cards that are linked to the S-P-O-C order of a grammatically correct sentence, but also understanding the meaning of the sentence logically.



Third Meeting: Paragraph Writing



The focus was shifted from sentence writing into paragraph writing for the third meeting. Students learned the fifth category, connectors, from the color coded papers with English vocabulary. The importance of using connectors is important and mandatory to connect the sentences into a paragraph. With that said, the students learned the vocabulary about connectors with its meaning. Another paper with a sentence written on them as visual aid was introduced. In other words, the students were no longer working with S-P-O-C categories. There were only two categories for the third meeting, white color coded papers with one sentence each and tosca color coded for connectors.



A related previous community service about paragraph writing has been done by Asmarani (2019) at SMKN 6 Semarang focused on creating a paragraph with a method called traffic light. The method is simply based on a traffic light of three different colors, namely green, yellow, and red. Then each color represents each element of a paragraph; green for topic sentence, yellow for supporting sentence and then red for concluding sentence. What sets apart Asmarani's community service compared to this current study is that, this current study focuses more on creating a paragraph using connectors function as bridges between sentences with similar and related meaning when put together.



Figure 9. (21) Score of the paragraph game (22) Picture after the third meeting

The game was played after the lecture. Similar to the second meeting, students were split into four different groups then taking turns to play. The goal of the game was to make sure the students understood how to connect sentences with related meaning to make a paragraph using the connectors. Out of four groups, there was one group that incorporated seven sentences with connectors in one paragraph and then there was only one group incorporated two sentences to create one paragraph.

It can be observed on the third meeting during the game that students experienced challenging time connecting related sentences to create a paragraph. Some groups can only manage to use one connector to build the connection between two sentences. While other groups used two connectors to unite three sentences. The students were also being part of the decision when the teachers look at their group works to decide the total numbers of the correct paragraphs to earn the points.

Fourth Meeting: Post-Test & Closing



Figure 10. (23,24) Students taking post-test at the fourth meeting



Figure 11. (25) Picture after the fourth meeting, (26) Picture with homeroom teacher and headmaster

The four class meetings for this current community service about paragraph writing at MTs N 1 Morotai were identical and a continuation to Sutrisno (2024) on sentence writing at SDN 1 Unggulan Pulau Morotai. However, any future community service will consider a longer duration of more than four meetings. One of the considerations comes from looking at Sudewi et al (2022) with a similar community service but with the focus on teaching academic writing at SMA 1 Karossa dedicated six meetings through online zoom. However, the use of online meetings can be seen as a challenge due to the lack of infrastructure. Furthermore, another consideration has something to do with how different topics bring different difficulties between sentence writing and paragraph writing.

The fourth meeting was dedicated to the post-test with exactly similar questions on the pre-test. This was done to track each one of the student's progress throughout the class meetings. The result of the post-test shows that the students have increased scores when pre-test and post-test answers are compared. The increase mostly occurred on the understanding of word level and sentence level. The result also shows that only a limited number of students increase the scores on paragraph level questions with correct answers. The complete result can be seen on the table below.

Scores result for Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Pre-Test							Post-Test						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1	3/10	0/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	3/40	4/10	5/10	3/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	12/40
2	5/10	3/10	0/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	8/40	10/10	9/10	5/5	4/5	0/5	4/5	32/40
3	5/10	2/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	7/40	7/10	8/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	15/40
4	10/10	2/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	12/40	10/10	8/10	4/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	22/40
5	5/10	2/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	7/40	3/10	7/10	5/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	15/40
6	7/10	3/10	1/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	16/40	10/10	9/10	5/5	0/5	0/5	5/5	24/40
7	3/10	3/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	6/40	7/10	8/10	4/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	24/40
8	3/10	0/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	3/40	8/10	8/10	1/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	22/40
9	4/10	0/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	4/40	4/10	8/10	3/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	20/40
10	4/10	0/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	4/40	4/10	9/10	1/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	14/40
11	3/10	0/10	0/5	5/5	0/5	3/5	11/40	5/10	9/10	5/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	19/40
12	7/10	5/5	3/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	20/40	8/10	9/10	5/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	22/40
13	7/10	2/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	9/40	8/10	7/10	5/5	5/5	0/5	0/5	25/40
14	3/10	0/10	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	3/40	6/10	4/10	1/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	11/40

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

1. The students participating in this community service experienced increased scores from the Pre-Test to Post-Test. It can be seen through the minimum scores of 3/40 during the pre-test has increased into the minimum scores of 11/40 for the post-test. In other words, the community service meets the expectation and success to some extent indicated by the noticeable increase before and after the four class meetings activity..
2. Having four teachers during the class is useful so that when the students are split into four groups for the game it can be done simultaneously for time efficiency.
3. Half of the participants successfully answer half of the questions right during Post-Test. In other words specifically, eight out of fourteen students answered 20 or more correct answers out of all 40 questions. This can be considered a significant increase in scores compared to how only one out of fourteen participants get half of the questions correct during Pre-Test.
4. It can be seen and concluded that students have built their understanding of what it takes to create a grammatically correct and make sense sentences and use connectors to create a paragraph
5. Post-Test result shows even though most students comprehend the sentence writing and paragraph writing, however, this comprehension is not translated into creating sentence and paragraph writing

Suggestion

1. This current community service is done twice a week with four class meetings in total. Therefore, future community service should consider a similar pattern with more meetings allocated to optimizing the whole teaching and learning process

2. The total class meetings for future related community service should consider to add more meetings because different topic requires different efforts of comprehension
3. The game sections for future related community service can consider to not only provide written words to be memorized and organized as sentence and paragraph but also require students to write
4. Games in group for scaffolding is useful to improve the motivation, however, individual work might be also necessary for the related community service in the future
5. The discussion section for future community service can consider applying role play method where students pretending to be the teacher to explain the materials for comprehension purposes

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