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# INCREASING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL USING LITERATURE: CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH AT MAN 1 PROBOLINGGO

**Abstrak**

Penelitian Tindakan Kelas ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa melalui penerapan pembelajaran berbasis sastra, khususnya puisi, yang terintegrasi ke dalam modul pembelajaran pada pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di MAN 1 Probolinggo. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam dua siklus yang meliputi tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, observasi, dan refleksi, dengan siswa kelas XI sebagai subjek. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan pada keterampilan menulis siswa, baik dari segi kreativitas, pilihan kata, maupun struktur kalimat, yang ditunjukkan dengan peningkatan skor rata-rata menulis dari pre-test ke post-test. Pembelajaran berbasis puisi juga menciptakan suasana kelas yang reflektif dan inspiratif, membantu siswa melihat menulis lebih dari sekadar latihan bahasa, tetapi sebagai sarana ekspresi diri yang bermakna. Dengan demikian, strategi pembelajaran ini terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kompetensi menulis siswa dan motivasi belajar secara keseluruhan.

**Kata kunci:** Penelitian Tindakan Kelas, Pembelajaran Berbasis Puisi, Keterampian Menulis, Motivasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris

**Abstract**

This classroom action research aims to improve students' writing skills through the implementation of literature-based learning, specifically poetry, integrated into the learning module in English lessons at MAN 1 Probolinggo. The research was conducted in two cycles covering the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, with 11th-grade students as the subjects. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis, then analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the study showed a significant improvement in students' writing skills, in terms of creativity, word choice, and sentence structure, as indicated by an increase in the average writing score from the pre-test to the post-test. Poetry-based learning also created a reflective and inspiring classroom atmosphere, helping students see writing not only as language practice, but as a means of meaningful self-expression. Thus, this learning strategy proved effective in improving students' writing competence and overall learning motivation.

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research, Poetry-Based Learning, Writing Skills, Motivation, English Education

## INTRODUCTION

Literature plays a crucial role in language learning, particularly in the context of Indonesian education, which is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. Through literary works such as poetry, novels, and short stories, students not only learn vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar, but are also guided to understand the values of life and culture embedded within them. Literature serves as a bridge connecting language learning with the broader human experience, enabling students to feel that language learning is not merely an academic activity, but also a journey to understand themselves and others. Smith and Downes highlighted the role

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of literature in providing cultural insights that enhance learners' understanding of social contexts and emotional nuances in the language. (Smith & Downes, 2023).

However, the reality on the ground shows that the English language skills, especially the writing skills of high school students in Indonesia, are still relatively low. Many students, including those at MAN 1 Probolinggo, find writing in English difficult and boring. Quoting from Purba et al. writing is a difficult skill for both native and non-native speakers (Purba et al., 2023). They often have difficulty finding ideas, constructing sentences correctly, and using a varied vocabulary. These difficulties are caused not only by limited technical skills but also by low motivation to write. This is in accordance with the opinion expressed by Noviadi et al, who stated that literary learning is often underestimated in language learning because its role is less functional in everyday life and is rarely used as a reference in assessing language skills (Noviadi et al., 2023).

Often, writing lessons in school focus solely on grammar and sentence structure, without engaging creativity and self-expression. As a result, students' writing tends to be straightforward, shallow, and lacking in critical and imaginative thinking. One question student frequently ask is, "What are the benefits of studying poetry, short stories, novels, drama, or folktales?" This question must be answered, of course. The English language skills learned must be functional in supporting future life and education.

To address these issues, a more innovative and engaging learning approach is needed. One alternative offered in this study is the use of literary works, particularly poetry, as a medium for learning to write. Through poetry, students can learn to use language creatively and expressively. Poetry teaches sensitivity to word choice, style, and nuances of profound meaning. Writing poetry or analyzing its meaning can foster students' interest in writing, as they feel emotionally and intellectually engaged. Furthermore, literature-based writing learning also provides space for students to develop critical thinking skills, analyzing characters, themes, and life values contained in literary works. Thus, the integration of literature in English learning is expected to create a more lively, contextual, and meaningful learning environment.

Theoretically, motivation is a key factor in successful learning. Motivation can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity because the activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation can take the form of money, gifts, grades, and even punishment. In general, both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are crucial in the success of learners in all levels of their education (Susanto, 2018). Quoting Natiqi, Azouble writes that the relationship between motivation and learning is reciprocal, not one-sided; there is no need to delay learning activities until interest and motivation develop (Natiqi, 2024). Teachers, as the main element, are facilitators of new learning strategies, motivating and showing interest in students, as well as the importance of developing skills, aspirations, interests, and ideals in education (Alcívar et al., 2021). Literary works can be an effective means of fostering motivation because students are invited to experience human experiences close to their own lives. When students feel connected to the content of literary texts, they will be more enthusiastic in expressing their understanding and feelings in writing.

Several previous studies also support the view that literature can improve students' writing skills and enrich their vocabulary. Noviadi et al. showed that literature-based learning can increase student participation in class discussions and writing activities (Noviadi et al., 2023). Firman also stated in his research that by studying the history of English, especially its literature, there are many things that can be learned and understood to improve their writing skills, especially each person's writing style, and this depends on how they apply various vocabulary into it (Firman, 2022). Furthermore, JATAU STEPHEN et al. revealed from their research results that literature serves as a powerful tool for authentic language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, language comprehension, and production skills (JATAU STEPHEN, et al., 2025). Thus, it is recommended that curriculum planners work together to integrate literature into the English curriculum.

Based on this background, this study aims to improve students' writing skills at MAN 1 Probolinggo through a literature-based learning approach, specifically using poetry as the main medium. This study focuses on understanding how poetry-based learning activities can

influence students' writing skills, as well as which aspects are most developed through this approach. Specifically, this study will answer two main questions, namely: (1) how poetry-based learning activities influence students' writing skills in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes, and (2) which aspects of writing skills are most improved through the use of poetry in classroom learning.

This research is expected to provide evidence that literature, particularly poetry, can be an effective medium for enhancing students' motivation and writing skills. By presenting engaging literary texts, students can expand their vocabulary, understand language styles, and develop more creative and meaningful writing skills. For teachers, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference in designing more contextual and humanistic English language learning strategies, with an emphasis on appreciation, creativity, and critical thinking. Ultimately, the implementation of literature-based learning not only aims to improve language competence but also shapes students' character to be more reflective, communicative, and open to cultural diversity in the global era.

**METHOD**

This research methodology uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which aims to improve learning practices through reflection and direct action in the classroom. This approach allows teachers to directly examine their teaching processes and thus assess the effectiveness of using literary works, particularly poetry, in improving students' writing skills. The CAR approach is considered effective because it provides teachers with the freedom to adapt teaching methods to suit students' needs, increases motivation, and actively engages students in the learning process.

The subjects of this study were 11th-grade science students at MAN 1 Probolinggo, selected based on their English language proficiency and motivation to learn. This selection was made to ensure the research results reflect actual conditions in the school environment, involving students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. English teachers were also involved as collaborators to ensure optimal implementation of literature-based learning and provide deeper insights into effective learning strategies.

Data were collected through several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted during the learning process to observe students' engagement with literary texts and writing activities. Classroom observation is considered a strategy to improve teachers' teaching skills and measure student learning outcomes. This is intended to improve teachers' classroom practices and teaching effectiveness (Morillo et al., 2025). Interviews were conducted with students and teachers to explore their experiences, perceptions, and challenges during the learning process. Document analysis included assessing students' writing before and after implementing literature-based learning to determine improvements in their writing skills. The combination of these three techniques provides a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the approach used.

Data analysis was conducted by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (mixed methods). According to Schoonenboom and Johnson, mixed methods research is a type of research in which a researcher or research team combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., the use of qualitative and quantitative perspectives, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for broad and in-depth purposes when understanding and conducting evidence (Pane et al., 2021). Qualitative analysis was used to interpret the results of interviews and observations in order to identify important themes that emerged in the learning process, while quantitative analysis was used to measure improvements in writing skills and vocabulary mastery by comparing pre-test and post-test results. By combining these two approaches, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of using literature in English language learning.

This research was conducted in four main stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researcher designed learning objectives, prepared relevant poetry materials, and integrated them with materials in the learning module, such as "asking for and giving opinions." The implementation stage was carried out by applying the designed learning method. During the process, observations were made to record student

activities, responses to literary texts, and the dynamics of learning in the classroom. The final stage, reflection, was carried out to evaluate the results of the activities, assess the effectiveness of the strategies used, and determine improvement steps for the next cycle.

Overall, this methodology aims not only to measure the improvement of students' writing skills through literature-based learning but also to create a reflective space for teachers to improve their teaching practices. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to improving the quality of English teaching at MAN 1 Probolinggo, making it more contextual, creative, and meaningful.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
**A. RESULTS**
1. Pretest Results and Analysis
The pretest and posttest target a score of 75 as the minimum passing score.

In the pretest conducted at that time, 15 students filled out the questionnaire, with the following results:

Table 1. Pretest results

| Number | Number of students | Total score obtained |
|--------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1.     | 4                  | 50                   |
| 2.     | 4                  | 30                   |
| 3.     | 7                  | 20                   |

The table shows that 4 students scored 50, 4 students scored 30, and 7 students scored the lowest score, namely 20.
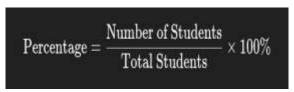The percentage is calculated using the following formula:

$$Percentage = \frac{Number\ of\ Students}{Total\ Students} \times 100\%$$

Figure 1. Calculation formula

1. For students who scored 50:
• Number of students = 4
• Number of students = 15
• Calculation: (4 / 15) × 100% = 26.666...%
• Rounded to one decimal place: 26.7%

2. For students who scored 30:
• Number of students = 4
• Number of students = 15
• Calculation: (4 / 15) × 100% = 26.666...%
• Rounded to one decimal place: 26.7%

3. For students who scored 20:
• Number of students = 7
• Number of students = 15
• Calculation: (7 / 15) × 100% = 46.666...%
• Rounded to one decimal place: 46.7%

These data reveal a rather concerning initial situation. Overall, 100% of students (15) failed to achieve the minimum passing grade, with the majority (11) scoring below 50.

From the pretest questions distributed to students, it was discovered that many still had difficulty expressing their ideas in writing. This was because their mastered vocabulary wasn't fully utilized in poetry.

2. Post-test Results and Analysis

In the post-test, participation increased to 17 students, with the following results:

Table 2. Post-test results

| Number | Number of students | Total score obtained |
|--------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | 7 | $\leq 75$ |
| 2. | 5 | $\geq 80$ |
| 3. | 3 | 100 |
| 4. | 2 | $\geq 50$ |

This table allows us to conclude that 7 students scored close to the minimum passing score of 75. Then, 5 students scored above the minimum passing score, namely 90 and 80. Two students scored a perfect score of 100, and 3 students scored the lowest, namely 20, 30, and 50. The percentage is calculated using the following formula:



$$Percentage = \frac{Number\ of\ Students}{Total\ Students} \times 100\%$$

Figure 2. Calculation formula

• Above KKM (score $\geq 80$)
= (2 + 5) ÷ 17 × 100%
= 7 ÷ 17 × 100%
= 41.18%

• Close to KKM (score = 70)
= 7 ÷ 17 × 100%
= 41.18%

• Below KKM (score 50–20)
= 3 ÷ 17 × 100%
= 17.64%

Although three students have yet to show improvement, overall progress has been made. Several students have reached or nearly reached the minimum passing grade. This achievement is evident in seven students who have exceeded the minimum passing grade and seven others who are on the verge of passing (a score of 75).

Based on the post-exam questions, a small number of students could be categorized as having understood the material and possessing fairly good writing skills. The remainder appeared to have difficulty distinguishing figurative language in poetry.

**B. DISCUSSION**

This study aims to answer two research questions: first, how does poetry affect EFL students' writing skills; and second, which aspects of writing improve the most.

1. The Effect of Poetry-Based Activities on EFL Students' Writing Ability

A qualitative analysis of their responses revealed the root of the problem: a significant gap between their vocabulary and the requirements for expressing ideas poetically. They struggled to translate their thoughts and opinions about poetry into coherent writing.

Based on these findings, a posttest was designed to directly address these challenges. The teacher not only reviewed the material in the poem but also provided enrichment with some relevant vocabulary. The results proved significant in the posttest. Of the 17 students, 14 (82.35%) achieved success.

1. How to calculate percentage:
• students with a score of 100 (Pass)
• 5 students with scores of 90 and 80 (exceeding the minimum passing score)

• 7 students with a score of 70 (close to the minimum passing grade)
• Number of students who passed = 2 + 5 + 7 = 14 students
2. Identify the total number of students in the post-test:
The total number of students who took the post-test was 17.
3. Calculate the Percentage of Successful Students:
The formula used is:
(Number of Successful Students / Total Students) x 100%
= (14 / 17) x 100%
= 0.8235 x 100%
= 82.35%

have successfully achieved or approached the minimum passing grade, with 7 students even exceeding the target (scores of 80-100). These data clearly answer the first research question, namely that poetry-based activities have been shown to have a positive effect on improving students' writing skills, provided that such engagement is accompanied by adequate vocabulary support and learning focused on literary topics.

2. The Most Improved Aspect of Writing Skills

Through this approach, vocabulary mastery and fluency in expressing written opinions were two areas that showed improvement. In the pretest, students' writing tended to be brief and to the point. In contrast, in the posttest, there was more specific and varied use of words in responding to the poem. Furthermore, students began to organize their opinions in a more structured manner, supported by the use of more precise and contextual phrases for asking and giving opinions (such as "I think" and "In my opinion").

However, this study also identified limitations. Although vocabulary and fluency in expressing opinions improved, a deep understanding of figurative language remained a persistent challenge. Some students still found it difficult to differentiate between different types of figurative language, which ultimately hampered their ability to conduct more critical literary analysis.

Overall, this data narrative concludes that the integration of poetry into writing instruction is an effective strategy, with visible impacts on vocabulary enrichment and the development of students' fluency in expressing their opinions in writing.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## CONCLUSION

Based on the pretest and posttest results in this study, it can be concluded that the approach of learning to write through literature (poetry) integrated with the learning module of asking and giving opinions has proven effective in improving students' writing skills. This is indicated by changes in scores, where at the beginning of the learning process (pretest), 0% (15 students) had not reached the minimum passing grade, while after the learning process (posttest), 82.35% (14 of 17 students) had exceeded or approached the minimum passing grade of 75.

However, further improvement efforts are still needed to address the remaining challenges, namely the difficulties some students have in understanding and distinguishing figures of speech. These findings suggest that for optimal results, future learning strategies need to prioritize two main aspects: (1) more systematic vocabulary enrichment, and (2) more in-depth, innovative, applicable, and engaging figurative language teaching methods.

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