

Improving Students' Writing Skills With Daily English Journals

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Abstract-The ability to write in English is an important skill that students must master to improve their academic and communication competence. However, many students face obstacles in writing, such as limited vocabulary, weak understanding of grammar, and lack of consistent practice. This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing daily English journals as a method for improving students' writing skills. Daily journals provide an opportunity for students to practice writing regularly without formal pressure, so they can develop their language skills gradually. The research method used in this study is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and analysis of students' journal writing. The results showed that the use of a daily English journal significantly increased students' vocabulary, improved grammatical structures, and helped them write more coherently and systematically. Apart from that, daily journals also increase students' creativity, critical thinking, and confidence in expressing their ideas in writing. Thus, a daily English journal is an effective strategy in improving students' writing skills. It is hoped that this method can be integrated into the English language learning curriculum with optimal teacher guidance, and combined with digital technology for maximum results.

Keywords: Daily English Journal, Writing Skills, Vocabulary and Grammar, Qualitative Research, Student Motivation and Confidence

1. PENDAHULUAN

Writing ability is one of the language skills that is very important in the world of education and everyday life. In the context of learning English, writing skills are often a challenge for students because they involve various aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and fluency in expressing ideas in writing. Therefore, effective strategies are needed to improve students' writing skills so that they can express their thoughts and ideas well in English.[1]

Advances in information and communication technology have brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including education. The teaching and learning process that was previously conventional is now starting to shift to a digital technology-based learning model. One of the skills that is the main focus in this digital era is digital literacy, which includes the ability to access, understand and use information via technological devices effectively. Digital literacy is not only important to help students master academic content, but also provides 21st century skills that are relevant to future needs. In the context of basic education, mastery of digital literacy can be designed to support the learning of core subjects such as English. English as an international language has an important role in students' academic development, including increasing access to global learning resources. [2]

However, learning English at the elementary school level often faces obstacles, such as limited resources, low student motivation, and less interesting learning methods. To overcome these challenges, the use of technology-based learning applications, such as Duolingo, is a promising alternative. English, as an international language, has an important role in supporting global communication and access to information. Unfortunately, the results of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF-EPI) report show that the level of English language proficiency in Indonesia is still relatively low. This is caused by the limitations of conventional learning methods, lack of access to interesting learning resources, and lack of student motivation to learn English outside the classroom. The ability to write in English is an essential skill that students must master to support the learning process and effective communication in everyday life. However, many students face challenges in developing these skills, especially in the aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Therefore, innovative and effective learning strategies are needed to improve students' writing skills. One approach that has proven effective is the implementation of a daily English journal. Research shows that daily journal writing can significantly improve students' writing skills. For example, a

study at Panca Budi Middle School showed an increase in students' average scores from 60.62 to 82 after implementing daily journal writing. In addition, daily journals allow students to practice writing regularly without high formal pressure, so they can improve their writing skills gradually through continuous practice. Daily journals also provide opportunities for students to develop their creativity in constructing sentences and build critical thinking habits in English.[3]

One method that can be applied to improve students' writing skills is to use a daily English journal. Daily journaling is a form of reflective writing that allows students to practice writing regularly without high formal pressure. By journaling consistently, students can improve their writing skills gradually through continued practice. Apart from that, daily journals also provide opportunities for students to develop their creativity in constructing sentences and build critical thinking habits in English.[4]

Implementing a daily English journal has many benefits, including increasing students' vocabulary, improving grammar, and helping them compose more complex and coherent sentences. In addition, daily journals also allow students to reflect on their experiences, so they can better understand how to better express ideas and feelings in writing. In other words, a daily journal is not just a writing practice, but also a tool to improve students' analytical and reflective thinking skills.[5]

However, in its implementation, there are several challenges that students often face, such as lack of motivation to write regularly, limited vocabulary in English, and difficulty in understanding correct grammatical structures.[6] Therefore, a systematic approach and proper guidance from educators is needed so that students can feel the maximum benefits from daily journal writing activities. Teachers can provide constructive feedback, encourage students to read more sources in English, and give students the freedom to write according to their interests and experiences.

Apart from being a tool for improving writing skills, a daily English journal can also be used as a means of increasing students' understanding of various broader aspects of language. Through the habit of writing every day, students can better understand sentence patterns in English, the use of various verb forms, and the relationship between the ideas they express in their writing. This continuous practice helps students internalize the rules of the English language more naturally compared to learning methods that only focus on theory.[7]

On the other hand, daily journals also play a role in improving students' memory and analytical skills. By writing down their daily experiences in English, they indirectly train their ability to remember important details in everyday life. This will have an impact on increasing critical thinking skills, because students must organize their writing logically and systematically so that it is easily understood by readers.

Apart from that, writing a daily journal in English can also increase students' confidence in using English in everyday life. By writing more often, students will feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas in English, both written and orally. This will have a positive impact on their overall communication skills, which is an important aspect in mastering a foreign language. Apart from that, writing regularly in a journal can also improve students' ability to express ideas more systematically, which in turn will help them in facing other academic assignments, such as writing essays and research reports..[8]

Overall, daily English journaling is an effective learning strategy to improve students' writing skills. With support from teachers and a conducive learning environment, students can develop their writing skills better and be more confident. Therefore, this research will examine in more depth the application of daily English journals in learning as well as strategies to optimize its benefits for students. Apart from that, this research also aims to explore how this method can be applied in various levels of education as well as how daily journals can be combined with digital technology to increase its effectiveness in modern learning.

2. METHODS

This research applies several stages in implementing a daily English journal to improve students' writing skills. This stage includes preparation, implementation, evaluation and reflection.[13]

The preparation stage begins with strategic planning for implementing a daily journal. At this stage, the teacher determines the journal format that will be used, either in digital or manual form. Apart from that, writing guidelines are prepared which include the length of the writing, daily topics, as

well as aspects to be assessed, such as grammar, vocabulary and coherence. The teacher also provides guidance to students regarding the goals and benefits of daily journal writing activities and provides examples of journals as references.

The implementation stage is carried out by asking students to write a journal in English every day for a certain duration. Students are given the freedom to choose a topic or follow a predetermined theme. Teachers provide regular feedback on students' writing to help them improve grammar, vocabulary use, and sentence structure. Students are also encouraged to re-read the journals they write and revise any errors found. Apart from that, group discussions can be held to share ideas and experiences in journal writing.

The evaluation stage is carried out by analyzing the development of students' writing abilities. Evaluation includes improvements in vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and fluency in writing. Students' consistency in writing daily journals is also an assessment indicator. The teacher uses a rubric that has been prepared to assess the coherence of students' writing and creativity in compiling journals.

The reflection stage aims to determine the impact of implementing a daily English journal on students' writing skills. At this stage, discussions were held with students to find out their experiences in writing journals every day. Obstacles faced in the journal writing process are identified, and solutions are sought that can help increase the effectiveness of this method. With reflection, the daily journal learning strategy can be further developed to be more optimal in improving students' writing skills in English.[14]

3. RESULTS

This research shows that the implementation of a daily English journal has a positive impact on improving students' writing skills. The results obtained based on analysis of daily journals, feedback from teachers, and observations of student skill development show significant improvements in various aspects of writing, such as fluency in constructing sentences, more appropriate use of grammar, and an increasingly extensive vocabulary.[15]

One of the main findings of this research was that students who consistently wrote daily journals experienced improvements in critical and analytical thinking skills. Students are able to develop their ideas more systematically and develop them in more coherent writing. Apart from that, the daily writing habit also helps students become more confident in using English, both in written and oral form.

In terms of grammar, many students initially experience difficulty in using correct sentence structures. However, with regular journal revisions and feedback from the teacher, students can understand the mistakes they often make and correct them over time. This improvement can be seen from the reduction in grammatical errors and the increase in the complexity of the sentences they write in their daily journals.

Apart from that, students' skills repertoire also develops through daily journal activities. By writing every day, students are exposed to new words and phrases that they use in different contexts. This increases their ability to choose words that are more appropriate and appropriate to the desired context. The use of synonyms and word variations is also increasing, so that students' writing becomes more interesting and less monotonous.

However, there are several obstacles faced during the implementation of daily English journals. One of the main obstacles is students' lack of motivation to write regularly. Some students find it difficult to find ideas to write about, while others feel overwhelmed by daily writing assignments. To overcome this problem, an approach is taken by providing themes or topics that are interesting and relevant to students' daily lives. Apart from that, the teacher also appreciated the students' efforts in writing journals to increase their motivation.[16]

Apart from the motivational aspect, another challenge faced is the limited vocabulary of students in writing journals. Some students find it difficult to express their ideas because of the limited words they master in English. To overcome this, teachers encourage students to read more sources in English as well as introducing a list of new vocabulary words that they can use in their journals..[17] Overall, this research proves that daily English journals are an effective method in improving students' writing skills. Through continuous practice, students can develop their writing skills

gradually. Additionally, this approach also helps them build reflective and analytical thinking habits, which contribute to improving overall academic abilities. With the right support from the teacher and a conducive learning environment, a daily journal can be a useful learning tool in improving students' English language competency.

This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of implementing daily English journals in improving students' writing skills. Based on the results of observations, analysis of journals that have been collected, as well as feedback from teachers and students, it was found that this method had a positive impact on various aspects of writing, such as improving grammar, expanding vocabulary, increasing critical thinking skills, and increasing student motivation in writing.

1. Improving Students' Writing Ability

One of the main aspects observed in this research was the improvement in students' writing skills in English. Students who consistently write daily journals make progress in various components of writing, such as sentence structure, more appropriate use of grammar, and integration of ideas in their writing.

At the beginning of implementing a daily journal, many students still experienced difficulty in constructing sentences correctly. Errors that are often found include using inappropriate tenses, choosing words that are not appropriate to the context, and errors in sentence structure. However, after several weeks of regular writing practice, there was significant improvement. Students begin to understand how to use tenses better, choose more appropriate words, and construct sentences more structured and logical.

In addition, by writing a daily journal, students become more accustomed to expressing their ideas in written form. This helps them to think more critically in constructing the arguments or narratives they write. In the initial journals, most of the students' writing was still simple and less structured. However, as time goes by, they begin to develop more complex writing, with more coherent paragraphs and more developed ideas.

2. Increased Vocabulary and Grammar Use

One of the main obstacles that students often face in writing in English is limited vocabulary. At the beginning of the research, many students only used simple words and often repeated the same vocabulary in their writing. This makes their writing feel monotonous and lacking in variety.

However, by writing a daily journal regularly, students are encouraged to look for and use a wider variety of new words. Teachers also play a role in providing input regarding the use of vocabulary that is more appropriate and appropriate to the context. Apart from that, students are also encouraged to read various texts in English, both from books, articles and other digital sources, to enrich their vocabulary.

An increase in the use of grammar is also one of the main findings in this research. Many students initially have difficulty applying grammar rules consistently in their writing. However, with feedback from the teacher and continuous writing practice, students begin to understand and apply grammar rules better. Errors that previously often appeared, such as using inappropriate subjects and verbs or using conjunctions that were inappropriate, decreased as their writing progressed.

3. Improved Critical Thinking Skills and Creativity

Apart from helping students improve their writing skills, implementing a daily English journal also has a positive impact on their critical thinking skills and creativity. By writing regularly, students do not just rewrite information, but also learn to organize their own ideas, develop arguments, and analyze their personal experiences in written form.

Students who initially only wrote in a very simple format began to show progress by writing more reflectively and analytically. They begin to be able to connect personal experiences with broader concepts, as well as provide their opinions on various issues they face in everyday life. Thus, daily journals not only help students in linguistic aspects, but also in deeper cognitive aspects.

In terms of creativity, daily journals provide freedom for students to express themselves through writing. Some students who initially had difficulty finding ideas to write about, began to find ways to express their thoughts more freely and variedly. By being given the freedom to choose

topics, students feel more comfortable in writing and do not feel forced, so their writing becomes more expressive and interesting.[18]

4. Increasing student motivation in writing

Motivation is an important factor in successful learning, including improving writing skills. At the start of the research, many students felt less motivated to write in a journal every day. They feel that writing in English is a difficult and boring task. However, after being given a more interesting approach, such as choosing topics that suit students' interests and providing appreciation for their writing, students' motivation to write increased.

Providing constructive feedback from teachers is also an important factor in increasing student motivation. By getting constructive feedback, students feel that their efforts are appreciated and that they have the opportunity to continue to improve. Additionally, some students also reported that they felt more confident in writing after seeing the progress they made from week to week.

5. Obstacles and Solutions in Implementing Daily English Journals

Although implementing a daily English journal has many benefits, there were several obstacles faced during this research. One of the main obstacles is the lack of initial motivation from students to write regularly. Many students feel burdened with writing assignments every day, especially those who still have limitations in vocabulary and grammar.

To overcome this problem, several strategies were implemented, such as:

Provide freedom in topic selection: Students are allowed to write about topics they like, such as hobbies, daily experiences, or fictional stories they create themselves.

Provide examples of good writing: Teachers provide examples of journals that are interesting and easy to understand as references for students.

Increase interaction in learning: Journals are not only used as individual assignments, but also combined with group discussions or presentations of student writing in front of the class.

Apart from motivational constraints, another challenge faced is students' limited vocabulary. To overcome this, teachers provide a list of new words that can be used in journals, and encourage students to read more texts in English to enrich their vocabulary.

6. Research Implications

The results of this research indicate that implementing a daily English journal can be an effective strategy in improving students' writing skills. By applying this method systematically and providing proper guidance, students can develop their writing skills gradually.

Apart from that, this research also provides implications for teachers and educational institutions in designing more effective and interesting learning methods. The use of a daily journal can be combined with digital technology, such as blogs or online platforms, to make the writing experience more interactive and relevant to students' lives in the digital era.

Overall, this research proves that daily English journals not only help students in improving their writing skills, but also in developing their critical thinking skills, creativity, and motivation in learning English. With the right support from the teacher and a conducive learning environment, this method can be an effective approach in improving students' overall English language competency.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that implementing a daily English journal significantly improves students' writing skills. Through analysis of daily journals, feedback from teachers, and observations of student skill development, improvements were found in the fluency of constructing sentences, more appropriate use of grammar, and an increasingly extensive vocabulary. One of the main findings was the improvement in students' critical thinking and analytical skills. By writing a daily journal, students are able to develop ideas systematically and organize them into coherent writing. This habit also increases students' confidence in using English, both orally and in writing. In terms of grammar, students who initially struggled with correct sentence structure showed significant improvement. Regular journal revisions and feedback from teachers help students understand and correct their grammatical errors. In addition, students' vocabulary develops through daily journal activities. Exposure to new words and phrases in different contexts improves students' ability to choose appropriate words according to context. However, there are obstacles such as students' lack of

motivation to write regularly and limited vocabulary. To overcome this, teachers can provide themes or topics that are interesting and relevant to students' daily lives, and encourage them to read more sources in English to enrich their vocabulary. Overall, this research proves that daily English journals are an effective method in improving students' writing skills. With continued practice and proper support from teachers, students can gradually develop their writing skills, build reflective and analytical thinking habits, and improve overall academic abilities.

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