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**THE APPLICATION OF LEARNING WRITING TO IMPROVE JUNIOR  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH THE  
APPLICATION OF CONSTRUCTIVISM MODEL  
IN PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN TASIKMALAYA**

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**THE APPLICATION OF THE CONSTRUCTIVISM MODEL  
IN LEARNING WRITING TO IMPROVE  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS  
IN TASIKMALAYA, WEST JAVA**

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**Abstract**

Writing is one of the most complicated human mental activities. Learning writing needs to change from the conventional model to the modern one. The purpose of this study is to make students understand the importance of writing and thinking in constructivism way that can be applied in learning language skills at school. The use of this study is creating an educational network among LPTK (the institution of teacher education), teachers, and students, in improving the language learning, especially writing and thinking skills in constructivism model to raise the quality of language learning at school. The method used in this study is speech, question-answer, exercise, and task. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the constructivism model in learning Indonesian language can entirely improve all aspects of students' writing skill.

Key words: constructivism model, language skill

**INTRODUCTION**

There are many factors causing students' difficulty in writing. One of them is stated by Safei (1988: 47-48):

The difficulty in writing is encountered by students because they are not used to write. In practicing writing, the difficulty is caused by the problem of arranging the first sentence. Students are confused about where they should start to write and how to write the first sentence in a writing. Deciding topics is a difficult thing for students. Students' utterance such as "I'm confused, do not know what to write", "Actually, I have a lot to write but I do not know how to choose", "Many times I change the topic but I have not got the stable one". These utterances show that students have difficulty to start writing.

The interest in reading and writing is important for the progress of a nation's culture. It is said that human beings left the era of primitive after knowing reading and writing. The glory of the past and the thoughts of the great people of the world will last forever because of writing.

Related to the fact above, learning writing should be replaced from the conventional model of learning underpinned by the assumption that "knowledge can be entirely transferred from the teacher's mind into the students' mind", to the modern model of learning (constructivism).

Constructivism approaches in line with the process skill, integrated skill, and whole language approach. This model of learning is not applied ... , it is applied entirely based on the students' interest, ability, and the need of learning. The aspects of language, language skills, and vocabulary are presented at once, as a unity; considering the level of emotional, cognitive, and socio-cultural development.

In Indonesia, the constructivism learning model applied in science using science, technology, and society approaches has been successful and satisfying (Hidayat, 1996). However, in learning writing Indonesian language, the concepts of constructivism have not been applied. So far, theses and dissertations have not reflected constructivism-oriented learning yet.

This research problem can be formulated as follows: "Can the constructivism learning model improve the students' and teachers' language skills in learning writing Indonesian language?" The problem can be expressed into more operational problems as follows:

- 1) What main problem that is faced by a writer in the writing process of constructivism model?
- 2) What difficulties students encounter in writing?
- 3) Can constructivism model improve the language skills, especially writing skill?
- 4) What important aspects of scientific writing that can be improved by constructivism model?
- 5) How to learn writing based on constructivism learning model?

The aim of this study is to make students understand the importance of writing and are aware that constructivism model can be applied in learning and language skills at school.

- a. Explain the main problem faced by a writer in the writing process of constructivism model.
- b. Describe the difficulties encountered by students in writing.
- c. Explain the relationship between thinking and writing in constructivism model to improve the language skills.
- d. Explain the important aspects in scientific writing.
- e. Compose a writing based on the constructivism learning model.

The advantages of this study are as follows:

- a. Creating an educational network among LPTK (the institution of teachers education), teachers, and students in conducting the improvement of language learning, especially thinking and writing skills in constructivism model as an effort of healing the system of language learning at school.

- b. Giving contribution and solution to gain the optimal language learning process.
- c. Motivating students and fellow teachers to activate writing in constructivism model through the innovations by conducting a class action research in language learning.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study “Learning Writing to Improve the Junior High School Students’ Language Skills through the Application of Constructivism Model in Public Junior High School in Tasikmalaya” was conducted in SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya and SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya from the middle of July to the middle of September 2007. The participants were purposively chosen. The number of junior high school’s teachers who attended the training was 30; 26 teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya and 4 teachers of SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya.

After taking part in the training, those teachers applied the core material of training to their students in each school. The teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya applied it to the students of class VIII J, while the teachers of SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya applied to the students of class VIII C. Each class consist of 40 students. The result of the application, as the impact of the training, was observed by the researcher. It included the pretest, the assessment of student work sheets, and the posttest.

The targets of this study are:

- a. The improvement of knowledge, ability, thinking and writing in constructivism model to solve the educational and language learning problems.
- b. The finding of the way to synchronize the constructivism model of thinking and writing process to improve the learning of language skills at school according to the school's condition and situation.

## **APPLICATION AND RESULT**

In this study, there were an evaluation on the students and an evaluation on the program conducted. Students' evaluation was objectively held over the process and the result. The evaluation on the program was done to know the achievement level of the program's objective.

The evaluation was done before, during, and after the training. The written test was given in the evaluation before the training held, during the training the evaluation was done by observing and assessing the students' work sheets. After that, a written test was given to know the effect of the training.

The progress of students' writing ability, both of class VIII J in SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya and class VIII C SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya, can be seen from the comparison of the pretest and posttest. Here is the average scores of the writing pretest and posttest's.

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Pretest Score</b>	<b>Posttest Score</b>
SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya	66.36	78.97
SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya	63.12	70.27

The table above shows that the pretest average score of class VIII J of SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya is 66.36 and after applying the constructivism learning model, it turns to 78.97. Meanwhile, the pretest average score of class VIII C of SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya is 63.12, and that of the posttest is 70.27. Based on the data, there was a progress in the result of learning writing of the two classes.

The recapitulation of students' average scores based on students work sheets is as follows:

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Cycle I</b>	<b>Cycle II</b>	<b>Cycle III</b>
SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya	71.70	74.68	77.45
SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya	69.75	72.70	74.95

This is the graphic of the pretest and posttest scores:

### **Table 1. Students' Writing Ability of Class VIII SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya**

Based on the pretest and posttest scores of class VIII J of SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya and the students' writing ability shown by the graphic, it can be concluded that the average score of students' ability in identifying and formulating the main ideas before and after the treatment is different. It increases from 63.1 (Fair) to 75.1 (Good). It means that in terms of the contents of writings, they are quite understandable, complete, expressive, in line with the title although they still lack of details. Related to the organization of writing, that is the logical arrangement of main ideas; it shows that the average increases from 72.2 (Fair) to 85.59 (Good). It means that the writings are well-arranged, neat, clear, logical, and quite cohesive and coherent. The mastery of vocabulary also shows a progress. Its average rises from 72.26 (Fair) to 86.2 (Excellent). The data expresses that the vocabulary is varied and effectively used. It means that the students know the word forms and right diction. In terms of the arrangement of words into sentences, its average rises 65.2 to (Fair) to 79.7 (Good). It can be said that the students are able to use and arrange simple sentences with a few mistakes in grammar without blurring the meaning. In fulfilling the requirement of standard words and spelling writing based on the official Indonesian spelling system, the average also increases from 67.7 (Fair) to 76.9 (Good). It means the students know the writing system of words and spelling.



The students' writing ability of class VIII C SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya can be seen on the graphic below.

**Table 2. Students' Writing Ability of Class VIII SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya**

Based on the graphic, it can be seen that related to the content the average turns from 61.7 (Fair) turns to 68,5 (Fair). It means that the contents of students' writing are quite understandable, complete and expressive but they are less in detail. In terms of the organization, the average is also improved from 72.2 (Fair) to 80.2 (Good). It means that the students' writing are well-organized, neat, clear, logically arranged and show quite high cohesion and coherence. Students' vocabulary is also improved. The average raises from 71.8 (Fair) to 79.0 (Good). It can be said that students use a wide range of vocabulary effectively, know the

words forming and right diction. In arranging sentences, the average pretest of 61.5 (Fair) increases to 69.6 (Fair). It shows that students use simple sentences, make a few mistakes in grammar without blurring the meaning. In terms of the writing mechanics, there is also a positive change. The average of pretest 73.5 (Fair) turns to 79.0 (Good) in the posttest. Students know the system of writing words and spelling.

**Table 3. The average of Students' Writing Ability Improvement of Class VIIIJ SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya**

From the data above, the writing ability improvement of Class VIII J SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya can be sequenced as follows:

- |                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| a. The aspect of language     | 23% |
| b. The aspect of organization | 22% |
| c. The aspect of vocabulary   | 22% |
| d. The aspect of content      | 19% |

e. The aspect of writing 14%

The data show that after the constructive model of learning writing is applied, there is a significant improvement in the aspect of language, organization, vocabulary and content.

**Table 4. The average of Students' Writing Ability Improvement of Class VIIIJ SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya**

The writing ability improvement of Class VIII C SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya can be sequenced as follows:

a. The aspect of organization	24%
b. The aspect of language	22%
c. The aspect of vocabulary	20%
d. The aspect of content	19%
e. The aspect of writing	15%

The data show that after the constructive model of learning writing is applied, there is a significant improvement in the aspect of organization, language, vocabulary and content.

### **The t-test result of Class VIII J SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya's writing ability between the pretest and posttest scores.**

The significance scores (two tailed) of the pretest and posttest in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language, words writing, and all aspects of writing ability are 0.000; 0.000; 0.000; 0.000; 0.000; and 0.000, less than the real score 0.05, so the average of content, organization, vocabulary, language, words writing, and all aspects of writing ability are significantly different (real) or there is a real improvement in all aspects of writing ability after the treatment.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings and the analysis of the pretest and posttest in this study, it can be concluded that learning writing in constructivism way applied to the students of Class VIII J SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya and that of Class VIII C SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya:

- a. can entirely improve all aspects of students' writing skill. In general, the students' ability in both classes in two junior high schools mentioned above is improved. In Class VIII J SMP Negeri 2 Tasikmalaya the average of students' writing ability rises from 66.36 to 78.97. Similar to this, the

students' writing ability of Class VIII C SMP Negeri 14 Tasikmalaya is also improved. The average turns from 63.12 to 70.27.

- b. can be accepted by the students as an aid in their learning process. It is proved by the improvement of of students' writing ability before and after the treatment. There is a significant difference.
- c. improves all aspects of writing skills, such as: organization, vocabulary, language, and word forms in students writing.
- d. gives some advantages, such as: training the system of thinking, creating unmonotonous atmosphere of learning writing, enabling students to be creative, and motivating them to write better.
- e. has a weakness in in the aspect of words writing. In general, it has also weaknesses in the learning process: taking more time and requiring practice and adaptation early so that the students are able to learn autonomously and construct the knowledge. Besides, it is only the active students who can get the good level of writing skill.
- f. produces such assessments:
  - 1) In terms of content, students generally have understood it completely and expressively. The content is in line with the title although it is less in detail.
  - 2) In terms of organization, students' writing has been well-organized and clear. The students express a lot of ideas that are logically arranged and quite cohesive.

- 3) In terms of vocabulary, students know a lot of words and use them effectively. They are able to use right diction.
- 4) In terms of sentence arrangement, students make simple sentences with a few mistakes on grammar, but without blurring the meaning.
- 5) In terms of writing, the students generally know the norms of writing.

Based on the conclusion above, there are some suggestions for the teachers of junior high school, headmasters, and educational researchers that have interest in learning writing. The suggestions are as follows:

1. The constructivism learning model is hoped to be an input for teachers, especially the teachers of Indonesian language; so that they can develop their profession ability. However, it should be noted that this model demands the teachers' belief that students can make progress and creative in writing as long as the teachers are active and creative in doing their roles as facilitator and moderator in learning writing.
2. The model is not instant, it needs a quite long process. However, this model will be very useful to help students fulfill what they need to make a writing. Thus, they will be able to produce their own writing, not imitate and copy the the existed ones.
3. The assessment of writing should be separated from that of reading ability and other language skills. It is according to the suggestion to the assessment report published by the Directorate of Junior High School, because writing ability is different from other language ability and skills.

4. Teachers and headmaster should provide students with optimal learning medium, for example a good library and a conducive learning environment to optimize students' knowledge and ability.
5. Teachers should always relate the previous learning material to the material that will be learned by the students to maximize students' power of thinking. Then, the students are asked to map what they have learned in the form of clustering or concept mapping so that they have a complete concept about what they learn and are able to express what they know both in written or oral way well.
6. Researchers who have interest in learning improvement, especially in learning writing should develop this study using class action research and case study so that the students' problems in writing process can be solved in accordance with each school's situation and condition.

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