# IMPROVING STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING NEWS ITEM TEXT BY IMPLEMENTING SILLY NEWS REPORTS GAME

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### *Abstract*

*The tendency to ignore the lesson and make distraction in writing course led to bad result in writing assessment especially in news item text. This research intended to see how silly news reports game improve students' skill in writing news item text particularly in improving students' motivation as interest in writing. This research was a Classroom Action Research (CAR) in three cycles to 37 students at class XII IPA 6 of SMAN 3 Pontianak in academic year 2019/2020. The result of the data collection showed that implementing silly news reports game improved students' skill in writing news item text in terms of writing composition and grammar accuracy on using reported speech, and improved students' motivation as interest in writing. Based on the observation, the highlight of the improvement by the game implementation was on the content of silly news reports game which is ridiculous yet easy to understand supported by the guided question worksheets that made the students able to produce a well-organized writing by considering the composition of the writing such as the organization of the text and the language features used in the news item text. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the teacher implement silly news reports game to teach news item text of writing course.*

***Keywords:*** *Writing, News Item Text, Silly News Reports Game, Classroom Action Research*

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# INTRODUCTION

In teaching and assessing the skill of writing for EFL learners, the teacher needs to put a little more effort than the skills of reading, listening, and speaking. Writing has always been the most problematic issue among both teachers and learners, so the teaching and learning process does not commonly run well. Finding out the most suitable method of teaching is not easy when it comes to dealing with students' behavior in class since the students tend to struggle with their boredom in account of the boring content in the material being taught. In the interview section done by the researcher in SMA N 3 Pontianak, the interviewee (the English teacher) who was in charge in teaching the twelfth-grade students elaborated that the problem was in teaching writing especially for the material of news item text. The students' tendency to be passive and monotonous in the part of word choice when they deal with the activity of writing was the main problem found. It seemed that the students were afraid of doing something wrong in their writing that would affect in bad scores.

In addition, from the students' perspective based on the small interview done with several students, the researcher found out that most of the students had problems in writing news item text because the content of text was not as light and interesting as the other genres of text have. The students mostly elaborated that they had problems on using reported speech as one the language features used in news item text, and the motivation in composing their writing of news item text. The students might lose their interest in writing news item text since they were not provided with something new and fresh which should have been considered as an up-to-date trend. The students' interest might affect their willingness in joining the course especially for writing news item text which is generally thought as something difficult and boring. Thirty-five out of thirty-seven students said that they needed fun activity in the form of game as the main activity in learning process while the other two students did not mention any fun activity because of the lack of their English proficiency that they were afraid of not being able to contribute in the activity actively as expected.

In order to help the teacher in solving the problem, the researcher had planned to implement a game as a medium of teaching in order to catch the students' interest that was expected to result in an ideal writing. According to Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006), language is hard work. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. Games also help the learners experience language rather than merely study it. Therefore, in order to provide a suitable game to implement with the needs of improving students' skill in writing news item text, the researcher had considered and picked a game called 'Silly News Reports'.

Silly news reports game is basically a variation of newscast activity in teaching news item text. Hedge (2002) views a newscast activity as an activity

that lets the students write a news story based on the information they obtain from the news records and headline news or short newspaper articles as sources. While, in silly news reports game, the students are provided funny content that makes it way more interesting in doing newscast activity in writing news item text. Based on a research conducted by Florensy and Saun (2014), the newscast activity helps the students organize the ideas in producing a news item text that provides the students with another experience of writing because the students are given the opportunity for writing in order to perform with a wide variety of roles and tasks such as being a journalist, a news anchor or even an informant.

Therefore, in order to solve the problem, the researcher collaborated with the English teacher who was in charge to teach the class targeted, by designing lesson plans which silly news report game mostly contributed in it so that the students would have their interest in writing news item text. The research was conducted as a classroom action research as the design reflecting to the research problem since the objective of doing this research was to solve the problem found in the classroom. In addition, in implementing this research, the researcher had planned to implement the research using genre-based approach as the design of the lesson plan combined with silly news report game at the twelfth grade students, class XII Science 6 of SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak in academic year 2019/2020.

**METHOD**

By the intention of improving students' writing of news item text through silly news report game, classroom action research has to be the most suitable research method which has a purpose to solve classroom problems and is commonly conducted by teachers. Burns (2010) states that CAR is a method that has a purpose in solving problems that are specific and practical so that the processes are only well-applied in certain situations. She also adds a statement that CAR lets teachers find out what actually becomes the problems and the ways to solve it instead of waiting for the order of the administrators. Since the purpose of this research is to solve the classroom problem in writing news item text, the researcher decided to set CAR as the design of the research. CAR can be beneficial not only on teacher's side, but also students' side. CAR concerns with outflow, difficulty or area of collective interest. The post effect of implementing CAR as a research design does not stop at improving teacher's skills shown on how they are able to reproduce their materials and develop a better communication. It also impacts on the professionalism of the teachers that sets the school reputation better.

This research let the researcher become the collaborator while the teacher of this subject was the one who implemented the researcher's plan. The researcher had chosen the students of the twelfth grade in SMAN 3 Pontianak. The first thing to do by the researcher was explaining the technique to make

sure that the implementation run appropriately. While the teacher was implementing the technique in class, the researcher did some observation and note taking to make sure that every plan designed would run as expected.

The procedures of classroom action research include planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The four stages can be represented as follows:
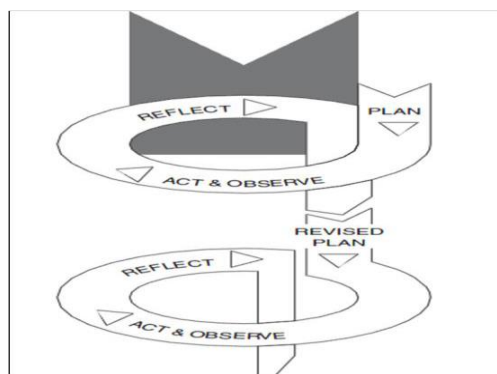


Figure 1. The cycle of classroom action research

The first stage is planning. In this research, the researcher and the teacher collaborated in preparing for the research implementation, such as designing lesson plan, choosing the media and the materials that were to be implemented in teaching writing news item text to the students. Lesson plan, media, and materials were also noted on the observation checklists and field note.

After the planning stage, the teacher and the researcher collaborated and implemented the lesson plan that had been prepared for the conduction. The strategy that was used in the lesson plan was integrated with the genre-based approach in implementing silly news reports game. The teacher handled the class for the teaching and learning process as both a moderator and a facilitator while the researcher acted as an observer.

The third stage is observing. In this section, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process which had been implemented in the application of silly news reports game by both the students and the teacher. The researcher observed the teaching learning process by evaluating the research based on the observation checklist and field notes taken during the lesson. The researcher did the observation for the student writing performance guided from the individual assessment that had been scored by the teacher. After that, the researcher coded the data, and then compared the data, buildings meanings and interpretations, and reported the outcomes (Burns, 2010).

The fourth stage is reflecting. The teacher and the researcher identified current challenges in analysing the data, and listed difficult questions in

implementing silly news reports game to improve student writing of news item text. After knowing the answers, the researcher discussed it with the teacher whether the criteria of success were satisfying and evaluated it for the next cycles in order to ease and shorten when conducting the research. Nugent, Malik, Holingsworth (2012, p.45) state that, "After collecting data, take a close look, analyse the information, and share the results. Examine the data to find themes and patterns of behaviour and performance that answer your research question." After this reflection stage, the researcher analysed the result.

The subject of this research included the students of the class to be implemented and the teacher who collaborated with the researcher in conducting the research. The research was conducted to the twelfth-grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak in academic year 2019/2020. The subject of this research was the students in class XII IPA 6 that consists of 37 students. They were 23 female and 14 male students. The researcher collaborated with the English teacher of SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak who is in charge to teach the students of XII IPA 6.

To analyse data, the researcher decided the technique. It was a combination of qualitative and quantitative data analysis The observation checklists technique was done in every meeting in order to record students' attitude and the development in writing news item text through silly news report game. Here, in analyzing the data, the researcher analyzed the date qualitatively by using coding technique. Burns (2010) states that coding data looks for the main themes or concepts that help to throw light on the research questions, puzzles, or dilemmas.

In analyzing the qualitative data, the researcher will follow up three steps in analyzing qualitative data from Burns (2010). The first step is organizing the data, in this step the researcher and the teacher will collect and organize the data in the form of field note and observation checklist table to record any activities of students and teacher in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, the researcher also will interview the students and it will be in a summary form. The second stage is description. In this stage the researcher will describe any data which already collect from teaching and learning process and transcript the data from interview with the students. The last step is interpretation. In this step the researcher will analyse the data through narrative descriptive analysis to narrate the data. After doing those steps, the researcher will conclude all the data about the study. In order to get the greater confidence with the research findings, the researcher elaborated the data analysis which was taken from both results, writing tasks as the secondary data and the observation as the primary data. From the writing test, the writer counted the mean score of the student writing test.

The formula of individual score:

X    = obtained score x 100
          Maximum score

The formula of average classroom score:
M        = mean score (the average of students' score)
ΣM       = total
N        = the number of students

<center>Table 1. Score Qualification (Singh, 2006)</center>

| Total score | Qualification |
|---|---|
| 80-100 | Good to Excellent |
| 70-79 | Average to Good |
| 60-69 | Average |
| 50-69 | Poor to Average |
| 0-49 | Poor |

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**
**Findings**
The researcher used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) in order to create changes and improvements on the students' writing of news item text toward the twelfth grade students of science six in SMA Negeri 3 Pontianak. As stated in the first chapter, in the background of the research, the students had problem in the writing composition due to the lack of interest in writing especially in the lesson of news item text that affected the lack of student comprehension on how to remake a reported speech sentence from a direct speech sentence as one of the language features used in the news item text. The problem appeared because the lesson ran monotonously without any variation of activities provided by the teacher. That caused the students to show their boredom in writing news item text that made the students score of writing assessment mostly poor.

After the implementation of the research design, the researcher found that there were changes considered as improvement of the student behaviour that was shown based on the observation during the lesson resulted in the improved score in the writing compared from one cycle to another cycle. The improvement of the students' writing composition was affected by the activities provided through the implementation of silly news reports game. The activity of filling out information gained from the video of silly news report provided by the teacher gave contribution on the improvement on the students in producing writing. While the activity of changing the form of direct quotation to reported speech gave impact on the student grammatical accuracy. In addition, the activity of creating a plot twist on the silly news video by the students gave contribution in the improvement of student interest.

**Implementing Silly News Reports Game in Writing News Item Text improved students in writing composition**

The application of silly news reports game as the medium of teaching news item text resulted in the improvement of student writing composition which was specifically gained through the activity of filling out information required on student worksheet. In filling out the worksheet with the information required while watching the silly news video provided by the teacher made the students pay attention on constructing sentences since they did not copy and paste what was on the video to the worksheet they had but they were indirectly demanded to summarize the script of the news video with their own words. The students were also helped with the teacher's guidance on the script in which the teacher provided some phrases to begin the sentence.

The improvement can be shown from one cycle to another cycle. Based on the data analysis of the student individual writing score, it can be seen that the changes of the worksheet design and the media used gave contribution to the student writing. In cycle one, in which the students were given blank worksheet without guided questions and the media used was radio news, the students got lost of the point they would write on the worksheet. As a result, there were only 46% of 37 students in total could pass the minimum score criteria of the student individual writing, while the other 54% of the students got below 75 of score. However, after the second cycle implementation, in which the worksheet was upgraded with guided questions and the media used was a video news, the students score of individual writing were significantly increasing, resulting in the improvement that 92% of students had passed the minimum score criteria. By analyzing the problem appeared from the second cycle, the worksheet of guided questions was upgraded, and the topic of the discussion was changed. Then, in the third cycle implementation, the student individual writing got perfectly improved because 100% of the student writing had passed the minimum score criteria.

Since the syllabus of the most current curriculum states that the goal of the writing course is the students will be able to identify and differentiate the social function, structures, and language features of the material being taught, the goal of using the controlled to free approach has done very well in which according to Raimes (2002), the writers are initially practiced to imitate grammatically, for instance, the writers are asked to change the questions to statements, or present tense to past tense in which the approach definitely suits the writing of news item text since there are some changes in reported speech from a direct quotation so this controlled composition made the writers' possibility of making error less. In conclusion, the approach used in teaching and assessing writing for this research that is controlled-to-free approach, significantly contributed to the incredible result got after the implementation.

**Implementing Silly News Reports Game in Writing News Item Text improved students to use reported speech**

When filling out information on the worksheet, the students learnt to construct sentences in a form of summary and retell it by their own words. By doing so, the students got used to retelling one's statement that made it easier for them to change the form of direct sentence to indirect sentence. It could be seen on the student writing in which the students had no problems in the changes of pronoun and tenses in the reported speech. Based on the observation of the researcher analysis, the student grammatical error in the first cycle was the main problem since the students who got below the criteria of passing the score for grammar point was 90% because there were only four students who had passed the minimum score criteria for grammar accuracy point. As a reflection, because both collaborators decided to make the intense discussion in the student circle, so it was decided to change the group work into pair work. The approach was done very well that the improvement was incredibly high. There were 54% of 37 students who passed the minimum score criteria from 10% in the previous cycle. Then, when the topic of the lesson was changed into a lighter one, the result in the third cycle was there were 95% of students had passed the minimum point of grammar accuracy.

The four stages according to Swales (1990) in learning a certain text genre, made the students learn in the best way since the students have been through systematical process of genre-based approach. Because one of the problems faced by the students before the research implementation was lack of grammatical mastery, the approach applied could give the detailed and more comprehensive way how it is done.

**Implementing Silly News Reports Game in Writing News Item Text improved students' interest in writing**
The application of silly news reports game created a fine atmosphere in the teaching and learning process of writing course. The students showed their interest in writing after the implementation of the game because the content had attracted them to pay more attention on the lesson. The activity of creating a plot twist on the silly news video gave much contribution to the student interest since the students needed to understand the topic and the content of the text so that the plot twist they created was related to the news reported. The interest of students could be seen to the length of their writing and the result of their writing.

Based on the interview section done with 10 students and the teacher after the implementation of the first cycle, 60% of the interviewees said that the main activity was a little bit difficult to do because according to them, they had weakness in listening in which the media used was listening audio. In addition, 20% said that it was difficult to do because they needed to fill out the worksheet which had no specific question, so they got lost whenever they wanted to write the information. However, the other 20% had no difficulties in doing the activity and they just enjoyed the class. Overall, 80% said that they got interested with the lesson because there was an activity of creating

silly news plot twist because they discussed a lot to create the funniest plot twist of the story. The other 20% said they could not find any interest because they had not much contributions in the class because they said that they could rely on their friends since it was a group work.

Meanwhile, based on the interview done after the implementation of cycle two and cycle three, the difficulties of doing the activity could be considered low in student perspective. 100% of the interviewees had not much hard time in doing the activity because the focus was intense since they worked in a much smaller circle that could made them concentrated. However, 50% said that the atmosphere of the class was not better than the previous meeting. It could be seen indirectly during the lesson in which the students did not respond too much to the topic of the lesson. 70% said that they found the lesson interest while the 30% said it was interesting but not as good as the previous lesson. Unexpectedly, in the last cycle interview section, with the same number of interviewees, 10 students and a teacher, 100% said that the lesson of the day was much better than the other previous meetings in terms of activity and atmosphere during the lesson which according to them, the topic was much easier to understand so they could relate the topic easily that made them easy to make the plot twist story of the silly news report and it made the response of the other students was better.

In conclusion, the statement of Wright et al (2006) that the strength of the game comparing to the others is that this game can effectively attract the students' interest in learning news item text that is initially considered as something boring could be proven true by seeing the result of the student behaviour that is considered motivated. In addition, the result of the students that show the phase of interest based on the interview of 10 students can be concluded that 30% of the students are in the phase of maintained situational interest, 50% are in the phase of emerging individual interest, while the other 20% are in the well-developed individual interest.

**Discussion**
This research was conducted in three cycles in which each cycle had planning stage, acting stage, observing stage and reflecting stage. There was one meeting in every cycle which had 2 x 45 minutes of duration. The teaching and learning process in every cycle made a big improvement especially in student behaviour, writing composition, and the use of reported speech in writing the news item text which realized the aims of this research in solving the problem that had occurred in the class before the implementation of the research. In this research, the researcher acted as the collaborator that helped the teacher arrange the lesson plan, choose the media, techniques and activities, and observe the teaching learning process. The process of the teaching learning process was observed through the research technique, observation and analysis of students' individual writing score, with some tools, they were observation checklists, field note, and writing test.

According to the collected data, student behaviour had made a change comparing to the previous teaching and learning before the research implementation, so did the student writing composition including the use of reported speech in news item text. The students did not show lack of motivation and passiveness while the implementation of silly news reports game was running. The result of the research showed that the more the students get excited and comfortable during the lesson, the better performance of writing they get. The result showed the strength of the game in which the game can effectively attract the students' interest in learning news item text that is initially considered as something boring (Wright et al, 2006). The atmosphere in the implementation of the game created students' excitement that made them interested in writing news item text. The students learned more to empower their friends' strength that made them easier to master what their friends had mastered. The students got improved when they were excited and felt more comfortable with the process of learning especially when the game of silly news reports was being implemented. The atmosphere created by the game made the students able to focus yet feel ease. It means that the silly news reports game enabled the students explore their creativity in writing while they could have fun in doing a thing that was initially difficult for them. These results had confirmed the statement of Florensy and Saun (2014) that silly news reports game could make the atmosphere of the class livelier as the students actively involved in the teaching and learning process. As students' participation improves, it motivates the students to write more.

Based on the observation data, the weakness of applying this research was the media chosen of playing the game, so the first cycle of implementation did not give much contribution on the students writing since the media applied was a listening audio of a news from the radio. However, the problem could be solved by the collaborators by providing new media for playing the game in each cycle that had the good ending through video that contained light content and funny interview section in it. While, based on the non-observation data, the students' individual writing score showed that there were improvements from one cycle to another cycle that were constantly increasing.

The researcher also found two main patterns in conducting the research, they are strategy of learning and students' behaviour. Strategy of learning here can indirectly be seen by the way of students making their own way to writing news item text while being implemented the silly news reports game especially while they were collaborating with their friends during the game implementation. For example, the students utilized their friends in doing the activity of the game by dividing them into job description for each member so that the collaboration was done well. Because collecting information and rewriting it in a form of summary are considered multi-tasking, the students in group empowered each member so that the work would be done

effectively and efficiently such as filling out information based on the guided questions, changing the form of direct speech into indirect speech, and creating the silly plot twist over the news. In addition, according to Firkins, Forey, and Sengupta (2007), genre-based text as the model of teaching and learning can be a detailed and more comprehensive way how it is done. As there were stages done through the genre based-text approach, the student understanding of the text could be seen by the result of their writing. In conclusion, the game of silly news reports made the students realize that the multi-tasking work can be done well if the utilization of members in the group can result in the even distribution of comprehension so that the result of individual writing would be better since the topic could be understood well. By sharing thoughts to the group, misinterpretation could be avoided by the students because there were discussions about the topic that made them have the same thought of the topic being discussed. Based on the observation checklists and field notes data in every cycle of the research implementation, the researcher found some positive behaviors of the students during the lesson. The students tended to be more active by showing their excitement. First thing was that they got motivated by the hook of the teacher when the teacher asked about their dream for the future. The teacher then related and told the students that learning news item might be the way to see the students' potential of becoming a news anchor, reporter, or even journalist. In the implementation of the game, the students were practiced more in the simulation of being a journalist since the focus of the research was on writing news item text. The students also got more active when doing grammar stuff in a fun way because they did not have to worry to make mistakes since they had their friends help each other in retelling one's statement activity. The students also got excited in doing their best in the game of silly news reports because it was fun to create a silly plot twist based on their own creativity without having to be in a challenge of being the best over their friends but just to have fun. When students learn because they found it interesting, they will likely pay more attention to the material than if they learn from effort (Hidi and Renninger, 2006). Therefore, the result of the student individual writing confirmed the statement.

The students' positive behaviors were also shown when the activity of journalist writing was being done that they got motivated to write because the topic was well understood after the group's work that made them confident enough to put their ideas on their own writing. In conclusion, the activity of silly news reports game created fine atmosphere that improved the students' behaviors such as activeness, excitement, and high motivation. Therefore, the improvement of the students' performance was significantly improved from one cycle to another cycle and it applied on each cycle.

**Table 2: Student Mean Score of Each Cycle**

| Cycle | Student Average Score | Increase from the previous Cycle | Classification |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 70.14 | - | Average to Good |
| 2 | 80.62 | 10.48 | Good to Excellent |
| 3 | 88.65 | 8.03 | Good to Excellent |

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

It can be concluded that the implementation of silly news reports game improved students' skill in writing news item text.The process that had appeared supported by the data during the implementation of the research had proved that the students' skill in writing news item text had constantly improved from one cycle to another cycle. The game of silly news reports is incredibly useful to enhance the students' motivation to write news item text since it is considered interesting and fun for the teaching and learning activity which is able to make the students more active in joining the course. On account of students' activeness, it is easier for the teacher to lead the students to the learning material, so the instruction could be delivered well. These points had led the students' individual writing score were getting higher from one to another cycle.

### Suggestion

Silly news reports game is recommended for the English teacher to implement not only to improve the students' writing skill, but also the other three skills of English as well. Before beginning the class, giving motivation to the students about the objective of the learning and the relation to the daily life and future is needed to enhance the students' motivation and interest to study. Video as the media is recommended for the game since the activity of collecting information could be well done by providing news in a form of video rather than listening audio. The topic to choose for the news to be discussed should be light and updated so that the students could relate and understand the topic well. The number of members in one group would be much better with three to four members because if the students work in a big number of people, there is at least one member who will not give any contribution on the work because there are friends to do the work. Meanwhile, if the work is done in pairs, the individual writing of the students will not be various but similar to their pair since they put their idea intensely to each other that result in a good comprehension yet monotonous writing. In providing worksheet for the students to collect information, there should be tables with guided questions and introductory phrase to begin the sentence of the answer so that the students do not get lost when putting their idea on words. If needed, there should not be any lecture during the lesson because

instruction is enough for the students to explore by themselves. Asking the students about their obstacles of the activity is required so that the teacher could improve the technique for the implementation.

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