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IMPROVING TEACHERS' ACADEMIC WRITING PROFICIENCY IN MEMPAWAH THROUGH MGMP TRAINING: ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This action research-based writing training is part of a research project organized by instructors in the field of social studies at the Faculty of Teacher Training, Tanjungpura University. The training applied an action research methodology, involving multiple cycles, each encompassing planning, execution, observation, and reflection stages. This particular approach was selected to encourage participants to share their insights for the purpose of enhancing the training's quality. The primary objective of this research was to gather feedback from teachers, along with their recommendations, to improve the effectiveness of academic writing training that is rooted in action research. The study involved 40 secondary school teachers who were in a group of MGMP Mempawah and took place at SMPN 1 Mempawah. Data was collected through the use of an open-ended questionnaire. The findings indicated that teachers encountered difficulties in finding enough time for writing and accessing online resources. As a result, they suggested extending the duration of the training. Furthermore, they proposed the provision of more comprehensive information and examples for each section of the research article. Finally, it was noted that teachers had a positive perception of the training.

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INTRODUCTION

This research highlights the issue of teachers' lack of academic writing proficiency. Previous researchers have attributed the deficiency in a teacher's writing ability to several factors, including a lack of information and socialization, low motivation among teachers to write, limited skills in using media, and insufficient opportunities for writing (Anugraheni, 2021). Furthermore, teachers primarily focus on their role as educators, making it challenging for them to gain direct experience in writing (Zainuddin, Harahap, & Naldi, 2023). Limitations in writing can impede Indonesian teachers from advancing to the III/b pay grade. This is based on the Decree of the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia No. 16 of 2009, which stipulates that a teacher must meet publication prerequisites to advance to the III/b pay grade (Adek, Pangesti, Nabila, & Zulfikarni, 2023).

In accordance with the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, and

the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards, a teacher is an individual who possesses professional educational qualifications, at least a Bachelor's or Diploma IV (S1/D-IV) in a relevant field, and must also have the necessary competencies as an educator (Qomariyah, 2015). The competencies required of teachers consist of pedagogical competence, social competence, personality competence, and professionalism competence (Sodiq, Suryadi, & Ahmad, 2014). To fulfill the professional competence for teachers, it can be developed through academic writing, which can be realized through scholarly activities (Yulianto, 2021).

To address these issues, an academic writing training program for teachers is necessary to equip them with the competence to write scholarly works effectively (Handayani & Dewi, 2019). Academic writing training for teachers aims to assist educators in acquiring knowledge and experience in writing, resulting in scholarly works that enhance a teacher's professionalism (Bachtiar & Nurocmah, 2021). It is also designed to build a social network among teachers, within which they can share knowledge and skills related to writing. This writing training program is implemented as a realization of the cultural capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (Huang, 2019), cultural capital comprises elements of specific knowledge, skills, and social experience.

In Indonesia, there is an organization for the teaching profession that serves as a platform for educators to develop their knowledge, skills, and professionalism, known as MGMP or Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (Najri, 2020). MGMP aims to provide knowledge and skills to enhance teachers' professionalism, in line with Republic of Indonesia Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. This is realized through various activities, including programs, training, and seminars (Najri, 2020). Previous researchers have stated that the seminars and training programs conducted by MGMP are less effective (Ma'rifatani, 2014). This is evidenced by the centralized nature of training activities, limiting teachers' participation, thereby narrowing their opportunities to acquire additional information for knowledge and skill development (Alimin, Hartati, & Simarmata, 2020). Therefore, for the benefits of training to be maximized, it is necessary to have training that provides access and opportunities for teachers to actively participate in the training from start to finish, allowing knowledge, skills, and experience to be fully conveyed to educators (Allela, Ogange, Junaid, & Charles, 2020). Consistent with the research of Handayani & Dewi (2019), training can be implemented within action research because researchers and teachers can collaborate, fostering active teacher participation. Action research allows for cooperation, collaboration, and participant involvement, making them key actors in situations to address problems, ultimately generating knowledge to bring about positive change and improvement in the social context (Burns, 2015). Action research involves stages such as exploration, identification, data collection, analysis, planning, action, and evaluation (Burns, 2015).

Previous research conducted academic writing training for teachers based on action research in the classroom. Supriyanto (2017) conducted action research with two cycles. In the first cycle, the researcher identified the problem focus for investigation, followed by seeking relevant theories used to address the existing issues. Subsequently, the researcher formulated questions related to the problems, which were used to gather more specific data or information for the study. The collected data were then analyzed. In the second cycle, the researcher made plans related to the preparation of activities, followed by taking action based on the planning. The results of the implementation were then analyzed to provide answers to the existing problems. These answers also served as a basis for reflection and evaluation for improvement.

Furthermore, academic writing training for teachers at SDN Kebon Pala 12 Pagi, East Jakarta, conducted by Handayani & Dewi (2019) is divided into three stages: the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the evaluation stage. In the preparation stage, a survey is conducted to identify the issues, select the target location, and communicate with the partner school to establish cooperation. Next, in the implementation stage, teachers are provided with an understanding of academic writing, followed by instruction on publication. Finally, teachers are asked to create an academic work under the guidance of the researchers. The last stage involves evaluating the activities conducted with the teachers.

Based on previous research, it has been found that classroom action research plays a significant role in helping teachers address issues related to academic writing. Prior research has also provided an overview of action research, where training involves multiple parties, such as researchers and teachers, collaborating and actively participating in the training process, while granting teachers the opportunity to engage in a democratic manner during training. This approach can aid teachers in better

comprehending the material and gaining direct experience in writing. Action research-based academic writing training also assists teachers in acquiring knowledge and skills that are beneficial for enhancing their professionalism. Given the benefits of previous research, the researcher is interested in conducting a new action research study to explore the understanding and perceptions of teachers regarding writing in Mempawah.

METHOD

This research is an action research-based writing training. This action research was conducted in collaboration with the MGMP of Mempawah Regency, located in West Kalimantan. The training activities were conducted at SMP 1 Siantan School in Mempawah Regency. The participants in this research included 40 teachers who positively responded to the invitations extended by the researcher. The action research design consisted of two cycles, with each cycle encompassing several stages, including planning, implementation, observation, and reflection (Burns, 2015; Rusino, 2021; Supriyanto, 2009).

In Cycle 1, the researchers initiated exploration and identification to address the issue of teachers' insufficient academic writing proficiency. They reviewed previous research attributing deficiencies to various factors and acknowledged the potential impact on teachers' career advancement. The team collected data on factors contributing to writing deficiencies and scrutinized the role of academic writing in fulfilling professional competencies. Subsequently, patterns and key issues in academic writing were identified. Plans were then formulated for an academic writing training program, which was implemented with a focus on building knowledge, skills, and social networks among educators. In the evaluation process, the researchers assessed the training program's effectiveness, collected feedback from teachers about their experiences and learning, and identified areas for improvement based on insights gained from the first cycle.

In Cycle 2, the researchers commenced with reflection and refinement, considering outcomes and feedback from the initial cycle. The training program was then adjusted based on lessons learned and suggestions, with specific goals set for the second cycle. Implementation followed, emphasizing active teacher participation and collaboration. The researchers observed teachers' engagement and progress, monitoring changes in their understanding and perceptions of writing. During the evaluation stage, the overall impact and effectiveness of the refined training were assessed, and feedback on improvements compared to the first cycle was collected. The final step involved reflection on the entire action research process, summarizing key findings and contributions, and considering implications for future academic writing training programs.

Throughout both cycles, the data collection tool employed was a questionnaire with open-ended questions. The questionnaire included five themes aimed at understanding challenges teachers face in writing, the obstacles encountered, participants' perspectives on the training with feedback for future improvement, an evaluation of perceived abilities after training, and participants' perceptions of the training's effectiveness. Post data collection, a comprehensive thematic analysis will be conducted to derive meaningful insights from the gathered information. In line with the advice from Heriyanto (2018), the thematic analysis technique is suitable for research that explores a problem by identifying patterns within the research subject. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method that systematically and comprehensively groups themes in the research (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Thematic analysis involves several stages, including reading transcripts, creating codes, searching for themes, critically reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing the analysis results (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this research, two cycles were conducted. The first cycle took place before the training began. In this cycle, participants were given open-ended questionnaires to obtain relevant answers for the research. The dominant responses to the given questionnaires were as follows: In the first theme, participants predominantly expressed a lack of time for writing activities. This was attributed to the teachers' focus on teaching students, as one participant stated, "We feel like we don't have enough time to write, making it difficult for us to balance teaching and writing." In the second theme, the dominant

response from participants was the "lack of information and guidance in writing," with other responses mentioning difficulties in accessing reading materials. Regarding the third theme, participants suggested that during the training, facilitators should provide concrete examples of academic writing. A teacher added that facilitators should give examples for different sections of academic papers, such as the introduction, literature review, research methodology, results and discussion, as well as the reference list. Furthermore, the teachers requested direct guidance from the facilitators and an extension of the training duration to receive feedback on their writing, enabling them to identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, after completing the first cycle, the researchers gathered feedback provided by the participants. Subsequently, the researchers developed a customized design based on the feedback received from the participants. This design was then implemented during the training. During the training, facilitators provided materials along with concrete examples related to academic writing. Additionally, they supplied resources and media to aid in academic writing. Participants democratically created academic papers, receiving personal guidance from the facilitators.

After the training, questionnaires were administered again to address themes four and five, as a form of evaluating the participants' abilities after the training and assessing the effectiveness of the research-based action training. In the first theme of this cycle, participants emphasized the completeness of the information they received during the training, which saved them time. One participant said, "We found the training very helpful; the provided information was comprehensive, from materials to clear examples of the introduction, literature review, methodology, and more that can be used as references for future writing." Another theme focused on the benefits of supporting media for academic writing. A teacher mentioned, "With Google Scholar, I can easily find references for my writing, which saves me time. Furthermore, the use of applications like Mendeley helps me manage my references more efficiently. The fifth theme addressed the effectiveness of the training conducted by the facilitators. The dominant response from participants was that they felt they had gained knowledge and skills in writing. Another participant stated that direct involvement helped shape their writing experience, and the facilitators' engagement in providing feedback on the participants' writing improved the teachers' writing skills. As a result, this training can be considered effective and beneficial for the teachers' career development.

Based on the research findings, it is evident that research-based action training can assist participants in improving their academic writing skills. This aligns with the research conducted by Handayani & Dewi, (2019); Supriyanto, (2017). In this study, participants were given the opportunity to directly engage in training activities, enabling them to acquire knowledge firsthand (Alimin et al., 2020). As a result, participants gained experience, information, and enhanced writing skills (Allela et al., 2020). The training received positive responses from the participants, as they were able to learn about guidelines and procedures for writing, as well as relevant tools and resources for writing. This is instrumental in developing teachers' writing skills. The development of teachers' writing skills can contribute to meeting the competencies required to become professional educators and can be beneficial for career advancement (Bachtiar & Nurocmah, 2021; Yulianto, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research addresses the issue of teachers' limited abilities in academic writing. Therefore, the objective of this study is to provide research-based action training in academic writing to teachers. The research employed open-ended questionnaires, allowing for more specific responses to the research questions. The results of this study reflect teachers' perspectives on the action research-based academic writing training. The implementation of the training involved facilitators and participants working together democratically to enhance their writing skills. After completing the training, participants exhibited a positive response, including increased knowledge and skills in writing. The research proceeded smoothly according to the researcher's design, enabling teachers to experience the benefits of the training in terms of improving their writing skills. This, in turn, contributes to meeting the competencies required to become professional educators and advancing their careers.

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