



# Increasing Students Writing Skill to Construct Sentences Through Competitive Writing Challenge Game

*Meningkatkan Keterampilan Menulis Siswa Dengan Membangun Kalimat Melalui Permainan Tantangan Menulis Kompetitif*

Muh. Al Fachrizah Fitra\*, Kisman Salija, Haryanto Atmowardoyo

Department of English Education Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

\*Penulis Koresponden: [muhalfachrizahfitra@gmail.com](mailto:muhalfachrizahfitra@gmail.com)

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini yakni mengkaji dua kasus; (1) permainan tantangan menulis kompetitif dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa, (2) aspek permainan yang mempengaruhi permainan tantangan menulis kompetitif. Penelitian ini menerapkan penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif yang mengkaji tentang meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa dengan membangun kalimat dan mencari tahu aspek dari permainan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian quasi eksperimen dan purposive sampling untuk mengumpulkan data dari populasi. Terdapat 28 siswa yang berpartisipasi sebagai sampel dan penelitian ini diadakan di UPT SPF Sekolah Dasar Inpres Tamalanrea 6 Makassar. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan kemampuan menulis siswa melalui permainan tantangan menulis kompetitif. Ada 5 aspek permainan yang mempengaruhi peningkatan menulis siswa saat melakukan permainan tantangan menulis kompetitif yakni, perkembangan fisik atau motorik, kemampuan berpikir, bahasa, emosi dan sosialisasi. Hasil penelitian ini dapat menjadi refleksi untuk siswa-siswi agar supaya lebih meningkatkan kemampuan menulis kalimat berdasarkan rumus tata bahasa yang benar.

**Kata Kunci:** Menulis, Permainan, Aspek, Tantangan Menulis Kompetitif

## ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to examine two cases; (1) Competitive Writing Challenge game can increase students writing skill, (2) aspects of games that affect Competitive Writing Challenge games. This research applied quantitative and qualitative research that examined increasing students writing skill to construct sentences and found out the aspects of game. This research is kind of research of quasi experimental design and purposive sampling to collect data from the population. There were 28 students who participated as a sample and this research was held at UPT SPF SD Inpres Tamalanrea 6 Makassar. The results of this research indicate that there is an increase in students writing skill through Competitive Writing Challenge game. There were 5 aspects of game that affect the improvement of students writing when applying Competitive Writing Challenge game, namely, Physical or motor development, Cognitive or Thinking skill, Language, Emotion and Socialization. The results of this research can be a reflection for students to further increase their ability to construct sentences based on correct grammatical formulas.

**Keywords:** Writing, Game, Aspect, Competitive Writing Challenge

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English language subject is a foreign language that is considered important for the purposes of science, technology, and arts and culture, as well as the development of relations between nations in the world. For this reason, English language subject starting from the 1994 basic curriculum, the 2004 curriculum, and the 2006 basic education curriculum, English language subject is listed as one of the subjects in elementary schools which are held as local content.

Based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture number 060/U/1993, who has been being the authority to determine a subject as local content is the Head of the Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture (now Ministry of National Education) level II (City or Regency) with the approval of the Regional office provided that local content in the form of English language subject is intended for provided competence to understand oral and written information and simple expressions or through sentences. The Decree also states that English language subject in Elementary schools can be taught in grade IV.

So, it is only focused on under-aged students on how to build a simple sentence with basic English sentence structure and correct preparation rules, where the most basic English sentence structure usually consists of 3 parts, namely subject, predicate and object. That is a simple way to build a simple sentence in order using English language.

Based on the quote from Soemarmo Markam (2005) explained that *"Writing does not only express in the form of symbols, but also in the form of images"*. It is mentioned in the quote that writing is not only in the form of symbols but also in the form of images, which means it will require a lot of thought to express an idea of what crosses the students' brain. So, it will help students improve writing skills through games to increasing students' feelings and ideas with image media to build sentences. Build a sentence is not easy enough, sentence structure refers to the physical nature of the sentence and how the elements of the sentence are presented.

Myklebust, 1973; Houck and Billingsley, 1989; Barenbaum and Newcomer, 1991; stated that composing sentences in English is one central integral of writing which most of students struggle. (Kame'enul

and Simmons, 1990; Datchuk and Kubina, 2012) poorly developed sentence-level composition abilities inhibit more complex writing assignment and thus server as a barrier to capable written interpretation. Constructing a sentence is a linguistically claiming assignment where students must use the grammatical knowledge to set up the text by linking the words into groups which is not only convey intended meaning, but grammatically acceptable too (Saddler; 2012).

Writing is an attempt to describe thoughts, ideas, feelings in the form of symbols. That symbol means to assigned the symbol of the writing language scheme. The means of communication is approximated as the written language. The definition of writing above is the first understanding of writing was put forward by Hargrove and Pottet which was conveyed in Abdurrahman, where *"writing is attempt to describe thoughts, ideas, feelings in the form of symbol"* (1998). That was said as a symbol cause in the past time, writing was not just arranged in word order but in ancient times it could also be made in the form of making reliefs, making inscriptions and much more. It is only recently that written forms of communication can be written in letter symbols and become a sentence. As said by Abdurrahman (1989) that meant *"writing is a scheme of communication structure. The essence of writing is being able to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas through graphic language symbols so that they can be easily understood by others"*.

In writing, of course, there are many benefits to be had to know the benefits that exist in writing but many students are not aware of it. There are benefits to writing according to Horiston in Darmadi (1996 : 3-4), including: 1) Writing activities is as a means to be able to find something, in the sense of being able to raise ideas and also information that is in our subconscious; 2) Writing activities can bring up a new idea; 3) Writing activities can train the ability to organize and also clarify various concepts or ideas that we have; 4) Writing activities can train someone's objective attitude; 5) Writing activities can help us to practice solving several problems at once; 6) Writing activities in a field of science will enable us to be active and not only to be recipients of information.

When students have these combinations and skills, then they will then be free to apply their techniques and abilities in various situations. This is especially true and necessary for students with dyslexia and/or

dysgraphs who compensates for processing inefficiencies in the language domain especially in constructing a good and correct sentence in English.

## 2. RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1. Writing

Writing is one aspect of language skills that are programmed for the specific purpose of using language. According to Henry Guntur Tarigan (2008) *“writing is a process of describing a language so that the message conveyed by the author can be understood by the reader”*. While in the Oxford Dictionary, *“writing is produced something in written form so that the people can read, perform or use it”*. Which statement is in the line with Hargrove and Pottet’s opinion which means that writing is a visual depiction of thoughts, feelings or ideas, using symbols of language systems for communication or note-taking purposes.

Technically, writing is assembling words, sentences, and paragraphs to conveyed messages in the form of information, ideas or thoughts. Generally, there is no theory about writing, just write, write down what is on the mind because writing activities are identified with the use of graphic symbols, namely a combination of letters related to the sound of the spoken language.

Based on Grenville (2001), there are three purposes of writing; to entertain, to inform, to persuade. Based on Nurgiyantoro (2001) stated that *“the stock of vocabulary, grammar and comprehend how to make a correct sentence must be considered to make a good writing. The students’ writing score will be evaluated by the scoring system. The aspects of scoring are organization, content, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic.”*

There are meaningful stuffs that the researcher must care in writing, when the researcher will create writing. According to Harmer (2004) declared that *“the movement of writing have four kind elements. They are planning, drafting, editing and final version”*.

### 2.2. Grammar

In both Indonesian and English writing rules, the characteristics of a good sentence are marked by the presence of a complete sentence constituent component. These components consist of a subject, predicate, and object, that is an effective sentence

structure or what is commonly referred to as English Grammar.

According to Jan Fluitt-Dupuy (2006) says that *“an effective sentence has two structures, namely sentence structure and word structure”*. The sentence structure mentioned here is the core part of the sentence, namely subject and predicate, meanwhile, word structures are nouns, adjectives, prepositions that make up simple but complex sentence.

Grammar is a writing progress, especially in English. It has rules that are usually assigned to as tenses. There are at least 16 grammar formulas in the form of tenses in English but in this research the researcher just focused on one simple grammar formulas especially Simple Present Tense.

Simple present tense is a tense the most frequently used in English to describe a general truth, an event that is currently taking place or an event that occurs repeatedly (habits). In English, grammar is divided into two sentence forms, namely verbal form, and nominal form and two subject forms, namely singular and plural.

### 2.3. Game

There are many other interesting methods that can be a fun alternative to learning specially a plenty kind of games. Games just not identic with small children’s activities. The learning process while playing is also suitable for all ages.

In fact, games is a form of learning. There are several theories that explain games. These images include; 1) Games is a very fun activity and makes the mind calm; 2) Games is an activity that can give something symbolic or make the students seem to imagine that students are doing something; 3) Games is an activity that makes students perform active movements; 4) Games is an activity that is not forced or it can say that students will volunteer when students are playing; 5) Games is an activity that provides learning.

### 2.4. Constructing Sentence

There are three types of sentences; simple, compound, and complex. Sentence type is determined by how many clauses, or subject, couple of verbs, conjunction and subordinates that are included in the sentence. A simple sentence is a complete thought that makes sense

on its own. Note that there is no punctuation between the subject, predicate and object.

Composing sentence is an obviously asking task where students should use syntactic awareness to develop text by linking words into groups that, not only convey proposed meaning, although grammatically acceptable too (Saddler, 2012). It is so usually affected, that by fourth grade, students have mastered those central writing abilities. In basic English sentence structure has some structure elements, those are subject, predicate, object, complement and adjunct.

### 2.5. Competitive Writing Challenge

Competitive writing challenge was formed by CfBT in 2012 in the book the 21 Moment Magic and was first applied in Brunei Darussalam to Junior High School students. Competitive Writing Challenge is a game in learning. It is almost the same as the Creative Writing challenge games but its different, what makes it different is the used of teaching method. Creative writing directs students to write a paragraph using the correct sentence structure, while the competitive writing challenge directs students to complete in constructing a simple sentence through the given image media using the correct sentence structure.

Competitive Writing Challenge game aims to encourage students who are reluctant to write and express ideas in a supportive environment without fear of making mistakes. Competitive writing challenge game can be used as a checking activity or an initial activity to get students to discuss and write about a person or character.

Competitive Writing Challenge game is very benefit apply to under-aged students so that the students will more attractive, they can interact with both to their friends or to their teacher because Competitive Writing Challenge is kind of game in learning that make students' mind calm and they can more focus to construct a simple sentence based on the given picture. They will not feel afraid to construct the sentence with grammatical error and lack of ideas because all the answer had been set on the picture so they just must to focus with the given picture then construct the sentence.

### 2.6. Aspects of Game

Talk about playing in learning, many students are more interested in learning while playing because they

certainly will not feel bored during the teaching and learning process. They do not only accept the learning but they will also feel the treatment of the teacher where they will feel more comfortable, more passionate and more active either to their friends or directly to the teacher during the teaching and learning process.

Quoted from the official Paddle Pop broadcast, Maria Montessori, a child psychologist, revealed that play is the work of the child, so it has become a child's main need to play and needs to be fulfilled. However, during the many choices of games currently available, parents as the important role in choosing the right games, such as those that are educational, age-appropriate and do not contain acts of social violence and pornography. In this case, the intended parent within the school is a teacher and the child is students. Maria Montessori emphasized the importance for parents to choose games that train five important aspects in children; 1) Physical Development; 2) Cognitive Ability; 3) Language; 4) Emotion; and 5) Socialization.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

### 3.1. Research Design

Quasi experimental design is used in this research. According to Sudarwan Danim (2013) "Quasi experimental design is an experimental research design carried out under conditions that do not allow controlling or manipulating all relevant variables". This design used a pre-test before treatment for the experimental group and the control group (O1, O3), the results of the pre-test would be the basis for determining changes. This research used quantitative method. "Quantitative data analysis refers to the application of statistical techniques to the data that have been collected" (Bryman 2012). In this discern, the numerical submission and handling the data are required to construe what has been initiate.

In this case, the experimental research concerned to educate the students about what the writing is, how to made a good writing without grammatical errors through competitive writing challenge game and increasing the students' writing skill by constructing sentences. "Experimental research is research that aims to predict and explain things that happen or will happen between certain variables through manipulation or control of these variables or the relationship between them, in order to find a

relationship, influence, or difference between one or more variables" (Bungin, 2005).

**3.2. Research Instrument**

Research instrument is tool of collecting data that should be valid and reliable. The instruments of this research were test and observation. Test was be given to the students to found out whether competitive writing challenge game increase students writing skill. the test divided by into two categories; pre-test and post-test. The aimed of pre-test was to find out the students' skill toward their writing skill before treatment was conducted. On the other hand, post-test conducted to find out whether their writing skill increase or not after the treatment. The test conducted by using competitive writing challenge game to collect the data of pre-test and post-test and observed to the students as the responses to obtain the real data about what were the aspects after the implementation of competitive writing challenge game that support increase students writing skill and in the observation is observation checklist.

**3.3. Data Collection**

In collecting the data, this research conducted the quasi-experimental teaching in four meeting for experiment class and two meeting for control class to knew whether competitive writing challenge game increase students' writing skill or not. Next, this research used test to measured students writing skill before and after the treatment applied. Afterward, to knew the aspects of the competitive writing challenge game the researcher analyzed the game by seeing the implementation to the students in the classroom and by students' responses.

**3.4. Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data that collected from the test, the researcher used statistical formula from Sudjana (2002: 12) to get the central tendency score where there were four statistics were used for estimating central tendency; mean, mode, median, mid-point, range, standard deviation, and T-test. Another way the researcher took to reveal the data was by using IBM SPSS Statistic application version 25 and the data obtained from the observation and analyzed descriptively by explaining all the results of observations of students during the implementation of the Competitive Writing Challenge game in the classroom and the researcher used observation

checklist so that the researcher was easier to get the real data namely to found out what aspects played a role that support students' writing skill on the implementation of the competitive writing challenge game.

**4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1. Findings**

The detail of Central Tendency score in experimental group is presented on the table below:

**Table 1.** Central Tendency score in experimental group

		Pre-Test	Post-Test
N	Valid	14	14
	Missing	0	0
Mean		70.36	87.86
Std. Error of Mean		3.208	2.078
Median		70.83 <sup>a</sup>	87.50 <sup>a</sup>
Mode		70 <sup>b</sup>	80 <sup>b</sup>
Std. Deviation		12.004	7.774
Variance		144.093	60.440
Skewness		.253	.132
Std. Error of Skewness		.597	.597
Kurtosis		.143	-.902
Std. Error of Kurtosis		1.154	1.154
Range		45	25
Minimum		50	75
Maximum		95	100
Sum		985	1230

The detail of Central Tendency score in control group is presented on the table below:

**Table 2.** Central Tendency score in control group

		Pre-Test	Post-Test
N	Valid	14	14
	Missing	0	0
Mean		65.00	74.29
Std. Error of Mean		4.322	4.254
Median		61.25 <sup>a</sup>	76.67 <sup>a</sup>
Mode		55 <sup>b</sup>	85
Std. Deviation		16.172	15.915
Variance		261.538	253.297
Skewness		.477	-.232
Std. Error of Skewness		.597	.597

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Kurtosis	-.468	-.856
Std. Error of Kurtosis	1.154	1.154
Range	55	55
Minimum	40	45
Maximum	95	100
Sum	910	1040

Based on the central tendency table above, it appears that Competitive Writing Challenge game is effective to increase students writing skill.

Meanwhile, on the observation experience that the research has done during the Competitive Writing Challenge game in the classroom, both in the Experimental group and Control group, this research found that many students fulfilled the 5 aspects of the game that are able to increase students' writing skill in the classroom, especially in the Competitive Writing Challenge game which held by the researcher at UPT SPF Inpres Tamalanrea 6 Elementary School Makassar.

This research then concludes some of the experiences gained during the observation, include starting from the experimental group, in the pre-test 13 students earn the physical development aspect (92.85%), 10 students earn the cognitive ability aspect (71.42%), 14 students earn the language aspect (100.00%), 10 students earn the emotion aspect (71.42%), and 14 students earn the socialization aspect (100.00%). Meanwhile, in the post-test, after going through the pre-test in these experimental group 14 students earn the physical aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the cognitive ability aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the language aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the emotion aspect (100.00%), and 14 students earn socialization aspect (100.00%) without exception all students earn all the aspects.

Meanwhile, from the control group, in the pre-test 14 students earn the physical development aspect (100.00%), 12 students earn the cognitive ability aspect (85.71%), 10 students earn the language aspect (71.42%), 14 students earn the emotion aspect (100.00%), and 14 students earn the socialization aspect (100.00%). Meanwhile, in the post-test, after going through the pre-test in this control group it is the same as the experimental group, 14 students earn the physical aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the cognitive ability aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the language aspect (100.00%), 14 students earn the

emotion aspect (100.00%), and 14 students earn socialization aspect (100.00%) without exception all students earn all the aspects.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency}}{\text{sample}} \times 100\%$$

So, based on the data of observation above, it can be concluded that aspects of game in both the experimental group and control group succeeded in supporting the Competitive Writing Challenge game to increase students' writing skill.

#### 4.2. Discussions

The result of the students' writing skill in students' pre-test score in the experimental group showed that 1 student earned excellent score, 1 student earned good score, 4 students earned average score and 8 students earned bad score. Based on the data above, the researcher concluded that in experimental group most of the students had understood about how to construct sentences well but still need guidance how to organized it. The study about Simple Present Tense had been through by them since grade 4, so, no wonder if they already have much vocabularies.

Then, the result of the students' writing skill in students' post-test score in the Experimental group showed that 4 students earned excellent score, 6 students earned good score, 4 student earned average score and none students earned bad score. It can be concluded that, the researcher had succeeded prove that the treatment was successfully carried out in the classroom, students could construct sentence based on Basic sentence structure and without grammatical errors so that the students earned scores above the minimum completeness criteria. So, all the students earned the writing achievement.

Meanwhile, the result of the students' writing skill in students' pre-test in the Control group showed that 1 student earned excellent score, 1 student earned good score, 2 students earned average score and 10 students earned bad score. In this class, the researcher concluded that most of the students still did not know how to organize and construct sentence use the correct formula moreover, if they asked to construct sentence through a picture because from the paper test, the researcher got they have much vocabularies but most of the students just wrote the word by word without correct pattern. So, it can be concluded that the students still need much guidance. To raise the score in

post-test, the researcher gave the formula then asked them to do a homework and study more about Simple Present Tense.

Then, the result of students' writing skill in students' post-test in the Control group showed that 1 student earned excellent score, 5 students earned good score, 1 student earned average score and 7 students earned bad score. Based on the data, the researcher assumed that few of students prove that they were able to construct a simple sentence based on basic sentence structure guide and without grammatical errors through given picture although few of them still need more guidance.

Experimental group and control group data in the form of students' post-test (quantitative) with unpaired samples. The number of students ( $n=28$ ) for the experimental group is 14 students and the control group is also 14 students. Thus, the requirements for using the independent sample t-test are in accordance with the provisions. Then, revealed the formulation to find out whether there was a difference in the mean post-test of students in the experimental group and control group.

To answer the second problem of this research, which is what aspects of game in Competitive Writing Challenge can support students' writing skill? The researcher distributed an observation to the students while the Competitive Writing Challenge game in progress in the classroom to get the real data about the aspects of the game. So, to make the researcher easier to earn the real of the observation data, the researcher made a table then give a checklist.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data and discussing the result in the previous chapter, there are two conclusions here; 1) Applying Competitive Writing Challenge game in the classroom can increase students' Writing skill for sixth grade students at UPT SPF Inpres Tamalanrea 6 Elementary School Makassar. Based on the result of

students' score which post-test scores in Experimental group was higher than post-test scores in Control group (mean of post-test Experimental group: 87.86, mean of post-test Control group: 74.29) where the data is calculated automatically by IBM SPSS Statistic application version 25. In other words, the implementation of Competitive Writing Challenge game as a method in teaching English writing increasing students' writing skill; 2) The implementation of Competitive Writing Challenge game as a method in teaching English Writing could increase students' writing skill. This research found the students have huge interest to Competitive Writing Challenge game and make the students learning English much better. It was proved by the observation result of the aspects of game that the researcher had researched. Therefore, Competitive Writing Challenge game is considered as an effective media in learning English especially in writing.

## REFERENCES

- Ali, F.R. 2009. Cara cepat belajar 16 tenses. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Widyatma.
- CfBT. 2012. 21 Magic Moments. Brunei Darussalam: Bandar Seri Begawan.
- Crystal, David. 2017. Making Sense: The Glamorous Story of English Grammar. London: Profile Books.
- Haris, K.R., Graham, S., Mason, L., & Friedlander, B. 2008. Powerful Writing Strategies For All Students. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks.
- James Cook University. 2016. Building Sentences. Australia: JCU Learning Centre.
- Krohn, Robert. 1997. English Sentence Structure. United States: University of Michigan Press.
- Loberger, Gordon & Shoup, Kate. 2009. Webster's New World English Grammar Handbook: Sentence Construction. United States: Liberty University.
- Sudjana. 2002. Metode Statistika. Bandung: Tarsito Bandung.
- Sudjana, Nana. 2011. Penilaian Hasil Proses Belajar Mengajar. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Tarigan, H. G. 2000. Prinsip-prinsip Dasar Metode Riset Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa. Bandung: Angkasa.