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ELT in Local and Global Lives: from Policy to Classroom Practices

## Improving Writing Skill through Culturally Responsive Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

The research was aimed to improve writing skill using Culturally Responsive Teaching. It was a collaborative classroom action research at XII MIPA 3 in SMAN 8 Kota Serang. It was carried out on 37 students in English classroom. The data used teacher observation and students learning result, both of them were analysed using four phases consisted of planning, acting, observing and reflecting in two cycles. The result showed students have some improvement using CRT approach in their writing conversation using conditional sentences. The teacher used local places in Indonesia to let them able elaborating their ideas by its familiarity. The average score in the first cycle increased from the pre-test, it was 41,67% increased to 58,33% in the first cycle. Then, in the second cycle, it had improved to 83,67%.

Keywords: writing skill, Culturally Responsive Teaching, students

### INTRODUCTION

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is an approach that links background, experience, learning styles and characteristics of students to improve learning outcomes and make learning more meaningful (Gay, 2000). He mentioned by posing teaching learning process situated within the lived experiences and frames the student references, the discussion being more meaningful and has higher interest appeal. Krasnof (2016) stated CRT could be applied by utilizing experiences forming idea to be developed in learning by engaging students to be involved in a condition that allows them to know and experience some situations. It is also highlighted by Abdalla and Mousa (2024) that one of conceptual framework of CRT in instructional material is by emphasizing the need for cultural relevant curriculum and instructional material that reflects the lived students experience and perspective.

In Indonesia context involved diversity of values, beliefs, ethnic groups and various cultural backgrounds, learning process could affect to student value and behaviour, and teacher-student interactions (Rahmawati et al., 2019). By incorporating CRT into Indonesian culture, learning

becomes more meaningful because they were introduced to the culture of their daily lives in the classroom.

English learning and CRT have a relationship in term of connecting the student familiarity on the context of English learning. Tomlinson (2008:4) mentioned language learning should develop material by providing opportunities for students to understand and be able to relate the material to their experiences. CRT is one of learning approaches accommodates student cultural background of students become more meaningful (Putra, et al: 2023). As English learning has interaction activities toward students, the teachers and learning resources that should be linked to their cultural background, it leads to the CRT creating meaningful learning.

In English learning, writing is an ability that requires complex aspects to be applied. As mentioned by Jacobs et al (1981), there are five components of writing consisting content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Content is related with the ideas and how the understanding owned by the writers on the text they wrote become clear and understood by the readers. Meanwhile, organization means the arrangement set chronologically from beginning to the end of ideas. Vocabulary is related with the word choices for the creative and appropriate text. For language use, is related with the correct of language degrees of grammar focusing on verbs, nouns and agreements. And the last, mechanism, is on the appropriateness of capitalization, punctuation and spelling. Besides that, writing is a process to provide information from experience, understand one point of view to be highlighted (Shanora, et al., 2021). In English as EFL context, writing has challenges, besides on the vocabulary and grammar, the text is also constructed less on building the ideas and elaboration (Parwati and Sugesti, 2023). The reason is the students often find some challenges due to various issues encountered consisting vocabulary, text structure and especially ideas to be written (Dhananjaya, et al., 2024).

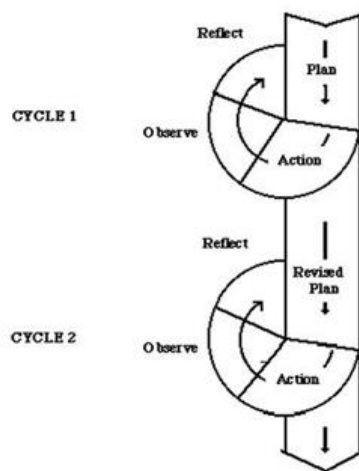
Improving students writing skill involves lots aspects determined by the teachers. Although it needs the focus mentioned, writing could construct students ability to think critically and systematically (Anggraini, 2020). It is also beneficial for students to express their ideas, engage them more creative and enable them to analyse the ideas (Shanorra, et al., 2021). By considering the importance of writing skill, its implementation in schools is an necessary activity to develop student writing competency.

The writers carried out the focus on the application of CRT in writing activities in SMAN 8 Kota Serang at one of the classes, XII MIPA 3. Based on previous observations, English text writing activities were rarely involved because the challenges of constructing ideas prevent the students to express the ideas and form them onto written text. Most of them took short writing activities which did not meet the elements of writing. They did not explore the ideas in the text they wrote. These issues caused the text they made were limited, which causes the structure of the text became less

systematic and some certain parts of the text did not develop. Besides that, the choice of vocabularies, grammatical rules and ways of conveying the desired information which were important tools in writing were hampered. Based on those challenges, the writers tried to apply CRT approach in constructing ideas on the theme of local tourist attractions in Jakarta and Banten with the aim of bringing students closer to the familiar places they have ever visited.

## METHOD

This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) to be conducted in a classroom determining the results of the actions applied from a work plan (action) as an effort to overcome a problem which carried out by some actions, observation and reflection (Kemmis and Taggart, 1988). Arikunto (2014: 135) mentioned CAR is one research involving teachers in the class to reach the improvement of the process or result in learning. She noted the research uses cycles as the research activities, which each of them consisted of four steps including planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Planning is listing what things and activities to be involved in the action, action is the implementation of the planning which derived in some activities, observation is the result or impact observed from the action carried out and reflection is reviewing and considering the impact of the action which has already taken.



Cycles of Action Research (Arikunto, 2014:137)

The cycles considering the activities on four steps conducted on the research. First, planning, it is an initial step to design learning consisted determining learning materials, lesson plans, learning models, media. Second is acting, it is an implementation of the plans carrying out CRT. Next, is observing, is a process of observing the course of action implementation recorded by daily record format on planning and action. Last is reflection, it constructed after analysing planning, acting, and

observing in all activities of the first cycle. The results of reflecting analysis seen as recommendations, which contain notions for improvements in the next cycle.

The research was conducted at XII MIPA 3 at SMAN 8 Kota Serang. The students consisted of 37, 15 male and 22 female students. The discussions were concerned about Conditional Sentences discussing tourism spots. The discussion took from the school book in the 2018 edition which discussed ‘Why don't we visit Seattle?’. By the reading context which were not in line with students’ experiences, the writers adjusted the theme using places in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta and Banten, those two places are believed as more familiar for the students. The aim implementing the actions (treatment) because the writers would like to see whether students are brought closer to a place that is more familiar to them as a form of the CRT approach to learning. The instruments as the data source in this research are divided into two consisted observation and score. In observation, the activities were seen based on events that occur in class. Meanwhile, the scoring was conducted by seeing on the students' grades in each cycle.

## RESULT

Table 3.1  
Writing skill criteria (Heaton, 1998:146)

Category	Score	Description
<b>Content (the extent to which the writing achieves the goal)</b>	27-30	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> respond to the tasks perfectly; perfect discussion; relevant and appropriate information; very strong and related interpretation
	22-26	<i>Good to average:</i> could respond to tasks; the discussion is good; information is generally relevant and correct; interpretation is generally favorable
	17-21	<i>Fair to poor:</i> less respond to tasks; the discussion is acceptable but sometimes inconsistent; information is sometimes irrelevant/inaccurate; interpretations are sometimes inconsistent with facts
	13-16	<i>Very poor:</i> unable to respond to tasks; incomplete and inconsistent discussion; information is often irrelevant/inaccurate
<b>Organization (appropriateness of rhetorical steps in writing)</b>	18-20	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> technical form of communication is good and clear
	14-17	<i>Good to average:</i> communication in a technical form of structuring in relationships
	10-13	<i>Fair to poor:</i> communication does not follow a clear sequence
	7-9	<i>Very poor:</i> cannot be communicated in technical form
<b>Vocabulary (vocabulary uses)</b>	18-20	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> choosing the right words and idioms
	14-17	<i>Good to Average:</i> good words and idioms choice, have meaning but some are unclear

	10-13	<i>Fair to poor:</i> limited vocabulary, idioms and patterns
	7-9	<i>Very poor:</i> very limited choice of vocabulary, idioms and patterns
<b>Language use (language appropriateness)</b>	22-25	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> The language used is very appropriate to the form of the text provided and the communication context
	18-21	<i>Good to average:</i> The language used is very appropriate to the form of the text provided and the communication context
	11-17	<i>Fair to poor:</i> The language used is not appropriate to the form of the text provided and the communication context
	5-10	<i>Very poor:</i> The language used is very poor
<b>Mechanics (spelling choices, punctuation, capital letters)</b>	5	<i>Excellent to very good:</i> Form, spelling, word choice, punctuation, use of capital letters, neatness fulfills the text rules
	4	<i>Good to average:</i> Form, spelling, word choice, punctuation, use of capital letters, neatness quite fulfills the text rules
	3	<i>Fair to poor:</i> Form, spelling, word choice, punctuation, use of capital letters, neatness less fulfills the text rules
	2	<i>Very poor:</i> Form, spelling, word choice, punctuation, use of capital letters, neatness do not fulfill the text rules
<b>Total</b>	<u><i>Cognitive + Organization + Vocabulary + Language use + Mechanics</i></u> 5	

Table 3.2

Writing Skill Score (adapted from Reid, 1986:172)

Scale	Score	Category
<b>A</b>	91-100	Very good
<b>B</b>	81-90	Good
<b>C</b>	71-80	Average
<b>D</b>	61-70	Fair
<b>E</b>	≤60	Less

The initial activities were carried out before conducting cycle I. This initial series of activities investigating the students to study the material on government book in 2018 revised edition. The book took the discussion about Seattle. Afterwards, the writers did observations outlined in an observation sheet by the collaborators and carried out a pre-test.

Table 3.3

Initial activities

Observation category	Score			
	1	2	3	4

Students are enthusiastic giving attention in learning		√		
Students' activeness in answering questions	√			
Students' activeness in expressing opinions		√		
Students' activeness in asking questions	√			
Students' activeness in analyzing example sentences	√			
Time effectiveness		√		

4 = Very good  
3 = Good  
2 = Average  
1 = Fair

In classroom observations, the students showed some amount of learning enthusiasm. In order to actively answer questions based on the theme discussed, namely Seattle, students were not familiar with the place which caused the answering questions session did not meet the expectation. In expressing opinion activity, they show some activeness by using maximize the devices they have to find more information about Seattle. They showed less activeness in asking questions related to themes, as well as in analyzing activities, they were less analyzing the sentences.

Tabel 3.4  
Pre-test Result

Score	Respondent
≤ 60	14
61-70	7
71-80	4
81-90	6
91-100	5

Note: 1 student did not do the test

Based on the results, 15 students who have writing skills with fair to very good scores or 41.67% of students were able to write a conversation. Meanwhile, 21 or 58.33% had scores fair to less in English writing skills, which indicated the need to be improved. Based on the results of the pre-test, the writers provided treatment to improve writing skills by applying CRT with the theme of tourist attractions in Indonesia in two cycles, each cycle had different actions based on the recommendation in the cycle.

## 1. Cycle I

### a. Planning

Creating a lesson plan with learning objectives to be achieved in cycle I. One of learning objectives focused on the research composing written text using conditional sentences on the theme of tourist attractions in Indonesia specially in Jakarta.

b. Action

The writers carried out a series of learning processes including greetings, conducting questions and answers and checking the students' presence. The writers also emphasized the discussion related to conditional sentences. The author applies the CRT approach by directing students to focus on writing conversations about tourism spots in Jakarta. Students were required to create conversations using di material discussed about Jakarta.

c. Observation

The results of observations in cycle I showed that the situation of learning activities included (1) students were able to determine the ideas or themes they would write about, (2) students had difficulty developing their ideas in creating conversations.

Table 3.5  
Observation Result Cycle 1

Observation category	Score			
	1	2	3	4
Students are enthusiastic giving attention in learning				√
Students' activeness in answering questions		√		
Students' activeness in expressing opinions			√	
Students' activeness in asking questions			√	
Students' activeness in analyzing example sentences		√		
Time effectiveness			√	

4 = Very good

3 = Good

2 = Average

1 = Fair

Based on the results of observations, the students' enthusiasm on their attention to the material was very good. Students were fair in answering questions and good at expressing opinions. Besides that, they were good at asking for questions and were fair in analyzing sentences. Meanwhile, for time effectiveness, students were good participating in learning.

Tabel 3.6  
Result of Cycle 1

Score	Respondent
≤ 60	7
61-70	8
71-80	4
81-90	8
91-100	9

Note: 1 student did not do the test

The result showed students with average to very good were 21 or 58.33%. It defined they were able to create conversational texts. Meanwhile, the students with fair to low were 15 or 41.67%, which assumed the teaching on writing skills need to be improved.

d. Reflection

Based on the results of observations and test, some points stated (1) students began to develop ideas in writing conditional sentence conversation texts with a focus on tourism places in Jakarta, based on of observations and tests from writing activities. In observation results, it discovered students were enthusiastic learning the material. They were also more active answering questions and were able to express their opinions. Thus, students were also good at asking questions and were more active in analyzing sentences. For time effectiveness, they were good in participating learning. (2) Some students needed to develop their ideas because there were only some students had never visited the places described, thus, some of them had difficulty in elaborating ideas. Apart from the issue, they showed progress of pre-test results (41.67%) with average to very good result for 21 students or 58.33%.

e. Recommendation

Based on the results of the observations, the writers tried to evaluate and improve the achievement in cycle I. In implementing Cycle II, the writers arranged out some planning including (1) Creating a more focused theme by highlighting local tourism places Banten to lead the students closer to the material. The theme was familiar and most of them know about the places for it could stimulate them building better writing skills. (2) Guiding students intensively for those who had difficulties by providing stimuli from places that are very familiar to them in Banten.

2. Cycle 2

a. Planning

The writers created a lesson plan with learning objectives to be achieved in cycle II. One of the learning objectives to be focused was to compose written texts using conditional sentences on the theme of tourism places in Banten the more specific and close places to the students' life.

b. Action

As in cycle I, the author carried out a series of learning processes including greetings, conducting questions and answers and checking the students presence. The writers also explained material related to conditional sentences. Reflecting on cycle I, the writers applied



the CRT approach by leading them to focus more on writing conversations by using a more specific focus on places around their environment in Banten.

c. Observation

The results of observations in cycle II portrayed that the learning activity situation includes (1) students were able to determine the idea or theme to write, (2) students were able to develop their ideas in creating conversations based on more familiar places.

Table 3.7  
Observation Result Cycle 2

Observation category	Score			
	1	2	3	4
Students are enthusiastic giving attention in learning				√
Students' activeness in answering questions			√	
Students' activeness in expressing opinions				√
Students' activeness in asking questions				√
Students' activeness in analyzing example sentences			√	
Time effectiveness			√	

4 = Very good

3 = Good

2 = Average

1 = Fair

Based on the results of observations, students were enthusiast in the learning. They were active answering questions and very good at expressing opinions. They were also very good carrying out questioning activities and were active analyzing sentences. For time effectiveness, they can carry out learning completely.

Tabel 3.8  
Result of Cycle 1

Score	Respondent
≤ 60	2
61-70	4
71-80	2
81-90	14
91-100	15

The result showed students with average to very good completion scores had increased, there were 31 or 83.78% of them were able to create conversational texts. Meanwhile, the rest, with scores from fair to low were 6 or 16.21%, which described the students need to be engaged intensively.

d. Reflection

Based on the results of observations and test, the writers found the students were able to develop ideas in writing conversational text conditional sentences well because they were focus on their local tourism places. From the results of observations, it discovered students were very enthusiastic learning the material. They were also active answered questions and were very good expressing opinions. They were also good at asking questions and active in analysing sentences. Meanwhile, for time effectiveness, they were able carrying out the learning with full activities discussing and analyzing. The students who could not develop their ideas were distracted by activities out of the classroom and were confused deciding where they want to have a conversation, these reasons caused them in elaborating ideas. However, learning activities by applying CRT in the context of local tourism places could explore their potential in writing skills by building appropriate conversational texts, both in cognitive, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The data is seen based on the scores from cycle I from 58.33% to 83.67%.

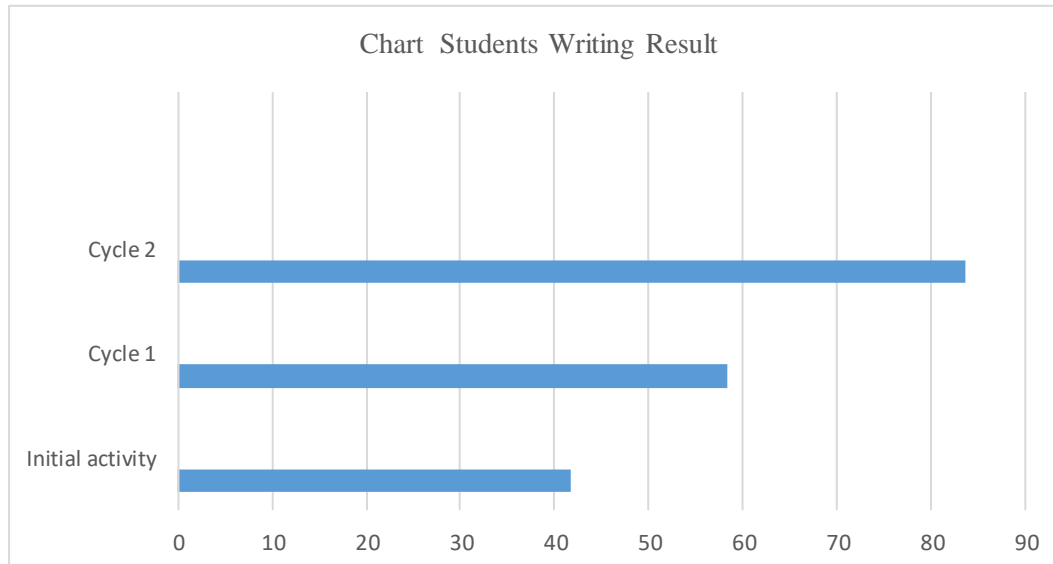
The writers obtained results based on some expectations. The students were more active in learning by applying CRT approach theme local tourism places. Based on the results of observations and tests, the writers found applying learning material using the CRT approach allowed students to further explore their writing skills.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study analysed students writing skill based on local themes. Based on the research explained above, students seemed more engaging in building sentences based on the theme they were familiar with. The government book (Kurikulum 2013 revised 2018) used general theme and new theme for the students. But in writing skill, constructing ideas should fulfil students understanding on the object they would elaborate. The theme generally used are appropriate to them, moreover, using local theme around them are more suitable to building writing skill.

The writers used two different themes in the research, one theme for each cycle. The result showed the improvement among the initial activity to the second cycle after the treatment proposed. On the initial activities, the students discussed the theme provided on the government book theme Seattle. Based on the writing skill scoring rubric proposed by Heaton (1998:146), there were five categories of writing skill to be highlighted consisting content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Based on those categories, writing activities need ideas to explore the ideas that make the categories completed. Based on the result of initial activities, the result showed 41,67% on students writing result. By the issue, the writers tried to use more familiar theme for students writing. On the first cycle, the writers used Jakarta, it was chosen as the capital city. There was 58,33% of

students able to write about the city. The result was needed to be improved, thus, the writers continued on the second cycle using local places in Banten. Students showed more activities on the cycle by 83,67%. Based on the result, writing skill could be improved on the students familiarity of the object as the theme of writing activities.



The chart showed there were improvement on the familiar theme applied on students writing. Along with the students result, students observation noted by the writers explained the students showed improvement on their activeness in answering questions, expressing opinions, asking questions, analysing sentences. Besides that, they have time session appropriately.

## CONCLUSION

The research on improving writing skills using the CRT approach showed some progress. The results increased along the discussions were more familiar to the students. In the pre-test, writing skills were obtained without applying the CRT approach, the results obtained in cycle I were 58.33% for the writing skills completeness category and in cycle II the results were 83.67%.

Based on the observations and the test in cycle 1, it was seen the students had difficulty developing ideas, they also had some difficulties determining the place for the focus of the conversation. Even though the CRT approach had been implemented by the theme of tourist attractions in Jakarta, the expected results have not been appropriate. Rarely of them had ever visited the place, they only notices the places through social media, pictures or articles. They did not experience the places by the visits. Some of the places were new for them. Those reasons showed unsatisfactory results regarding the influence of the CRT approach. Furthermore, the writers

carried out the research design again in cycle II by applying a more specific theme, by highlighting local tourism places.

In cycle II, the students showed their writing skills by developing ideas because when transferred to local tourism places, they were able to determine which place will be the focus of conversation because it was very familiar to them and major of them have visited the places. The CRT approach was implemented well because it raised the theme of local tourism places. Most them noticed the places based on their experience of visitation. Even though there are several places they have not visited, students are already familiar with the places in questions sessions because they have heard stories among classmates. Cycle I and cycle 2 showed some increasing results. Based on the results, the writers found CRT approach could be applied in learning, especially in writing skills because it was able to foster critical thinking skills and be able to develop ideas based on the events they have experienced and were familiar for them.

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