



ENHANCING PARAGRAPH WRITING AMONG NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH THE COMPLETE-SENTENCE MODEL: A PRETEST–POSTTEST STUDY

MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN MENULIS PARAGRAF DI KALANGAN SISWA KELAS SEMBILAN MELALUI MODEL KALIMAT LENGKAP: STUDI PRETEST–POSTTEST

Rahmadsyah Lubis^{1*}, Nisrina Nurhaliza², Sri Handayani Siregar³, Eni Fauziah Harahap⁴,
Mirjam Anugerahwati⁵

^{1*} Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kepolisian, Email: rahmadsyahlubis@stik-ptik.ac.id

² Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Bina Cipta Husada, Email: nisrina@stikesbch.ac.id

³ Politeknik Kesehatan YRSU Dr. Rusdi, Email: srihandayanisrg90@gmail.com

⁴ UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary, Email: enifauziah-p2b@uinsyahada.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Malang, Email : mirjam.anugerahwati.fs@um.ac.id

*email koresponden: rahmadsyahlubis@stik-ptik.ac.id

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Complete-Sentence Model in enhancing paragraph-writing ability among ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun. Specifically, it aimed to (1) describe the implementation of the Complete-Sentence Model in teaching paragraph writing, (2) measure students' paragraph-writing ability before and after the intervention, and (3) determine whether the model produced a statistically significant improvement. A pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design was employed. The population was all Grade IX students (N = 84); a purposive sample of 29 students from class IX C participated. Data were collected via observation checklists and writing tests. Findings show that implementation quality was rated as good (mean = 3.4). Students' mean writing score improved markedly from 39 (pretest; fail) to 75 (posttest; good). A paired t-test confirmed the improvement was statistically significant ($t = 11.78 > t_{critical} = 2.05$), leading to acceptance of the hypothesis. The results indicate that the Complete-Sentence Model is an effective instructional strategy for improving paragraph-writing ability among ninth-grade students at the study site.

Keywords : Complete- Sentence Model, Paragraph Writing, Pre-Test Post-Test Study.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas Model Kalimat Lengkap dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis paragraf di kalangan siswa kelas sembilan SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun. Secara spesifik, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mendeskripsikan implementasi Model Kalimat Lengkap dalam



pengajaran menulis paragraf, (2) mengukur kemampuan menulis paragraf siswa sebelum dan sesudah intervensi, dan (3) menentukan apakah model tersebut menghasilkan peningkatan yang signifikan secara statistik. Desain pra-eksperimental satu kelompok pretest–posttest digunakan. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa kelas IX (N = 84); sampel purposif sebanyak 29 siswa dari kelas IX C berpartisipasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui daftar periksa observasi dan tes menulis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas implementasi dinilai baik (rata-rata = 3,4). Rata-rata skor menulis siswa meningkat secara signifikan dari 39 (pretest; gagal) menjadi 75 (posttest; baik). Uji t berpasangan mengkonfirmasi peningkatan tersebut signifikan secara statistik ($t = 11,78 > t_{kritis} = 2,05$), sehingga hipotesis diterima. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Model Kalimat Lengkap merupakan strategi pembelajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis paragraf di kalangan siswa kelas sembilan di lokasi penelitian.

Kata Kunci : Model Kalimat Lengkap, Penulisan Paragraf, Studi Pree-Tes Dan Post-Tes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a central component of language proficiency and a foundational skill in education. It enables learners to organize, refine, and communicate ideas, serving both cognitive and social functions in academic and professional contexts (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Graham & Perin, 2007). Mastery of written discourse is essential for students' academic success and future employability, since the ability to produce coherent written texts underpins participation in higher education and the workplace (Hyland, 2003; Nation, 2009). Despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging language skills for many learners, particularly in contexts characterized by limited instructional resources, large class sizes, and teacher-centred pedagogies (Graham & Harris, 2000; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

Paragraph writing constitutes a critical intermediate level of writing competence: a paragraph is an organized unit of discourse that develops a single controlling idea through logically connected sentences, typically including a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence (Keraf, as cited in Nugraheni, 2017; Widjono, as cited in Nugraheni, 2017). Effective paragraph writing requires integration of multiple subskills—idea generation, cohesion and coherence, grammatical accuracy, sentence completeness, lexical choice, and rhetorical organization (Raimes, 1983; Hyland, 2007). For adolescent learners at the junior secondary level, these components are still under development; instruction must therefore scaffold both sentence-level accuracy and discourse-level organization to produce measurable improvements.

Empirical studies document persistent difficulties in paragraph composition among secondary-school learners. Typical problems include incomplete or run-on sentences, poor topic development, weak coherence and transitions, and surface errors such as incorrect capitalization and spelling (Ferris, 2002; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Observations at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun reflect these trends: Grade IX students frequently produce fragmented paragraphs lacking unity, coherence, and sufficient development, which constrains their ability to communicate ideas effectively in English and undermines academic progress.

The causes of inadequate paragraph writing are multifactorial. Cognitive limitations—such as constrained syntactic control and limited lexical resources—interact with affective factors like low motivation and writing anxiety to reduce student output and quality (Kormos, 2006; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Instructional shortcomings are equally salient: methods that prioritize rote learning or error correction without offering guided, contextualized composition practices often fail to build communicative writing competence (Graham & Perin, 2007). In addition, constrained teaching materials, insufficient media, and limited teacher training in evidence-based writing pedagogy contribute to learners' struggles (Shoimin, 2017).

In response to these challenges, pedagogical research advocates structured, scaffolded instructional models that simultaneously address sentence-level accuracy and discourse organization



(Harris, Graham, & Mason, 2006). The Complete-Sentence Model is one such approach. It provides learners with partial sentence or paragraph frames and answer keys that reduce transcriptional burden, allowing students to concentrate on linking ideas, developing content, and attending to coherence. The model operationalizes scaffolding by supplying linguistic frames and model sentences during guided practice, followed by gradual reduction of support as learners internalize patterns of sentence completeness and paragraph organization (Vygotsky, 1978; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

Indonesian pedagogical literature characterizes the Complete-Sentence Model as a practice-oriented instructional procedure beginning with teacher modelling and material presentation, proceeding through guided completion of incomplete sentences or paragraphs using provided answers, and culminating in independent performance (Shoimin, 2017; Istarani, 2011; Hidayat, 2019). These phases align with established principles of effective writing instruction—modelling, scaffolded practice, corrective feedback, and the gradual release of responsibility (Graham & Harris, 2000; Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009). By embedding sentence-level practice within authentic paragraph tasks, the model situates grammar and accuracy instruction within meaningful communicative aims, an approach shown to be more effective than decontextualized drills (Hinkel, 2004; Ellis, 2006).

Despite its theoretical promise and descriptive support in practitioner literature, rigorous empirical evaluation of the Complete-Sentence Model in junior secondary EFL contexts remains limited. Most intervention studies focus on comprehensive writing programs, process-writing approaches, or peer-assisted strategies, leaving a gap concerning focused sentence-completion scaffolds and their effects on paragraph-level outcomes (Graham et al., 2012). This evidence gap is particularly relevant for schools such as SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun, where students face linguistic and instructional constraints that may influence the model's effectiveness.

This study aims to address that gap by investigating the implementation and effectiveness of the Complete-Sentence Model for enhancing paragraph-writing ability among ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun. The specific objectives are to (1) describe how the Complete-Sentence Model is applied in classroom instruction; (2) assess students' paragraph-writing ability before and after the intervention; and (3) determine whether observed changes are statistically significant. A one-group pretest–posttest design was used to evaluate the intervention under natural classroom conditions, providing preliminary evidence of effect size and feasibility for future controlled studies (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

This study contributes to scholarship and practice by providing empirical evidence on a focused, low-resource instructional strategy with potential applicability in similar junior secondary contexts. By documenting implementation fidelity and pre-post learning outcomes, the research offers practical guidance for teachers and curriculum developers seeking evidence-based, scalable approaches to improve paragraph writing. Although the one-group pretest–posttest design limits causal inference, the study's findings can inform further controlled research and immediate pedagogical adjustments.

In sum, paragraph writing is a pivotal academic skill that remains challenging for many junior secondary learners. The Complete-Sentence Model presents a theoretically grounded, scaffolded approach that targets sentence completeness and supports the organization of ideas into coherent paragraphs. Investigating its implementation and effects at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun will yield insights into its viability as an instructional strategy in comparable EFL settings.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design to evaluate the effect of the Complete-Sentence Model on ninth-grade students' paragraph-writing ability at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun. The population comprised all Grade IX students ($N = 84$), from which class IX C was selected through purposive (systematic) sampling based on class accessibility, teacher cooperation, and consistent attendance; the final sample consisted of 29 students. Data collection instruments included parallel writing tests (pretest and posttest) and a structured observation checklist. The writing tests required students to produce a paragraph on assigned topics of comparable difficulty; student



compositions were assessed with an analytic rubric addressing content, organization, vocabulary, language use (including sentence completeness), and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling). The observation checklist documented instructional fidelity and classroom processes, rating aspects such as adherence to procedural steps, quality of teacher modelling, student engagement, materials use, and time management on a four-point scale.

The research procedure began with obtaining institutional permissions and informed consent from school authorities, parents, and participating students. The pretest was administered under standardized conditions with uniform instructions and time allocation. The Complete-Sentence Model intervention was then implemented across a scheduled series of classroom sessions; each lesson followed a consistent pattern of introduction and material presentation, teacher modelling of sentence/paragraph completion, guided practice using incomplete-sentence/paragraph frames with available answer keys, independent practice accompanied by peer feedback, and teacher consolidation with corrective feedback. Classroom sessions were observed and rated to monitor fidelity, and sample student works and lesson plans were collected for documentation. Immediately after the intervention period an equivalent posttest was administered under the same conditions as the pretest.

To enhance internal validity, the study standardized test conditions, used validated instruments with inter-rater reliability checks, and systematically monitored implementation fidelity. Nonetheless, the one-group pretest–posttest design limits causal inference due to potential threats such as maturation, testing effects, and historical events; findings are therefore presented as preliminary evidence of effectiveness. Ethical procedures were followed throughout: informed consent was obtained, participant anonymity was protected through coded identifiers, data were securely stored, and participation was voluntary with assurances that withdrawal would not affect students' academic standing.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the Complete-Sentence Model in Classroom Instruction

The Complete-Sentence Model was implemented according to the prescribed procedural steps (introduction, teacher modelling, guided completion with provided answer keys, independent practice with peer feedback, and consolidation). Classroom observation reported high levels of student engagement and active participation throughout the intervention. The observer's evaluation using a 12-item checklist yielded a total score of 41 and a mean of 3.4 (on a 1–4 scale), which is categorized as "good." Observational notes further indicate that students responded enthusiastically to structured completion tasks and that the researcher delivered materials clearly and effectively, which facilitated student involvement and on-task behaviour.

2. Pretest and Posttest Measures of Paragraph-Writing Ability

Baseline assessment (pretest) showed that students' paragraph-writing ability was low. Pretest scores ranged from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 50, with a mean of 39, median 47, and mode 47, placing the class average in the "fail/poor" category according to the study's scoring rubric. Following the intervention, posttest results indicated substantial improvement: scores ranged from 62 to 90, with a mean of 75, median 76, and mode 76, classified as "good." Descriptive comparisons of rubric subscales (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics) show that the largest gains occurred in language use and mechanics (sentence completeness, punctuation, capitalization), while notable improvements were also observed in organization and content development. Observation records and sample student works corroborate these quantitative gains, illustrating clearer topic sentences, more coherent supporting sentences, and reduced incidence of incomplete sentences. To get clear and complete descriptions, the researcher presented in this histogram:

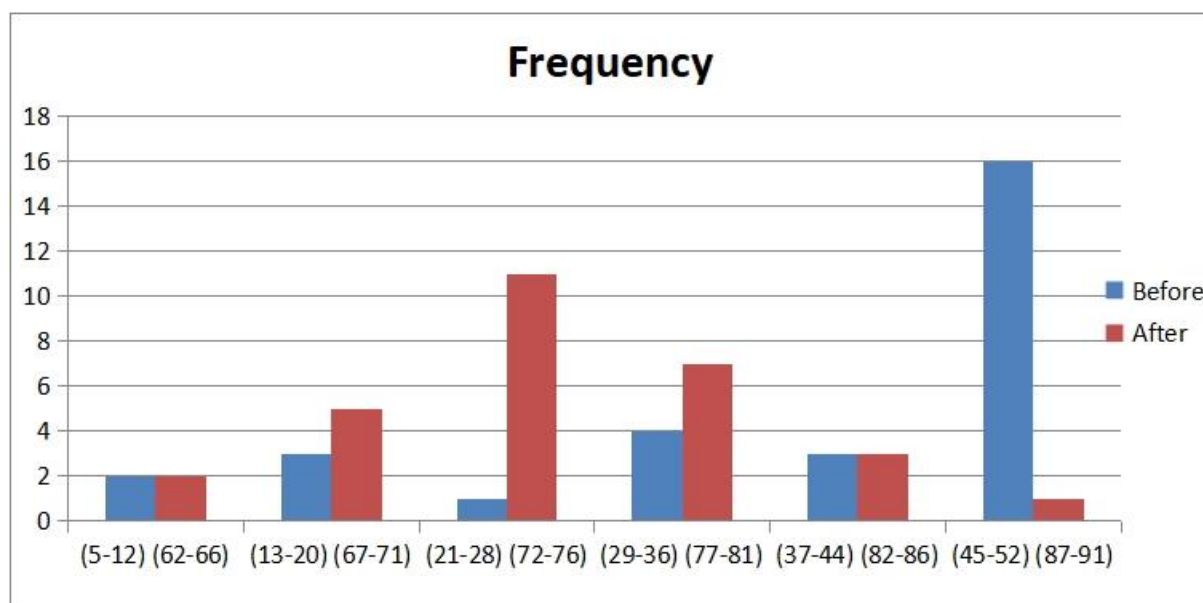


Figure 1. Histogram of Students' Writing Paragraph Before And After Using Complete Sentence Model

3. Statistical test of improvement

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the observed pretest–posttest gains were statistically significant. The analysis produced $t = 11.78$, which exceeds the critical t value ($t_{table} = 2.05$) at the chosen significance level, indicating a statistically significant improvement in paragraph-writing scores following the intervention. The large t statistic, together with the marked rise in mean score from 39 to 75, suggests a substantial effect. (Report effect size, e.g., Cohen's d , here if available — this quantifies the practical magnitude of change.)

DISCUSSION

The observation checklist indicated that the implementation of the Complete-Sentence Model in teaching paragraph writing received a mean score of 3.4, which falls into the “good” category. Students' paragraph-writing performance improved substantially after the intervention: the mean pretest score was 39 (categorized as “fail”), while the mean posttest score rose to 75 (categorized as “good”). A paired-sample t-test confirmed that this improvement was statistically significant ($t = 11.78$, $df = 28$, $p < .05$; critical $t = 2.05$), since the calculated t exceeded the critical value ($11.78 > 2.05$).

These findings are consistent with prior research. For example, Simanungkalit (2018) reported progressive gains in narrative paragraph writing using the Complete-Sentence Model, with mean scores increasing from 71.82 in Cycle I to 82.27 in Cycle II. Taken together, the evidence indicates that the Complete-Sentence Model produces a significant and positive effect on students' paragraph-writing ability.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results presented, the researcher concludes that:

1. The implementation of the Complete-Sentence Model in teaching paragraph writing at SMP Negeri 2 Sibabangun is rated “good,” with an implementation mean score of 3.4.
2. Students' paragraph-writing ability improved markedly after the intervention: the pretest mean score was 39 (categorized as “fail”), while the posttest mean score increased to 75 (categorized as “good”).
3. The improvement is statistically significant. A paired-sample t-test yielded $t(28) = 11.78$, which exceeds the critical t value of 2.05 at the 5% significance level ($11.78 > 2.05$); therefore, the null



hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis—stating that the Complete-Sentence Model has a significant effect on students' paragraph-writing competence—is accepted.

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