

## IMPROVING STUDENTS’ WRITING COMPETENCE THROUGH GUIDED IMAGERY

Rustiani Widiasih  
Senior High School 1 of Badegan  
rustianiwidiasih@yahoo.com

### Abstract

The research is aimed at finding out: (1) whether guided imagery can improve the students’ writing competence or not; (2) the most significant improvement of students’ writing competence; (3) the strengths and weaknesses of using guided imagery to teach writing. The research was carried out at SMA Negeri I Badegan, Ponorogo, East Java, from August 2015 to January 2016. The subjects of the research are 33 students of grade X- 5 consisting of 10 boys and 13 girls. The data were obtained from several techniques. The quantitative data were obtained from test; while qualitative data were obtained from collaborative observation, interview, questionnaires, and document analysis. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher used interactive model; while to analyze quantitative data, the researcher applied a descriptive statistics. It is done by comparing mean of pre-test (before implementing Guided imagery) and post test (after implementing Guided imagery). There were some findings of the research. **Firstly**, Guided imagery can improve students’ writing competence. **Secondly**, the most significant improvement of students’ writing competence after being taught using guided imagery is the improvement of idea/content. **Thirdly**, the implementation of teaching using Guided imagery had strengths and weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses existed in the students’ writing competence and the situation in teaching and learning process. The strengths of teaching using Guided imagery related to the students’ writing competence were: the improvements of students’ mean scores in all components of writing and the improvement of the number of students who got score above 65. The strengths of guided imagery could also be found in improving the class situation too as follows: (1) Improvement of students’ imagination (2) Improvement of students’ creativity (3) improvement of students’ focus; (4) Improvement of students’ interest (5) Improvement of students’ relaxation. The weakness of guided imagery shows that not all students can follow the steps of guided imagery. Related to the class situation, guided imagery made some students keep doing daydreaming in the classroom. It also leads students to sleep in the classroom.

**Keywords:** guided imagery, writing competence

### INTRODUCTION

The basic competence of writing which should be mastered by the students in senior high school is expressing the meaning by using the steps of rhetorical development accurately in written form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, review, public speaking in academic context and literary work in daily life (Depdiknas, 2006: 12). In expressing the meaning by using the steps of rhetorical development accurately in written form, the students must pay attention in selecting appropriate language, making grammatical sentences, organizing information, generating ideas, using appropriate spelling and mechanic.

In fact, based on the preliminary observation on October 17 Th 2015, students of grade X.5 SMAN I Badegan got difficulties in writing. The number of the students in the classroom was 33. The researcher used three kinds of techniques in collecting data: test, questionnaire, and interview. She gave a test to the students to write a recount text about their unforgettable experience. From the pre-test, it showed that the average score gained in each indicator was below minimum standard score, (65). The worse element of writing was grammar (52). The average score of the content score was (62.5). The average score of organization was (63), word choice (57.5), spelling (63), and punctuation (61.5). Therefore, the researcher summarizes that the students could not write a paragraph well.

Furthermore, based on the questionnaire and test, the researcher found that the students got problems in writing. The problem was that the students could not write a text well. They were still confused in using grammar correctly, getting the idea, using correct vocabulary, writing the words in right spelling, using the punctuation, and arranging the sentences. There were several

factors causing the problems namely: from the students, the teacher and the class condition. From the students, factors causing the problems in writing were: 1) the students were lazy to open the dictionary, 2) the students were lazy to write, 3) the students had low motivation and interest in writing, 4) the student's were seldom practicing writing, 5) the students did not know, how a good writing should be.

From the teacher's factor, in teaching writing the teacher did not use the appropriate technique. The teacher just gave the students example of a recount text then, asked them to create their own. Then, the students composed a text using *Bahasa Indonesia* and translated it into English. The teacher didn't give the right steps in writing such as planning, drafting, generating idea, editing, etc. Besides, the teacher didn't use various strategies in teaching.

The class condition also influences the teaching and learning process. From the interview, the teacher said that the students' motivation in learning, writing, joining the English lesson were low. Besides, the students were noisy, passive, and lazy to study. As the result, the class condition was not active and competitive.

To solve the students' problems in writing and to conduct teaching learning activity appropriately, the researcher applied guided imagery in teaching writing. According to Hall, et al. (2006: 5) guided Imagery (called guided meditation) is the process of using words (narration) to take the reader on an inner journey for a particular purpose. Herr (1981: 51) states that guided imagery strategy consists of asking students to reflect on a series of questions that invite them to visualize or create images of a scene, a situation, or a person, using their imaginations. Meanwhile, Samples (1977: 8) states that among other things, the guided imagery technique 1) builds a structural base for inquiry, discussion, and group work, 2) explores and stretches students' concepts, and 3) encourages problem solving.

The learning and teaching process in guided imagery strategy could stimulate the development of students' writing competence. In the steps of teaching using guided imagery, teacher read guided imagery and the students listened to it. From the process of listening, students made list of vocabularies related to the words or phrases used in the text. Guided imagery helped the students to recall the vocabulary in their mind, so they could express their idea or opinions into sentences or paragraph easily. Moreover, by listening guided imagery, the students would be able to find the idea of their writing. From the background above, the researcher stated the problems as follows: 1) Can guided imagery improve the students' writing competence? 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of using guided imagery to teach writing?

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research was an Action Research. There are various definitions of Action Research stated by some experts. Based on several definitions stated by some experts, the researcher concluded that action research is any systematic inquiry undertaken by participators in a social situation including education, which is directed toward greater understanding and improvement of practices where those practices are carried out.

The researcher chose Kemmis and Taggart steps. There were some reasons why the researcher used classroom action research in the study. The researcher wanted to find the solution of the problems found in preliminary research significantly. Besides, the researcher wanted to change the practice in teaching learning in the classroom.

### **Procedure of the Research**

#### *Planning*

Based on the preliminary research, the researcher shared ideas with the collaborator in order to discuss the lesson plan, material, guided imagery text, media, time, schedule, and instrument for observation. The topic of writing in the lesson plan was based on the syllabus in the curriculum. The text types that researcher used were recount and narrative text because those texts were

taught in the first semester of first grade students of Senior high school. Photographs, journals, field notes, and interview questions sheet were necessary to support the observation.

### **1. Implementing**

The process of teaching writing using Guided imagery was applied based on the following procedure:

#### **a. Pre-writing**

##### 1) Relaxing

The teacher led the students to relax, inhale, and exhale slowly, close their eyes and invite them to listen closely and visualize what they heard.

##### 2) Turning on the music

The teacher turned soft music without words as the background of reading guided imagery.

##### 3) Reading the guided imagery

The teacher read a passage of guided imagery or series of prompts slowly and paused between sentences. The teacher gave students time to visualize each image and create picture in their mind. The guided imagery will help students guiding their writing.

#### **b. During-writing**

##### 1) Listing

The students wrote what they can see from guided imagery in the form of words or phrases. The students made list of words or phrases on the white board.

##### 2) Reading the prompts

The teacher read the prompts containing of what the students expected to write. The teacher handed out the prompts to the students.

##### 3) Writing

The students wrote the first rough draft. Students began to generate ideas and put a structure on their writing. The goal of this step was expressing main ideas clearly and developing the content with many specific details. They put them together without worrying about grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

##### 4) Sharing

The students broke down into peer response group. Each person read his/her friends writing in turn. He/she checked grammar, punctuations, sentence structures, and spelling. The teacher helped the students to solve their difficulties.

##### 5) Editing

The students applied all corrections in their second writing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

After carrying out the teaching process using guided imagery in teaching writing, the researcher and collaborator recited the result of the activities which occurred in classroom as the reflection of action research. They evaluated the process and result of implementing guided imagery strategy in teaching writing. It was a basic consideration to make plan and to conduct the next meeting. It would also be used to answer the hypothesis that has been proposed by the writer before the action is carried out.

### **The strengths and weaknesses of teaching writing using Guided imagery**

The implementation of teaching using Guided imagery had strengths and weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses existed in the students' writing competence and the situation in teaching and learning process.

#### *The Strengths of Teaching Using Guided Imagery*

Related to the students' writing competence, there were some improvements reached from the implementation of Guided imagery in teaching writing. They were the improvements of students' mean score in each components of writing, the improvement of mean score and the

improvement of the number of students who got score above 65. The fact was in line with Gaylean's opinion that students use mental imagery scored significantly higher on measures of oral and written communication skills than students who did not use mental imagery (1980:6).

Besides related to the students' writing competence, the strengths of guided imagery could be found in improving the class situation. The improvements were: 1) Improvement of students' imagination 2) Improvement of students' creativity 3) improvement of students' focus; 4) Improvement of students' interest 5) Improvement of students' relaxation.

### **The Weaknesses of teaching using Guided imagery**

Besides its strengths, the application of teaching using guided imagery in teaching writing also has weaknesses. The weaknesses existed in the students' writing competence and the class situation in teaching and learning process.

Related to the weaknesses of guided imagery in the students' writing competence, the researcher found that not all students could follow the steps of guided imagery. Each student has his own characteristics. Some students who left-brain thinkers tend to dislike the method. They were accustomed to thinking rationally and logically. They like to make the outline or draft in writing. On the other hand, the right-brain thinker enjoyed the steps of guided imagery because they accustomed to think imaginatively.

The next weakness of guided imagery was that it could lead students to sleep. Some students slept after listening guided imagery. It could happen because before listening guided imagery, the students are led by the teacher to do relaxation. The relaxed condition made students comfortable to sleep. Besides, the reading of guided imagery was combined with music so it led to deep relaxation. The deep relaxation made the students sleep.

## **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

This research was conducted to overcome the problem faced by the students of grade X-5 SMA Negeri I Badegan in academic year of 201/2012. Based on the finding in applying guided imagery to teach writing, the researcher tries to make some conclusion.

Firstly, Guided imagery can improve students' writing competence. It is proven by the increase of students' mean scores from 58.8 in pre-test to 64.5 in cycle 1, and 72.8 in cycle 2. All mean scores of writing elements showed progress too. The mean score of all indicators reached above the minimum standard score and even higher. Secondly, the implementation of teaching using Guided imagery had strengths and weaknesses. The strengths and weaknesses existed in the students' writing competence and the situation in teaching and learning process. The Strengths of teaching using Guided imagery related to the students' writing competence were the improvements of students' mean scores in each components of writing, the improvement of mean scores and the improvement of the number of students who got score above 65.

Besides related to the students' writing competence, the strengths of guided imagery could be found in improving the class situation. The improvements were: 1) improvement of students' imagination 2) improvement of students' creativity 3) improvement of students' focus; 4) improvement of students' interest 5) improvement of students' relaxation.

Besides having strengths, the application of teaching using Guided imagery in teaching writing also had weaknesses. The weaknesses existed in the students' writing competence and the situation in teaching and learning process. Related to the weaknesses of guided imagery in the students' writing competence, the researcher found that not all students could follow the steps of guided imagery. Some students who left-brain thinkers tend to dislike the method. They accustomed to think rationally and logically. They like to make the outline or draft in writing. On the other hand, the right-brain thinker enjoyed the steps of guided imagery because they accustomed to think imaginatively.

Related to the class situation in teaching and learning process, the weakness of guided imagery made some students kept doing daydreaming in the classroom. Some students do not directly come to the real situation after guided imagery step. It needed more time for those students to continue the next step of guided imagery. The next weakness of guided imagery was that it could lead students to sleep. Some students slept after listening to guided imagery.

### **Implication**

The research findings of this research shows that guided imagery can improve students' writing competence. By using Guided imagery the students write a text easily. All mean scores of writing elements showed progress. The mean score of all indicators reached above the minimum standard score and even higher.

Furthermore, the implementation of teaching using Guided imagery has some effects for

improving the class situation. Firstly, the implementation of Guided Imagery can improve the students' imagination. When the teacher reads the Guided imagery, the students listen to the Guided imagery and at the same time they also listen to the music as the background sound. That step leads the student to focus their mind. The focused mind leads the students to improve their imagination. As a result, they can make a text consisting of imaginative sentences which enable the reader to imagine the description of things, time, and place.

Secondly, Guided imagery can improve students' creativity. The students can create the text well. The students' creativity is also reflected from their ability in drawing illustration in their writing. Moreover, guided imagery can improve students' focus and attention. Teaching using Guided imagery is started by relaxation. It makes the students focus their mind. When the teacher reads guided imagery, they can imagine the narration because their mind is focused. The class condition became quiet, comfortable, and conducive. Before guided imagery is applied, the class is crowded and noisy.

Next, guided imagery makes students have better interest in writing compared with before applying guided imagery. The students are more enthusiastic to write a text. They are happy in doing all steps of guided imagery. They also do the assignment seriously. The students enjoy learning using guided imagery because it leads the students to the relaxation. Guided imagery allows students in relax condition so they enjoy their time in the classroom.

### **Suggestion**

Considering the findings and the conclusion, the researcher would like to offer some suggestions as follows:

1. Teacher
  - a. The teacher who faces the same problem in teaching can apply Guided imagery in teaching.
  - b. The teacher should be patient in helping the students to solve their problems.
  - c. The teacher is suggested to use various teaching methods based on the students' condition.
2. Other researchers
  - a. It is needed to do the research on the use of Guided imagery in teaching listening, speaking, and reading.
  - b. It is suggested to use the findings of the research a starting point in the next research about the implementation of guided imagery.
3. Students
  - a. Students can use Guided imagery in solving their problems in writing.
  - b. Students must have high motivation and interest in studying so they can improve their skill.

- c. The regular practice must be done because it will make students have motivation and interest to get better achievement.

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## International Seminar on Education “Education Trends for Future Society”

Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Muhammadiyah University of Ponorogo, August 30, 2016

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