

APPLICATION OF THE CRT (CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING APPROACH IN IMPROVING THE PERSONAL LETTER WRITING SKILLS OF STUDENTS OF STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 2 LHOKSEUMAWE, ACEH

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in enhancing the personal letter-writing skills of high school students. A classroom action research design was employed with a sample of Class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe. Data were collected through observations, assessments of personal letter-writing skills, and photo and video documentation. Both qualitative and quantitative descriptive analyses were conducted. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' personal letter-writing skills across all assessed aspects following the implementation of the CRT approach. Specifically, in Cycle 1, 64.51% of students demonstrated incomplete letter-writing skills. However, in Cycle 2, this percentage decreased to 19%, with 81% of students achieving complete letter-writing skills. These results demonstrate the efficacy of the CRT approach in improving the personal letter-writing abilities of Class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe

Keywords: *Culturally responsive Teaching, Menulis Surat, Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning Indonesian serves to improve students' ability to communicate using Indonesian, both spoken and written (Aminah, 2023). The competency of Indonesian language graduates focuses on the ability to read and write. Language includes many abilities, such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. During the process of learning writing skills, one of the most difficult things to teach students is how to teach it. Writing is painting graphic symbols that describe a language that a person understands, so that other people can read these graphic symbols if they understand the language and graphics (Sukirman, 2020; Rahmawati & Citrawati, 2023). Often they have difficulty conveying their ideas. Such problems are caused by the fact that people prefer to talk rather than write about what they want or say. In addition, they lack training in writing, so they cannot control the extent to which their skills develop.

Writing learning is the most difficult language skill compared to other skills (Sutrisno, 2021). Writing a personal letter is one of the writing challenges that students face (Beding, 2021). Learners in this writing skill must have enough creativity and inspiration to create beautiful and correct writing that is in accordance with the rules of text writing. Communication that uses written language as a medium is also called writing (Maryana, 2021). In the final stage, learners have the language skills to communicate with purpose and understand texts of directions or instructions, short stories, simple poetry, drama, personal and official letters. (Cahyaningsih, 2023).

As with writing, every activity or endeavour has a purpose to be gained or conveyed to others. There must be a purpose behind what is written. Aminah,dkk (2022) Writing skills are skills that must be applied in learning Indonesian in accordance with the objectives of education in Indonesia. Writing has several purposes, according to Rahmi (2018), including conveying or teaching, convincing or urging, entertaining or pleasing, and expressing or expressing strong feelings and emotions (Sriyanti, 2017). The opinion states that this writing ability has various purposes that are very important. When you create a piece of writing, it is very important to determine its purpose first. This is done so that the writing you make is clear and the message conveyed can be understood properly. In addition, writing skills are related to various types of Indonesian language materials, one of which in grade X is about communicating through letters, which includes the basics of personal letters and official letters.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, personal letter material is taught in Semester II for grade X students. According

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to Emilda (2018), a personal letter is a letter written personally to an individual or group. Personal letters contain personal interests that aim to communicate by providing information to others or pouring out their feelings to others so that others know their feelings (Soplanit, 2019). A personal letter is also defined as a writing activity intended to communicate in writing with correct composition, content, and language (Faebudodo & Harefa, 2023). The material of a personal letter consists of many parts, one of which is the elements or structure of a personal letter. The date and address of the letter, the first greeting, the opening sentence of the paragraph, the body, the closing, the final greeting, the name, and the signature are the structure of this personal letter. To ensure that the writing produced is neatly and clearly arranged, it is important to pay attention to the structure that exists in personal letters (Lesmana et al., 2020). Therefore, you must thoroughly understand and comprehend how each personal letter structure is structured.

There are many ways to learn, especially Indonesian. This learning method must be adapted to the material to be studied. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is one learning approach that can be used. CRT is a learning approach that is linked to culture and has the ability to explore the academic and psychosocial abilities of each student. Hasanuddin et al. (2020) stated that CRT can also be useful learning for students. The CRT approach can certainly help participants recognize and explore their cultural background by linking cultural elements in learning. This approach can also make it easier for participants to carry out learning activities because it is appropriate to their cultural background. They already knew about the culture, but that was only preliminary knowledge. With this method, students will better understand things related to their culture, such as food, dance, musical instruments, and so on.

Academic success, cultural skills, and critical thinking improve as a result of applying CRT methods to students. CRT meets the needs of an independent curriculum and is an effective learning method. In Indonesia, many professional educators say that CRT allows them to work better with diverse populations. Teachers can find out more about students' background, language and place of residence by using this CRT method. Relevant student experiences form knowledge known as contextual learning. Before learning begins, students can be tested for non-cognitive diagnoses. Educators can find out students' background, language and place of residence from the data they collect. This can help and make it easier for teachers to connect students' everyday experiences with literature learning in the classroom. (Faebudodo & Harefa, 2023).

In learning, the concept of CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) says that teachers must create learning tools that reflect learning objectives. One of the objectives of selecting content is to utilize local culture, which can be linked to learning materials that are relevant to the learning objectives. Researchers used personal letters selected to highlight Acehese culture, such as typical food, tourist attractions and art. In this lesson, they are given the freedom to choose the theme to be discussed. For example, students choose the theme of typical Acehese food, and then they write personal letters about foods that are prohibited in Aceh. Learning objectives that will be taught to class X students of SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe. Learning is carried out through lesson planning, implementation of learning practices, observation and reflection before being delivered via text using the CRT method.

RESEARCH METHODS

Classroom Action Research (PTK) is a type of research that aims to improve the quality of learning implementation and review an object using a model with useful data. This research involved students in Class X at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe. Based on the findings of pre-cycle observations, this class meets the criteria to be used as a class action subject because efforts are needed to improve the ability to write personal letters. The focus of the research is students' ability to write personal letters using the CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) approach. This approach connects students with local Acehese culture, such as typical food, tourist attractions and art. This research uses test and non-test tools.

This study was carried out in two cycles. In the first cycle, participants were asked to write personal letters independently without being given material about personal letters, such as meaning, characteristics, structure and language. In the second cycle, participants were asked to relate personal letters to elements of Acehese culture. After all students have completed the exam, the results are analyzed based on the elements of assessing good and correct personal letter writing, which correspond to the elements that will be used again to analyze personal letters in the second cycle. Apart from that, we also want to know the elements that become obstacles and difficulties for students in writing personal letters.

In the first cycle, students were asked to write personal letters with free themes and in accordance with their initial knowledge about personal letters. They were also asked to send it via email, with the aim of teaching them the steps to send a message via email. Researchers helped them write these personal letters during the learning process.

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In addition, researchers often ask about problems they encounter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observation results show that on average students are still confused about writing personal letters. They had difficulty because they had never written a personal letter before. However, class X students were able to complete the assignment within the specified time. However, their skills in writing personal letters were still low on average, according to the results. There are a number of reasons for this. One of them is because they do not have sufficient knowledge about writing personal letters, including understanding the layout of the structure, determining the topic, and using appropriate language. This is in line with Cahyaningsih (2023) who stated that the reason why students still face difficulties in writing personal letters is because they do not have the enthusiasm or enthusiasm to learn, and they are not used to writing letters. So, for the next cycle, researchers used the CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) approach. The results of the first cycle of action can be known by collecting scores from students before using the CRT method. At the end of the cycle, product observations are carried out after all students have collected the personal letters they wrote. The following table shows the personal letter writing scores before using the CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) approach.

Table 1. Evaluation Results of Cycle 1 Students

Number of students	High Score	Low Score	Completed	Not Completed
31	87,5	37,5	35,48%	64,51%

There were 20 students who had not completed, with a percentage of 64.51%, and only 11 students had completed, with a percentage of 35.48%, according to Table 1. Students in the incomplete category received a score of 37.5 for 3 people, a score of 50 for 7 people, and a score of 62.5 for 10 people. Students in the completed category received a score of 75.5 for 5 people, and a score of 87.5 for 6. Thus, students in the incomplete category received a lower score than students students in the complete category.

The results of the first cycle showed that students were still confused about writing personal letters. These results are included in the incomplete category because their writing does not include the main message they want to convey. They are still confused in determining the topic in this case, so the resulting writing is not optimal. As a result of the students' inability to understand the structure layout, their writing was not well organized and did not include the eight personal letter structures created. Furthermore, one aspect of their incompleteness in writing personal letters is the way they use language. They often use language that is similar to what they say when speaking, so they do not use standard language that conforms to appropriate Indonesian language norms. Therefore, writing personal letters in the first cycle was still considered unsatisfactory and did not reach the standard.

In the second cycle, students write personal letters in a different way. In the second cycle, they used the CRT method to write personal letters. Before carrying out this task, the researcher provided an overview in the form of examples of personal letters containing cultural elements with a special emphasis on Sundanese culture. Researchers also provide an understanding of how to write a good personal letter by paying attention to the structure and use of language. After participants received examples of personal letters, the researcher asked them to view and analyze the structural elements of each personal letter displayed. The goal is for students to fully understand the contents of a personal letter. In addition, they were asked to identify standard and non-standard language found in personal letters. When writing a personal letter, it is also important to use appropriate language. If the language used is clear, the person receiving the letter can understand the contents of the letter. After the discussion about the material is finished, students start writing personal letters about things related to Acehese culture, such as typical food, tourist attractions, art, etc.

The results of the second action cycle, where the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) method was used, were shown by the achievement of scores resulting from writing personal letters. At the end of the cycle, product observations were carried out after each student received a written personal letter. The following table shows the personal letter writing scores using the CRT method.

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Table 2. Evaluation Results of Cycle 2 Students

Number of students	High Score	Low Score	Completed	Not Completed
31	100	50	81%	19%

Based on the second table, there are 25 students in the completed category with a percentage of 81%, while 6 students in the incomplete category have a percentage of 19%. 4 students in the complete category got a score of 100, 13 students got a score of 87.5, and 8 students got a score of 75.

Based on the second table, there are 25 students in the completed category with a percentage of 81%, while 6 students in the incomplete category have a percentage of 19%. 4 students in the complete category got a score of 100, 13 students got a score of 87.5, and 8 students got a score of 75. A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 shows that the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach can improve the personal letter writing skills of class X students. Students' writing skills increased by 46%. Students are able to write personal letters by linking elements of Acehese culture according to their interests and experiences. Students are also able to write personal letters with the correct structure sequence. Apart from that, there was an increase in the use of language and punctuation compared to writing in cycle 1, so it can be concluded that the CRT approach can help class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe in writing personal letters.

The culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach makes it easier for students to express their various feelings based on the experiences they have had. In this case, most students already have an understanding or understanding of the subject that will be discussed in their personal letter (Izzati et al., 2020). For example, about typical foods they may have consumed regularly and tourist attractions they have visited. Undoubtedly, this makes it very easy for them to convey their various ideas regarding the topics they convey. As a result, they can easily convey their message to the recipient of the letter.

CONCLUSION

The results of two cycles of research show that the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach can improve the ability of class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe to write personal letters. The CRT approach to learning to write personal letters also links elements of Aceh's daily life, such as typical Acehese food, tourist attractions, and art based on students' experiences, making it easier for students to express their ideas. Here, Acehese culture was chosen because most of the students come from the Acehese tribe, so learning is easier and more meaningful. In addition, the data collected showed that the ability to write personal letters in class X using the CRT method increased. In the first cycle, there were 20 students who had not finished with a percentage of 64.51% and only 35.2%. In the second cycle, there were 25 students who were in the completed category with a percentage of 81% and 6 students who had not yet completed with a percentage of 19%. Therefore, the ability of class X students at SMA Negeri 2 Lhokseumawe to write personal letters has been improved through the application of the CRT method.

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