IMPROVING STUDENTS' AWARENESS ON COLLOCATION AND WRITING SKILL THROUGH EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION AT MTs DARUSSALAM AMPING PARAK

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master's Degree in English

Education



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ABSTRACT

Yeni Arlius. 2024. Improving Students' Awareness on Collocation and Writing Skill through Explicit Instruction at MTs Darussalam Amping Parak.

Explicit Instruction is widely researched for its effects on graduate students' rather than junior high school students' writing skill. Also, none of the previous studies have investigated the effect of Explicit Instruction to students' awareness on collocation. The purpose of this research is to fill these gaps through the classroom action research. This study is intended: (1) to figure out to what extent Explicit Instruction improves students' awareness on collocation and writing skill, (2) to explore the students' attitudes and beliefs about Explicit Instruction to improve their awareness on collocation and writing skill, and (3) to explore the students' attitudes about the benefits and challenges in learning collocations toward writing skill. Twenty-five students from grade IX B at MTs Darussalam Amping Parak in Pesisir Selatan district, participated in this classroom action research study. They were given Explicit Instruction intervention for two cycles. The data were gathered from collocation and writing tasks, tests, observational checklists, field notes, questionnaire and interview. The cycle 1 to cycle 2 findings reveal that the Explicit Instruction can improve students' awareness on collocation and writing skill. That can be seen from the increase of students' average score in collocation and writing test. In the first cycle, the average score of collocation test was 53.64 or none of the students achieved the standard minimum criteria of achievement. However, the score had increased from 36.8 in pre-cycle. The results of collocation test in the second cycle displayed the increase of students' achievement, in which the average score was 75.84 or 11 students had passed the score of 75. Meanwhile, the average score of students' writing test in cycle 1 was 69.96 or 9 students had passed the minimum standard. That score had increased from 55.73 in pre-cycle. In cycle 2, the score obtained from the students' writing test was 82.37 or 20 students passed the minimum standard. The results also highlight the positive attitude and belief toward Explicit Instruction, the positive attitude toward the benefits of learning collocation and the negative attitude toward the challenges of learning collocation. The implication and suggestions from this study also discussed.

Keywords: Explicit Instruction, awareness, collocation, writing skill

ABSTRAK

Yeni Arlius. 2024. Improving Students' Awareness on Collocation and Writing Skill through Explicit Instruction at MTs Darussalam Amping Parak.

Instruksi eksplisit telah banyak diteliti karena efeknya pada keterampilan menulis siswa sarjana daripada siswa SMP. Selain itu, tidak ada dari penelitian sebelumnya yang menyelidiki efek instruksi eksplisit terhadap kesadaran siswa tentang kolokasi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengisi kesenjangan tersebut melalui penelitian tindakan kelas. Studi ini dimaksudkan: (1) untuk mencari tahu sejauh mana instruksi eksplisit meningkatkan kesadaran siswa tentang kolokasi dan keterampilan menulis, (2) untuk mengeksplorasi sikap dan keyakinan siswa tentang instruksi eksplisit untuk meningkatkan kesadaran mereka tentang kolokasi dan keterampilan menulis, dan (3) untuk mengeksplorasi sikap siswa terhadap manfaat dan tantangan ketika mempelajari kolokasi dalam keterampilan menulis. Dua puluh lima siswa dari kelas IX B di MTs Darussalam Amping Parak di kabupaten Pesisir Selatan, berpartisipasi dalam studi penelitian tindakan kelas ini. Mereka diberikan intervensi instruksi eksplisit selama dua siklus. Data dikumpulkan dari tugas kolokasi dan menulis, tes, lembar observasi, catatan lapangan, kuesioner, dan wawancara. Temuan dari siklus 1 hingga siklus 2 mengungkapkan bahwa instruksi eksplisit dapat meningkatkan kesadaran siswa tentang kolokasi dan keterampilan menulis. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari peningkatan rata-rata nilai siswa dalam tes kolokasi dan menulis. Pada siklus pertama, rata-rata nilai tes kolokasi adalah 53,64 atau tidak ada dari siswa yang mencapai kriteria standard minimum pencapaian. Namun, nilai tersebut telah meningkat dari 36,8 pada pra-siklus. Hasil tes kolokasi dalam siklus kedua menampilkan peningkatan pencapaian siswa, di mana rata-rata nilai adalah 75,84 atau 11 siswa telah mencapai nilai 75. Sementara itu, rata-rata nilai tes menulis siswa pada siklus 1 adalah 69,96 atau 9 siswa telah melewati standard minimum. Nilai tersebut telah meningkat dari 55,73 pada pra-siklus. Pada siklus 2, nilai yang diperoleh dari tes menulis siswa adalah 82,37 atau 20 siswa telah melewati standard minimum. Hasil ini juga menyoroti sikap positif dan keyakinan terhadap instruksi eksplisit, sikap positif terhadap manfaat mempelajari kolokasi, dan sikap negatif terhadap tantangan mempelajari kolokasi. Implikasi dan saran dari studi ini juga dibahas.

Kata kunci: Instruksi eksplisit, kesadaran, kolokasi, keterampilan menulis

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 \mathbf{v}

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ALHAMDULILLAHI RABBIL 'ALAMIIN. It will never be ending prayer

to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, the most gracious and merciful who has given me the

health, ability, time and chance to completing my thesis. Then, the invocation and

greeting to our beloved prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam.

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Dr.

Jufrizal, M. Hum for his invaluable advice, continuous support, and patience during

my master study. His immense knowledge and plentiful experience have encouraged

me in all the time of my academic research and daily life. I would also like to thank

Dr. Zul Amri, M. Ed and Dr. Yuli Tiarina, S. Pd., M. Pd as the contributors for this

research for their critics, suggestions and valuable contributions for the improvements

of the content of this thesis.

I would like to thank all the members of Magister English Education Year

2022 for their kind help and support that have made my study and life become more

wonderful. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents, my husband,

Ahmadoni, S. HI., M.A and my beloved children, Muhammad Yazid Alfaruq and

Fawwaz Abil Syathibi. Without their tremendous understanding and encouragement

in the past few years, it would be impossible for me to complete my study.

Padang, June 2024

Yeni Arlius

NIM: 2022/22178033

vi

TABLE OF CONTENT

ABST	TRACT	j
	TRAK	
	SETUJUAN AKHIR TESIS	
	SETUJUAN KOMISI UJIAN TESIS MAGISTER PENDIDIKAN AT PERNYATAAN	
	NOWLEDGEMENTS	
	LE OF CONTENT	
	OF TABLES	
	OF FIGURES	
	OF APPENDICESPTER I	
	ODUCTION	
A.	Background of the Problem	
В.	Identification of the Problems	6
C.	Limitation of the Problem	7
D.	Formulation of the Problem	7
E.	Research Questions	7
F.	Purposes of the Research	8
G.	Significances of the Research	8
Н.	Definition of the key terms	9
	PTER II	
REV	EW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
A.	Review of Related theories	10
1		
2		
3	8 8	
4	8	
5	1	
6		
7	Assessing Writing	36
R	Review of Related Studies	38

C.	Conceptual Framework	40
	PTER III	
RESI	EARCH METHOD	42
A.	Research Design	42
B.	Setting and Participants	43
C.	Types of Data	44
D.	Instruments of the Research	45
E.	Technique of Data Collection	57
F.	Technique of Data Analysis	58
G.	Procedure of the Research	62
CHA	PTER IV	67
RESU	ULTS AND DISCUSSION	67
A.	Results	67
1	I. Data Description and Analysis	67
2	2. Findings	106
B.	Discussion	119
CHA	PTER V	134
CON	ICLUSION, IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS	134
A.	Conclusion	134
B.	Implication	135
C.	Suggestions	136
REF	ERENCES	137
A PPI	FNDICES	143

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
3.1	The Indicators of Collocation Test	45
3.2	The Indicators of Writing Labels	48
3.3	The Indicators of Writing Procedure Text	49
3.4	The Indicators of Questionnaire	51
3.5	The Likert-Scale of Questionnaire	53
3.6	The Observation Checklist for Teacher's Activities	53
3.7	The Observation Checklist for Students' Activities	55
3.8	The Form of Field Note	56
3.9	Themes for Interview	56
3.10	Jacobs et al.'s scoring profile	59
3.11	The Students' Writing Score	60
3.12	Data Interpretation of the Questionnaire Score	61
3.13	The Procedure of Teaching and Learning Process by Using	64
	Explicit Instruction	
4.1	The Students' Score in Collocation Test (Pre-Cycle)	67
4.2	The Students' Score in Writing Test (Pre-Cycle)	69
4.3	The Schedule of the Research (Cycle 1)	71
4.4	The Students' Score in Collocation Test (Cycle 1)	79
4.5	The Students' Score in Writing Test (Cycle 1)	80
4.6	The Schedule of the Research (Cycle 2)	83
4.7	The Students' Score in Collocation Test (Cycle 2)	89
4.8	The Students' Score in Writing Test (Cycle 2)	90
4.9	The Accumulation of Students' Collocation Test	91
4.10	The Accumulation of Students' Writing Test	92
4.11	The Results of the Questionnaire	94
4.12	The Results of the Questionnaire	101
4.13	The Results of Students' Collocation Test	106
4.14	The Results of Students' Writing Test	107

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Type of Collocations	13
2	Designing Lessons of Explicit Instruction	35
3	Conceptual Framework	41
4	The Procedure of CAR	62
5	Students' Attitudes and Beliefs about Explicit Instruction	111
6	Students' Attitudes about the Benefits and Challenges in Learning	114
	Collocation	
7	The Wilcoxon-test Result for Writing Test	118
8	The Wilcoxon-test Result for Collocation Test	118

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Syllabus of Grade IX Curriculum 2013	143
Appendix 2	The Attendance List	152
Appendix 3	Lesson Plan of Cycle 1	153
Appendix 4	Lesson Plan of Cycle 2	163
Appendix 5	Observation Checklist Cycle 1	172
Appendix 6	Observation Checklist Cycle 2	174
Appendix 7	Field Note of Cycle 1	176
Appendix 8	Field Note of Cycle 2	177
Appendix 9	Samples of Students' Collocation Test 1	178
Appendix 10	The Students' Score of Collocation Test 1	180
Appendix 11	Samples of Students' Writing Test 1	181
Appendix 12	Students' Writing Score of Test 1	183
Appendix 13	Samples of Students' Collocation Test 2	184
Appendix 14	The Students' Score of Collocation Test 2	186
Appendix 15	Samples of Students' Writing Test 2	187
Appendix 16	Students' Writing Score of Test 2	189
Appendix 17	The Accumulation of Students' Scores in Collocation	190
	Test	
Appendix 18	The Accumulation of Students' Scores in Writing Test	191
Appendix 19	Sample of Students' Questionnaire	192
Appendix 20	The Results of Students' Questionnaire	198
Appendix 21	Validation Sheet from Expert	200
Appendix 22	The Results of Validity and Reliability from SPSS	215
Appendix 23	Research Permit Letter from Campus	220
Appendix 24	Letter of having conducted research from the school	221

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In the EFL context, the learners tend to learn word by word separately not in combination. They are not accustomed to enrich their vocabulary in the word combination. This combination is called by collocation. For instance, when they work with the text, the learners tend to look for the meaning of each word in the dictionary whenever they get stuck with it. As a result, when two or more words appear together, the learners will translate word by word individually not in a whole. The meaning of the words will become ambiguous and their understanding of the text will become vague, too, especially if the teachers do not introduce them with the collocation.

To overcome this problem, special attention should be given not only to the possible meanings of each word has but also the meanings when the word combined with other words. Trng & Thao (2021) indicate that the choice of which word can go with another one in collocations is extremely arbitrary. The lexical knowledge is not just about understanding individual words, but also about how to put words together. Collocations are words which are conventionally used together. It is, of course, very natural to native speakers who use the language effortlessly; however, this troublesome aspect of the language may trigger some tension for EFL learners.

Being viewed as the fundamental building blocks of native speakers' linguistic competence, collocation is given a special status in the context of foreign language learning. It must be mastered by students especially in productive skills: speaking and writing. By using the right collocations, students can deliver their ideas naturally and sound like a native speaker. They will be highly effective in conveying the message in a more appropriate sense.

Previous studies have proved that collocations are viewed positively in the language learning. The advantages of collocations in writing are perceived similarly by learners and teachers (Duong & Nguyen, 2021). From learners' view, it was found that utilizing collocations make their written ideas look real, interesting, succinct, and smooth. Meanwhile, from teacher's insight, there are some effects of using collocations in academic writing. First, it is encouraged to write fluently like a native, which makes communication easier. Second, the students' lexical resources expand and become precise. The last is students can create sentences that are both shorter and clearer.

However, choosing the right collocations to express meaning in spoken and written form can be a challenge for English language learners (ELLs) in both English as a second language and English as a foreign language setting. One of the reasons is the importance of collocation is not taken into consideration in many contexts. For example, in an EFL context, the majority of instructional resources in Indonesian junior and senior high schools concentrate on teaching grammar and words alone, rather than in

combination. They are not well taught how to use collocation in their task and even teachers do not introduce students with collocation. As a consequence, most students cannot use a good English in writing skill.

Futhermore, writing is not a simple task for students. Teachers must teach the students how to write well and encourage them to practice this skill. Le et al. (2022) emphasize that learners must posses a variety of abilities in order to effectively use written language, including the ability to communicate ideas, organize them coherently, accurately employ rhetorical devices, and correctly apply grammar when written texts diverge from spoken language. In other words, when the students write, they do not just put their ideas into written form, but there are some essential skills required.

Futhermore, based on the evaluation of students' task at MTs Darussalam Amping Parak, it was found that students cannot use the right combination of words. For example, the word "homework" is often followed by *make homework*. In fact, the right collocation is *do homework*. Another problem is when they translate the word *make a bed* with *membuat tempat tidur* instead of *merapikan tempat tidur*. From, this phenomenon, it can be concluded that students do not know how to use the right collocation even in translation. The students need an alternative instructional method that could be applied in the classroom to improve both their awareness on collocation and their ability in writing.

Explicit Instruction is considered as one of the teaching strategies to improve the students' problem in writing skill. In this strategy, the concepts or skills are taught in a very structured way. The stages are revealed very clearly by Archer & Hughes (2011) in the body of the lesson of Explicit Instruction. In the opening, teachers can gain students' attention, review critical prerequisite skills, and state the goal of the lesson. Meanwhile, for the body of the lesson, teachers can do modelling (*I do it*), prompted or guided practice (*We do it*), and unprompted practice (*You do it*). At the last stage, teachers can review critical content, preview the content of the next lesson, and assign independent work.

Another positive value of Explicit Instruction is absolutely necessary in teaching content that students could not otherwise discover. For example, without explicit input, how would the students discover the construction of the essay in their writing performance. Explicit instruction is helpful not only when discovery is impossible, but also when discovery may be inaccurate, inadequate, incomplete, or inefficient (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In other words, through three steps of Explicit Instruction, the students are guided step by step by teachers until they can do the task and practice the writing skill individually.

On one side, it seems that Explicit Instruction focuses on "teacher-centred" rather than "student-centred". However, Archer & Hughes (2011) argue that this teaching strategy also considers about students' need to help

them in performing their language skill especially for the novice learners. They cannot learn well if they are not guided gradually by their teacher. In contrast, the advanced learners have capabilities to discover the knowledge by themselves in which the teacher as the facilitator since they know a lot about that topic derived from their long-term memory.

A few intervention studies with the explicit teaching strategy have been conducted and students have been found to make considerable progress in various aspects of learning English (Alawerdy & Alalwi, 2022; Mohammed, 2022; Zhang, Zhang & Xu, 2023; Kesler, 2023; Michaud & Ammar, 2023). However, it remains unclear if and how such an instruction might affect students' awareness and understanding of collocation, as well as their more general understanding of writing skill. These word choice is influential to determine the most suitable words to convey a writer's message to readers related to the clarity aspect in writing (Reynolds & Teng, 2021). Besides, the previous studies were more focused on the intermediate and advanced level instead of beginner level. If the collocations are introduced to the students since the early time, they will be familiar with the collocations used by the English native speaker.

Therefore, the present study implemented a strategy that could improve students' awareness about collocation and develop their writing skills. Accordingly, the main purpose of this research was to examine whether

Explicit Instruction affected EFL students' awareness on collocation and their writing skill.

B. Identification of the Problems

Related to the background of the problem above, some problems were identified by the researcher. The first problem was collocations are very natural to native speakers who use the language effortlessly; however, this troublesome aspect of the language may trigger some tension for EFL students. Second, choosing the right collocations to express meaning in spoken and written form was still challenging for English language learners. Third, writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered by EFL students even the native English speaker.

These problems emerged because of some factors which came from teacher and students. Based on the preliminary studies, from teacher's side, the collocations were not introduced from the beginning since the students started learning English. In fact, collocations were integrated with their learning materials. As the consequence, students were not aware about collocations. They could not use the appropriate word combination in sharing their ideas. Besides, teachers still rarely used the media and technologhy to help students in learning. They just concerned with curriculum and text book. Moreover, the students did not practice writing skill a lot and their teacher did not teach writing explicitly. From students' side, they had low ability in writing skill due to limited vocabulary and low motivation in learning.

Dealing with the problems above, the research was aimed to improve students' awareness on collocation and ability in writing by using Explicit Instruction. Clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, supported practice with feedback, and clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the skill are all characteristics of Explicit Instruction, which guide students through the learning process until independent mastery can be achieved.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problems above, this research was limited to improve students' awareness on collocation and writing skill through Explicit Instruction for the ninth grade students at MTs Darussalam Amping Parak.

D. Formulation of the Problem

The problem of this research was formulated as follow "How does Explicit Instruction improve students' awareness on collocation and writing skill?".

E. Research Questions

In this research, the researcher formulated three questions as follow:

- 1. To what extent does the Explicit Instruction improve EFL students' awareness on collocation and develop their writing skill?
- 2. What are the attitudes and beliefs of EFL students about the Explicit Instruction to improve their awareness on collocation and writing skill?

3. What are the attitudes of EFL students about the benefits and challenges in learning collocations toward writing skill?

F. Purposes of the Research

Related to the research questions above, the purposes of the research were:

- to figure out to what extent Explicit Instruction improves students' awareness on collocation and writing skill,
- 2. to explore the students' attitudes and beliefs about Explicit Instruction (EI) to improve their awareness on collocation and writing skill,
- 3. to explore the students' attitudes about the benefits and challenges in learning collocations toward writing skill.

G. Significances of the Research

There are two significances of the research. They are theoretical and practical contributions. As the theoretical contributions, the findings of the research are expected to enrich teacher's knowledge in teaching related to improving students' awareness on collocation and ability in writing. Besides, it is hoped to be useful information for other researchers in doing further research dealing with explicit instruction, collocation and writing skill. As the practical contribution, it is hoped this instructional method is going to be used in teaching practice on collocation and others learning materials.

H. Definition of the key terms

To avoid misunderstanding of the concept used in this research, some definitions are provided as follows:

- 1. Explicit Instruction : teacher does modeling in writing skill, teacher guides the students in performing the skill in group or individually, and teacher asks the students to perform the skill without prompt
- 2. Awareness : how the students use the lexical collocations in their writing performance
- 3. Collocation : lexical word combination between verb + noun and adjective + noun that can be found in the labels and procedure text
- 4. Writing skill : students' ability to clearly communicate ideas in writing labels and procedure text.