Problem-based learning for Improving Capital Letter Writing in 2nd Grade Elementary Schools

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1.   Abstract

In this instructional research, the paradigm of problem-based learning (PBL) is used to improve capital letter writing skills in the 2nd grade of a state elementary school in Yogyakarta for the school year 2022–2023. 8 students in the 2nd grade of a state elementary school in Yogyakarta served as subjects of the study. The subject of the study is the talent of writing capital letters using a learning approach called problem-based learning. Based on the results of the first cycle, an average score of 71.25 was obtained with a completeness level of 62.5%. The research results of the first cycle showed that the results were below average. The results of the cycle II actions received an average score of 78.75 and a completion rate of 75%. Thus, compared to cycle I, the research results of cycle II showed an increase. Conclusion: the application of problem-based learning approach can improve the ability to write capital letters in Yogyakarta's 2nd grade state elementary schools with an improvement of 12.5% from cycle I to cycle II.

Keywords: *writing skills, capital letters, problem-based learning models*

2.   Introduction

Indonesian language learning requires mastery of four basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Writing activities cannot be separated from language teaching and learning activities (Saddhono & Slamet, 2014). Writing is a linguistic skill that enables

individuals to express ideas, emotions, or feelings systematically in written form so that others can understand the message (Ratoyo et al., 2019; Susandi, 2019). A writer must have good writing skills in order to communicate the thoughts that are going through his or her mind and achieve his or her goals. De Smedt et al. (2016) also noted that a basic understanding of writing skills is crucial because young people do not acquire advanced writing techniques naturally. Writing skills should therefore be introduced or taught in elementary school.

The 2013 curriculum, which is still used in 2nd grade elementary schools, includes a set of basic requirements for students learning Indonesian as a second language. The use of capital letters, periods, and question marks in sentences must be visible to students. Writing tasks in school are undoubtedly crucial for learning. Compared to regular letters, capital letters have a unique size and shape (Purnamasari et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2022). Usually, the first letter of a sentence, a person's name, etc., is written in capital letters. Readers can distinguish the beginning of a sentence from the end of a sentence by looking for capital letters at the beginning of the sentence. Many guidelines on the use of capital letters are included in the Ministry of Education and Culture's Regulation No. 50 of 2015 on General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling. According to the curriculum for Indonesian language 2nd grade in elementary school , the material on capital letters teaches six spelling rules, including the following: 1) The first letter at the beginning of a sentence should be capitalized; 2) The first letter of a person's name should be capitalized; 3) The first letter of the pronoun God should be capitalized; 4) The first letter of the name of religion should be capitalized; 5) The first letter of the day should be capitalized; and 6) The first letter of the month should be capitalized.

According to Heaton and Brown (Saddhono & Slamet, 2014), assessment of a student's writing should focus on the following elements when writing a sentence: content, Organization, Discourse, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Mechanics. If a sentence contains components of the above elements, it can be considered well-written. In practice, however, many sentences are still written that do not meet expectations or, it could be argued, do not yet meet the requirements to be considered good sentences. A study of the writing performance of children in 2nd grade in state elementary schools in Yogyakarta highlighted this problem. The pictures that the students saw were described by them in short sentences. However, they do not pay attention to the mechanics of writing, such as capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. In writing, in addition to the topic of the text, attention must be paid to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization according to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling. The results of the still low writing proficiency score serve as evidence of this. According to the data obtained from the results of the pre-cycle in the form of essay questions, only 1 out of 8 students, i.e. 12.5%, was able to meet the minimum mastery criteria. Consequently, there are still 7 students or 87.5% who did not achieve the minimum mastery criteria. According to the results of the analysis, the students did not use capitalization correctly. This result shows that students still do not know how to capitalize short sentences correctly.

If the correct answer is not given now, students will continue to have poor writing results in the future because of the issues raised. Students still disregard or misunderstand the requirements for capitalization. Teachers can therefore use a variety of creative learning strategies to respond to learning problems that arise. The learning model used should be adapted to the needs of the topic being taught. The problem of poor sentence

capitalization skills can be addressed by using the problem-based learning (PBL) paradigm as an instructional strategy.

The problem-based learning (PBL) learning model is a type of learning that begins with challenges that require students to think critically in groups to find solutions to the problems they experience (Assegaff & Sontani, 2020; Hotimah, 2020; Yulianti & Gunawan, 2019). PBL teaches students to think critically and analytically and to find and use the best learning resources. The following are the steps of the problem-based learning model: Students must be introduced to the topic, organize themselves to learn, be guided through individual or group experiences, develop and present their work, and then analyze and evaluate the process. According to Hotimah (2020), the PBL learning paradigm has the following characteristics: 1) There are problems at the beginning of learning; 3) The problems delivered stimulate different perspectives, which requires students to be exposed to the ideas of different sciences; 2) Existing problems are from the real world or daily life; and 3) 4) Current problems present students with new learning challenges; 5) Students who want to learn independently are given priority; 6) Use of a variety of information and knowledge sources; 7) Students need to cooperate, communicate, and collaborate in order to learn.

The application of the PBL learning model by Nugraha (2020) revealed that the problem-based learning (PBL) approach of the model led to an improvement in students' descriptive writing skills. It is known that the average score of the previous product and learning completeness for writing skills was 61.4, with a completeness rate of only 36%. In Cycle I, there was an increase of 69.6 with a learning completion rate of 60%, an increase of 24%, while in Cycle II, there was an increase of 75.6 with a mastery rate of

88%, an increase of 28%. Thus, written descriptions in class IV Indonesian courses at SDN 3 Selajambe, Kuningan Regency, can be improved with the method of problem-based learning. These results indicate that problem-based learning can be used to address the problem of capital letter writing skills in 2nd grade Yogyakarta state elementary schools.

The Problem-Based Learning model was used in an effort to improve the Indonesian language learning process based on the challenges mentioned above. This instructional approach is designed to help students in Yogyakarta state elementary schools in grade II become more proficient in writing capital letters. This led to the implementation of the action research project "**Problem-based learning for improving the writing of capital letters in 2nd grade elementary school**".

3. Methods

3.1. Participants and context

The children of 2nd grade in Yogyakarta state elementary schools in the –school year 2022-2023 served as subjects for the study. Eight students formed the 2nd grade, including two males and six females. Three children classified as children with special needs were part of the 2nd grade, along with five other students. Together with the supervising teachers, we conducted action research in class and made observations. The goal of this project is to improve capital letter writing using a problem-based learning approach.

3.2. Material

The methods used to collect data in this study were observation, testing, and document study. Below is a detailed description of the different techniques:

1) Observation

The purpose of the observations in the study was to observe how students were engaged in the learning process before and after the introduction of the problem-based learning paradigm. To get a general idea of what children do in learning, one observes before acting. Observations made during the activity to learn about students' activities using the problem-based learning paradigm to learn Indonesian in capital letters.

2) Test

The test is designed to test students' knowledge through tasks that must be completed both alone and in groups. The test includes both objective and non-objective tests. Unlike non-objective tests that give answers in the form of descriptions, objective tests give answers to questions in the form of choices. In this study, both objective tests, which involve answering evaluation questions, and non-objective tests, which involve capitalizing sentences, are used.

3) Documentation study

A documentation study is a summary of past episodes or events. For this study, student identities, instructional modules, teacher learning resources, documentation of diagnostic tests taken by students, results of capitalization skills before and after using the problem-based learning model, and documentation of the learning process are needed.

3.3. Data Collection and analysis

Data analysis is helpful in generating knowledge that can be used as a basis for solving current problems. Two types of data analysis are used in this study: quantitative data analysis and qualitative data.

The results of the inter-cycle assessments related to the ability to write capital letters will be compared using quantitative data analysis approaches, specifically by using comparative descriptive analysis techniques. Qualitative data analysis is used to understand the data collected to support the formulation of the research question.

In Sugiyono (2015), Miles and Huberman's model consisting of three parts — data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion — was used as the analysis technique. Each element is explained below:

1) Data reduction

   In order to reduce the amount of data in the study, data were first sorted before being collected through the learning process, curriculum, observations, assessments, documents, or photographs of learning activities about the ability to write capital letters using a problem-based learning paradigm.

2) Data presentation

   Presentation of information in the form of an arrangement of facts that can suggest conclusions and inspire action. The following data are included in this study:

   a. Information on how important the ability to write capital letters is for students in the 2nd grade in state elementary schools in Yogyakarta.

   b. The children of 2nd grade in Yogyakarta state elementary schools were observed.

3) Conclusion

   In order to meet the formulation of the research problem, the conclusion examines the results of the data collected. The conclusions are based on the results of all steps of data analysis.

3.4. Limitations to the Study

To conduct in-depth, focused, clear, and targeted research, limitations are placed on the problem identification in this class action research. Therefore, the scope of this class action research problem is as follows:

1) This study uses the problem-based learning approach to constrain the development of capital letter writing skills.

2) The students of 2nd grade in Yogyakarta, a state elementary school, were the subjects of this study in 2022–2023.

3) The subjects are written in capital letters in Indonesian.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

Before taking measures, observational activities were conducted to learn more about the ability to write capital letters, which served as baseline data for the study. The pre-cycle score indicates that mastery of capitalization is not yet adequate. Only 1 in 8 children, or 12.5%, met the minimum criterion for completeness based on the pre-cycle data. The average for the classical class is 50. The class average is still considered low.

The following table provides a basic summary of the results of the pre-cycle traditional analysis of writing skills in uppercase letters:

Table 1. The results of the analysis of the completeness of writing skills

No	Category	Number of students	Percentage
1.	Not finished	1	12,5%

2.	complete	7	87,5%

Based on these results, it is critical to use the problem-based learning approach to address difficulties and improve capital letter writing in particular. This approach encourages students to approach problems critically. PBL can help teachers design their students' learning activities in a methodical way.

Two cycles of classroom action research were conducted, with two meetings per cycle. In Cycle I, there were two face-to-face meetings. Each meeting lasted two class periods or 70 minutes. The use of problem-based learning in the implementation of the first cycle for learning the capital letters improved compared to the previous cycle. This improvement can be seen in the results of the capital letter writing test, which yielded an average score of 71.25. A percentage of 62.5%, or 5 out of 8 students, exceeded the minimum mastery criteria after achieving an average score. The following table compares the scores from the pre-cycle and Cycle I:

Table 2. Comparison of pre-cycle and cycle I values

Aspect	Pre cycle	Cycle I
The highest score	70	90
Lowest value	30	60
Rate-rate	50	71,25
Completeness percentage	**12,5%**	**62,5%**

In the pre-cycle and cycle I there was an increase in capital letter writing skills with an increase in the number of students who scored above the minimum mastery criteria with a completeness percentage of 12.5% in the pre-cycle to 62.5% in cycle I. The increase in the class average during the pre-cycle 50 became 71.25 in cycle I. Based on the

acquisition of these scores, there were still deficiencies in terms of applying the model *Problem Based Learning*. So it needs to be repaired and improved in cycle II. Things that need to be improved include the activeness of students in learning, the process of implementing learning in improving capital letter writing skills, and increasing the value of capital letter writing skills.

The II action research cycle was divided into two sessions. The application of the problem-based learning paradigm in the implementation of the first cycle for learning capitalization improved compared to the first cycle. This improvement was determined by the result of the test on writing capital letters, which resulted in an average score of 78.75. After achieving an average score, a percentage of 75% — or 6 out of 8 students — met or exceeded the minimum mastery criteria. The lowest score for students in the II cycle was 60, and the highest was 90. The following table compares the pre-cycle and II cycle scores:

Table 3. Comparison of pre-cycle and cycle I values

Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II
The highest score	90	90
Lowest value	60	60
Rate-rate	71,25	78,75
Completeness percentage	**62,5%**	**75%**

With an increase in the percentage of students scoring above the minimum mastery criteria and a percentage of completeness that increased from 62.5% in Cycle I to 75% in Cycle II, there was an improvement in capital letter writing skills between Cycles I and II. The percentage of completeness increased by 12.5%. The increase in class average from cycle I to cycle II was 71.25 to 78.75.

The importance of writing in capital letters has increased for students in the class II at the state elementary school in Yogyakarta. The following table compares the value of writing skills in capital letters from the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II:

Table 4. Comparison of the value of writing capital letters

Criteria	Condition		
	Pre cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Lowest value	30	60	60
The highest score	70	90	90
Average value	50	71,75	78,75
The number of students is not complete	7	3	2
The number of students completed	1	5	6
Completeness percentage	12,5%	62,5%	75%

Comparison of the average value of writing skills between cycles in the table is also presented in graphical form as follows:
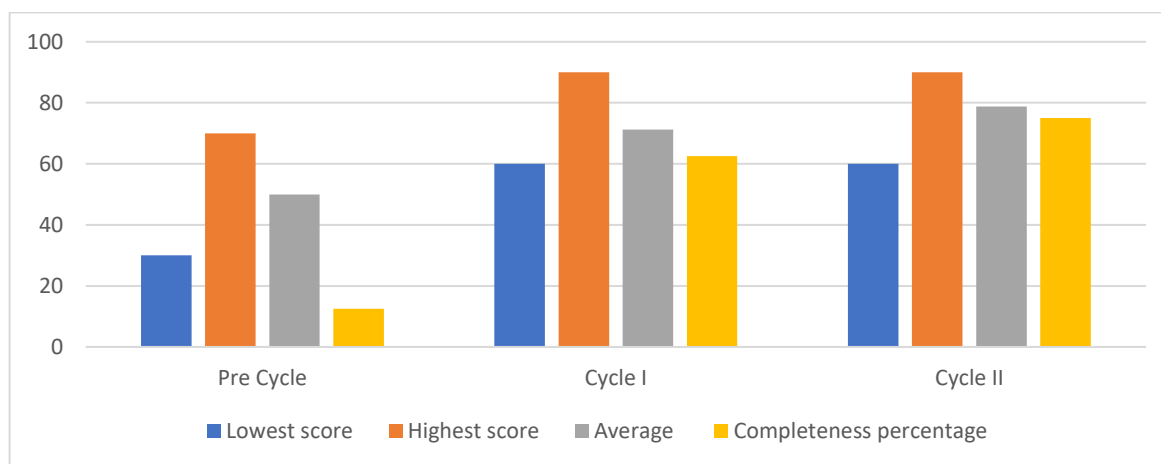

Figure 1. Graph of comparison of capital letters writing skills scores

Students' skills in writing uppercase letters improved compared to pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II conditions, as shown in table 4 and figure 1. The lowest, highest, average

score, and percentage of completion all show increases. The lowest pre-cycle value was 30, increased to 60 in Cycle I, and remained at 60 in Cycle II. In Cycles I and II, the highest pre-cycle value increased from 70 to 90 and remained at 90.

The average value of the pre-cycle, which was 50, increased to 71.25 in cycle I and again to 78.75 in cycle II. In cycle I, the percentage of completeness of the classic pre-cycle increased by 50% from 12.5% to 62.5%, and in cycle II it increased by another 12.5% to 75%.

4.2.   Discuccion

Two cycles of this classroom action research were conducted. Each cycle consists of two meetings. Before the cycle begins, pre-cycle learning is conducted without any learning activities, resulting in children in grade II at Yogyakarta's state elementary schools still not being able to write capital letters according to proper guidelines.

The results of the pre-cycle writing proficiency tests continued to be low. According to the data obtained from the results of the pre-cycle examination in the form of essay questions, only one out of eight students managed to meet the required minimum (KKM), which is 12.5% of the students. Consequently, there are still 7 students or 87.5% who did not achieve the KKM. According to the results of the analysis, the students did not apply capitalization correctly. This result shows that students still do not know how to capitalize short sentences correctly. As a result, teachers can apply a variety of unique and creative learning approaches to address any learning difficulties. The learning model used should be adapted to the needs of the topic being taught. The problem of poor capitalization of sentences can be addressed by using the problem-based learning (PBL) paradigm as an instructional strategy.

Capitalizing writing in the first cycle of using the problem-based learning model works very well. Two meetings were used to implement learning cycle I. Although the teacher often has to correct students who joke on their own, the learners tend to be active and eager when applying the problem-based learning style. With a total of 5 students completing the cycle out of a total of 8 students, the Cycle I learning assessment was 62.5% complete.

Based on the reflection on learning in Cycle I, where there are still deficiencies in the application of learning models such as problem-based learning, the cycle II was conducted to address these deficiencies. The learning method, student involvement, and the importance of student capitalization skills were improved. Because students had a general understanding of the topic they had learned in the previous lesson, the learning in the II cycle was passionate and engaged. Student enthusiasm for learning activities is evident in the teaching and learning in Cycle II. The average learning score from Cycle I to Cycle II increased to 78.75, and the assessment results in Cycle II showed an increase to 75%.

Based on the data collected on the importance of students' ability to write in capital letters in class II, from pre-cycle to cycle II, a reflection on the measures of the second cycle is shown. Thus, the problem-based learning model can improve students' ability to write in capital letters and reach the ideal completeness standard of more than 70%, which means they have mastered their learning. This study was only related to the first cycle and showed an improvement in the ability to write in capital letters from a low score before the cycle to good scores in cycles I to II.

Capital letter writing abilities are improved while learning using the Problem-Based Learning paradigm. This is because group discussions to solve problems provided by the teacher are part of the learning syntax.

5.   Conclusion

This classroom action research was carried out in two cycles. Where learning is carried out to improve skills in writing capital letters for 2nd grade state elementary schools in Yogyakarta through the application of models Problem Based Learning. The results of the action show that there is an increase in capital letter writing skills which is known from the results of the writing skills test in the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. This increase can be seen from the average results and the percentage of completeness of students. pre-cycle average value of 50 with a completeness percentage of 12.5%. Cycle I was 71.25 with a completeness percentage of 62.5%, and cycle II was 78.75 with a completeness percentage of 75%.

6.   References

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