Implementation of Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach on Enhancing Students' Writing Ability in 8th Grade of Junior High School

Annisa Rahmasari, Gusti Nur Hafifah, Nur Afifah

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, SMPN 4 Surabaya

annicarahmasari@gmail.com

Abstrak: Penelitian tindakan kelas ini mengkaji penerapan pendekatan Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas 8G di salah satu SMP Negeri di kota Surabaya selama tahun ajaran 2024–2025. Evaluasi pra-siklus pada awal pembelajaran menunjukkan bahwa hanya 36,36% siswa yang mencapai ketuntasan, dengan rata-rata nilai 60,22, yang mengindikasikan masih banyak ruang untuk diperbaiki pada materi recount text. Oleh karena itu, rencana pembelajaran dan lembar kerja siswa yang disesuaikan dengan berbagai tingkat kemampuan dibuat menggunakan pendekatan TaRL. Setelah penerapan pembelajaran, rata-rata nilai siswa meningkat secara signifikan menjadi 85,30, menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan menulis siswa. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model TaRL mendorong pembelajaran yang merata dan meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, terutama ketika dipadukan dengan lembar kerja pembelajaran (LKPD) yang terdiferensiasi dan kegiatan kelompok. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa dengan memenuhi berbagai kebutuhan belajar dan mendorong lingkungan pembelajaran kolaboratif, strategi TaRL tidak hanya meningkatkan keaktifan siswa siswa tetapi juga prestasi akademik.

Katakunci: Teaching at The Right Level; Writing Ability; Student Response

Abstract: This classroom action research examines the implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach to improve the writing of 8G grade students at a public junior high school in Surabaya during the 2024–2025 academic year. The pre-cycle evaluation at the beginning of the learning process showed that only 36.36% of students had mastery, with an average score of 60.22, suggesting that there was still much space for improvement. As a result, lesson plans and student worksheets catered to different ability levels were created using the TaRL approach. The average student score rose significantly to 85.30 after the adoption, indicating a notable improvement in writing ability. The findings show that the TaRL model promotes equitable learning and increases student engagement, particularly when paired with differentiated learner worksheet (LKPD) and group activities. Overall, the study finds that by addressing a variety of learning needs and encouraging collaborative learning environments, the TaRL strategy not only raises student response but also improves academic achievement.

Keyword: Teaching at The Right Level; Writing Ability; Student Response

INTRODUCTION

English is taught as an essential subject from primary to higher education level. English as subject require students to master four language ability, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Writing is one of the four basic English ability and it holds a major part of learning a language since it is a productive ability to prove student's competence of language in written form (Afrin, 2016). In order for students to communicate ideas, experiences, and information in an organized and significant manner, writing is an essential part of developing their language ability. Writing is an important language ability that improves communication whilst enhancing vocabulary, grammar, and critical

thinking (Harmer, 2008). Nevertheless, since writing becomes increasingly complicated and requires the ability to arrange ideas, apply appropriate language laws, and maintain clarity and unity, students frequently find it challenging in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) schools (Nurdianingsih, 2024). Precisely, writing might be a difficult ability since it requires students to produce various things related with the language rules and context yet writing is one of the essential abilities that students must master for conveying their ideas and information in appropriate language form.

There are multiple genres of texts which students in junior high schools are required to learn. Five categories of English texts—descriptive, narrative, procedural, recount, and report—are taught in schools, particularly at the junior high school level, according to the 2006 BNSP (Syifa et al., 2022). Among various text, students at 8th grade are required to learn about recount text. Texts that provide sequences of events to retell past experiences or events are known as recount texts. The readers are intended to be amused or entertained by the happenings in the recount text (Herman et al., 2020). However, students usually find it difficult to write recount text, even though the story is well known since it typically involves personal experiences. Common issues include a lack of vocabulary, incorrect verb tenses, and issues logically organizing their work from orientation to events and reorientation (Fernando et al., 2024). Students ability in writing recount text to tells about their past events related with their experiences is important to learn. Yet the difficulties students faced were core knowledge that they should master related with the sentences and text structure.

Additionally, initial observations in the classroom showed that students ability levels are vary. Though some students can write on their own with very minimal mistakes, others find it difficult to simply put simple sentences together. It showed by the diagnostic assessment that some students are able to construct the correct sentences, while the other still have difficulties in transform the verbs uses in sentences. The conventional teaching approaches tend to presume consistent proficiency across the class, they frequently fail to recognize this variance in students' learning readiness (Maharani et al., 2025). (the correlation of learning motivation) Many students consequently feel unchallenged or left behind, which impairs their motivation and ability to advance. In addition, students are intended not to show their responsibility in completing their work, students tend to wait for their friend to complete it.

The Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach offers an effective approach of addressing this learning gap. TaRL, which was created by Pratham and is extensively used in a variety of educational contexts, focuses on determining students' present learning levels, classifying them according to ability rather than age or grade level, and then providing them with teaching that is specifically tailored to their needs (Banerjee et al., 2016). This approach refers to accommodate students learning based on their level of

ability. The TaRL approach to learning refers to students' ability levels rather than grade levels. This method is the solution to the issue of comprehension gaps that frequently arise. Students are the main emphasis of this approach's implementation. When used in writing teaching, this approach enables teachers to meet students where they are in their understanding of narrative texts, whether that is in terms of sentence structure, grammar correctness, or cohesive concept organization. The TaRL method is seen to be particularly appropriate for kids who are enrolled in school but haven't learned the fundamentals for a variety of reasons (Muammar et al., 2023). One of the best strategies for enhancing students' learning is the TaRL approach. This research will be focusing on how Teaching at The Right Level Approach enhance student's ability to write recount text along with their response in learning related with their motivation and responsibility in completing their task.

Several researches related with the Teaching at The Right Level are similar with the current study however the focus of study is different. First Muammar et.al (Muammar et al., 2023) research related with the Teaching at The Right Level approach to improve elementary students reading ability. According to the study's findings, Class I MIN 1 City of Mataram students' beginning reading ability can be enhanced by utilizing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) technique with the use of Inovasi Materials. This is evident from the evaluation results, which range from Cycle I's average value of 66 to Cycle II's average value of 81.36. Following that, the number of students who finished increased from 20 in Cycle I to 33 in Cycle II; alternatively, it might be said that the percentage increased from 52.63% in Cycle I to 86.84% in Cycle II.

Other research conducted by A. Tenry Lawangen (Aspat Colle et al., 2023) revealed that the research used three steps of statistical methodology were employed in this study. First, a writing scoring rubric was used to gauge the students' writing proficiency. Second, ascertain which category the pupils' scores fall into. Third, determine the percentage of the class in the writing score category that best represents the students' writing ability. If 70% of all students met the learning goals accomplishment criteria in their writing evaluation, which is the very good category (81–100), then 7. C improves. According to the study's findings, 48% of students fell into the writing score category in cycle one, whereas 74% did so in cycle two. It was determined that class 7. C students' writing ability improve.

Other research related with the Teaching at The Right Level conducted by Vera Yuli Erviana (Erviana & Istiqomah, 2025). This research is focusing on students reading and writing ability for 1st grade students in Bantul. The results show that the TaRL method can successfully close the reading and writing proficiency gap at the elementary school level. In addition, the study's findings advise teachers to use more needs-based and adaptable instruction to raise the caliber of literacy. Furthermore, this method can serve

as a template for creating inclusive educational policies that prioritize the steady development of fundamental ability.

As shown in the previous studies, this study aims to investigate the implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach to improve 8th-grade students' writing ability in recount texts, as well as to explore their learning responses, including motivation and participation in completing their assignments, at a junior high school in Surabaya.

METHOD

The study carried out here follows with the guidelines of classroom action research (CAR), which is a systematic and analytical strategy for improving learning environments. Action Research is a method wherein educators systematically and systematically analyze their own practices employing research tools. Participants formulate a research question, gather data over the course of the year, analyze their findings, and compose a report on their results. Observations, interviews, questionnaires, and journals are standard data collection methods employed by participants to explore their enquiries (Khasinah, 2013). A classroom action research is done through a cycle and is designed into four steps. The techniques conducted in this research included planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting (Arif & Oktafiana, 2023). The classroom action research begins with the planning of the learning approach that related with the specific problems find in the classroom. The plan is implemented as an activity in the classroom, which is thereafter observed. The reflection is done to analyze the data obtained during the action.

The research aims to apply the TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) Approach, which is intended enhance students' writing ability. The study specifically conducted in one of Junior Highschool in Surabaya at academic year 2024/2025 in April to May 2025. The subject of the study was class 8G with the total students 33 who has different level of ability in English writing. The study's main goal is to enchance students' writing ability and its response in related with TaRL approach. This research intends to offer significant perspectives into the extent to which the TaRL Approach encourages ongoing developments of students writing ability and their response related with the learning process within the selected educational context by using Clasroom Action Research.

Additionally, the data gathering methods employed in this research included observation, written assessments and interview. The researcher conducts preliminary observations of students during the learning process and administers written assessments prior to implementing the TaRL model to evaluate students' basic knowledge and how student's behavior during the learning process. The researchers categorized the students into eight groups according to their test results: three groups

with high scores, two groups with moderate scores, and three groups with low scores. Throughout the implementation of the TaRL model, the researcher noted the enhancement of students' comprehension of simple past tense and recount text by both observational methods and written assessments. After the learning process completed, researcher conduct an interview to find students response related with the TaRL learning.

This study employed a mixed-methods strategy for data analysis, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. As for the written assessment the attainment of a minimum completeness score of 75, alongside an average classical score of at least 75% on the written assessment following the implementation of the TaRL model, serves as the benchmark for the success of this research. This is evidenced by the improvement in student learning outcomes the application of the TaRL model. However, students' responses during the learning process will be analyze through elaborating the interview result into descriptive analysis.

The results from the assessments were examined at the conclusion of each cycle. If the data indicated enhancement and satisfied the predetermined success criteria, the research was deemed complete. If the requirements were unmet, modifications were implemented, and the study proceeded to the subsequent round.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The result of the research will be explained along with the data obtained from all cycle stages. The result of pre-cycle results related with students understanding about the grammatical structure of recount text are shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1. Pre-cycle result

Assessment Summary	Score
Highest Score	100
Lowest Score	0
Average Score	60.22
Completed students	12
Incomplete students	21
Average Mastery	36.36%

According to the abovementioned table, prior to the implementation of the TaRL learning model, the average score achieved by 33 students was merely 60.22, with an average completeness of 36.36%. The findings achieved do not yet exceed the criterion for completeness, specifically the average classical completeness of 75 and 75%.

According to stages of PTK after the findings of the pre-cycle test, researcher started to planning the learning implementation plan using the Teaching at The Right

Level (TaRL) approach. By this stage, researcher divide the group of students into 8 groups according to the pre-cycle result. The lesson plan has been reviewed by teachers and researchers of Class I. This represents a collaborative effort between researchers and teachers. Researchers additionally developed observation sheets to monitor teacher and student activity during the learning process. Subsequently, student worksheets (LKS) are also developed to facilitate student learning.

After the planning stage, the researcher started to implement the lesson plan and observe the learning process. During the implementation and observation phase, the researcher discussed with the model teacher regarding the implementation of learning throughout two sessions for this cycle. The first meeting occurred on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. Learning typically comprised three components: initial activities, main activities, and final activities. In the first meeting, the learning process are focusing on grammatical and sentences structure of recount text using simple past tense. The second learning session happened on Tuesday, May 06, 2025. At the second meeting, learning encompassed three components: initial activities, main activities, and final activities. The second meeting focusing on students construct their recount text. At this stage, teacher and student activities were observed, and an assessment of students' writing ability was conducted.

The findings from the study carried out in Cycle I reveal the writing ability of students, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Summary	Score
Highest Score	97.5
Lowest Score	60
Average Score	85.30
Completed students	28
Incomplete students	5
Precentage	84.84%

Table 2 indicates that students' writing ability has been already shows improvement since its scores has attained 75% of completion or the average level of students score is 75. In contrast with students' pre-cycle test, this result already shows the improvement of students writing ability. A number of students' who previously scored below 60 demonstrated enhancement in their performance. As a result, the average score increased to 85.30 from the prior 60.22, indicating a substantial improvement relative to the pre-cycle test. Furthermore, the count of students' attaining mastery rose to 28, with each individual's score reflecting significant advancement, resulting in an elevated total performance level of 84.84%. This indicated that the

Teaching at The Right Level approach can assist students in improving their writing ability.

The student's response related with the study was gather through likert scale questionnaire and interview to have more evidence for the student's response of TaRL approach. The likert scale questionnaire using the criteria 1-5 started from the low agreement to high agreement. The result of the likert scale questionnaire showed in the table 3 below.

Table 3. Student's Responses

Aspects	Mean	Criteria
Learning Motivation	4,24	Very High
Material Understanding	4,12	High
Group Participation	4,02	High
Learning Improvement	4.07	High

According to the table 3 it shows that student's response during the implementation of Teaching at The Right Level Approach (TaRL) students' responses related with the motivation shows average score 4,24 which is very high. Students showed very high motivation when learning was adapted to their learning process. In addition, from the interview session students 6 implied that using the TaRL approach can help them to be more motivated in the learning process yet to understand the material. However, students 1 and 2 implied that the learning process using TaRL approach is the same as the other traditional learning. In addition, material understanding also shows the high criteria with the average score 4,12. It indicates that students believe TaRL approach in the learning process help them to have better understanding on the material they learnt since it was delivered according to their level. According to the interview session with the students, all the students implied that they are agree with the differentiated learning material and worksheet based on their cognitive level can help them to understand more about the material.

Most of the students are agree that during the implementation of TaRL they can have more participation during the group work. It shows from the result of the questionnaire with the 4,02 average score means students are highly agree with the statement. Active participation in group work was rated highly. Students felt comfortable, confident, and able to collaborate effectively within groups of similar ability. They were more willing to ask questions, discuss, and complete tasks together. Students 4, 5, and 6 also mentioned that they can have more discussion with their group members to complete the task. Based on these, students implied that their group members are voluntary participated to complete the task and do not shows hesitation in working with the worksheet. Students also mentioned that they have more courage to ask and answer the worksheet.

The implementation of Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach also help students to improve their learning in the terms is recount text writing ability. Students shows high agreement with the average score 4,07. Students perceived significant improvement in their writing ability and overall learning outcomes after participating in TaRL-based lessons. Students 3,4,5 and 6 mentioned that they felt the approach helped them achieve academic targets through the differentiated worksheet, which they cannot get during the traditional approach. In contrast, student 1 and 2 mentioned that not all the students can improve their learning specifically students in the lower level. They mentioned that students on the lower level still needs more learning process so that they can improve their ability. Yet students 1 and 2 mentioned that their writing ability improved after participating in the learning process which implemented the TaRL approach.

Overall the data indicate an increase between the Pre-Cycle and the 1st Cycle. This research concluded in the first cycle because the criteria for completeness and the average classical completeness, specifically 75%, were previously met. Upon evaluating the learning outcomes attained by students, both the mean value and the average classical completeness shown a significant increase following the implementation of the TaRL learning approach. In addition, the implementation of the TaRL approach in this context was highly effective. Students reported very high motivation and high levels of understanding, participation, and learning progress. The positive student responses suggest that differentiated instruction and collaborative learning, as facilitated by TaRL, can significantly enhance both student engagement and academic achievement, especially in diverse classroom settings. The findings indicate that the TaRL learning model can enhance the writing ability and response during the learning process of class 8G students at Junior Hight School in Surabaya throughout the 2024/2025 academic year.

Discussion

Individualized instruction is essential, as noted in the study's background, given that the students in class 8G exhibit varying levels of knowledge and comprehension of English. Certain students possess a strong foundational understanding, whereas others exhibit considerable knowledge deficiencies. Implementing TaRL in the classroom can identify these differences, enabling the customization of instruction and differentiation of teaching strategies to address individual needs (Tomlinson, 2001). The lesson plan, media, materials, and worksheets have been developed and executed to address each student's specific needs, facilitating personalized and targeted support. Identifying specific areas for improvement in student writing enables tailored instruction that addresses individual challenges. This method provides students with targeted feedback, practice, and assistance in grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization,

resulting in enhanced writing ability. This study's findings are consistent with (Cahyono, 2022) research, which indicated that the Teaching at Right Level (TARL) method can enhance students' learning outcomes.

Other research found out that the implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach significantly enhances the reading and writing ability. The TaRL approach, in comparison to traditional learning methods, enables students to engage in learning that aligns with their ability levels, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the educational process. This study's results suggest that TaRL may effectively address the deficiencies in reading and writing ability among primary school students (Erviana & Istiqomah, 2025). The Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach fosters equitable development among students with varying levels of understanding by differentiating materials and utilizing Learner Worksheets (LKPD) that are aligned with students' ability. The implementation of TaRL fosters a more inclusive and adaptive learning environment, enabling students to develop in accordance with their potential.

In addition, the result of student's response during the learning process also shows improvement of their learning motivation and participation. In working with the group with the same level of ability students seems to have more comfortable in taking action in completing their work. It shows that each group can complete their task just in time as the deadline giving by the teacher. Additionally, students are able to work in group and participating a group discussion.

Implementing TaRL in student learning may enhance student responses, as it is tailored to their motivation, understanding, and student's participation collaborating in groups to accomplish assigned tasks. In other words, The TaRL approach has the potential to enhance students' learning motivation. A study by (Ningrum et al., 2023) contributed to the previous research on TaRL. This finding also in line with the research conducted by (Juliana & Agustina, 2022) which also found that there is significant correlation between students learning motivation and their academic achievement. In addition, other research supports the findings that TaRL improves literacy ability and motivation by grouping students based on ability and implementing student-centered learning methods.(Rahmawati et al., 2024) As shows in the result of the research that student indicates to have learning motivation while they were studying using Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach.

The result of the current researcg shows that during the implementation of Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach indicate students to have more participations during the group discussion. However, this finding contrast with the previous research by (Najah et al., 2024) which found that the increased of students' engagement were not statistically significance. This happened because some students

initially oppose placed in lower-level groups, which may diminish their participation and motivation until they get the explanation. In contrast, the other previous research that in line with the current research reported that the implementation of TaRL enhanced student engagement and participation in learning processes, with students demonstrating increased enthusiasm and active involvement in class activities following the implementation of the approach. (Herdikayanti et al., 2024) In addition the research conducted by (Simanjuntak et al., 2024) Students demonstrated greater active participation, productive work, mutual respect, and engagement in discussions and group activities following the implementation of TaRL including involvement in learning objectives, instructional activities, and decision-making.

This study identifies several factors that contribute to the enhancement of students' writing ability. PBL encompasses learning stages that impact the ability to write descriptive text, specifically during the third and fourth phases: investigating, developing, and presenting. Students' writing ability improve following the stages of investigation, both individually and collaboratively (Aspat Colle et al., 2023). In line with the previous study that the ability of students to independently and collaboratively discover data through direct observation facilitates the writing process.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) learning approach in a classroom in Junior Highschool at class 8G is the main topic of the study. The pre-cycle findings revealed an average completeness of 36.36% and an average score of 60.22. Following the pre-cycle test, the researcher started utilising the TaRL approach to create the learning implementation strategy. Teachers and researchers evaluated the lesson plan, and worksheets for students were created to help them learn. The first session of the implementation and observation phase focused on the grammatical and sentence structure of recount texts using the simple past tense. The second session evaluated the students' writing ability while concentrating on how they constructed recount texts. With an average score of 85.30, the results demonstrated a significant improvement in the students' writing ability compared to the pre-cycle test.

According to the findings, class 8G students at Junior High School in Surabaya about the enhancing their writing ability and students' responses over the 2024–2025 academic year by implementing the TaRL learning model. The result showed that the Teaching at Right Level (TARL) approach can improve students' learning results. By employing Learner Worksheets (LKPD) that are matched to students' ability and differentiating resources, the TaRL approach promotes equitable development among students with varied levels of comprehension. Because it is adapted to each student's

ability level and promotes group participation, this method also raises student motivation and understanding on the learning material.

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