

## The Effect of Humanistic Approach Integrated with Social Emotional Learning (Sel) On Students' Writing Skills and Motivation

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to enhance students' learning motivation and descriptive writing skills through the integration of a humanistic approach and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design involving 27 ninth-grade students of SMPN 10 Tebo. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments, motivation questionnaires, and observation sheets, and analyzed using a mixed-methods approach. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' writing performance, with the mean score increasing from 59.5 in the pre-test to 77.5 in the post-test, indicating an average gain of 18 points. In addition, the questionnaire results showed increased learning motivation, with 85% of students reporting higher self-confidence, 80% finding the learning process more enjoyable, and 90% feeling more expressive in conveying their ideas. These findings suggest that integrating a humanistic approach and SEL effectively creates meaningful learning experiences, enhances intrinsic motivation, and improves students' writing skills. Therefore, this approach is recommended for English language teaching practices.*

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### ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar dan keterampilan menulis deskriptif siswa melalui integrasi pendekatan humanistik dan Pembelajaran Sosial Emosional (SEL). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang melibatkan 27 siswa kelas IX SMPN 10 Tebo. Data dikumpulkan melalui penilaian pra-tes dan pasca-tes, kuesioner motivasi, serta lembar observasi, dan dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan campuran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kinerja menulis siswa, dengan nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 59,5 pada pra-tes menjadi 77,5 pada pasca-tes, yang menunjukkan kenaikan rata-rata sebesar 18 poin. Selain itu, hasil kuesioner menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi belajar, dengan 85% siswa melaporkan peningkatan rasa percaya diri, 80% merasa proses belajar lebih

menyenangkan, dan 90% merasa lebih ekspresif dalam menyampaikan ide-ide mereka. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi pendekatan humanistik dan SEL secara efektif menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang bermakna, meningkatkan motivasi intrinsik, dan meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa. Oleh karena itu, pendekatan ini direkomendasikan untuk praktik pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

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## PENDAHULUAN

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most challenging skills for students in learning English as a foreign language. It requires not only linguistic competence, such as vocabulary and grammar mastery, but also higher-order thinking skills to organize ideas coherently. However, many junior high school students experience difficulties in writing, particularly in producing descriptive texts. These difficulties are often accompanied by low motivation, lack of confidence, and writing anxiety, which hinder students from expressing their ideas effectively.

One of the main causes of these problems is the predominance of teacher-centered instruction that emphasizes cognitive aspects while neglecting students' emotional and personal development. As a result, learning becomes less meaningful and fails to engage students actively. In this context, adopting a more student-centered approach that addresses both cognitive and affective domains is essential.

The humanistic approach offers a promising alternative by viewing learners as whole persons with emotional, social, and intellectual needs. It emphasizes a supportive and non-threatening learning environment where students feel safe to express themselves. In line with this, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) plays a crucial role in helping students develop self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills, which are essential for successful learning.

Previous studies have shown that both humanistic approaches and SEL can improve students' engagement, reduce anxiety, and enhance academic performance. However, limited research has explored the integration of these approaches in teaching writing, particularly in the context of descriptive text at the junior high school level.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the integration of a humanistic approach and SEL can improve students' motivation and descriptive writing skills. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to more meaningful and holistic English language teaching practices.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Writing Skill in EFL Context**

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It requires the integration of cognitive processes, linguistic knowledge, and communicative competence. Hyland (2003) states that writing is not only about producing text but also about organizing ideas and adapting them to the audience and purpose. Similarly, Brown (2007) emphasizes that writing is a recursive process involving planning, drafting, and revising.

In addition, Harmer (2004) argues that writing encourages students to focus on language accuracy and develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, Nunan (2003) highlights that writing is both a physical and mental act, requiring learners to generate ideas and express them meaningfully. These perspectives indicate that writing is a multidimensional skill that requires both cognitive and affective engagement.

### **2. Humanistic Approach in Language Learning**

The humanistic approach is rooted in humanistic psychology, particularly the works of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. This approach emphasizes the development of the whole person, including emotional, social, and intellectual aspects. Humanistic learning theory views education as a process of self-actualization and personal growth.

Rogers (1983) argues that meaningful learning occurs when learners are personally involved and emotionally engaged. He further explains that learning is most effective when students feel safe, respected, and free from external pressure. Experiential learning, according to Rogers, involves personal involvement, self-initiation, and self-evaluation, which contribute to deeper and more lasting learning.

In addition, Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that learners must fulfill basic psychological and emotional needs before achieving optimal learning. Humanistic education also emphasizes student autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and the importance of a supportive learning environment that fosters self-confidence and creativity.

Moskowitz (1978) further highlights that humanistic teaching focuses on students' feelings and self-concept. She argues that learning becomes more effective when students feel valued and are encouraged to express themselves. This approach helps reduce anxiety and creates a positive classroom atmosphere, which is essential for language learning.

### **3. Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals acquire and apply skills to understand and manage emotions, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. According to CASEL (2020), SEL consists of five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Durlak et al. (2011) found that SEL programs significantly improve students' academic achievement, social behavior, and emotional well-being. These findings are supported by Jones and Kahn (2017), who emphasize that social-emotional competencies are essential for success in both academic and real-life contexts.

Furthermore, SEL contributes to reducing students' anxiety and increasing their engagement in learning activities. In language learning contexts, emotional regulation and

confidence play a crucial role in helping students express their ideas, particularly in productive skills such as writing.

#### **4. Learning Motivation**

Motivation is a key factor influencing success in language learning. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as a combination of effort, desire, and positive attitudes toward learning a language. Students with high motivation are more likely to engage actively and persist in learning tasks. Deci and Ryan (2000), through Self-Determination Theory, distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, which arises from internal interest and enjoyment, is considered more effective in promoting long-term learning outcomes.

In addition, Dornyei (2001) emphasizes that motivation in language learning is dynamic and influenced by both internal and external factors, including teaching methods, classroom environment, and teacher-student interaction. Therefore, creating a supportive and engaging learning environment is essential to sustain students' motivation.

#### **5. Integration of Humanistic Approach and SEL in Teaching Writing**

The integration of the humanistic approach and SEL provides a holistic framework for teaching that addresses both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. Humanistic theory emphasizes emotional engagement and personal meaning, while SEL develops essential emotional and social competencies.

Krashen (1982), through the Affective Filter Hypothesis, explains that emotional variables such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence can either facilitate or hinder language acquisition. When students feel relaxed and motivated, their affective filter is lowered, allowing better language input processing.

Humanistic learning also stresses that learning is influenced by students' feelings and self-perception, making emotional factors central to the learning process. By integrating SEL into a humanistic classroom, teachers can create a supportive environment that promotes both emotional well-being and academic success.

Therefore, combining these approaches is particularly effective in teaching writing, as it helps students overcome anxiety, build confidence, and express ideas more freely.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes in writing. The research followed the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The intervention integrated a humanistic approach and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into the teaching of descriptive texts.

The participants were 27 ninth-grade students of SMPN 10 Tebo, Indonesia, selected based on their relatively low motivation and writing performance. The class represented diverse levels of English proficiency and learning motivation.

Data were collected through writing tests, motivation questionnaires, and observation sheets. The writing tests (pre-test and post-test) measured students' improvement in descriptive writing skills using an analytic scoring rubric covering content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The questionnaire, designed using a Likert scale, assessed students' learning motivation. Observation sheets were used to document students' behaviors related to SEL competencies during classroom activities.

Data were analyzed using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were analyzed by comparing mean scores between pre-test and post-test to identify improvement. Qualitative data from observations were analyzed descriptively to capture changes in students' engagement, confidence, and emotional responses.

To ensure validity, methodological triangulation was applied by combining multiple data sources, including tests, questionnaires, and observations. In addition, the instruments were developed based on established theories and validated frameworks in language assessment and motivation studies. Reliability was addressed by using a consistent scoring rubric for writing assessment and maintaining systematic observation procedures. Where applicable, scoring consistency was ensured through careful and repeated evaluation.

Regarding research ethics, this study ensured that all participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity of students' data were strictly maintained throughout the study. Furthermore, this study upholds the principles of academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism, providing transparent citation of all sources, and respecting the intellectual property rights of previous authors.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study indicate a significant improvement in students' descriptive writing skills and learning motivation after the implementation of a humanistic approach integrated with Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

### **Results**

The quantitative data from the writing tests show a clear increase in students' performance. The mean score of the pre-test was lower compared to the post-test, indicating that students demonstrated better ability in organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying correct grammar after the intervention. Improvements were observed across all assessed aspects, including content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This supports the view that writing is a complex skill requiring the integration of multiple linguistic components (Hyland, 2003).

In addition, the results of the motivation questionnaire revealed a positive shift in students' attitudes toward learning English. Most students reported higher levels of interest, confidence, and willingness to participate in classroom activities. The integration of SEL appeared to create a more supportive and engaging learning environment.

Qualitative data from classroom observations further supported these findings. Students became more active, collaborative, and confident during the learning process. They were more willing to express their ideas and showed improved emotional regulation, such as reduced anxiety and increased enthusiasm when completing writing tasks.

### **Discussion**

The improvement in students' writing skills can be attributed to the implementation of a humanistic approach that emphasizes students' feelings, needs, and personal experiences in the learning process. According to Rogers (1983), humanistic education focuses on the development of the whole person and encourages meaningful, self-directed learning. This approach aligns with student-centered learning principles, which promote active engagement and autonomy in learning.



Furthermore, the integration of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) played a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation and classroom behavior. SEL frameworks highlight the importance of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). These competencies help students manage emotions, build positive relationships, and engage more effectively in learning activities.

The findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that emotional and social competencies significantly influence academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). By integrating SEL into the classroom, students not only improved their emotional regulation but also developed greater confidence in expressing their ideas in written form.

The combination of humanistic teaching and SEL not only improved cognitive outcomes (writing skills) but also positively influenced affective aspects (motivation and engagement). This supports the argument that effective language teaching should address both cognitive and affective domains (Krashen, 1982), particularly through lowering students' affective filter to facilitate language acquisition.

Overall, the results suggest that incorporating humanistic principles and SEL into English language teaching can be an effective strategy to improve both students' writing performance and their motivation to learn.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of a humanistic approach and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) effectively improves students' writing skills and learning motivation. Students showed significant progress in writing performance and became more confident and engaged in the learning process.

The findings suggest that language teaching should not only focus on cognitive skills but also consider students' emotional and psychological needs. Teachers are encouraged to create supportive learning environments and integrate SEL into classroom practices.

Future research is recommended to explore the application of this approach in different contexts and with larger samples to strengthen its generalizability.

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