



Improving Personal Letter Writing Skills Using *The Think Pair Share* Model for Students of State Middle School 2 Pontianak

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ABSTRAC

This research was conducted because the ability of class VII H students of SMPN 2 Pontianak in writing personal letters is still low. This is caused by difficulties in understanding language structures, the influence of instant messaging culture that affects the use of punctuation, and lack of learning motivation due to less varied teaching methods. This two-cycle classroom action research aims to explain the improvement in these abilities by using a cooperative model in the form of Think Pair Share (TPS). The research subjects were 32 students. Data were obtained through observations, learning achievement tests, and interviews, then analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The research shows a significant improvement in student learning outcomes. Before the cycle began, the average class score was 72.34 and the completion rate reached 56.25% with 18 students successfully completing the task. After implementing TPS in the first cycle, the average class score increased to 77.03 with a classical completion rate of 71.87% which included 23 students who successfully completed the task. Students' abilities reached their peak in Cycle II with an average score of 84.00 and a completion rate of 100% (all 32 students successfully completed the course). Positive changes also occurred in classroom activities; the teacher acted as an interactive facilitator, while students were more active, bold in expressing their opinions, and able to make their own improvements to pronunciation and language logic. The application of the TPS model greatly helped improve the ability to write personal letters and also prevented the decline in language structure in the digital era for class VII H students of SMPN 2 Pontianak.

Keywords: personal letter, writing skills, think pair share

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the pillars of human civilization, enabling the transfer of knowledge and ideas between generations. In the educational curriculum, writing occupies a crucial position as a productive skill that reflects a person's level of thinking. Writing is not simply transferring words to paper, but rather a complex cognitive process of organizing ideas logically, systematically, and communicatively. Kosasih (2019:2) emphasizes that writing is the most complex language skill compared to listening, speaking, and reading, as writers are required to master linguistic rules and organize ideas systematically so that they can be understood by readers. In the context of secondary education, writing ability is a benchmark of basic literacy that will determine students' aca-

demic success at the next level. However, the reality on the ground shows that writing is often considered a burden or tedious task for students, rather than a fun means of self-expression. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the extent to which students' writing skills can be improved through appropriate learning models.

Writing skills are the ability to express ideas, experiences, thoughts, and knowledge in written form so that others can understand them. This skill is part of Indonesian language learning, where, with writing skills, students can easily convey what they think. Supriadin & Turohma (2023:68) states that writing is a complex skill because students are required not only to express ideas but also to convey thoughts, concepts, feelings, and desires

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in a structured manner and in accordance with linguistic rules. In the context of education, writing skills are essential competencies that students need to possess and master, not only to achieve academically, but also to improve their critical and creative thinking skills. One of the writing skills taught at the secondary school level is writing personal letters.

A personal letter is defined as a type of written communication conducted by an individual to another person as a person, not as a representative of an organization or institution. Miranda & Ramalho (2016:261), explain a personal letter as an informal letter that aims to convey feelings, news, or personal needs to family, friends, or acquaintances. Letters, as a means of communication that utilizes written language on a piece of paper, have now undergone a shift in the modern era dominated by instant messaging such as WhatsApp or social media. Nevertheless, personal letters still have high pedagogical value because understanding language style, structure, and paragraph development remains very important so that ideas, concepts, and feelings can be well received by the reader.

Teaching personal letters in schools aims to train students to adapt their language use to those they communicate with, while also teaching them warmth, honesty, and politeness that are often lost in fast-paced instant messaging. This material is officially taught in the Chapter on Correspondence with Personal and Official Letters in the Indonesian Language student book for Grade VII (Harsiati, Trianto, & Kosasih), which includes competencies in recognizing letter structures, analyzing linguistic rules, and writing personal letters independently. In general, writing personal letters can train students' thinking skills, especially in adjusting language use based on the characteristics of the recipient of the letter. Choosing the right learning model is key to making the process of learning to write personal letters effective, efficient, and enjoyable.

Based on the results of pre-observation on February 3, 2026, and interviews with the Indonesian language teacher, Mrs. I'anatul

Insianah at SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak, especially in Class VII H with a total of 32 students (13 boys and 19 girls), it was found that the problem is low student ability in writing personal letters. The average score for writing personal letters of students is in the range of 71 to 75, so it is still below the KKTP (Criteria for Achieving Learning Objectives) set at 80, with the percentage of learning completion that has not reached 75% of the total number of students. Many of them have difficulty in composing the correct sentence structure. The main problem lies in the inability of students to distinguish between the use of formal language and more personal, polite language, as well as difficulties in writing correct punctuation. This low motivation is further exacerbated by the learning method that tends to be monotonous, where teachers still dominate the class through lectures, so that students do not have enough opportunities to participate actively. Bata & Ratu (2024:2) added that the limitations seventh-grade students face in expressing ideas in writing are closely linked to the adjustment phase they are currently undergoing. Furthermore, the demand for precision and correct grammar often acts as a major obstacle in the process of constructing sentences.

The choice of learning model needs to be adjusted to the material to be taught; if the model used does not match the level of difficulty of the material, it can cause a mismatch in the learning process. Engaging learning can increase students' learning motivation so that their learning outcomes can also improve. One cooperative learning model designed to encourage active student involvement through pair work is Cooperative Learning, as explained by Slavin and Bandura (Wulandari et al., 2025:540). Therefore, this study uses one variant of the cooperative learning model, namely Think Pair Share (TPS).

The Think-Pair-Share (TPS) model is an effective method for increasing student learning participation because students are expected to be more involved in activities during the learning process. TPS provides opportunities for students to learn independently while collaborating with



others. The implementation of learning with the TPS model begins with individual thinking about solutions to a problem (think), followed by pair discussions to unify each student's views (pair), and ends with sharing the results of the discussion with the whole class (share), where students are required to express their opinions responsibly. A common problem found in schools is that students increasingly use slang, abbreviations, and imperfect sentences in everyday life due to the habit of communicating on social media. Silaban et al. (2025:523) found that the intensified use of slang by students has an impact on the decline in high school students' writing skills in the digital era, especially in aspects of grammatical accuracy and standard sentences. This finding is supported by Sinaga et al. (2025:578), Zulkhaeriyah et al. (2023:73) who observed that the excessive use of slang and foreign loanwords among the younger generation negatively impacts academic writing skills and understanding of standard language. As a result, the core of a personal letter, which should be narrative and expressive, risks losing its meaning, because students prioritize speed over depth of content and language norms.

Several previous studies have tested the effectiveness of the TPS model in the context of writing learning. Mutatik (2018:181) explained in a classroom action research on junior high school students in Tulungagung, found that the application of the TPS approach can significantly improve students' writing skills. In line with that, Irianto (2016:205) in his research at SMP Negeri 1 Padang proved that the TPS type of cooperative learning model had a positive effect on the descriptive text writing skills of grade VII students. These two studies provide a strong empirical basis that TPS is relevant to be applied to writing activities at the junior high school level, including the personal letter material that is the focus of this study.

The specific use of the TPS model has proven effective in various linguistic aspects. According to Mundelsee & Jurkowski (2021:2), the TPS model gives students time to think independently (think) before finally validating their ideas through pair discussions and sharing with a wider audience

(share). This stage is particularly relevant to writing activities because it allows for independent brainstorming and editing before the final draft is produced; through peer interaction, students can gain a mutual understanding of the logical structure and linguistic impact of their personal letter drafts. Raba (2017:2) also emphasize that implementing the TPS model in elementary and secondary schools can stimulate students' internal motivation through structured social interactions, thereby increasing their confidence in expressing their ideas both orally and in writing.

Although the TPS model has been widely studied in the context of teaching descriptive, argumentative, and narrative writing (Irianto 2016; Mutatik 2018), research specifically examining the application of TPS to personal letter material in junior high schools in West Kalimantan is still limited. Most previous studies have focused more on the final results of cognitive scores or general learning activities, without in-depth examination of how the process of "thinking" and "partnering" can improve students' logical sentence structures that were previously fragmented due to instant digital communication habits (Siregar et al., 2026:133). The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to go further, namely analyzing how collaborative processes in TPS can specifically improve the language logic and politeness of junior high school students amidst the influence of instant messaging culture, while simultaneously filling the research gap regarding the effectiveness of TPS in the local context of SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak.

The author believes that by providing students with opportunities to think independently (think), then exchange ideas with peers (pair), and finally, to present themselves in front of the class (share), psychological challenges such as the fear of making mistakes or failing to put their ideas together appropriately can be overcome. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) is not merely an effort to improve grades on paper, but also a means for teachers to develop creativity, teach, and understand each student's learning characteristics more deeply.

The researcher chose the CAR approach because, as explained by Arikunto et al. (2015:2), CAR is oriented toward implementing actions with the goal of improving classroom learning practices and observing the impact of these actions on the research subjects. The researcher's reason for choosing CAR was due to real-life problems in the classroom that required solutions and improved learning quality. The significance of this research lies in its effort to revive personal letters as a tool for learning language logic amidst the dominance of an instant communication culture.

The main objective of this research is to describe and explain the process of implementing and improving the skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak in writing personal letters using the Think Pair Share learning model. The hope is that students will not only be able to compose personal letters with structured sentences, but will also be able to use logical, polite, effective, and meaningful language in everyday life.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive research method to describe and explain the research results according to actual conditions in the field.

The research method used is CAR. Arikunto, Suhardjono, & Supardi (2015:1) state that classroom action research is research that describes what happens when an action is taken, from the process of taking the action to the impact it has on the research subjects. This research design uses a cyclical classroom action research model, with each cycle consisting of four stages: (1) planning, (2) implementation/acting, (3) observation, and (4) reflection.

To ensure data validity, the authors applied triangulation techniques. Sugiyono (2016:241) explains that triangulation is a data collection technique that combines various existing data sources and collection techniques, thereby simultaneously testing the data's credibility. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations of student activities,

collaborators' field notes, and interview results. Technical triangulation was conducted by verifying the correspondence between the learning process recorded in the observation instrument and the scores listed in the personal letter writing assessment rubric. With this approach, the resulting data are expected to accurately, validly, and accountably represent improvements in students' literacy skills.

Data collection tools in this study included teacher and student activity observation sheets, a personal letter writing assessment rubric, interview guidelines, and documentation formats. The data obtained comprised two types: quantitative data in the form of student learning outcomes and qualitative data describing student activities and responses. Data sources were obtained from all Grade VII H students of SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak and the Indonesian language teacher as a collaborator, as well as supporting documents such as teaching modules and initial score lists. This research procedure followed the CAR framework, with data analysis using two methods: quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the classroom action research on the application of the Think Pair Share (TPS) learning model to improve the personal letter writing skills of class VII H students at SMP 2 Pontianak. The findings are presented in two forms: quantitative data (students learning outcomes) and qualitative data (the learning process observed across cycles).

1. Improvement of Student Learning Outcomes (Quantitative Data)

The data from the evaluation of writing personal letters shows a consistent increase from the orientation stage to Cycle II, as presented in Table 1.



Table-1.
Indicators of Success in Implementing the Think-Pair-Share Model

	Orientation	Cycle I	Cycle II
Total Score	2.315	2.465	2.690
Class Average Grade	72,34	77,03	84,00
Number of Students Completed	18	23	32
Number of Incomplete Students	14	9	0
Minimum Completion Percentage	56,25%	71,87%	100%

Based on Table 1, the average class score increased from 72.34 in the orientation to 77.03 in Cycle I, and reached 84.00 in Cycle II. The percentage of classical completion also increased sharply from 56.25% to 71.87%, finally reaching 100% at the end of Cycle II.

2. Improvement of the Learning Process (Qualitative Data)

2.1 Initial Conditions (Orientation)

Before the intervention, writing instruction in Grade VII H was still dominated by lectures with occasional Q&A sessions. Students tended to be passive, preferring to listen to the teacher's explanations rather than taking the initiative to ask questions or express their opinions. Student scores on neatness, spelling, and letter structure were low at this stage.

2.2 Cycle I: Initial Implementation of the Cooperative Model

In Cycle I, the implementation of the cooperative learning model had a positive impact, with the class average increasing to 77.03 and the completion rate increasing to 71.87%. Individual changes, such as the jump in neatness scores, were observed as group interaction began to encourage students to pay more attention to the presentation of their writing. However,

9 students still had not completed the task, and students generally still had difficulty organizing the letter structure independently.

2.3 Cycle II: Implementation of Think Pair Share

In Cycle II, the Think Pair Share (TPS) model was implemented in a more specific and structured manner, consisting of three main stages: think (independent thinking), pair (partnering and discussing), and share (sharing results with a larger group or class). As a result, all 32 students achieved 100% classical mastery with a class average of 84.00. The most striking changes were seen in students who had previously remained at low grades, who experienced significant improvement after receiving intensive guidance during the pairing phase.

3. Improvement Analysis per Assessment Aspect

The analysis of the increase in scores per aspect of the personal letter writing assessment from Pre-Cycle to Cycle II is presented in Table 2.

Table-2
Score Increase Based on Assessment Aspects

Assessment Aspect	Score Improvement
Neatness	0.91
Letter Structure	0.44
Language Use	0.44
Spelling and Punctuation	0.41
Content Relevance	0.22

Table 2 shows that the largest increase occurred in Neatness (0.91), followed by Letter Structure (0.44), Language Use (0.44), and Spelling and Punctuation (0.41). The smallest increase was recorded in Content Relevance (0.22).

DISCUSSION

This section interprets the results presented above by linking them to relevant theories and the findings of previous research, in order to strengthen the explanation of why and how the improvements occurred.

1. Interpretation of the Improvement in Learning Outcomes

The consistent increase in class average and classical completion from Pre-Cycle to Cycle II is consistent with various classroom action research studies that apply the cooperative model to learning to write personal letters, which generally report a gradual increase in learning outcomes between cycles (Sundusilah, 2005; Journal of Improving Personal Letter Writing Skills, 2019).

2. Interpretation of the Initial Condition

The passivity of students and their low scores in neatness, spelling, and letter structure during the Pre-Cycle align with T view, which emphasizes that writing skills do not come automatically but must be honed through regular, guided practice. Without appropriate learning strategies, students tend to struggle to express their ideas in writing. This indicates that, prior to intervention, students had not yet received adequate training in graphology and written language structure—two elements that Tarigan considers key characteristics of communicative writing.

3. Interpretation of Cycle I

The improvement observed in Cycle I, including the jump in neatness scores, demonstrates that group interaction began to encourage students to pay more attention to the presentation of their writing. However, the fact that 9 students still had not completed the task and generally struggled to organize letter structure independently indicates that group work was not fully optimized, because it lacked structured individual thinking stages prior

to discussion.

4. Interpretation of Cycle II: The Role of Think Pair Share

The obstacles identified in Cycle I were addressed through a more specific and structured implementation of the TPS model. This model was first developed by Frank Lyman at the University of Maryland in the early 1980s as a variant of cooperative learning consisting of three main stages: think (independent thinking), pair (partnering and discussing), and share (sharing results with a larger group or class). This three-stage structure was designed to shift classroom interaction patterns from being teacher-dominated to being more participatory and equitable for all students.

Siregar (2021:271) explains that implementing TPS gives students more time to work on assignments and listen to each other's opinions, so that the number of students who dare to answer and the quality of their answers tends to increase with the increased thinking time allotted. These benefits were evident in Cycle II, when all 32 students achieved 100% classical mastery with a class average of 84.00. The most striking changes were seen in students who had previously remained at low grades, who experienced significant improvement after receiving intensive guidance during the pairing phase.

Theoretically, the success of TPS in this study can also be explained through its underlying constructivist theory, namely that students need to be given space to construct and verify their own understanding before the information is confirmed through social interaction (Nurhasanah, 2025:250). The thinking stage provides space for students to construct initial ideas independently; the pairing stage allows for verification and correction among students; while the



sharing stage encourages social responsibility because the results of the work will be presented to a wider group.

5. Interpretation of Improvement per Assessment Aspect

The relatively smaller increase in content alignment (0.22) indicates that some students were actually quite capable of conveying the main ideas of personal letters from the start. This aligns with Pae (2020) and Siregar (2021:1), who view that writing is essentially the transmission of spoken language into written form. Once ideas have been mastered orally, students' main challenges lie more in the technical aspects of writing, rather than the substance of the ideas themselves. Therefore, the TPS intervention in this study contributed most to strengthening the technical-formal aspects of personal letter writing.

6. Relationship to Previous Research

The findings of this study reinforce a number of previous classroom research studies on the application of the cooperative model to personal letter writing. Research applying the Example-Non-Example model to similar learning also reported significant improvements, emphasizing that personal letter writing skills play a crucial role in developing students' interpersonal communication and self-expression. Other research using the CAMISI strategy on the same material also reported gradual increases in class averages between cycles, with a similar pattern of aspects—namely, spelling and neatness tending to be the aspects that developed most, compared to content. The consistency of patterns across these studies indicates that the primary challenges for junior high school students writing personal letters are indeed more technical-formal than substantive, and that cooperative learning models that provide

space for individual thinking before group discussions—such as TPS—tend to be effective in addressing these challenges.

7. Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that need to be frankly stated. First, the research was conducted in only one class (VII H), so generalizing the results to other classes or schools requires caution. Second, the limited time for each cycle also affected the depth of the discussion process during the pairing stage, especially for pairs of students with significantly different initial abilities. Third, the assessment instrument used was a teacher-based assessment rubric, potentially containing elements of subjectivity, despite efforts to ensure consistency of criteria between cycles.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of the Think Pair Share model consistently improves students' personal letter writing skills, both in terms of process and learning outcomes. The three-stage structure of think, pair, and share has been proven effective in encouraging students to think independently, assess each other, and take greater responsibility for the quality of their writing, thus aligning with the cooperative and constructivist learning principles underlying this model.

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