

# USING THE I-CAN STATEMENT TO MOTIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH WRITING

Olivia Angraini<sup>1</sup>, SaunirSaun<sup>2</sup>  
English Department  
Faculty of Languages and Arts  
State Padang of University  
Email: [Oliviaangraini@gmail.com](mailto:Oliviaangraini@gmail.com)

## ABSTRAK

Makalah ini membahas teknik *the I-Can statements* yang digunakan untuk memotivasi dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri mengatasi masalahnya dalam menulis. Teknik ini digunakan dalam tahap *pre-writing*. Sebelum mereka membuat sebuah teks, mereka membuat pernyataan-pernyataan yang mestinya mereka bisa lakukan seperti menulis sebuah teks. Dengan pernyataan-pernyataan yang mereka buat diharapkan mereka bisa termotivasi dan mampu untuk melakukan pernyataan yang telah mereka buat. Melalui teknik ini diharapkan siswa dapat termotivasi dalam menulis *Recount text* dengan benar.

Kata kunci: I-Can statement, recount text, writing at Junior High School.

### A. Introduction

There are four skills in English taught at Junior High School. One of them is writing. Writing is one of the important English skills beside listening, speaking, and reading. Writing is also an activity to express some ideas, opinions, and feelings. People can express all of them by writing on the paper. Byrne (1982) says that sometimes writing makes the students bored; the students feel that their ability in writing is still poor and then they become less confidence to write something. This is supported by Brown (1994) who says teachers focus on what a final piece of writing will look like and measure it against criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use and mechanical consideration such as spelling and punctuation as well as content and organization.

Brown (2004) says that writing ability becomes an important skill in life. In short, the writing skill helps the learners to explore and express their own idea, experience, thought and feeling.

However, writing has become a problem for some students. Harmer (2007) says that one of the issues in writing English is many students think or say that the

---

<sup>1</sup> The writer of paper from English Department for graduation period March 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Advisor, the lecturer of FBS State University of Padang

students do not want to write or they cannot write. It occurs because they are lack confidence; they think that they have nothing to write and they say that writing is boring. Moreover, MacDuff, Alhayki, and Linse (2010) state that in writing, many students usually are not motivated and confident that they have the basic writing skills or the language skills needed to compose a piece of writing in English.

According to Dornyei (2001), motivation is thought to be responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain activity and how hard they are going to pursue it. It means that motivation is a desire coming from within someone. To achieve it, she / he will do an act. According to Scovel (2001), motivation is an instrumental for studying a new language, the main element that determines success in developing a second language (EFL). Without motivation, students will not have willingness, need, desire, and do not participate in the learning process.

Oxford in Lins (2003) defines motivation as an inner state of need or desire that activates an individual to do something and it will satisfy the need or desire. Margaret and Gardner (2003) say that motivation can support second language achievement and they have higher correlation in the language than other measures. If the students have higher motivation in learning, they will hopefully be successful. They will enjoy learning the language. The students will enjoy seeing, hearing, and paying more attention to their teachers explanation. They will do the assignments that are given by their teacher. So, motivation can be summed up, briefly, as the student's desire and they need to learn from their mistakes to make them work hard, pay attention, and so on.

Nation (2008) states that the motivation will really help learners do a lot of writings. As the result, they will think that writing is a fun activity and the learning objective will be achieved. Curley (2012) states that motivating students to write can be a challenge but it is necessary to help them improve this skill and expand the range of their creativity and thought. It is important because without motivation, students cannot be successful in writing.

In short, motivation in teaching writing is a key of students' successfulness; they cannot reach what they want without having motivation. Motivation is divided into two; motivation that comes from outside named extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation, motivation that comes from the inside. In learning the writing process, teacher takes the main part as motivator. If a teacher has an interesting strategy in classroom, students will be motivated automatically.

Based on the writer's teaching experience in the field at eighth grade of junior high school, when the students write a recount text, they always think that writing is difficult. Writing English is not easy for them. This is caused by some factors. First, the students get troubles in expressing their ideas, opinions, and feelings in a composition. It is caused by limited background knowledge of the topic to be written. Second, the students get difficulty to arrange the sentences into a good paragraph. This problem appears because in writing, the students have to

write in the correct grammar but they have poor ability in grammar. Third, the students have limited vocabulary. So that, they are not able to write. In addition, in prewriting stage, the teacher always begins the process of writing by giving some topics. Then, he or she asks the students to write a recount text in certain of time. Because not all students have a good ability in writing, they are not enthusiasm, not confident, and motivated in writing.

Because of those problems, students feel not confident and motivated in writing. To solve these problems, the teachers should build students' confidence and motivation to write and help them to practice writing continuously to create a good development since writing is a process that needs time and effort and teacher emphasizes grammar and punctuation rather than decision about the content and the organization of ideas. Byrne (1982) says that sometimes writing makes the students bored; the students feel that their ability in writing is still poor and then they become less confidence to write something. This is supported by Brown (1994) who says teachers focus on what a final piece of writing will look like and measure it against criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use and mechanical consideration such as spelling and punctuation as well as content and organization.

Writing means combining texts and not just a single sentence. One way to increase students' motivation and confidence to write is by using *the I-Can Statement technique*. MacDuff, Alhayki, and Linse (2010) say that *the I-Can Statement* is an appropriate technique to build student's confidence in writing text. In this technique, students are given opportunities to state what they think they are able to do. Besides that, it can build their abilities by writing what they can do in their activities.

The *I-Canstatement technique* is an activity that can build students' confidence in their ability to write in English and can develop their ideas in writing without thinking the mistake of grammar. *The I-Canstatement technique* is used to make sentences. In these activities, the students can express the ideas they have through writing. Therefore, the students are not burdened. Besides that, the students work in group, so they feel easier to catch the idea and enjoy to writing.

In short, by using *the I-Canstatement*, the students are able to raise their motivation and self confident in writing so that they do not think that writing is a difficult skill.

## **B. Using the I-Can Statement Technique to Motivate Junior High School Students in English Writing**

### **1. Preparation**

Before applying *theI-Can Statement* in teaching writing a recount text in classroom, there are some preparations that the teacher should do. They are as follow:

a. Selecting and choosing materials

Materials are very important for the teacher in teaching writing recount text. Moreover, teacher must be selective for choosing materials. One point of view such as the topic of recount text should be interesting for the students. The teachers should choose the topic that is interesting for students and also makes them focused in learning process.

b. Technique

The teacher needs to consider about technique that will be used because an appropriate technique will make the process of teaching and learning writing in English becomes successful.

c. Media

Media is kind of tools in teaching. It is used to support the learning process. Furthermore, using media in teaching and learning process really helps teacher and the students.

d. Lesson Plan

The teacher makes lesson plan in order to guide him or her during teaching and learning process. When creating the lesson plan, teacher should write subject, school, class and semester, the skills to be taught, topic and time. The lesson plan should also include standard competence and basic competence.

## 2. The Classroom Implementation

There are three stages that can be done in teaching writing a recount text by using *the I-can statements*. They are pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities and post-teaching activities.

### a. Pre-teaching activities

In this stage, the teacher opens the class by greeting the students. Then, the teacher checks the students' attendance. After that, he or she checks the students' readiness and him or her build student's background knowledge. Next, the teacher relates their background knowledge to the new lesson. In addition, the teacher tells the indicators and the objectives of the lesson which are going to be taught.

### b. Whilst-teaching Activities

#### 1). Exploration

The teacher writes a topic (e.g.: **a place they have visited**) on the white board. Next, from the topic, the teacher asks some questions to the students such as "Where did you go to celebrating Idul Fitri last year?", "what place did you visit?", "what did you see?", "what did you do?". These guided questions are intended to help students explore the idea about the topic. They can write the

answer in the white board. Next the teacher makes sure that they can make a story in written form based on their experience or their imagination by using *the I- Can statement technique*. They state what their ability to write a text. They write *the I-Can statement(s)* in the white board. For example of their I- Can statement(s) are: **I can write a short story in form of past tense; I can write about my trip.** By making the I-Can statement in the beginning of writing, it is expected that the students have some targets so that they have a sense of what they are expected to accomplish the targets.

**2). Elaboration.**

The teacher introduces the processes of writing recount text by using the I-Can statement technique. There are some stages in teaching writing a recount text by using this technique. They are choosing a topic, making I- Can statement, answering guided questions, and organizing the answer into a good paragraph.

From their guided question, they can organize in to a good form of recount text (orientation, events, and re orientation). Then it is analyzed based on the characteristics of recount text.

A sample of recount text:

**Our Trip to Celebrate Idul Fitri Last Year**

When celebrating Idul Fitri last year, my friends and I went to Bukittinggi. We visited the zoo, traditional market, Jam Gadang, and Panorama. It is the best place to visit because they are beautiful.

Orientation

First of all, we went from my house by car at 9 o'clock in the morning. On the trip, my car was broken, so we pushed the car. It made us become very tired.

Event

After we pushed our car about a kilometer, our car became normal. We felt happy and we continued the trip.

Event

When we arrived to Bukittinggi, we had lunch in panorama. There is fresh and cold air there.

Event

After having lunch, we went around, visited the crowded traditional market, and bought dress and souvenir.

Event

After that, we visited Jam Gadang. In Jam Gadang, we took some photos and we came inside Jam Gadang.

Event

Then, we decided to visit the Zoo. It was the first time for us to go to the zoo. There are many animals there such as deer, camels, elephants, Sumatran tigers, monkeys, and so on. We were satisfied there.

Event

After we visited some wonderful places, we bought fried chicken and we ate it together. After that, we went home. Even though we were tired having a long trip, we were very excited in celebrating Idul Fitri last year.

Re-orientation

After that, teacher asks the students to write a new version of the story in groups. They are asked to sit in pair and they are asked to prepare a piece of paper and writing utensils. In addition, the teacher asks each student to tell a partner about a place they have visited. Then, the teacher tells the students to answer guided questions about their trips. The guided questions are in the past tense because in this activity, the students are going to write about a trip that has already taken place. After that, the students in pair write about the trip by using the guided questions provided and then the students compose a short story about their trip. In addition, on a separate piece of paper, each pair draws a picture representing their trip. Finally, they collect their story to the teacher.

Then the teacher passes the students' out among the pairs and the teacher avoids giving a story to the pair who wrote it. The teacher takes the students' drawings that represents their stories and does the same. Then, each pair reads the story that they receives aloud. The other pairs listen carefully to check who has the drawing that matches to the story that is being read. The pair who has the matching drawing calls out "we have it!" so that the pair gets turn to read the story that they have received. After that, the teacher asks students, "what you can do?", and the students answer" **I can answer the guided question, I can write a short story in form of past tense, and I can write about my trip**". After that, they read the story. Finally, after all of students have the chance; the teacher leads the students to create a recount text individually. They can choose the topic given by teacher

### 3). Confirmation

The teacher and the students review what they have been learned. The teacher should make sure that the students already understood about writing a recount text. The teacher along with the students may conclude the definition of recount text, and the characteristics of recount text.

### c. Post-teaching Activity.

In this stage, it is an activity purposed to end the teaching and learning activity. The teacher gives homework to his or her students. Then, the teacher asks the students' to collect their paragraph in next meeting.

### C. Conclusion and Suggestion

It can be concluded that using *the I-Canstatement* in teaching recount text is an alternative technique in making students interested in writing English. By applying this technique, students are confident to write in English and then this technique helps the teacher to motivate students easily in writing English. In this technique, the teacher has to have a good preparation and he or she follows the

three procedures of teaching writing in classroom: pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities, and post-teaching activities.

In the pre-writing activities, the teacher builds students' background knowledge by giving some questions. In whilst-writing activities, there are some steps, like choosing a topic, making *the I-Can Statement*, answering guided question, making short story, and drawing the picture that represent their stories. In post-teaching activities, the teacher collects the students' stories and pictures and then gives them to other pairs and then the teacher asks the pair to read the story that they receive. Besides that, the teacher leads the students to compose a recount text individually.

Based on the discussion above, there are some suggestions in applying *the I-Can* statement to motivate students in writing. They are: first, the teacher should encourage the students to use any *the I-Can* statements that are relevant to their work being done. Second, the teacher should encourage the students to use any *the I-Can* statements that are relevant to the skill being done. Third, the students should be aware of the number of *the I-Can* statements depend on the complexity of activities.

**Note:** This article is based on the writer's paper with a guidance from Drs.H.SaunirSaun, M.Pd.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Byrne, Donn. 1982. *Teaching Writing skills*. New York: Longman.
- Brown.H.D. 2004. *Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Longman Company.
- Dornyei, Zoltan. 2001. *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. London: Longman Group
- Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. *How to teach English*. London: Longman, Pearson.
- Lins, Tanja. 2003. *Motivation and Second Language Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.motivation.com> (retrieved on May, 12, 2009)
- Nation, I.S.P. 2008. *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Macduff, Fife, Khadija Alhayki, and Caroline Linse. 2010. "Using Progressive I-Can Statement to Promote Learner Confidence in writing". *English teaching forum online, volume 48 no 4* retrieved on <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol48/no4/html>.