

**THE ROLE OF FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS THROUGH LESSON STUDY  
IN IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS OF ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY  
STUDENTS IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SUBJECT**

**Achmad Fawaid**

Universitas Nurul Jadid, Probolinggo, Indonesia

[fawaidachmad@unuja.ac.id](mailto:fawaidachmad@unuja.ac.id)

**Huzaimah Sindu Malika**

Universitas Nurul Jadid, Probolinggo, Indonesia

[huzaimahsindum@gmail.com](mailto:huzaimahsindum@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

*This study investigates the role of formulaic expressions in enhancing the writing skills of Islamic elementary students through the lesson study framework. It is due to the fact that many students in Islamic Elementary School (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) deal with some challenges in developing writing fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. This study aims to explore how formulaic expressions, combined with the iterative cycles of lesson study, can improve these skills. The method of this study uses classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and assessments of students' writing performance across two lesson study cycles. This study resulted a significant increase in student engagement, fluency, and overall writing competence due to the structured integration of formulaic expressions with lesson study. This study also highlights the effectiveness of using formulaic language to reduce cognitive load and enhance linguistic scaffolding in writing tasks. It also implies that this approach can be applied to various educational settings to support writing development in young learners.*

*Keywords: Formulaic Expressions, Indonesian Language, Lesson Study, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Writing Skills*

**INTRODUCTION**

Writing skills are fundamental to a student's academic success, particularly in elementary education, where language proficiency forms the foundation for future learning. In the context of Islamic elementary schools (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*), students often deal with additional challenges as they learn both religious and secular subjects simultaneously. The integration of formulaic expressions can provide these young learners with essential linguistic tools that simplify the writing process, reducing the cognitive load and helping them focus on content rather than form. This research is crucial because it addresses a gap in the teaching strategies currently employed in Islamic schools, where students may struggle to develop strong writing skills. Moreover, the use of a lesson study framework allows for the systematic development and refinement of teaching practices, ensuring that the interventions are both practical and effective. This study's focus on the intersection of formulaic expressions and lesson study is essential for improving educational outcomes in this unique learning environment.

Previous research has extensively explored the use of formulaic expressions in language learning, particularly in second language acquisition, where they have been shown to enhance fluency, grammatical accuracy, and overall coherence in writing.<sup>1</sup> Studies have also demonstrated the effectiveness of lesson study as a collaborative professional development tool that helps teachers refine their instructional strategies.<sup>2</sup> However, little research has focused on the application of formulaic expressions specifically in the context of improving the writing skills of young learners in Islamic elementary schools.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, while lesson study has been applied to various subjects, its use in language instruction-particularly in the Bahasa Indonesia subject-remains underexplored.<sup>4</sup> This research aims to fill these gaps by combining the strengths of formulaic expressions with the lesson study framework, creating a novel approach to improving writing skills in this specific educational setting.

The primary aim of this research is to examine how the use of formulaic expressions can improve the writing skills of Islamic elementary students in the Bahasa Indonesia subject. Specifically, the research will investigate whether integrating formulaic expressions into writing instruction, through the Plan-Do-See cycle of lesson study, can enhance students' fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy in writing. This study seeks to answer several key questions: How do formulaic expressions impact the writing abilities of elementary students? Which formulaic

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<sup>1</sup> Luluk Khoiriyah and Januarius Mujiyanto, "The Realization of Formulaic Competence in the Classroom Interactions among Learners in Kampung Inggris Pare," *English Education Journal* 12, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v12i2.54985>; Günter Schmale, "Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching," *Linguistik Online* 113, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.13092/lo.113.8328>; Yohanis Ndapa Deda, Hermina Disnawati, and Otaget Daniel, "Research Trends on Lesson Study Based on Google Scholar and Scopus Database: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Jurnal VARIDIKA* 35, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.23917/varidika.v35i2.23223>.

<sup>2</sup> Nurit Dvir and Orna Schatz-Oppenheimer, "Novice Teachers in a Changing Reality," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 43, no. 4 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1821360>; Fang Hua Jhang, "Teachers' Attitudes towards Lesson Study, Perceived Competence, and Involvement in Lesson Study: Evidence from Junior High School Teachers," *Professional Development in Education* 46, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2019.1585383>; Catherine Lewis and Rebecca Perry, "Lesson Study to Scale up Research-Based Knowledge: A Randomized, Controlled Trial of Fractions Learning," *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* 48, no. 3 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.5951/jresmetheduc.48.3.0261>.

<sup>3</sup> Amber E Benedict et al., "Using Lesson Study to Change Teacher Knowledge and Practice: The Role of Knowledge Sources in Teacher Change," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 122 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103951>; Rachel Goh and Yanping Fang, "Improving English Language Teaching through Lesson Study: Case Study of Teacher Learning in a Singapore Primary School Grade Level Team," *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 6, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLLS-11-2015-0037>; Encarnación Soto Gómez et al., "Action Research through Lesson Study for the Reconstruction of Teachers' Practical Knowledge. A Review of Research at Málaga University (Spain)," *Educational Action Research* 27, no. 4 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1610020>.

<sup>4</sup> Nguyen Mau Duc and Hoang Thi Chien, "Renovating the Professional Activities of Teachers through the Model of 'Lesson Study' in Vietnam," *Vietnam Journal of Education* 335, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.1755>; Matt Lewis, "Mathematics Lesson Study around the World: Theoretical and Methodological Issues," 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794802.2018.1563563>; Chap Sam Lim, Liew Kee Kor, and Hui Min Chia, "Revitalising Mathematics Classroom Teaching through Lesson Study (LS): A Malaysian Case Study," *ZDM* 48 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-016-0779-7>.

expressions are most effective for young learners? How can the lesson study model be used to iteratively refine the teaching of these expressions? By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide practical insights that can inform teaching strategies, both in Islamic elementary schools and beyond, to improve students' overall writing proficiency.

Preliminary evidence suggests that formulaic expressions, when integrated into writing instruction through lesson study, can significantly improve students' writing skills. By providing students with ready-made language structures, formulaic expressions reduce the mental effort required for sentence construction, allowing students to focus on organizing their ideas and conveying meaning. This research hypothesizes that students who are exposed to formulaic expressions in a structured, iterative manner will show marked improvements in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Additionally, the use of the lesson study framework ensures that the teaching methods can be continuously adapted to meet the specific needs of the students, leading to more effective learning outcomes. The anticipated outcome is that this approach will not only improve writing skills in the short term but also provide students with lasting linguistic tools that they can apply across subjects, enhancing their overall academic success.

RESEARCH METHOD

The unit of analysis for this research focuses on the writing skills of Islamic elementary students in the Bahasa Indonesia subject. This study uses a Lesson Study framework, specifically following the Plan-Do-See in two cycles (Table 1), which is a collaborative professional development method that emphasizes continuous improvement in teaching practices.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1. Lesson Study Cycle in Indonesian Language Subject of Islamic Elementary School

No	Cycle	Material	Plan	Do	See
1	Cycle 1	Karangan Fiksi	Aug 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Aug 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 (Class VI)	Aug 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
2	Cycle 2	Karangan Fiksi	Aug 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Aug 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 (Class VI)	Aug 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2024

The lesson study approach is ideal for this research because it allows for the iterative testing of formulaic expressions as a tool to improve student writing.<sup>6</sup> Research design involves two cycles

<sup>5</sup> Jajat Burhanudin, *Ulama Dan Kekuasaan: Pergumulan Elite Politik Muslim Dalam Sejarah Indonesia* (NouraBooks, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Erna Sari and Linda Tri Antika, "Pengaruh Problem Based Learning Terhadap Keterampilan Kolaborasi Siswa," *Bioedutech: Jurnal Biologi, Pendidikan Biologi, Dan Kesehatan* 1, no. 1 (2022); Achmad

(Table 1) of lesson planning (Plan), teaching (Do), and reflective evaluation (See), enabling researchers and teachers to observe real-time learning progress and adapt strategies based on student performance.<sup>7</sup> Recent studies figures out that lesson study is an effective model for improving language instruction by fostering teacher collaboration and focusing on student-centered learning outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

The sources of information in this research include both students and teachers from an Islamic elementary school in Probolinggo, as they provide critical insights into the practical application of formulaic expressions in writing instruction. Data will be collected through classroom observations, writing assessments, and teacher-student interviews, which will be conducted during the “Do” phase of the lesson study cycle. Classroom observations will provide qualitative data on how students use formulaic expressions during writing tasks, while writing assessments will offer quantitative measures of improvement in writing skills.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, teacher reflections during the “See” phase will help identify the effectiveness of formulaic expressions in facilitating student progress. Studies have shown that triangulating data from multiple sources enhances the validity and reliability of research findings in educational settings, making this method an appropriate choice for the current study.<sup>10</sup>

The analysis will follow the Plan-Do-See cycle, which provides a structured approach for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching strategies implemented. During the “Plan” phase, teachers and researchers collaboratively identify specific formulaic expressions to introduce into writing lessons. In the “Do” phase, these strategies are put into practice in the classroom, and

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Fawaid and Miftahul Huda, “Implementing Problem-Based Learning to Improve Collaborative Writing Skills through Lesson Study in the Indonesian Language Subject,” *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya* 10, no. 1 (2024).

<sup>7</sup> Wai Ming Cheung and Wing Yee Wong, “Does Lesson Study Work?: A Systematic Review on the Effects of Lesson Study and Learning Study on Teachers and Students,” *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 3, no. 2 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLLS-05-2013-0024>; Bearatrix Bella, Yuswa Istikomayanti, and Anis Samrotul Lathifah, “Numbered Heads Together Cooperative Learning in Learning Collaboration and Communication Skills Based on Lesson Study Activities,” *Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan* 13, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.18592/tarbiyah.v13i1.10999>.

<sup>8</sup> Iris Willems and Piet Van den Bossche, “Lesson Study Effectiveness for Teachers’ Professional Learning: A Best Evidence Synthesis,” *International Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 8, no. 4 (2019); Sally Baricaua Gutierrez, “Building a Classroom-Based Professional Learning Community through Lesson Study: Insights from Elementary School Science Teachers,” *Professional Development in Education* 42, no. 5 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2015.1119709>.

<sup>9</sup> MU Hajar and S Hendayana, “Lesson Study as a Means of Transforming Classroom Discourse and Student Cognitive Engagement in Science Classroom,” vol. 1157 (Journal of Physics: Conference Series, IOP Publishing, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1157/2/022050>.

<sup>10</sup> Shigeo Mase, “Lesson Study in Teaching Practicum,” in *Lesson Study-Based Teacher Education* (Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003036852-5>; S Saparuddin et al., “Subject-Based Lesson Study Supporting Merdeka Curriculum Enactment: Findings from Malang City Science Teachers,” *Journal of Community Service and Empowerment* 5, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.22219/jcse.v5i1.29411>; Eisuke Saito et al., “Development of School-Based in-Service Training under the Indonesian Mathematics and Science Teacher Education Project®,” *Improving Schools* 9, no. 1 (2006).

student performance is closely monitored. The “See” phase involves a thorough analysis of student outcomes, comparing pre- and post-intervention writing samples to measure improvements in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy.<sup>11</sup> Qualitative data from teacher reflections and student interviews will be analyzed using thematic coding, while quantitative data from writing assessments will be statistically analyzed to determine the significance of the improvements. Recent literature underscores the importance of such mixed-methods analysis in lesson study research, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of both the process and outcomes.

The analysis of the data collected will be guided by both qualitative and quantitative methods. This dual approach is essential for capturing the full scope of the intervention’s impact on students’ writing skills.<sup>12</sup> Quantitative data, such as writing scores, will be used to track measurable improvements in areas like fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Meanwhile, qualitative data from result of writing tasks will provide insight into the challenges and successes encountered during the use of formulaic expressions. This mixed-methods approach is commonly used in educational research because it provides a more nuanced understanding of how specific teaching strategies affect learning outcomes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Formulaic Expressions and Writing Skill

Formulaic expressions refer to fixed or semi-fixed chunks of language that are pre-constructed and frequently used in communication. These can include idiomatic phrases, collocations, or sentence frames that help speakers and writers express ideas without having to generate language from scratch.<sup>13</sup> There are different interpretations of what constitutes a formulaic expression, with some scholars emphasizing fully fixed phrases (like idioms) while others include more flexible structures (like sentence stems).<sup>14</sup> The importance of formulaic expressions in writing is their ability to reduce cognitive load, as learners can rely on familiar structures to focus on content creation. For younger students, particularly those in elementary education, using formulaic

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<sup>11</sup> Fawaid and Huda, “Implementing Problem-Based Learning to Improve Collaborative Writing Skills through Lesson Study in the Indonesian Language Subject.”

<sup>12</sup> Bening Palupi et al., “Creative-Thinking Skills in Explanatory Writing Skills Viewed from Learning Behaviour: A Mixed Method Case Study,” *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* 15, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i01.11487>; Mariam Gibriel, “Investigating Writing Strategies, Writing Anxiety and Their Effects on Writing Achievement: A Mixed Method Design,” *Journal of Asia TEFL* 16, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.1.33.429>.

<sup>13</sup> Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal et al., “The Impact of a Contrastive Lexical Approach in Formulaic Expressions’ Perception on University EFL Learners’ Writing Proficiencies,” *Education Research International* 2022, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/1295870>; Fatemeh Ebrahimi et al., “The Effect of Teaching Formulaic Expressions through Contrastive Lexical Approach on Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL Learners’ Writing Skill,” *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 50 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-021-09778-z>.

<sup>14</sup> Schmale, “Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching.”

expressions can help bridge the gap between their limited language proficiency and the demands of writing in an academic setting, especially when learning complex languages like Bahasa Indonesia.<sup>15</sup>

Formulaic expressions can be categorized into several types based on their function and structure. The most common categories include collocations, idiomatic phrases, sentence starters, and discourse markers<sup>16</sup> as drawn in Table 2. Collocations are word combinations that frequently occur together (e.g., “*bermain bola*, *makan siang*, etc.”), while idiomatic phrases are expressions whose meanings aren't directly derived from the individual words (e.g., “*angkat tangan*, *kaki seribu*, etc.”). Sentence starters, such as “*Pada suatu hari ...*” or “*Setelah pulang sekolah ...*” help students organize their thoughts in writing. Discourse markers, like “*Pertama-tama*” or “*Akhirnya*,” link ideas together and improve coherence.

**Table 2.** Examples of Formulaic Expressions Used by Elementary School Students

Jenis Ekspresi	Contoh dalam Bahasa Indonesia	Translation in English
Collocations	Membuat PR	<i>Doing homework</i>
	Bermain bola	<i>Playing soccer</i>
	Membaca buku	<i>Reading a book</i>
	Menggambar pemandangan	<i>Drawing a landscape</i>
	Makan siang	<i>Having lunch</i>
Idiomatic Phrases	Angkat tangan	<i>Give up</i>
	Buah hati	<i>Loved one (child)</i>
	Kaki seribu	<i>Run fast</i>
	Berat hati	<i>Reluctant</i>
	Ringan tangan	<i>Helpful</i>

<sup>15</sup> Ewa Guz, “Formulaic Sequences as Fluency Devices in the Oral Production of Native Speakers of Polish,” *Research in Language* 12, no. 2 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.2478/rela-2014-0004>; Deda, Disnawati, and Daniel, “Research Trends on Lesson Study Based on Google Scholar and Scopus Database: A Bibliometric Analysis.”

<sup>16</sup> Ebrahimi et al., “The Effect of Teaching Formulaic Expressions through Contrastive Lexical Approach on Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL Learners’ Writing Skill”; Schmale, “Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching.”

Sentence Starters	Pada suatu hari...	<i>One day...</i>
	Ketika saya bangun pagi...	<i>When I woke up in the morning...</i>
	Setelah pulang sekolah...	<i>After school...</i>
	Di taman bermain...	<i>At the playground...</i>
	Saat itu...	<i>At that time...</i>
Discourse Markers	Pertama-tama,	<i>First of all,</i>
	Selain itu,	<i>Besides that,</i>
	Namun,	<i>However,</i>
	Oleh karena itu,	<i>Therefore,</i>
	Akhirnya,	<i>Finally,</i>

These different categories in Table 2 serve distinct functions in writing, but collectively, they enable students to write more fluently and with greater ease. Studies have shown that students who regularly use formulaic expressions in their writing are more likely to produce texts that are both grammatically accurate and coherent, making these expressions a valuable teaching tool.

Writing skills refer to the ability to express thoughts, ideas, and information through written language in a clear, coherent, and organized manner. In the context of elementary education, writing skills encompass basic elements such as sentence construction, grammar, vocabulary use, coherence, and the ability to convey meaning effectively.<sup>17</sup> Different definitions of writing skills emphasize various aspects, with some focusing more on mechanical accuracy (e.g., spelling and grammar) and others on higher-level cognitive skills such as organization, argumentation, and creativity.<sup>18</sup> For Islamic elementary students, mastering writing skills in Bahasa Indonesia is particularly important because it enables them to succeed academically across a range of subjects,

<sup>17</sup> Abdulaal et al., "The Impact of a Contrastive Lexical Approach in Formulaic Expressions' Perception on University EFL Learners' Writing Proficiencies"; Makherus Sholeh, Abd Aziz, and Nur Kholis, "Development Of Teacher Competence In Creative Writing To Actualize Literacy Of Madrasah," *ELEMENTARY: Islamic Teacher Journal* 9, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.21043/elementary.v9i2.11903>.

<sup>18</sup> Karolis Anaktototy and Jusak Patty Monica, "Catalysts and Challenges in Essay Writing Proficiency among College Students: Insights from Motivation, Literacy, Cognition, and Language Skills," *Eralinga: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Asing Dan Sastra* 8, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.26858/eralinga.v8i1.61009>.

including both religious and secular topics. Writing proficiency is not only a critical communication tool but also a foundation for developing higher-order thinking skills.

Writing skills are generally evaluated based on several key aspects: fluency, coherence, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary use. Fluency refers to the ability to write with ease and without hesitation, often supported by the use of formulaic expressions.<sup>19</sup> Coherence focuses on how well the ideas are connected and flow logically within the text. Grammatical accuracy measures how correctly students use language rules, while vocabulary use evaluates their ability to choose words that are appropriate for the context.<sup>20</sup> Research shows that these aspects are interrelated—students who are more fluent in their writing tend to demonstrate better coherence, as they can focus on organizing ideas rather than getting stuck on individual sentence construction. The integration of formulaic expressions can assist in enhancing these aspects, particularly by providing students with ready-made linguistic tools that improve fluency and accuracy.<sup>21</sup>

## B. Student's Fluency and Confidence in Writing

The result of interview data from teachers and students in regarding with using formulaic expressions through lesson study cycles revealed insightful perspectives. Teachers noted that formulaic expressions helped students structure sentences more efficiently, while students mentioned that it boosted their confidence and fluency. Regarding lesson study, teachers appreciated its collaborative nature and the opportunity it provided to address student needs effectively.

*"Incorporating formulaic expressions into our curriculum has been incredibly beneficial for helping students structure their sentences more effectively. Moreover, the collaborative nature of the lesson study process has significantly enhanced our teaching methods, allowing us to refine our approaches and better address the diverse needs of our students."* (Teacher A, Aug 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

*"I've observed that students adapt remarkably quickly to using formulaic expressions, which has been a pleasant surprise. Additionally, the lesson study framework is instrumental in identifying specific student needs, enabling us to tailor our instructional strategies to support each learner's development more precisely."* (Teacher B, Aug 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

Students, on the other hand, found that learning became more structured, offering consistent support in their writing tasks.

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<sup>19</sup> Guz, "Formulaic Sequences as Fluency Devices in the Oral Production of Native Speakers of Polish"; Ebrahimi et al., "The Effect of Teaching Formulaic Expressions through Contrastive Lexical Approach on Iranian Pre-Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Skill."

<sup>20</sup> Dian Luthfiyati, Tiara Widayiswara, and Zuli Dwi Anggraini, "Students' Grammar and Vocabulary Mastery: Does It Correlate To Students' Writing Skills?," *Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan* 12, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.18592/tarbiyah.v12i1.7341>.

<sup>21</sup> Schmale, "Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching."



*"Utilizing formulaic expressions has noticeably improved my writing fluency, making it easier for me to express my ideas clearly. Furthermore, the consistent support provided through the lesson study approach helps me feel more secure in my learning journey, as I know there are structured methods in place to assist me."* (Student A, Aug 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

*"Using formulaic expressions in my writing gives me a boost of confidence because I can rely on familiar structures to convey my thoughts. The lesson study framework contributes to a more organized learning environment, which helps me understand what is expected and how I can improve."* (Student B, Aug 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

Table 3 shows that both teachers and students expressed positive feedback regarding the use of formulaic expressions and the lesson study approach.

**Table 3.** Results of Interview with Teachers and Students in  
Using Formulaic Expression through Lesson Study

Interviewee	Comments on Formulaic Expressions	Comments on Lesson Study
Teacher A	Very helpful for structuring sentences	Collaborative process improves teaching
Teacher B	Students adapt quickly to using them	Helps identify student needs
Student A	Helps with writing fluency	Provides consistent support
Student B	I feel more confident when using them	Learning is more structured

Table 3 shows a clear pattern where both teachers and students acknowledge the positive impact of formulaic expressions on writing development. Teachers emphasize how these expressions simplify sentence construction and ease the cognitive load for students. Simultaneously, students report increased confidence in their writing, indicating that formulaic expressions are serving as a scaffold for developing fluency. Lesson study also received strong endorsements from teachers, who found it effective for collaboration and identifying specific student needs. Students expressed appreciation for the structured learning it facilitated, highlighting how consistent support through lesson study improved their learning experiences. Overall, the interview data suggest that both formulaic expressions and lesson study contribute significantly to enhancing student writing skills.

The positive feedback from both teachers and students can be interpreted as a validation of the instructional methods being studied. Formulaic expressions likely reduce the complexity of writing tasks, allowing students to focus on content generation rather than linguistic accuracy, which is consistent with cognitive load theory. The collaborative aspect of lesson study likely

enabled teachers to refine their strategies in real time, leading to better outcomes for students. Furthermore, the structured environment provided by lesson study ensured that students received the support they needed at each stage of the writing process. These results align with existing literature on the benefits of scaffolding in language learning, which shows that structured linguistic input can lead to improved performance in language tasks.

### C. Teacher Interaction and Student Engagement in Writing

The observational data suggest that as lesson study cycles progressed, both teacher interaction and student involvement grew, indicating a more engaged learning environment. Observation data were collected during three phases: pre-lesson study, post-lesson study cycle 1, and post-lesson study cycle 2. Table 4 highlights teacher-student interaction time, student engagement, and the percentage of formulaic expressions used during writing tasks. Over the course of the lesson study cycles, teacher-student interaction time increased, along with notable improvements in student engagement and the use of formulaic expressions.

**Table 4.** Results of Observation of Teacher Interaction and Student Engagement during Using Formulaic Expression through Lesson Study

Observation Phase	Teacher Interaction (Minutes)	Student Engagement (Percentage)	Use of Formulaic Expressions (Percentage)
Pre-Lesson Study	10	60	40
Post-Lesson Study Cycle 1	15	75	65
Post-Lesson Study Cycle 2	20	85	80

Table 4 reveals a clear upward trend in teacher interaction, student engagement, and the use of formulaic expressions as the lesson study progressed. Initially, students showed moderate engagement and used formulaic expressions in 40% of their writing. However, after the first cycle of lesson study, there was a noticeable improvement in both engagement (75%) and the use of formulaic expressions (65%). By the second cycle, engagement had increased further to 85%, with formulaic expressions being used in 80% of writing tasks. Additionally, teacher-student interaction time also increased, indicating a more dynamic and involved classroom environment, where teachers likely provided more targeted feedback to students.

The increase in engagement and formulaic expression usage over the lesson study cycles can be attributed to the iterative nature of lesson study. As teachers reflected and adapted their teaching strategies, they were able to provide more relevant support to students, fostering higher

engagement. The increased use of formulaic expressions suggests that students became more comfortable and proficient with these structures, leading to more confident writing. This aligns with Vygotsky’s social development theory, which emphasizes the importance of teacher guidance in learning. The gradual increase in interaction time also suggests that teachers were more involved in scaffolding student learning, which directly contributed to improved outcomes in writing fluency and coherence.

**D. Fluency, Coherence, and Accuracy in Writing**

The students' writing performance was assessed during three key periods: pre-intervention, mid-intervention, and post-intervention. Table 5 presents the average scores for fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy at each stage. As the intervention progressed, there was a marked improvement in all three areas. Fluency scores rose from 60 to 85, coherence from 50 to 80, and grammatical accuracy from 55 to 82. These results indicate significant development in the students' writing skills, particularly in fluency and coherence, following the implementation of formulaic expressions through lesson study.

**Table 5.** Students Writing Performance of Fluency, Coherence, and Accuracy during Pre-, Mid-, and Pos-Intervention Lesson Study

Assessment Period	Average Fluency Score	Average Coherence Score	Grammatical Accuracy Score
Pre-Intervention	60	50	55
Mid-Intervention	75	70	68
Post-Intervention	85	80	82

Table 5 shows a steady improvement in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy across the intervention period. At the pre-intervention stage, fluency and coherence scores were relatively low, with fluency at 60 and coherence at 50. However, by mid-intervention, both scores had increased substantially to 75 and 70, respectively. This upward trend continued post-intervention, with fluency reaching 85 and coherence 80. Grammatical accuracy also showed considerable improvement, rising from 55 pre-intervention to 82 post-intervention. Table 5 suggests that the structured introduction of formulaic expressions, coupled with the iterative lesson study approach, positively influenced students' writing development.

The use of formulaic expressions significantly enhances both the structure and engagement level of student writing. It allows for more complex sentence structures and smoother transitions,

resulting in a coherent narrative that is both descriptive and emotionally engaging. In contrast, the paragraphs without these expressions in Figure 1 tend to be simpler and less engaging, highlighting the importance of teaching students how to effectively incorporate formulaic language into their writing. The comparison of student work without formulaic expressions (Figure 1) and with formulaic expressions (Figure 2) on the theme “My Daily Activity” is shown in the Figures below.



<p>Petunjuk Soal: Buatlah sebuah paragraf bertema “Aktivitas Sehari-Hari Saya.” <i>Task Instructions: Write a paragraph on the theme of “My Daily Activity.”</i></p>	
<p><b>Hasil Kerja Siswa A (Siklus 1)</b></p> 	<p><b>Hasil Kerja Siswa B (Siklus 2)</b></p> 
<p>Kemarin saya pergi ke rumah nenek. Saya main di sana. Ada banyak mainan. Saya suka main mobil-mobilan. Saya makan kue yang enak. Saya pulang sore. Saya senang.</p>	<p>Di sekolah saya belajar matematika. Guru mengajar tentang angka. Saya menulis di buku tulis. Teman saya juga menulis. Kami belajar sampai siang. Lalu kami istirahat.</p>
<p><i>Student A's Work: (First Cycle)</i></p> <p><i>Yesterday I went to grandma's house. I played there. There are many toys. I like playing with toy cars. I ate delicious cake. I went home in the evening. I am happy.</i></p>	<p><i>Student B's Work: (Second Cycle)</i></p> <p><i>At school, I learn math. The teacher teaches about numbers. I write in the notebook. My friend also writes. We learn until noon. Then we take a break.</i></p>

Figure 1. Elementary School Student Work without Formulaic Expressions

Petunjuk soal: Petunjuk Soal: Buatlah sebuah paragraf bertema “Aktivitas Sehari-Hari Saya.” Gunakan ekspresi formulaik atau idiom untuk membantu penulisan kalian.

*Task Instructions: Write a paragraph on the theme “My Daily Activity.” Use formulaic atau idiomatic expressions to aid your writing.*

**Hasil Kerja Siswa A  
(Siklus 1)**

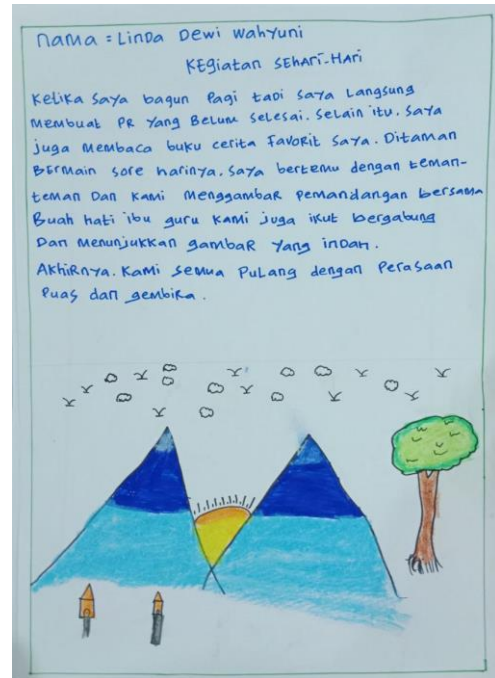


Pada suatu hari, setelah pulang sekolah, saya dan teman-teman bermain bola di lapangan. Pertama-tama, kami membagi tim dengan adil. Rina, yang terkenal ringan tangan, membantu temannya yang kesulitan mengikat sepatu. Ketika permainan dimulai, Rina berlari seperti kaki seribu mengejar bola. Namun, hujan tiba-tiba turun deras. Oleh karena itu, kami berhenti bermain dan mencari tempat berteduh. Meskipun basah kuyup, kami merasa senang karena bisa bermain bersama.

*Student A's Work:  
(First Cycle)*

*One day, after school, my friends and I played soccer on the field. First, we divided the teams fairly. Rina, who was known for being helpful, assisted a friend who was having trouble tying their shoes. Once the game began, Rina ran like a centipede, chasing the ball. However, it suddenly started pouring rain. So, we stopped playing and looked for shelter. Even though we were soaking wet, we were happy because we got to play together.*

**Hasil Kerja Siswa B  
(Siklus 2)**



Ketika saya bangun pagi tadi, saya langsung membuat PR yang belum selesai. Selain itu, saya juga membaca buku cerita favorit saya. Di taman bermain sore harinya, saya bertemu dengan teman-teman dan kami menggambar pemandangan bersama. Buah hati ibu guru kami juga ikut bergabung dan menunjukkan gambarnya yang indah. Akhirnya, kami semua pulang dengan perasaan puas dan gembira.

*Student B's Work:  
(Second Cycle)*

*When I woke up this morning, I immediately did the homework that wasn't finished yet. Besides that, I also read my favorite storybook. At the playground in the afternoon, I met with friends and we drew landscapes together. Our teacher's beloved child also joined us and showed his beautiful drawing. Finally, we all went home feeling satisfied and happy.*

**Figure 2.** Elementary School Student Work With Formulaic Expressions

Figure 1 and Figure 2 shows that elementary school students' using of formulaic expressions provide structure and logical flow to writing, making it easier for readers to follow the argument and understand the main points. In Figure 1 (Without Formulaic Expressions), The paragraphs consist of simple, short sentences that often lack transitions or connections between ideas. For example, "I played there. There are many toys. I like playing with toy cars." The narrative flow is minimal, making the text feel more like a list of activities rather than a cohesive story. The lack of connectors makes it harder for readers to follow the sequence of events smoothly. The descriptions are straightforward and lack depth, which may not capture the reader's interest effectively. For instance, "I ate delicious cake" is a simple statement without much elaboration. The emotional content is minimal, as seen in phrases like "I am happy," which do not convey much about the experience.

In contrast, the paragraphs in Figure 2 (With Formulaic Expressions) that incorporate formulaic expressions demonstrate improved organization and depth. The use of formulaic expressions enables the construction of more complex sentences. Phrases like "first of all," "however," and "finally" help in structuring the narrative logically. These expressions provide natural transitions between ideas, enhancing the overall coherence of the paragraph. The narrative flows smoothly from one event to another, creating a more engaging story. The use of idiomatic phrases and descriptive language adds depth to the narrative. Expressions such as "ran like the wind" or "soaked but happy" create vivid imagery. The paragraphs convey emotions more effectively through expressions that highlight feelings and reactions, making the story more relatable and engaging for readers.

The consistent improvement in students' writing skills throughout the intervention can be attributed to the combined impact of formulaic expressions and the lesson study model. Formulaic expressions likely provided students with the linguistic tools necessary to write more fluently and coherently, while the reflective cycles of lesson study allowed teachers to fine-tune their instructional methods to address specific student needs. The rise in grammatical accuracy also indicates that students were not only writing more fluently but were doing so with increasing linguistic precision. These findings support the idea that structured linguistic input, reinforced through reflective teaching practices, can lead to significant gains in writing proficiency, particularly in young learners.

## **E. Dicussion and Further Implications**

The findings of this study revealed that both teachers and students found formulaic expressions to be helpful in improving students' writing skills. Teachers reported that these expressions made it easier for students to structure their sentences, while students expressed that

they felt more confident and fluent in their writing. The implication of this finding is that formulaic expressions provide a foundation for students to build their writing upon, reducing the cognitive load involved in sentence construction.<sup>22</sup> For teachers, the integration of formulaic expressions into lesson plans through the lesson study framework allows for more targeted instruction that directly addresses students' writing challenges.<sup>23</sup> This shows that the use of formulaic expressions is not just a linguistic tool but a strategy that enhances the learning process, making writing more accessible to students in a structured, supportive environment.

The correlation between the positive feedback from both teachers and students and the effectiveness of formulaic expressions lies in the nature of these expressions as cognitive scaffolds. Formulaic expressions provide a set of ready-made structures that students can use to formulate sentences, which minimizes the complexity of generating language from scratch.<sup>24</sup> This is particularly important in a writing task, where the demands of grammar, coherence, and idea generation can overwhelm students. The lesson study framework further strengthens this process by allowing teachers to refine their approach based on real-time feedback and collaborative reflection.<sup>25</sup> Through continuous improvement cycles, teachers can adjust the formulaic expressions introduced to the class, ensuring that students are receiving the most relevant and effective language support. This cyclical structure ensures that the teaching methods evolve to meet student needs, creating a more efficient learning environment.

This study also demonstrated that, over time, both student engagement and the use of formulaic expressions increased significantly, with higher percentages of student participation and more frequent usage of the expressions. The implication of this study is that the structured environment of the lesson study, combined with the introduction of formulaic expressions, fosters greater student involvement in writing tasks. As students became more familiar with the formulaic expressions, they engaged more actively in writing activities, which suggests that these linguistic tools reduce the barriers that typically hinder student participation.<sup>26</sup> This increased engagement is crucial because it indicates that students are not only using the expressions but are becoming more

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<sup>22</sup> Khoiriyah and Mujiyanto, "The Realization of Formulaic Competence in the Classroom Interactions among Learners in Kampung Inggris Pare"; Schmale, "Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching"; Deda, Disnawati, and Daniel, "Research Trends on Lesson Study Based on Google Scholar and Scopus Database: A Bibliometric Analysis."

<sup>23</sup> Achmad Fawaid, "Pengantar Penulisan Akademik," *Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar*, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Duc and Chien, "Renovating the Professional Activities of Teachers through the Model of 'Lesson Study' in Vietnam"; Schmale, "Formulaic Expressions for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching."

<sup>25</sup> Dvir and Schatz-Oppenheimer, "Novice Teachers in a Changing Reality"; Lewis and Perry, "Lesson Study to Scale up Research-Based Knowledge: A Randomized, Controlled Trial of Fractions Learning."

<sup>26</sup> Deda, Disnawati, and Daniel, "Research Trends on Lesson Study Based on Google Scholar and Scopus Database: A Bibliometric Analysis"; Guz, "Formulaic Sequences as Fluency Devices in the Oral Production of Native Speakers of Polish."

confident in their writing abilities, resulting in a more dynamic and interactive classroom atmosphere that promotes learning.

The rise in student engagement and usage of formulaic expressions can be traced back to the repetitive, reflective nature of the lesson study framework. In the “Plan” phase, teachers collaboratively select specific formulaic expressions that align with the lesson objectives. During the “Do” phase, these expressions are introduced and practiced in the classroom, with real-time observation capturing student interaction. The “See” phase allows teachers to analyze the outcomes, adjusting their approach for the next cycle. This continuous refinement ensures that students receive consistent exposure to formulaic expressions, reinforcing their understanding and use. As students become more familiar with these structures, they experience less cognitive strain when writing, leading to increased participation and engagement.<sup>27</sup> The iterative cycles of lesson study provide a mechanism for progressively deepening students’ mastery of formulaic expressions, leading to sustained improvement in writing skills.

The students' writing performance also showed significant improvements in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy throughout the intervention. The most notable improvement was in fluency, where scores increased from 60 to 85, reflecting the ease with which students could produce written text by the end of the lesson study cycles. The implication here is that formulaic expressions, when integrated into writing instruction through a structured, reflective process like lesson study, can greatly enhance students' writing abilities. The improvement in grammatical accuracy and coherence further supports the argument that these expressions provide a linguistic framework that allows students to focus on more complex aspects of writing, such as organizing ideas and ensuring logical flow.<sup>28</sup> These results suggest that formulaic expressions, coupled with lesson study, offer a practical solution for addressing writing challenges in elementary education.

The consistent improvement in students' writing skills, particularly in fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy, is directly related to the iterative cycles of the lesson study model. The “Plan-Do-See” approach ensures that teachers are not only introducing new linguistic structures but are also continuously evaluating and refining their teaching methods based on student outcomes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Hajar and Hendayana, “Lesson Study as a Means of Transforming Classroom Discourse and Student Cognitive Engagement in Science Classroom”; Anaktototy and Monica, “Catalysts and Challenges in Essay Writing Proficiency among College Students: Insights from Motivation, Literacy, Cognition, and Language Skills”; Abdulaal et al., “The Impact of a Contrastive Lexical Approach in Formulaic Expressions’ Perception on University EFL Learners’ Writing Proficiencies.”

<sup>28</sup> Ying-Hsueh Cheng, “E-Portfolios in EFL Writing: Benefits and Challenges,” *Language Education & Assessment* 5, no. 1 (2022); Atika Etemadzadeh, Samira Seifi, and Hamid Roohbakhsh Far, “The Role of Questioning Technique in Developing Thinking Skills: The Ongoing Effect on Writing Skill,” *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70 (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Jhang, “Teachers’ Attitudes towards Lesson Study, Perceived Competence, and Involvement in Lesson Study: Evidence from Junior High School Teachers”; Lewis, “Mathematics Lesson Study around the



In the initial stages, students struggled with writing fluency, as observed in the pre-intervention scores. However, as the lesson study cycles progressed and students were repeatedly exposed to and practiced using formulaic expressions, their writing skills steadily improved. This is because the repetition and structured use of formulaic expressions helped solidify these linguistic patterns in students' minds, reducing the cognitive load required for sentence construction and allowing them to focus on higher-order writing tasks. The cyclical nature of lesson study ensures that learning is scaffolded and reinforced, leading to measurable improvements in writing proficiency over time.

## CONCLUSION

The key finding of this research is the significant role those formulaic expressions, when integrated into writing instruction through lesson study, play in improving students' writing skills. This study shows that these linguistic tools enhance fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy by reducing cognitive load and providing scaffolding. This method also boosts students' confidence in expressing ideas, which is particularly valuable in early education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

This research innovatively combines formulaic expressions and lesson study into a new approach to writing instruction. This study's strength lies in its use of iterative cycles of reflection, where teachers adapt their methods based on student feedback. This perspective offers a systematic model for improving language instruction. It also contributes new insights into how structured language input can support writing skill development in young learners, offering valuable implications for similar educational contexts.

The research is limited by its specific focus on Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, which may not generalize to other contexts. It also centers on writing skills without examining the impact on broader language development. Future research should explore the use of formulaic expressions in different educational settings and subjects, and conduct longitudinal studies to assess long-term language proficiency improvements.

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