

Analysis of The Application of SAS (Structural Synthetic Analytics) Method in Initial Writing Ability in Children of Migrant Workers

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Abstract

Initial writing is a foundational literacy skill that enables children to transform oral language, visual recognition, and motor coordination into meaningful written symbols. This study analyzes the application of the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method in supporting the initial writing ability of children of migrant workers at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara, Malaysia. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in Class C, involving 22 students consisting of 10 boys and 12 girls. Data were collected through classroom observation, teacher interviews, student questionnaires, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model through data collection, reduction, display, and verification. The findings show that students experienced difficulties in distinguishing similar letters, writing complete words, maintaining neatness, and constructing simple sentences. Specifically, 3 students were unable to write A-Z correctly, 10 students were unable to write words accurately, while 9 students were able to write sentences properly. The SAS method was found to be useful because it guides students from meaningful sentence structures to words, syllables, and letters before recombining them into complete forms. The study indicates that structured, contextual, and media-supported writing instruction can strengthen early literacy practices among migrant worker children in non-formal learning settings.

1. Introduction

Education is an essential social process that equips learners with knowledge, values, and life skills needed to participate meaningfully in society. In this sense, education is not limited to formal schooling, but also includes learning experiences that strengthen children's ability to adapt to their environment and respond to daily life needs. Balkis et al. (2024) explain that education contributes to the formation of life skills and character, while the Indonesian National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 emphasizes the development of learners who are faithful, knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens (Depdikbud 2003). Therefore, access to basic education and literacy development is a fundamental concern, particularly for children who live in vulnerable social and administrative conditions.

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For children of migrant workers, educational access is often shaped by mobility, documentation status, economic constraints, and the availability of community-based learning institutions. In Malaysia, several Indonesian children encounter difficulties in entering mainstream schooling because they do not possess complete official documents such as a family card, birth certificate, passport, or other administrative records. In this context, At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Guidance Studio (Sanggar Bimbingan or SB) functions as a non-formal learning space that helps children of migrant workers obtain basic education. This role is important because non-formal education can serve as an inclusive mechanism for children who are not fully reached by formal systems (Mahardhani 2018; Trisofirin et al. 2023).

Language learning is one of the most important components of early education because it enables children to communicate, express ideas, and understand information. Mailani et al. (2022) describe language as a central instrument of human communication. In the classroom, language learning involves listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing is often regarded as the most complex because it requires the coordination of visual perception, fine motor control, memory, phonological awareness, and cognitive organization. Children must not only recognize letters but also connect letters with sounds, arrange them into words, and use words to construct meaningful sentences.

Initial writing is the first stage in which children learn to form written symbols accurately and meaningfully. At this stage, children are introduced to the shapes of letters, the direction of strokes, spacing between letters and words, and the relationship between oral language and written representation. Adiatama et al. (2023) explain that early writing begins when children learn to draw pencil strokes in the form of letters. Similarly, Dewi (2018) states that writing is productive and expressive because it integrates other language activities such as listening, speaking, and reading. The development of initial writing is therefore not merely a technical activity, but a gradual literacy process that requires systematic guidance and repeated practice.

The ability to write at the beginning level is particularly important because it becomes the foundation for later academic learning. Students who are unable to identify letters, copy words, or write simple sentences may experience difficulties in reading comprehension, note-taking, completing assignments, and participating in classroom activities. Vivi Luftiyah et al. (2024) highlight that writing enables students to convey ideas through written language according to the intended purpose. However, for beginner students, writing can be challenging when they still struggle to distinguish similar letter shapes, remember the correct sequence of letters, or maintain neat handwriting within the writing line.

The initial observation at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia showed that several students in Class C experienced difficulties in early writing activities. These difficulties included writing inverted letters such as b-d, n-h, n-m, and p-q; confusing letters with numbers such as e and 9; omitting letters in words; submitting writing tasks late; and producing uneven handwriting that did not follow the line. Such problems indicate that the students' writing difficulties were not limited to handwriting neatness, but also involved visual discrimination, letter-sound awareness, attention, and understanding of word structure. These conditions require teaching methods that are structured, concrete, and meaningful for children.

Teachers at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia therefore attempted to use varied learning methods to support students' initial writing development. Istiqoma et al. (2023) argue that varied learning methods can create a more conducive, creative, and active classroom atmosphere. One method used by teachers is the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method. The SAS method introduces writing through meaningful language structures. Students first encounter a complete sentence, then analyze it into words, syllables, and letters, before synthesizing the parts again into the original structure. This process helps students understand that letters are not isolated symbols but components of meaningful written language (Maulana et al. 2019).

The SAS method is relevant for beginner learners because it begins with a whole structure that is familiar to the students before moving to smaller linguistic units. Putri (2022) found that the SAS method can support students' initial writing ability, while Hartono et al. (2023) emphasize its adaptive and equitable potential for linguistic skills. In the context of migrant worker children, this method is also significant because it can connect writing instruction with students' daily experiences through pictures, sentences, and concrete examples. Based on these considerations, this study analyzes the application of the SAS method in developing the initial writing ability of children of migrant workers at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia. The study focuses on the types of writing difficulties experienced by students, the way the SAS method is implemented by teachers, and the extent to which the method supports students' ability to write letters, words, and simple sentences.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the application of the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method in the initial writing ability of migrant worker children at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand the learning process, classroom interaction, teacher strategy, and students' writing difficulties in a natural educational setting. Rather

than testing a statistical hypothesis, the study aimed to describe how the SAS method was applied and how students responded to the stages of learning letters, words, syllables, and sentences.

The research site was Class C at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia. The class consisted of 22 students, comprising 10 boys and 12 girls. The students were children of migrant workers who attended the guidance studio as a non-formal learning institution. This setting was selected because the students represented a group of learners who required literacy support but faced limitations in accessing formal education. The classroom also provided an appropriate context for observing the practical use of the SAS method in early writing instruction.

The researcher acted as the main instrument in the study by observing the learning process, recording classroom events, conducting interviews, and interpreting the collected data. This role is consistent with qualitative research, in which the researcher becomes the key instrument for understanding meaning, context, and interaction. To strengthen the credibility of the data, this study used triangulation by combining observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The use of multiple techniques allowed the researcher to compare information from teachers, students' written work, and classroom practices.

Data were collected through the following techniques:

- **Interview.** Interviews were conducted with teachers who taught Class C at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia, namely NAM and ANP. The interviews focused on students' difficulties in initial writing, teaching strategies used by teachers, the implementation of the SAS method, learning media, and teachers' perceptions of student progress. The interview data helped clarify the reasons why certain writing errors occurred and how teachers responded to them during instruction.

- **Observation.** Structured classroom observation was used to examine how the SAS method was implemented in real learning activities. The researcher observed the teacher's opening activities, use of pictures, sentence presentation, student imitation, copying activities, decomposition of sentences into words, syllables, and letters, and the recombination of these elements into meaningful forms. The observation also focused on students' attention, participation, neatness of writing, and ability to follow teacher instructions.

- **Questionnaire.** A written questionnaire was used to obtain information about students' ability and difficulty in writing letters, words, and sentences. The questionnaire items were arranged to capture three main aspects of initial writing: letter formation, word writing, and sentence writing. The data from the questionnaire provided a descriptive overview of the number and percentage of students who still required assistance in each aspect.

- **Documentation.** Documentation consisted of students' writing products, photographs of classroom activities, teacher notes, questionnaire results, and records of observation and interviews. These documents were used to support and confirm the findings obtained from observation and interview data. Students' written products were particularly important because they showed concrete evidence of letter inversion, incomplete words, uneven handwriting, and sentence-writing ability.

The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data reduction stage, information related to initial writing difficulties, SAS implementation, and student responses was selected and organized. In the data display stage, the findings were arranged according to letters, words, and sentences to make the pattern of student difficulties clearer. In the verification stage, the researcher interpreted the findings by comparing observation results, teacher interviews, questionnaires, and documentation.

The validity of the findings was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques. Teacher interview data were compared with observation notes and students' writing products. Questionnaire results were also used to support the interpretation of the extent of students' writing difficulties. Through this process, the study attempted to present a balanced description of the application of the SAS method and its relevance for early writing instruction among migrant worker children.

Ethically, the study was conducted by respecting the learning environment and the children involved in the classroom. Student identities were not disclosed, and the data were presented in aggregate form. The focus of the analysis was not to label students as weak learners, but to identify the areas of difficulty that required pedagogical support. This is important because children of migrant workers may face educational disadvantages that need to be addressed through inclusive, patient, and context-sensitive teaching practices.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the research that has been carried out, the findings show that the SAS method was implemented as a structured strategy to guide students from complete language units to smaller linguistic elements and back to meaningful written forms. The findings are discussed in relation to three main aspects: the students' initial writing difficulties, the classroom implementation of the SAS method, and the contribution of the method to letter, word, and sentence writing.

The results of the interview with ANP indicated that several students continued to face difficulties in writing, especially in distinguishing letters with similar shapes. For example, when the teacher dictated or demonstrated the letter b, some students wrote d; when the teacher showed n, some students wrote h or m; and when the teacher

introduced e, some students wrote 9. These errors show that early writing difficulties were closely related to visual discrimination and memory of letter forms. The students were not simply copying incorrectly; they were still developing the ability to identify the direction, curve, and structure of each letter.

Observation also showed that some students did not give full attention during writing activities. As a result, when the teacher asked them to complete writing exercises, several students submitted their work late or required repeated instruction. This condition suggests that initial writing learning requires not only cognitive readiness but also classroom engagement. If students lose attention during the explanation of letter form, word structure, or sentence arrangement, they may find it difficult to complete the writing task independently.

Another difficulty found in the study was the omission of letters in words. Students sometimes wrote incomplete words because they did not fully recognize the sequence of letters. This difficulty is important because word writing requires students to connect sounds, letters, and meaning at the same time. Incomplete spelling also shows that students were still at the stage of developing phonological and orthographic awareness. Therefore, teachers need to provide repeated opportunities for students to see, say, copy, analyze, and rewrite words in meaningful contexts.

The neatness of writing was also a visible problem. Some students wrote outside the line, produced uneven letter sizes, and placed letters too close or too far apart. This finding indicates that early writing involves fine motor coordination and spatial awareness. Children must learn how to hold a pencil, control hand movement, maintain direction, and position letters within the writing space. These aspects are often overlooked when writing is understood only as a language skill, although they are crucial at the beginning stage.

The questionnaire results support the interview and observation findings. The data showed that 13.6% or 3 students were unable to write the letters A-Z, 13.6% or 3 students could not write letters without teacher assistance, and 59.5% or 13 students could not write the letters A-Z correctly. This means that more than half of the class still needed systematic practice in letter recognition and formation. The high percentage of students who could not write the letters correctly also indicates that letter mastery should remain a central focus in early writing instruction.

In the aspect of word writing, the data showed that 45.4% or 10 students were unable to write words properly. In addition, 59.5% or 13 students could not write words without teacher assistance, while 63.6% or 14 students were unable to write words accurately and neatly. These findings show that the transition from writing letters to writing words was a major challenge. Students might recognize some individual letters, but they still found it difficult to combine letters into meaningful and correctly ordered words.

In the aspect of sentence writing, the questionnaire results showed that 59.5% or 13 students were unable to write sentences, 63.6% or 14 students were unable to write sentences correctly, and 72.7% or 17 students were unable to write sentences neatly. Sentence writing was therefore the most difficult component for many students. This finding is understandable because sentence writing requires a higher level of literacy integration. Students must understand word order, spacing, meaning, and punctuation while also maintaining legible handwriting.

The SAS method was applied by introducing a complete sentence through a familiar picture. In the observed lesson, the teacher displayed a picture of a broom and wrote the sentence 'I sweep the floor.' The sentence was first presented as a meaningful whole so that students could connect the picture with the written sentence. This structural stage is important because it prevents students from seeing writing as a set of isolated symbols. Instead, they begin with a complete message that is related to daily experience.

After the sentence was introduced, the teacher guided students to read and repeat it. The students were then asked to copy the sentence in their notebooks. This copying activity functioned as a bridge between recognition and production. Students did not only look at the sentence but also practiced writing it. At this stage, the teacher could observe students' handwriting, spacing, letter formation, and ability to follow the line. The activity also allowed students to become more familiar with the structure of a simple sentence.

The analytical stage was carried out by decomposing the sentence into words, syllables, and letters. For example, the sentence 'I sweep the floor' was separated into the words 'I', 'sweep', 'the', and 'floor'. These words were then divided into syllabic units and finally into individual letters. This stage helps students understand that a sentence consists of words, words consist of smaller sound units, and letters are the smallest visible elements in writing. Khoridah et al. (2019) state that the SAS method trains learners to arrange words from sentences and to understand the relationship between sentences, words, syllables, and letters.

The synthetic stage was implemented by recombining the separated elements into the original structure. After students analyzed the sentence into smaller parts, they were guided to reconstruct the parts into syllables, words, and the complete sentence. This process is pedagogically useful because students do not stop at memorizing letters; they learn how letters function within larger written structures. The movement from whole to part and part to whole strengthens students' understanding of written language as a meaningful system.

The use of pictures and innovative cards made the learning process more concrete and engaging. Before writing, students observed pictures and connected them with familiar objects or activities such as a broom, bread, newspaper, doll, and book. The teacher then used cards to help students arrange letters into words and words into sentences. This strategy reduced the abstract nature of writing because students could manipulate visible

units of language. It also encouraged active participation, especially for students who were easily bored when learning writing through repeated copying only.

The findings are consistent with Ernalis (2006), who explains that the SAS method uses meaningful materials based on students' experiences and begins with language structures that can be understood by learners. The method is also consistent with Hartono et al. (2023), who emphasize psychological, pedagogical, and linguistic principles in SAS learning. Psychologically, students begin with familiar experiences; pedagogically, teachers guide students step by step; and linguistically, students learn the relationship between sentences, words, syllables, and letters.

From the psychological perspective, the SAS method is helpful because it reduces the burden of learning letters in isolation. When students see a picture and a complete sentence, they can attach meaning to the writing task. This is important for children of migrant workers because their learning experiences may be uneven and they may require additional motivation to participate actively. Meaningful and contextual learning can make writing activities feel closer to their daily lives.

From the pedagogical perspective, the SAS method provides a clear sequence for teachers. The teacher does not immediately ask students to memorize letters or write words without context. Instead, the teacher starts with a complete sentence, guides students to observe it, helps them analyze its parts, and finally asks them to reconstruct the sentence. This sequence supports gradual learning and allows teachers to identify at which stage students experience difficulty. For instance, a student may be able to copy a sentence but struggle when the word is broken into syllables, or may recognize letters but struggle to arrange them into a word.

From the linguistic perspective, the SAS method strengthens students' awareness of language structure. Writing is not only a motor activity but also a process of representing language. Through SAS, students learn that a sentence carries meaning, a word names an object or action, a syllable helps pronunciation, and a letter represents a sound or symbol. This layered understanding is essential for early literacy because it connects reading and writing development.

Nevertheless, the findings also show that the SAS method should be implemented continuously and not as a one-time classroom technique. The presence of students who still could not write A-Z, words, or sentences correctly indicates that writing development requires repetition, patience, and differentiated support. Students who confuse letters such as b and d may need additional visual discrimination exercises. Students who omit letters in words may need phonics and syllable practice. Students whose writing is not neat may need fine motor exercises and guided handwriting practice.

The implementation of the SAS method at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia therefore demonstrates both the potential and the limitations of structured early writing instruction. The method provides an organized pathway for teaching writing, but its effectiveness depends on teacher consistency, appropriate media, student readiness, and sufficient practice time. In a non-formal learning environment, teachers may also face challenges related to limited facilities, diverse student backgrounds, and differences in learning readiness. These factors should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Overall, the results show that the SAS method can be used as a meaningful strategy to support initial writing among children of migrant workers. The method helps students connect pictures, sentences, words, syllables, and letters in a systematic way. It also encourages students to participate actively through visual media and card-based activities. Although several students continued to experience difficulties, the method provided teachers with a structured approach for identifying and addressing those difficulties in the classroom.

The findings also suggest that the SAS method has practical value for teachers who work with students from diverse educational backgrounds. In non-formal learning settings, students may enter the same class with different levels of exposure to letters, reading, and writing. Some students may already recognize several letters, while others still require basic guidance in pencil control and directionality. The SAS sequence enables the teacher to begin from a shared classroom text, such as a sentence based on a picture, while still allowing individual students to receive support at the level where they experience difficulty.

For students who experience letter confusion, the teacher can strengthen the analytical stage by comparing similar letter pairs. For example, b and d can be introduced through visual cues, repeated tracing, and oral explanation of direction. The same can be done for p and q, n and m, or e and 9. These activities should be integrated into meaningful words and sentences so that students understand the function of each letter within a communicative context. This approach is consistent with the SAS principle that learning begins with meaning before moving to smaller language elements.

For students who have difficulty writing words, the teacher can use syllable cards and word-building activities. Students can be asked to arrange syllables, read them aloud, copy the words, and then use the words in simple sentences. This strategy can reduce the tendency to omit letters because students become more aware of the internal structure of words. It also supports memory because the written word is repeatedly seen, spoken, arranged, and written. Through repetition in different forms, students gradually develop confidence and accuracy in word writing.

For students who struggle with sentence writing, teachers may provide sentence frames based on daily activities. Sentences such as 'I read a book', 'Mother buys bread', or 'Father reads the newspaper' are useful because they are simple, concrete, and connected to familiar experiences. After students copy the sentence, the teacher can guide them to identify the subject, verb, and object in a simple way. This does not require formal grammar teaching, but it helps children understand that a sentence is an organized unit of meaning. Such practice can strengthen students' ability to move from copying to independent writing.

The classroom evidence further indicates that the success of the SAS method depends on the quality of teacher facilitation. Teachers need to provide clear modelling, sufficient wait time, positive reinforcement, and corrective feedback. Students who are slow in completing tasks should not be viewed as lacking ability, but as learners who require additional scaffolding. In the context of migrant worker children, a supportive classroom atmosphere is especially important because educational interruption, social adjustment, and limited learning resources may affect students' confidence. Therefore, the SAS method should be understood not only as a technical writing method, but also as an inclusive pedagogical approach that can help teachers respond to learners' varied literacy needs.

The SAS method is carried out as follows:

Table 1 Example of SAS sentence-word-syllable-letter analysis

Num	Picture	Sentence	Word	Syllable	Letter
1	brush	I sweep the floor	<u>I</u> sweep the floor 1 2 3	I, swe-ep, the, floor	I, s-w-e-e-p, t-h-e, f-l-o-o-r
2	bread	Mother buys bread	<u>Mother</u> buys bread 1 2 3	Mo-ther, buys, bread	M-o-t-h-e-r, b-u-y-s, b-r-e-a-d
3	newspaper	Father reads the newspaper	<u>Father</u> reads the 1 2 3 Newspaper 4	Fa-ther, reads, the, newspaper	F-a-t-h-e-r, r-e-a-d-s, t-h-e, n-e-w-s-p-a-p-e-r
4	doll	The younger sibling is playing with dolls	<u>The younger</u> sibling 1 2 is playing with dolls 3 4 5	The, younger, sibling, is play- ing, with, dolls	T-h-e, y-o-u-n-g-e-r, s-i-b-l-i-n-g, i-s, p-l-a-y-i-n-g, w-i-t-h, d-o-l-l-s
5	book	I bought a book	<u>I</u> bought a book 1 2 3	I, bought, a book	I, b-o-u-g-h-t, a b-o-o-k

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research on the application of the Structural Analytical Synthetic (SAS) method, it can be concluded that the method is useful in supporting the initial writing ability of children of migrant workers at SB At-Tanzil Kayu Ara Malaysia. The method is implemented by first presenting a complete and meaningful sentence based on a picture, then guiding students to analyze the sentence into words, syllables, and letters, and finally synthesizing the elements back into the original structure. This sequence helps students understand writing as a meaningful system rather than a collection of isolated symbols.

The study found that students' writing difficulties included confusion in distinguishing similar letters, inability to write A-Z correctly, incomplete word writing, difficulty writing sentences, and untidy handwriting. The questionnaire results showed that 3 students still could not write A-Z correctly, 10 students could not write words correctly, and only 9 students were able to write sentences properly. These findings indicate that initial writing instruction for migrant worker children requires continuous, structured, and contextual support.

The SAS method is relevant because it combines psychological, pedagogical, and linguistic principles. It begins with familiar experiences, uses concrete media, provides systematic teacher guidance, and connects whole language structures with smaller writing units. However, the method should be supported by repeated practice, differentiated assistance, and appropriate learning media. Teachers are encouraged to use pictures, sentence cards, syllable cards, and guided writing exercises to strengthen students' letter recognition, word construction, and sentence writing. Future studies may examine the implementation of the SAS method over a longer period or compare it with other early literacy approaches in non-formal education settings.

The findings have several implications for early literacy teaching in guidance studios and other non-formal education settings. First, teachers need to diagnose students' writing difficulties before deciding the focus of instruction. Students who are unable to write letters correctly require different support from students who can write letters but cannot form words or sentences. A simple diagnostic activity using picture-based sentences can help teachers identify whether the problem occurs at the level of letter recognition, word construction, sentence formation, or handwriting neatness.

Second, the SAS method should be combined with consistent formative assessment. Teachers can observe students' notebooks, compare writing products from week to week, and record the types of errors that appear repeatedly. Such records are useful because they allow teachers to monitor progress and plan follow-up activities. For example, if a student repeatedly omits letters in the middle of words, the teacher can provide syllable segmentation practice. If a student writes outside the line, the teacher can provide guided tracing and line-awareness exercises before moving to sentence writing.

Third, classroom materials should be designed around students' lived experiences. The examples used in the SAS method, such as sweeping the floor, buying bread, reading a newspaper, playing with dolls, and buying a book, are simple daily activities that children can recognize. Familiar contexts can reduce anxiety and make writing more meaningful. When students understand the sentence, they are more likely to participate in the analytical and synthetic stages because the written form is connected to an object, action, or experience that they already know.

Finally, the implementation of the SAS method should be understood as part of a broader effort to provide inclusive education for children of migrant workers. Literacy learning in this context does not only develop academic skills; it also supports children's confidence, participation, and sense of belonging in the classroom. When teachers provide structured guidance and positive reinforcement, students are more likely to view writing as an achievable skill. This is particularly important for learners who may have experienced interrupted schooling or limited access to formal educational resources.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Author Contribution

*The authors confirm their contributions to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Nuraini and Ayu Wulansari; **data collection:** Lilis Sumaryati and Dyah Atiiek Mustikawati; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Nadia Amrul Ummah and Nuraini; **draft manuscript preparation and academic revision:** Siti Marpuah. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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