



## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXT-BASED TASK IN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL AND CREATIVITY**

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### **Abstract**

This research aimed to find out 1) whether or not the use of text-based tasks in language learning improved students' writing skill and 2) whether or not the use of text-based task in writing increased students' creativity in terms of fluency, flexibility, and originality. This research employed quasi-experimental design with two groups; control and experimental. It used pre-test and post-test as the instruments of the research for both tests: writing test and creativity test. In treatment, experimental group was taught by applying text-based task whereas control group was conventional method; three phases technique. The result of data analysis showed that the use of text-based task in language learning improved students' writing skill. It can be seen from the mean score, standard deviation, and scoring classification of experimental group which are improved significantly and also from the component of writing where scores of content, organization, language use, and mechanics of students in experimental group are higher than control group. The t-test value of writing in posttest was  $3.895 \geq t\text{-table } 2.000$ ; it means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Text-based task improved students' writing. The result also showed that students' ability to produce number of category of ideas (flexibility) and produce new idea (originality) as part of creativity improved significantly through text-based task whereas the number of ideas (fluency) did not show significant improvement.

**Keywords:** text-based task, writing skill, creativity

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are four skills of language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Reading and Listening are receptive skills. People receive message and process them to understand the meaning. Whereas writing and speaking are productive skills which mean that people are involved producing language rather than receiving it. People use language to produce a message to make others understand.

In writing, messages and readers are the most important elements to be considered. Messages on writing relate to the purpose of why someone writes. To express the messages well, the ability to form letters and words, and then join those together to make sentences should be mastered to be able to communicate the message. Besides, reader is a key-element in writing. She/he influences greatly what a writer will write and how he will write it. However, at early stages of school, students may not naturally be conscious of their readers. They just write for a reason of task completion.

Peha (1995:5-4) stated that there are five reasons why students are asked to write. First, the output of writing process is a great way to know and assess students' knowledge. Their writing can describe indirectly their individual thought process, knowledge and understanding. Second, Writing is an important skill that students need to achieve a better education and life. Third, writing helps students to express themselves confidently. Some students cannot express their feeling and knowledge orally; it may be frustrating of what they experience. Writing can facilitate them to be confident in delivering feeling and thought. Fourth, teacher can see how clear the students think by writing output that they write clearly. "Write clearly means think clearly". The last, writing is power that students need to understand to continue the life of their better education and enter to work world.

Although writing has many important roles, it is considered that writing is the most difficult skill for both the students who learn English as a foreign language and the native speakers. There are some reasons why writing becomes the most difficult skill. First, good grammar is crucial in writing. Students especially for the non-native speakers should combine their thought in what should be written and the rules of structure. Collins and Gentner in Dakhmouche (2008:30) stated students must consider at least four structural levels in expressing idea: overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure (syntax), and word structure. Second, writing becomes not important to spend much in learning language. Native speakers are proved to read more than any other skills while non-native students are busy to learn the structure or grammar first and must listen to the language most of time. Shortly, students spend little of time for writing. Third, students' writing is sometimes denied so that they do not know whether their writing is correct or incorrect. The role of teacher in this case is needed to give them a hand. The problem then is that teacher does not have enough time to correct them all by looking the condition that one class consists of twenty or more students. Without correction, the mistakes may be repeated many times and become bad habits which are hard to adjust. The last is that non-native students are expected to have the same proficiency with the native speakers when they start learning to write, and this expectation may cause them frustrations. It should be considered that the students are just expected to produce an acceptable, clear and interesting piece of writing which is suitable for the requirements of the writing situation.

The difficulties mentioned above look worse in where this research conducted. Based on observation at school, the main problem faced by some students is lack of vocabulary and knowledge to make good paragraphs. The rules of making sentences in Bahasa Indonesia become reference till the orders of words and sentences are confusing. When they are asked to make some sentences, they directly use translation tool which is suitable for translating words so the arrangement is bad.

It is not simple and easy thing to make students like writing. It is the task of the teachers to make them understand the goals of writing first and understand that learning writing can help them for many things in classes and work world. Generally, teaching writing has the goal to enhance skills to produce a single sentence of any complexity, and developing additional skills required to produce units longer than a single sentence. These skills will help students become less controlled by the text and the teacher, develop the use of syntactic patterns, write longer units of discourse, and use awareness of cultural differences in writing. Another goal consists in moving the students to the level of advanced composition in which they will be provided with enough opportunity to write for their own purposes and to make them independent writers making their own choices of structure, content and purpose.

Many teachers or researchers have tried to solve the problems faced by students in writing. Some methods had been applied to maximize students' writing ability. One method that can be used is Task-based Language Learning (TBLL). It can help students by placing them in a situation like in the real world; a situation where oral communication is essential for doing a specific task. Task based learning has advantage to get students to use their skills at current level; to help develop language through its use.

One important purpose of choosing TBLL is to increase students' activity. TBLL is concerned with students' activity; and it lies on teacher to produce and supply different tasks which will give students an opportunity to experiment spontaneously, individually and originally with the foreign language. Each task will provide students with new personal experience with the foreign language and at this point the teacher has a very important part to play. He or she must take the responsibility of the consciousness raising process, which must follow the experimenting task activities. It makes the students to learn by doing.

Text-based Task is a part of TBLL which concerns with process the text for meaning. The tasks given to the students are many kinds of text that can be in oral or written form, or any supporting and additional materials like pictures that can make students write. This method can facilitate students to be familiar with many kinds of text.

Based on the statement above, the researcher was inspired to carry out this research under the title “The Implementation of Text-Based Tasks in Language Learning to Improve Students’ Writing Skill”. The researcher formulated problem statement as follow: “Does the use of Text-based Tasks in language learning improve students’ writing skill and creativity?”

## METHOD

### Research Design

This research employed quasi-experimental design with one control and experimental class. It aimed to give description about whether or not the students could improve their writing skill significantly through text-based tasks being compared to control class which used the conventional method. It also measured the influence of Text-based Tasks toward students’ creativity. The students as the samples were given pre-test to know their prior skill in writing, and post-test to know the improvement after being given treatment. Besides that, this research also measured how teaching method using text-based task influenced students’ creativity.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{EG} \rightarrow \text{O1} \quad \text{X1} \quad \text{O2} \\ \text{CG} \rightarrow \text{O1} \quad \text{X2} \quad \text{O2} \end{array}$$

(Gay, 2006:254)

### Participants

Population of this research was the eleventh year students of SMA Neg. 2 Bone. It consists of 359 students in 10 classes; 5 exact classes and 5 social classes. The exact classes consist of 196 students; 69 men and 127 women. The social classes consist of 163 students; 99 men and 64 women. In choosing samples, the writer used cluster sampling technique by choosing two classes; one was chosen as an experimental group, and the other was control group. The numbers of samples were 60 students; each group was 30 students.

### Research Instrument

In collecting data, the researcher used writing test as the instrument consisting of pre-test and post-test for both experimental and control group. Pre-test was to know the basic writing skill of students, and post-test to know their improvement after being given treatment. The form of the test was writing a narrative story with students’ own words. Beside that, there was also creativity test in form of making some possible endings of a narrative story.

### Procedure of Collecting Data

To get data, it used some procedures. First is pre-test by asking students both in control and experimental group to write a narrative story. The pretest ran for 90 minutes. Second is creativity test. The students were asked to write some possible endings of a narrative story. It was to know their prior creativity before having treatment. To measure the creativity, the researcher adapted the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) by Guildford and Torrance. Third is treatment. It was given five times after pre-test and creativity test were administered. Each meeting ran for 90 minutes. The procedures of treatment were:

#### *Experimental Group*

The researcher delivered a task for every meeting. The main activities done by the students for each meeting were: 1) predicting new story; students were asked to continue

incomplete stories without having read, seen, or heard before. 2) Jumble story; students were given some pictures which were arranged unwell. 3) Restoration task; students were asked to find out the odd sentence in a paragraph which did not support the main idea or topic sentence. 4) Comparison task: students were given two pictures with some differences; their task was to find out the differences and then making a comparison-contrast paragraph. 5) Memory challenge task: students read or listened text with time limit, and then they had listed ideas they remembered from the text and made them as a good paragraph.

In experimental group, procedure of giving treatment was divided into three phases: pre-task, during the task, and post task. In Pre-task, the researcher introduced and defined the topic that will be discussed in the meeting; classified words or phrases used in task, explained the lesson materials, and gave task instruction to prepare students to do the task. During the task, there were two steps in this phase; they were task preparation and task realization. In task preparation students prepared input for task in form of thinking of issues, brainstorming, discussing with partner, and in task realization, students produced their tasks: producing paragraph. In Post-task, the researcher asked the students to look at the structure and organization of their paragraph and helped students to deal with difficult/ unusual vocabulary. Researcher also did feedback and evaluation.

#### *Control group*

Students in this group were taught by their own teacher by using their own method. They were asked to write about the topics of narrative that the students' chose. The steps done in control group in every meeting were: 1. Pre-writing: teacher gave stimulus in form of narrative text material, discussed the material, and gave opportunity to students to present narrative text; 2. Whilst-writing: teacher asked students to make narrative text individually or found information of the narrative text; 3. Post-writing: teacher corrected the students' writing, discussed the mistakes, concluded what have been done, and motivated students. The theme chosen in every meeting in control group were: 1) introducing generic structure and language features of narrative, 2) finding information of a story, 3) fable, 4) fairy tale, 5) legend.

After treatment for both groups, the researcher conducted post-test and creativity test. In post-test, students did the same form of test with the pre-test to measure whether or not there was an improvement in their writing skill after being given treatment by using Text-based Task or without it. The post-test ran for 90 minutes. Whereas the second creativity test was used to know the creativity of students after being taught by using text-based tasks whether it had any improvement or not compared to the pre-test.

#### **Technique of Data Analysis**

In writing test, the data was collected from pre-test and post-test about students' improvement, then being analyzed by using some procedures. To obtain the students' writing scores of both pretest and posttest, the researcher used the rubric of Jacobs (1981). After that, the data were classified into 5 classifications by referring the scoring system (Depdiknas, 2006:38), then calculating the mean score, standard deviation, and value of t-test to identify comparison between pretest and posttest by using SPSS program

To measure students' creativity before and after treatment, the researcher adapted The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking model in form of writing test. Students were asked to write some possible endings of a narrative story given. The three variables of creativity (originality, fluency, and flexibility) were measured separately. The tests were timed. Score of creativity was classified based on Carter and Russel (2003:152), and then calculating the mean score, standard deviation, and value of t-test to identify three aspects of creativity between before and after treatment by using SPSS program.

## FINDINGS

### Writing Skill

The result of data analysis showed that students' score in writing improved after treatment proved by the scoring classification mean score, standard deviation, the value of t-test and writing components; that is content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. Students' scores are classified into five based on the classification system of Depdiknas (2006:38). The classification are very good (90-100), good (75-89), average (60-74), poor (45-59), and very poor (1-44). The pre-test result of experimental group is 13 students (43.3%) classified into average, 13 students (43.3%) classified into poor, and 4 students (13.3%) classified into very poor. In post-test, 3 students (10%) are classified into very good, 16 students (53.3 %) are classified into good, 10 students (33.3%) are classified into average, and 1 student (3.33) is classified into poor. It shows the significant improvement of students' score after being given treatment. In pre-test, result in control group shows that there are 1 student (3.33%) classified into good, 18 students (60%) classified into average, 10 students (33.3%) classified into poor, and 1 student (3.33%) classified into very poor. In post-test, 8 students (26.67%) are classified into good, 16 students (53.33%) are classified into average, and 6 students (20%) are classified into poor category. It shows increase of score from pre-test and post-test although it is still in the same level of classification.

The result of mean score and standard deviation in pre-test and post-test for both groups are different. In pre-test, mean score of experimental group (56.77) is lower than control group (59.10). It means that score range of experimental group is closer than control group. The control group in pre-test has better score than experimental group. The result changes significantly in post-test where the mean score of students in experimental group is 77.60. It is higher than control group with 68.07.

The researcher also used t-test (test of significance) for independent sample test to know significant difference between the result of students' in pre-test and post-test in control and experimental group. The level of significance (0.05) with degrees of freedom  $df = n_1 + n_2 - 2$  where  $n$  = number of subject (30). The degrees of freedom of this test is  $df = 30 + 30 - 2 = 58$ . Therefore,  $\alpha = 0.05$  and  $df = 58$ . The t-test values of pre-test and post-test show significant change. In pre-test, the t-test value is 0.952 which is lower than t-table (2.000). It indicates that the difference before treatment was not statistically significant. The result of post-test shows a very different result. After calculating through SPSS, it is found that t-test of post-test is  $3.985 > t$ -table 2.000. It means that the alternative hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. The use of text-based task in language learning improved students' writing skill.

### Creativity

The test is to measure the students' creativity before and after treatment. It adapted The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking model but it is in writing form. It was an unfinished story, the students in both groups made 12 endings. There are three items to be measured in creativity in this research; they are fluency, flexibility, and originality. The fluency means the number of ideas written by students, flexibility means the number of different categories of ideas written by students, whereas originality means statistical infrequency of the new idea.

The improvement of students' creativity can be seen from the mean score, standard deviation, scoring classification, and t-test value of three elements of creativity. In fluency, students in experimental group have higher ability to produce many different ideas for ending one story. The table above shows that mean scores of experimental group are higher than control group in pre-test and post-test. In pre-test, experimental group gets 6.78 compared to control group with 5.43 whereas in post-test experimental group got 7.93 was higher than 6.33 for control group. They were more creative than control group in term of fluency. Standard

deviation of experimental group in pre-test (3.53) was smaller which meant that the score range was closer than control group (4.02). In post-test, the standard deviations for both groups were not too different (3.63 and 3.29). In flexibility, it is found that the means of experimental group were 5.47 in pre-test and 6.57 in post-test. They are higher than the means of control group which in pre-test get 4.47 and in post-test get 4.83. We can conclude that students in experimental group are more creative to produce the number of different categories of relevant ideas. In originality, the mean scores of experimental group and control group in pre-test are same; 1.73 and 1.70; it means that students in two groups have same capability in making new idea. After giving treatment, experimental group has significant score (4.37); higher than control group (2.00). We can say that teaching through text based task improve the students' capability to produce original idea. The standard deviation of both groups in pre-test and post-test are quite same which indicated that the score range is also same before and after treatment.

After being classified, students' scores in experimental group show the improvement of students' creativity. In fluency, the number of students categorized in exceedingly creative increased from 6 to 12 whereas very creative category is from 8 to 9. The number of students that is not entered to the classification also decreased from 7 to 6. Treatment also influences some students have higher score in flexibility. In pre-test, there is not any student who can be categorized as exceedingly creative, but in post-test there are 3 students achieved it. But it can be denied that the number of students entered in classification decreased from 23 to 21. A significant result is gotten in originality. From 6 students in pre-test, it increases to 17 students classified into exceedingly creative, very creative, and average. Where as in control group, the creativity scores of students do not increase significantly even in 'exceedingly creative decrease from 5 to 4 in fluency and 3 to 1 in flexibility. The increase is found in the total number of students classified to the classification; 18 to be 21 in fluency, 16 to be 20 in flexibility, and 6 to be 8 in originality.

The following table is the t-test value of each part of creativity: fluency, flexibility, and originality.

Creativity Elements	T-test value	
	Pre-test	Post-test
Fluency	1.467	1.788
Flexibility	1.292	2.502
Originality	0.054	2.659

The table shows that in pre-test the t-test value of fluency is 1.467 whereas in post-test is 1.788. Both values are not greater than the t-table (2.000). It means that there is no significant difference teaching through text-based task and conventional method in improving students' fluency. Teaching through text-based task does not improve the students' fluency. T-test value of flexibility in pre-test is 1.292 and 2.502 in post-test. The significant change of t-test value which was greater than t-table (2.000) showed that there is a significant difference after treatment given. It indicates that the creativity of students in making different categories of ideas improves after the implementation of text-based task. The table also shows that t-test value of originality in pre-test is too small. It is because many students did not have any original idea which differ them to others. Many of them have zero score. After treatment and being tested, the t-test value is 2.659 which is greater than 2.00 (t-table). So, there was significant difference between pre-test and post-test. Teaching through text-based task stimulated students to produce original idea.

## DISCUSSION

### Writing Improvement

The obtained data indicates students in control group at first had higher score in pre-test than students in experimental group. It also shows the result of different score of mean score and standard deviation of both groups. The mean score of experimental group was firstly lower than control one but after treatment, it changes significantly. Moreover, after hypothesis testing was done and the result showed that t-test bigger than the t-table it can be concluded that the use of text-based task in language learning improved students' writing skill.

The reason for the result is: teaching through text-based task provides many tasks which make students interested to learn writing. Designs of text-based task could attract their attention because it provided some pictures and texts which trained them to create a good writing. It supports what is stated by Willis (1996: 83) that text-based task makes students interact with texts in different way. The processes offers a variety of learning opportunities that students need to improve their ability. Variety of texts helps students to be familiar with and influence the result of their achievement.

Text-based task improved the students' achievement because it trains students to write many times. It influences the process of learning writing so that students are familiar and finally know how to write well. Raimes in Nik (2010: 12) stated that the process of writing should be concerned more than the product. Students are given chance and time to write, and feel every step of writing. Moreover, Mancho in Khatib (2015: 208) used the term of process-oriented learning or 'writing to learn' rather than 'learn to write'.

The data are also supported by the result of mean score of all components of writing: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics which improve higher in experimental group than in control group. Perkins and Britten (1990: 75) stated that there is an interdependence of interrelation among content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. After sequence tasks in form of text, students' score will improve. Many kinds of tasks in text-based task directly train students to revise their writing in many forms and produce better result in every meeting. Prediction tasks both on pictures or story form train students to produce writing, it helps students to be creative to end the story or make a story just by looking some pictures. Jumbles trained them to determine parts of a story. Restoration task teach students to identify the content to make the story unified. Students also can study how to make description to produce interesting story to read by comparison task. All design in text-based task support the good result gotten in this research.

### Students' Creativity

Creativity test given to students was adapted from Torrance Test of Creative Thinking Model. There were two versions; verbal and figural. The figural version asks the sample to make as many as possible different pictures by using common shape. This research adapted the figural one but in writing form. It provided unending story where the students had to complete it with 12 twelve different endings. The result of this research showed that scores got by students in experimental group was greater than control group. Generally, the use of text-based task in language learning is effective to improve students' creativity. One of the tasks can motivate students to produce creative idea; that is prediction new story in which students are asked to give an ending of the story. The end will be varied based on students' idea.

Although the ends of the story made by students are not correct in writing component, but the ideas are understandable. After collecting students' works, the ideas are then read, and students can know that they have produced many ideas which are appropriate to the story given. Starko (2004:7) stated that an idea is appropriate if it meets criteria that make something work, better, more meaningful, or more beautiful. This is what have been done by students;

with their own idea, they were succeeded to make the story become more meaningful and beautiful.

Fluency refers to the students' ability to come up with many ideas to write as many as possible endings of a narrative story. Mostly students could make twelve endings as hoped in the pre-test and post-test. Their difficulty was in translating their ideas into English, that's why most of them wrote the ideas in pre-test in Bahasa. In post-test, they had tried to translate it although the structure still had many mistakes but it was understandable. The mean score and standard deviation of fluency showed constant score. It indicated that text-based task did not give any improvement for the students in producing many different ideas. It was also supported by the score of t-test value before and after treatment. It indicated that the different between students' fluency in experimental and control group is not significant. Teaching through text-based task did not improve students' fluency.

Different from fluency, flexibility score showed a great increase. Students in experimental group became more creative to produce the number of different categories of ideas than control group because they are provided with some tasks which are designed to use their imagination to complete a story. As Swain in Albert and Kormos (2011: 74) stated that task involving the use of imagination and generation of new ideas might produce creative learners and more comprehensible output as a proof the great success of language learning. The t-test value of both group also showed an improvement in flexibility. The t-test value 2.502 was greater than 2.000. It meant that there is significant difference between teaching through text-based task and conventional method in producing different number of idea category. Students' flexibility improved after being taught through text-based task.

Originality means how one student's ideas compared to other students. It was a statistical infrequency of ideas. The more students had same ideas, the less score gotten. In pre-test, the mean scores of originality both groups were same. It meant that the students of experimental and control group had same ability to produce original idea. But after being given treatment by using text-based task, the mean scores were changed. It showed that text-based task improve the students' ability to produce original idea. The t-test value of originality showed very significant increase. It was greater than t-table 2.000. It indicated that teaching through text-based task stimulated students to produce original ideas.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description and explanation given before, it can be concluded that the use of text-based task in language learning improves students' writing skill since it provides many designs which make students familiar with parts, content, generic structure of text which direct students to finally produce good content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics. Text-based task in writing generally increases the students' creativity. From three items of creativity, text-based task can make improvement to students' flexibility and originality whereas fluency does not show any change. Through text-based task, students can produce many different categories of ideas and original one.

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