TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH RESPONDED THEMATIC WRITING TASK

Laila Wati*1 , Siti Husna Maab2, Hamzani Wathoni3, Siti Maysuroh4, and Ari Prasetyaningrum5

1,2,3,4,5*Universitas Hamzanwadi*

* Corresponding Author: *ladyazzurry@gmail.com*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT

This study aims at finding the effectiveness of Responded Thematic Writing Tasks in teaching writing descriptive text to develop students' fluency in writing. This research is a pre-experimental research with pretest-posttest design. The sample of this research was 32 students of semester 2A of Study Program of English Language Education of Hamzanwadi University in the academic year 2021-2022. A writing test was used to collect the data. The data were then analyzed by using descriptive statistic, and paired sample T-test was used to test the hypothesis. Based on the result of the study, the mean score of the pretest was 63.28 while the posttest was 78.75. This shows that the mean score in the posttest was higher than the mean score in the pretest. Additionally, the sig score was at 0.00 < 0.05, so the hypothesis (Ha) of this study was accepted. It implies that Responded Thematic Writing Tasks was significantly effective in developing students' fluency in writing descriptive text. It is suggested that English teacher use Responded Thematic Writing Tasks as an alternative technique in teaching writing.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most primary source for us to communicate each other (Bridgman et al., 2020). There are thousand languages in this world. Each country has its own language to communicate whether it is a national language or local language spoken and understand by their people.

In this global world, English cannot be ignored and denied since according to Rao (2019), (Smith, 2015), Efrizal (2012), English is the most common language spoken almost in every country, and currently it is the language of most business, cultural, and educational activates among countries in the world. Thus, English language is one of languages that must be mastered in this era.

In response to the importance of mastering English, many countries include English as second or foreign language in their school syllabus and start learning English at a young age. English includes four skills in the instructional process: listening, speaking,

reading, and writing. These skills are related to each other and cannot be independent. Therefore, learners need to master all of the four skills. This is supported by Kyrpychenko et al., (2021) who state that mastering language skills will determine the students' communicative competence in the target language.

Among the four skills, writing seems to be the most complicated one to acquire. Bulqiyah et al. (2021) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second language and foreign language learners. This might be because writing takes many to consider. Writing is not only generating and organizing ideas (Gregg & Steinberg, 2016) of our mind, but also translating these ideas into a readable text (Bulqiyah et al., 2021). Based on their arguments, it seems common that many learners –particularly those of foreign language learners—have some degrees of difficulties in writing. Therefore, some efforts need to be done in order to maintain or improve the students' writing skill.

Through all the types of writing, English learners tend to have the same problems as many students do not write coherently and ignore the importance of aspects in writing. According to Ningsih (2016) and Apsari (2018), the most difficult thing probably to do in writing are producing coherent, fluent, and extended ideas of writing. Besides, the challenge in writing is, according to Jairos et.al. (2012), ensuring fluent—linguistically competent—piece of writing.

Fluency is an essential component in writing ability and development (Abdel Latif, 2013), so it should be promoted to help develop English for foreign learners' (EFL) writing ability. Fluency is defined as the number of words within a writing (Baba & Nitta, 2014). However, fluency does not only deal with the number of words, it deals more with the appropriateness of word structure, how well the vocabulary is used, and how smooth the content of a writing is.

In order to develop fluency in writing, teachers need to elaborate the basic pattern of responded thematic tasks. What is meant by responding in this study is that the writing tasks handed are given responses in order to give learners a chance to write for purposeful communication, while thematic is meant that the writing tasks train the learners to focus their writing on a determined theme.

Response in common can be interpreted when someone gives a reaction through thoughts, attitudes, and behavior (Chen, Kim, & Chan, 2022). In general, the response can be interpreted as a result or impression obtained from an observation. Response can be in form of written or oral feedback. Responded in this study meant that the writing tasks handed in are given responses in order to give learners a chance to write for purposeful communication.

Responses from a teacher of writing are usually given when the writing class commit to have a dialogue journal. In spite of giving response only on students' dialogue journal, giving responses to whatever –in any form—they write is the duty of teachers. There is no specified recommendation, however about how the teacher should give the responses and how long the responses should be. This allows teachers to offer any simple comprehensible response to the learners' writing.

Thematic writing is usually assigned to learners when they have to write a paragraph on one central idea that is limited by the topic sentence (Doolan, 2021). This is also the case when learners have to write an essay. In writing an essay, learners are

required to write specified in line with the ideas in a thesis statement. This thesis statement then is develop into supporting paragraphs. In writing paragraphs or an essay, the conclusion may be given. The conclusion in the paragraph conveys the ideas of the topic which states the thesis and introductory paragraph. In short, thematic writing takes learners to focus on their topic in writing. In order to bring strength in writing, response and theme in the responded writing tasks are integrated.

Dealing with the essence of responded thematic writing task, this research is aimed at examining the effectiveness of applying responded thematic writing tasks in developing fluency in students' writing descriptive text. The result of this research is expected to give information about how important teachers' response is toward students' writing development. It also encourages teachers/lecturers to keep giving responses to students' piece of assigned writing.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study aimed at finding the effectiveness of responded thematic writing task on students' fluency in writing descriptive text. In order to reveal it, a pre-experiment research was conducted. A pre-experimental design is a design that includes only one group or class that is given pre and post-test (Nappu et al., 2022). This pretest and post-test design was carried out on one group without a control group or comparison group. It is a quantitative approach since numerical data were gathered and analyzed. According to Leppink (2017) and Apuke (2017) quantitative approach concerns typically on numerical data.

This study took place at Hamzanwadi University, where students of the second semester of Study Program of English Language Education participated. One class consisted of 32 EFL students was chosen as sample using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a data retrieval technique with specific consideration (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2016). Because this research is to test the effectiveness of thematic responded writing, one class among the four classes in the second grade was taken as the investigated group.

The data in this study were collected through pretest, treatments, and posttest. These tests were administered to measure the students' writing ability. Rezeki & Rahmani (2021) stated the test was method of measuring a person' level of development or progress that has been achieved by students after giving a treatment in learning process within a certain period of time. The pretest was administered before doing the treatment using responded thematic writing task, and the post-test was ordered after the treatment to determine the effectiveness of responded thematic writing task in the students' writing fluency. The students' writings were rated based on the elements of writing using the scoring rubric proposed by Cohen (2001) which covers content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

The data collected then were analyzed using descriptive statistic, and paired sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The statistical analysis model was used to describe and examine the t-test. The alternative hypothesis in this research is that responded thematic writing task is effective on students' writing descriptive text in second semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Hamzanwadi University. A

descriptive statistical analysis was to describe the calculation of mean score and standard deviation. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing was used to determine the effectiveness of thematic responded writing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher found that responded thematic writing task was effective in developing students' fluency in writing descriptive text. It can be seen from the score of the descriptive statistics where the mean score and standard deviation in the pretest were lower than in the post-test. The difference of the scores is summarized in Table 1.

Table. 1. Descriptive Statistic

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest	63.28	32	8.387	1.483
	PosTest	78.75	32	10.473	1.851

Table 1 shows the differences in students' average pretest and post-test scores before and after the treatment implemented. In the descriptive statistic, the average score in the pretest was 63.28 and 78.75 in the posttest, so it improves 17.47 points from the pre-test to the post-test. The findings indicate that responded thematic writing task develop students' fluency in writing descriptive text.

Based on the result of the calculation of descriptive statistic using SPSS 22 for Windows, it was determined that the significance 2 tailed level is 0.00 which was lower than 0.05. It means that hypothesis is accepted. This concludes that responded thematic writing is effective in developing EFL learners' fluency in writing descriptive text.

Learning EFL writing is the last skill to be acquired (Wati, et.al., 2021) as it is assumed to be the most difficult language skill to learn (Salma, 2015 and Winardi, 2020). The result of this research proves that writing can be much easier by the teacher's responses on the students' writing product. In implementing this responded thematic writing, students were provided with learning material in a paper then the students explored the material deeper in the classroom. More time to practice by the technique suitable with the teaching and learning writing was provided. Their writing then were submitted and given written responses.

The responses given to the students' writing plays very important role as the basis for them to edit and revise their work. As a response toward the students' writing, feedback—according to Bijami, Kashef, & Nejad, (2013)—has come to take an important part in writing instruction because it provides a flexible platform to help students' writing progress. This feedback represent important information especially when students revised their draft based on the comments given (Cavanaugh & Song, 2014) by the teacher.

Additionally, in this research, the presence of teacher's feedback on the students' writing motivate them more to produce much better piece of writings. The students become more responsible to what they have written on their drafts then fix and complete their draft into a more developed writing product. In a nutshell, responded thematic writing task is significantly effective on the EFL learners' writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is deduced that responded thematic writing task was significantly effective toward the EFL learners' ability in writing descriptive text. The result of this research also shows that the students' fluency in writing descriptive text developed better. The responses motivated and helped them advance the choices of words in their writing.

SUGGESTION

With respect to the process and finding of this study, some suggestions are offered. This study only included a small number of students in the English Language Education Study Program. Therefore, further researchers are suggested to carry out the same research involving larger number of sample.

This research focused only on teaching writing descriptive text and only administered writing test as the instrument to collect the data, so it provides opportunities for further researchers to conduct deeper research using more instruments for more detail data and information.

Referring to the result of this study, it is suggested that EFL teachers/lecturers, especially writing lecturers, to apply responded thematic writing task to get students' interest and motivation in learning writing and to give responses to students' writing more frequently because it may provide a chance for students to write with a sense of communication purpose.

REFERENCES

Abdel Latif, M. M. M. (2013). What do we mean by writing fluency and how can it be validly measured? Applied Linguistics, 34(1), 99–105. Retrieved: 16 August 2022.

Apostolopoulos, N., & Liargovas, P. (2016). Regional parameters and solar energy enterprises: Purposive sampling and group AHP approach. International Journal of Energy Sector Management, 10(1), 19–37. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.

Apsari, Y. (2018). Reflective reading journal in teaching writing. Indonesian EFL Journal, 4(2), 39–47. Retrieved; 13 August 2022.

Apuke, O. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods: A synopsis approach. Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, 33(5471), 1–8. Retrieved: 19 August 2022.

Baba, K., & Nitta, R. (2014). Phase transitions in development of writing fluency from a complex dynamic systems perspective. Language Learning, 64(1), 1–35. Retrieved; 13 August 2022.

Bijami, M., Kashef, S. H., & Nejad, M. S. (2013). Peer feedback in learning English writing: Advantages and disadvantages. Journal of Studies in Education, 3(4), 91–97. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.

Bridgman, A., Merkley, E., Loewen, P. J., Owen, T., Ruths, D., Teichmann, L., & Zhilin, O. (2020). The causes and consequences of COVID-19 misperceptions: Understanding the role of news and social media. Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review, 1(3).

Bulqiyah, S., Mahbub, M., & Nugraheni, D. A. (2021). Investigating Writing Difficulties in Essay Writing: Tertiary Students' Perspectives. English Language Teaching Educational Journal, 4(1), 61–73.

Cavanaugh, A. J., & Song, L. (2014). Audio feedback versus written feedback: Instructors' and students' perspectives. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 10(1), 122. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.

Chen, H.-T., Kim, Y., & Chan, M. (2022). Just a glance, or more? Pathways from counter-attitudinal incidental exposure to attitude (de) polarization through response behaviors and cognitive elaboration. Journal of Communication, 72(1), 83–110. Retrieved: 19 August 2022.

Cohen, A.D. 1994. Assessing Language Ability in the Classroom. (2nd Ed).   Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Doolan, S. M. (2021). An exploratory analysis of source integration in post-secondary L1 and L2 source-based writing. English for Specific Purposes, 62, 128–141.

Efrizal, D. (2012). Improving students' speaking through communicative language teaching method at Mts Ja-alhaq, Sentot Ali Basa Islamic boarding school of Bengkulu, Indonesia. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(20), 127–134. Retrieved, August, 12, 2022.

Gregg, L. W., & Steinberg, E. R. (2016). Cognitive processes in writing. Routledge. Retrieved, August, 12, 2022. Retrieved, August, 12, 2022.

Jairos, G., Rugare, M., Washington, T. D., & Jabulani, S. (2012). Academic writing challenges at universities in Zimbabwe: A case study of Great Zimbabwe University. International Journal of English and Literature, 3(3), 71–83. Retrieved; 13 August 2022.

Kyrpychenko, O., Pushchyna, I., Kichuk, Y., Shevchenko, N., Luchaninova, O., & Koval, V. (2021). Communicative Competence Development in Teaching Professional Discourse in Educational Establishments. International Journal of Modern Education & Computer Science, 13(4). Retrieved; 13 August 2022.

Leppink, J. (2017). Revisiting the quantitative–qualitative-mixed methods labels: Research questions, developments, and the need for replication. Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences, 12(2), 97–101. Retrieved: 19 August 2022.

Nappu, S., Dewi, R., Hasnawati, H., & Hamid, R. (2022). The Effect of Online Learning on Academic Writing Course During Covid-19 Pandemic. VELES Voices of English Language Education Society, 6(1), 247–257.

Ningsih, S. (2016). Guided writing to improve the students' writing ability of junior high school students. Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics, 1(2), 129–140. Retrieved; 13 August 2022.

Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. Research Journal of English, 4(1), 65–79. Retrieved from https://www.rjoe.org.in/Files/vol4issue1/new/OK%20RJOE-Srinu%20sir(65-79).pdf (Retrieved, August, 12, 2022).

Rezeki, Y. S., & Rahmani, E. F. (2021). The implementation of collaborative writing technique to improve students' writing performance and soft skill. VELES Voices of English Language Education Society, 5(2), 81–94.

Salma, U. (2015). Problems and practical needs of writing skill in EFL context: An analysis of Iranian students of Aligarh Muslim University. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 20(11), 74–76. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.

Smith, L. E. (2015). English as an international language: No room for linguistic chauvinism. Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, 4(1), 165–171. Retrieved, August, 12, 2022.

Wati, L., Maysuroh, S., Wahyuni, S., Yusri, A., & Hindri, N. (2021). Toondoo comic in teaching speaking (a pre-experiment research). JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia), 7(1), 43–47. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.

Winardi, Y. K. (2020). Improving Students' Writing Skill Using a Mobile Learning Application. Jurnal Basis, 7(2), 281–290. Retrieved: 21 August 2022.