Effect of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach on Tenth Graders' Writing Skills

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to examine the effectiveness of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach to improve writing skill of the tenth grade students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu. The research employs pre- experimental research design. The population of this research is Grade X students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu, and the sample is Grade X Al-Qolam, consisting of 20 students. The researcher employs purposive sampling technique and takes one-group pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is administered to assess the student's writing ability through the CTL Approach and to determine whether the class is equal or not in terms of their writing achievement before the treatment is given, and the post-test is used to administer students' writing skill achievement after receiving the treatment. The result of the data analysis indicates that there is a significant difference in the students' achievement in pre-test and post-test. It shows that the mean score of pre-test is (60.59) and the mean score of post-test is (76.33). The sig value (Asymp. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is smaller than the p-value = 0.05, indicating that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Thus, the contextual teaching and learning approach is effective in improving the writing skill of grade X students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu.

Keywords: *Improving, Writing skill, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach, Descriptive Text*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill that allows people to clearly and effectively communicate ideas, facts, and emotions through written language. In the classroom, many students believe writing is difficult. Writing involves crucial components including vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar (Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020). Even experienced authors may encounter comparable complications in their initial draft (Gautam, 2019). Writing can be difficult due to its complexities which necessitate accurate idea expression and successful communication through correct grammar, vocabulary and structure. Writing involves more than just putting words on paper; it also involves effective communication to communicate complex ideas in terms that even a layman can understand.

In writing skill, there are some types of the text taught to the tenth-grade students such as narrative text, descriptive text, recount text, report text, procedure, etc. However, the researcher will focus on descriptive text because it can help develop observation skills, which are essential for improving writing skill. Descriptive text is a kind of text with a purpose to give information as detail. A descriptive text is a text by which a writer tries to picture what he is describing. Description is used to describe a particular thing/object, place, or person (Husna, 2017).

In fact, based on the observation that the researcher has done in MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu, the researcher found that many students have problems in writing a descriptive text. The teacher asks students to write down descriptive text, but their paragraphs are unstructured and they frequently use inappropriate words. It happens because the main problem is the lack of literacy skill which can make it difficult for students to improve their writing skills due to limited number of vocabulary, lack of understanding of text structure, lack of references, low critical thinking skills and creativity. That is the reason why students assume that writing is difficult and a boring activity.

Literacy is the ability to read, write, and understand texts, enabling effective communication and critical thinking. Literacy is more than only breaking text codes; it is also about developing and interpreting meaning from texts (Mbau & Sugeng, 2019). Good literacy gives students more vocabulary, a better understanding of how to structure texts and inspiration to describe things clearly and interestingly. Without adequate literacy, students will struggle to express ideas effectively in descriptive writing.

Various approaches have been considered to improve students' writing skills such as problem-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based learning, contextual teaching and learning (CTL), project-based learning (PjBL) and etc. However, the researcher will focus on contextual teaching and learning (CTL) as the main approach. The researcher uses the CTL because it is an approach that can help the students succeed in understanding or creating descriptive text in a long-range life. CTL is a learning concept that assists teachers in connecting the materials being taught to students' real-world experiences and encouraging students to use their knowledge in their daily lives. The contextual teaching and learning approach is one of the learning approaches reflected in the student-centered approach (Haerazi et al., 2019). The teacher can provide an example of descriptive literature that is relevant to the students' real-world experiences, such as asking each student to describe one of their close friends. They can start to describe his/her appearance, behavior, hobby, favorite foods, etc. The learning environment is created naturally here.

Furthermore, the application of CTL in writing instruction encourages students' active participation through meaningful and relevant assignments. By connecting the subject matter to current events, students are more motivated to participate and take responsibility in their learning. According to Safitri (2022) CTL can be defined as a learning method that emphasizes the process of full student involvement in finding the material being studied and connecting it to real-world problems. This method not only allows students to practice writing skills, but it also fosters critical thinking and problem-solving ability. CTL additionally encourages student collaboration by allowing them to share and compare descriptive texts they write, facilitating peer learning and feedback. As a result, students will have a greater understanding of how to use writing abilities in diverse life situations, thus improving their writing ability and their learning experience.

Based on the background, the researcher is interested to conduct a study on the implementation of the CTL in teaching writing under the title "The effect of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach toward writing skill of the tenth-grade students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu." The researcher would like to find out whether the CTL approach is effective in teaching writing.

METHODS

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach with pre-experimental design to examine the effect of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach toward writing skill of the tenth-grade students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu.

Research design

The research was conducted using pre-experimental design. A pre-experimental design was a research method that involved observing a group or groups after a treatment or agent was applied

to determine how it affected the group. In this research there was one group pretest and posttest. The pretest was given to assess the students writing skill before the treatment. The researcher provided the treatment to students through a contextual teaching and learning approach and finally administered the post-test to investigate whether this method could improve students' writing skill. The researcher used a research design formula proposed by Arikunto (2006):

Table 1
Research Design

Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test
O_1	X	O_2

Research participants and Sampling Procedures

The population in this study is 100 Grade X students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu.

Table 2: Class Distribution

No	Class	Number of Students
1	X AN-NAHL	20
2	X AL-KAUTSAR	20
3	X AL-QOLAM	20
4	X AL-KAHFI	20
5	X AL-FURQON	20
Total		100

A sample is a subset of a population chosen for research reasons. Researchers use the sample group to draw conclusions about the total population (Taherdoost, 2018, Bhardwaj, 2019, Ahmad et al., 2023). The sample of this research was selected using purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected specific individuals or groups based on predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. Based on the researcher's observation, there were 5 classes of tenth grade students in MAN Insan Cendekia Palu. Mostly each class had similar problems in writing descriptive text. After interviewing the English teacher, she recommended X AL-QOLAM.

Data Collection

This research conducted writing tests to collect data. This test was divided into two parts: pretest and posttest. The students were instructed to create descriptive texts in paragraph form with different topics. Before beginning the treatment, the researcher provided a pretest to assess the students' writing abilities. Furthermore, the researcher gave a posttest to see how effective the treatment was in improving students' writing ability after they had completed the treatment. The purpose of giving this test was to measure students' writing ability.

In scoring the students descriptive paragraph, the researcher used the score procedure which is adapted from Brown (2007).

Table 3: Scoring Rubric of Writing

Aspect	Score	Descriptions	Weighting
Content (C) - Topic - Detail	4	The topic is complete and clear and the details are related to the topic.	5X
	3	The topic is complete and clear but the details are almost related to the topic.	
	2	The topic is complete and clear but the details are not related to the topic.	
	1	The topic is not clear and the details are not related to the topic.	
Organization (O) - Identification - Description	4	Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with proper connectives.	5X
	3	Identification is almost complete and descriptions are arranged with almost proper connectives.	
	2	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with few misuse of connectives.	
	1	Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with misuse of connectives.	
Grammar (G)	4	Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.	3X
	3	Some grammatical inaccuracies.	
	2	Frequents grammatical inaccuracies.	
	1	Almost all grammatical patterns are inaccurate.	
Vocabulary (V)	4	Good choice of words with no repetition.	3X
	3	Good choice of words and few repetition.	
	2	Adequate choice of words but some repetition.	

	1	Confused use of words and much repetition.	
Mechanics (M) - Spelling - Punctuation - Capitalization	4	It uses correct spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	1X
	3	It has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	
	2	It has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization	
	1	It is dominated by errors in spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	

Interventions

This study used a pre-experimental design with six meetings in total, where the first and last meetings were for the pre-test and post-test, while the four meetings in between were for the treatment. After the pre-test, the researcher applied the CTL approach to enhance students' ability in writing descriptive texts. Initially, the researcher introduced CTL and reviewed descriptive text materials, including its definition, organization, and language features. Each session focused on different aspects of writing, such as building vocabulary, structuring paragraphs, and connecting ideas with real-life experiences. Students engaged in collaborative discussions, inquiry-based learning, and peer review to refine their writing. As the sessions progressed, their motivation, confidence, and ability to construct descriptive texts improved. By the final meeting, students demonstrated significant progress, as confirmed by the post-test results, which showed an increase in the average score, indicating the effectiveness of the CTL approach in enhancing their writing abilities.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of this research deal with the answer of the problem statement which aims to find out the effect of students' writing skill. The result of data analysis found that teaching writing through a contextual teaching and learning approach can improve students' writing skill at the tenth-grade of MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu. The researcher analyzed the data that was obtained from the students pre-test and post-test score and the result has proved that the Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach was effective to enhance the students' writing skill.

Table 4: Result of Pretest and Posttest

		Pretest	**Posttest**
	Valid	20	20
N	**Missing**	0	0
Mean		60.59	76.33
Median		57.35	74.27
Std. Deviation		14.756	10.407
Range		52	29
Minimum		38	65
Maximum		90	94

The results of calculations using SPSS. Pretest data obtained a valid sample size of 20 people. Based on the table above, the score before applying the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach in the pre-test was 60.59% and after being given treatment, the student's score in the post test became 76.33%. Thus, it can be concluded that after the implementation of CTL Approach, students' writing skills increased to 15.74%.

Table 5: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.198	20	.039	.928	20	.138
Post-Test	.185	20	.071	.874	20	.014
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Normality test is a test that is conducted to determine whether the distribution of the data was normally distributed or not. Tests of normality vary not only in power but also in simplicity in terms of calculation and the need for special critical values (Yazici & Yolacan, 2007). For this research, the researcher used Shapiro-Wilk statistics to get the data about normality tests. The Shapiro-Wilk test, which is based on correlation between given data and related normal scores, is one of the most widely used tests for normality assumption diagnostics. It has strong power qualities (Rani Das & H.M. Rahmatullah Imon, 2016).
Based on the table above, it can be concluded that:
1. Pretest sig. = 0.138 > 0.05 (Normal)
2. Posttest Sig = 0.014 < 0.05 (Abnormal)

Because one of the data results is abnormal, the researcher finally conducts a non-parametric Test (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test).

Table 6: Wilcoxon Test **Ranks**

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post-Test - Pre-test	Negative Ranks	0[a]	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	20[b]	10.50	210.00
	Ties	0[c]		
	Total	20		

a. Post-Test < Pre-test
b. Post-Test > Pre-test
c. Post-Test = Pre-test

Based on the table, it was found that none of the scores decreased (Negative Ranks = 0), while the entire sample (N = 20) experienced an increase in scores from pre-test to post-test (Positive Ranks = 20, Mean Rank = 10.50, Sum of Ranks = 210.00). In addition, no data was found that had the same score between pre-test and post-test (Ties = 0).

Test Statistics[a]

	Posttest - Pretest
Z	-3.923[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on negative ranks.

Non-parametric tests are statistical tests that do not rely on a particular data distribution, suitable for ordinal, nominal, or non-normally distributed data. Examples: Mann-Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis, Wilcoxon, and Chi-Square tests. Non-parametric tests are designed to have desirable statistical properties when few assumptions can be made about the underlying distribution of the data (Pappas & DePuy, 2004). For this research the researcher uses Non-Parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The Non-Parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test is one of the statistical tests used to compare two paired samples in situations where the data is not normally distributed. This test is used to test whether there is a significant difference between two sets of linked data (for example, pre-test and post-test on the same subject). It provides an important alternative to the parametric t-test for giving robust results without the restriction of normality assumption in the population (Shieh et al., 2007).

Based on the table above the p-value of 0.000 indicates that the difference between the pre-test and post-test is highly significant. In this case, because the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted.

To find out more clearly how much influence the CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) appro ach has on students' writing skills, researcher will calculate the effect size (r). This calculation aims to see the extent of the impact of the treatment given in this study.
The formula for calculating effect size (r) proposed by (Cohen J, 1988):

$$r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{N}}$$

Where:

- r = effect size
- Z = Wilcoxon statistical value (taken from SPSS output)
- N = total sample size (not the number of pairs, but the total number of data.

Wilcoxon Test Result:

- Z = -3.923
- N = 20

$$r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{N}} = \frac{-3.923}{\sqrt{20}} = \frac{-3.923}{4.472} = 0.877$$

After calculating the effect size using the Z value from the Wilcoxon test, an r value of 0.877 was obtained.

Effect Size Interpretation Criteria (r)

According to Cohen (1988), the effect size r is interpreted as follows:

- **Small:** $0.1 \leq r < 0.3$
- **Medium:** $0.3 \leq r < 0.5$
- **Large:** $r \geq 0.05$

Based on Cohen J (1988), an effect size with a value above 0.5 indicates a large effect. Thus, this result indicates that the application of the CTL approach has a significant and strong influence in improving the writing skills of the tenth grade students of MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the study, the mean score of the pretest result was lower than the mean score of the posttest result. Before the application of the intervention intended, during the first meeting, the researcher gave the pretest to evaluate the baseline standard of the students regarding writing descriptive text. From the result of the pretest, it could be concluded that a majority of the students were still having difficulty in in writing descriptive text, with only five students who passed the pretest. The mean score of the pretest results was 60.59. According to Novita (in Ismiyanti & Kholiq 2020) in her research, she states that the students showed that they have some difficulties in writing descriptive text. The difficulties that they faced were: 1) generic structure; 2) grammar; 3) spelling.
The intervention was conducted throughout four meetings. During the first meeting after the pretest, the researcher explained about the CTL approach, the definition and the process of applying this approach. The researcher also reminded the students about the material of writing descriptive text, the definition, the organization and the language features or generic structure of the descriptive text. Most of the students did not know about descriptive text or even the generic

structure. One of the problems that limits students' ability to write descriptive texts is their limited vocabulary, which limits their ability to come up with ideas (Liza & Refnaldi, 2013). After explaining the material, the researcher asks the students to write descriptive text. Unfortunately, some students found it difficult to organize their paragraphs when writing since they were still confused and lacked vocabulary. They did not know how to arrange the words to make a proper sentence and later to develop it into a proper paragraph. They were still having difficulties in utilizing proper grammar, vocabulary and word choice.

In order to encourage them to regularly practice writing descriptive texts, the researcher administered the same intervention during the next meeting. Throughout the learning process, the students' motivation and level of engagement increased. Their confidence and involvement increased as a result of the CTL approach, which enabled students to connect writing to personal experiences. According to Safitri (2022), CTL is defined as a concept that helps the teachers and the students relate meaning and real-world situations to the subject matter in the right way. Their comprehension and descriptive writing abilities were also enhanced by this approach. They might organize the text step by step. Up to the final meeting, the researcher continued this intervention. Students made significant development in their ability to write descriptive texts at the most recent meeting.

Finally, the researcher administered the posttest following the intervention sequence. The researcher was interested in the students' skill development following intervention. Following the intervention, the posttest results indicated that students had greatly improved. The posttest mean score was 76.33. This score was higher than the pretest mean result. There were 13 students who achieved more than 68 and only seven students who did not pass. This improvement aligns with Windi & Suryaman (2022), which states that the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach is very effective to improve the quality of the process and the quality of learning outcomes to write descriptive text for students.

The implications of these findings for educators are significant, particularly in adapting the CTL approach to various learning contexts. This approach is not only applicable to teaching descriptive text writing but can also be utilized for other writing skills, such as narrative, expository, and argumentative texts, by adjusting the strategies accordingly. Moreover, CTL can be implemented across different educational levels, from elementary school to higher education, while considering students' proficiency levels and specific needs. For learners from diverse backgrounds, such as those with language limitations or those from environments with limited literacy support, CTL can be integrated with differentiated instruction strategies to ensure that all students benefit optimally. Therefore, a broader application of CTL has the potential to enhance the quality of writing instruction in a more inclusive and effective manner across various educational settings.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the results of the learning process, the researcher concluded that the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach had a significant impact on students' writing skills. This was evidenced by the significant increase in students' posttest scores compared to their pretest scores, with an average improvement from 60.59 to 76.33. The statistical analysis further confirms this effect, as the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating a meaningful difference in students' writing performance after the implementation of CTL. Additionally, the effect size calculation ($r = 0.877$) indicates a strong impact, reinforcing the effectiveness of the CTL approach in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the CTL approach significantly enhanced the writing skills of the tenth-grade students at MAN Insan Cendekia Kota Palu, particularly in writing descriptive texts. However, this study has some limitations, including the use of a pre-experimental design with only one group and no control class, which prevents a comparison with other teaching methods. The small sample size also limits

the ability to generalize the results to a larger population. Furthermore, the focus on short-term improvements did not assess whether students retained their writing skills over time. For future research, it would be valuable to explore the long-term effects of CTL on students' writing development, as well as its impact on other types of writing, such as narrative or argumentative texts. Research could also look into how CTL can be adapted to cater to students with varying language proficiency levels or different learning needs. Lastly, using a more rigorous experimental design with a control group and a larger sample would help strengthen the evidence of CTL's effectiveness in enhancing writing skills.

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