


## THE USE OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS AT X GRADE IN SMK MUHAMMADIYAH 2 BONTOALA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b>                      Received: December 14, 2022                      Revised: January 17, 2022                      Accepted: February 29, 2023                      Published: December 30, 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>                      Task-Based Language Teaching                      Writing Skills</p>	<p>This study aimed to find out whether or not Task-Based Language Teaching method improve the writing skills of class X AP students at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala in terms of grammar and mechanics. The research method used was quantitative with a pre-experimental design. The population in this study were students of SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala. The number of samples used was 20 students and the sample class were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Based on the results, the pre-test score of students' writing skills in terms of grammar was 65.8 and the post-test score was 81.4. While the Pre-test score of students' skills in terms of mechanics was 64.0 and post-test is 83.0. After analyzed the results of the pre-test and post-test data, the researcher found that in writing skills, p-value (0.000) less than <math>\alpha</math> (0.05), this indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. The researcher concluded that Task-Based Language Teaching through descriptive text at SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala improved students' writing skills. There is a significant difference in students' writing skills in terms of grammar and mechanics with the use of Task-Based Language Teaching methods.</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>
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### INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in human life. People try to acquire, learn and use language as a means of communication, as well as a measure of their social strata. All forms of communication, are deeply embedded in the culture, which influences how conversations are conducted, how people interact in groups, and how much importance they place on the group versus the individual, (Rum et al., 2020). By learning the use of language, a person is able to make statements, convey facts and knowledge, explain or report a problem, and

maintain social relations between language users. This shows that by using language, people express their ideas, feelings, and information through communication.

For developing countries, one of which is Indonesia, English has a vital role in all aspects of life. In addition, it used to develop relations in international forums to strengthen relations between nations, etc. Seeing the important role of English in life, that is why English is very important to be understood and mastered by everyone around the world. There are four skills in English that are important to learn, namely speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each skill has its own role.

One of the most important skills to master is writing. This is because writing is the most difficult skill for foreign language learners. Writing is not only about generating ideas but also how to convey them into readable text. Writing focuses students on understanding, developing their voice or perspective, and communicating this perspective to others. Writing makes readers better and improves understanding and critical thinking. According to Hammer as cited in Faraj (2015) writing skills have been recognized as one of the basic skills in learning language. He also added the reasons for the importance of writing skills and teaching writing skills to students which include reinforcement, learning styles, language development, and most importantly, writing skills as an investment for yourself.

Learning writing skills for students is very important for their future. It is said to be important because writing is widely used, especially in the future. First writing will be necessary when communicating in writing with people via the internet. Writing is also included in the English language tests such as TOEIC and IELTS, which are usually a requirement to continue studying abroad. More importantly, writing is used in the academic field, especially when writing scientific papers such as journals and theses.

Writing in English has its own difficulties for foreign language students. The most common problem is the difference in the pronunciation and writing of words. Byrne as cited in Wigati (2014), groups the difficulties faced by students in writing skills into three, the first is linguistic problems. This relates to the ability of students to compose sentences that can be understood well by the reader. The second difficulty is cognitive, this problem is related to students' understanding of the forms of language, structure, and grammar that are useful in communicating through writing or the term is called the organization problem. The third difficulty is content. The third difficulty is the content or problem with the idea. This relates to anything that entered into writing. Usually students run out of ideas while writing.

Due to the problems that often occur, it is necessary to apply a learning method that is expected to be able to help foreign language students improve their writing skills. The learning method contains things that will be done to overcome these problems. One of the learning methods that can be applied is the Task-based Language Teaching method where this method focuses on giving assignments to students. Working on the tasks given also requires students to use the target language in completing their assignments.

Based on interviews conducted by researcher with English teachers of SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala, it is known that there are still many class X students who have

poor writing skills and have difficulties in learning related to writing. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study in class 10 of SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala to find out whether or not the use of the Task Based Language Teaching method was effective in improving students' writing skills. The researcher uses the Task-Based Language Teaching method in teaching descriptive text material.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher used a pre-experimental design in the form of a one-group pre-test-post-test design. According to Phakiti (2014), an experimental research design is included in the quantitative research methodology that is often used in language learning research. There are four main experimental research designs, one of which is pre-experimental research. Pre-experimental research design is more exploratory than confirmative in making conclusions about the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Campbell and Stanley as cited in Leavy (2017) identify three types of pre-experiments, one of which is a one-group pre-test-post-test design. In the one-group pre-test-post-test design, one group is given a pre-test (to determine the initial condition of the subject), then the group is given an experimental intervention, then the same group is given a post-test. The results of the pre-test and post-test are then compared and the difference in results will be attributed to the experimental intervention carried out (Leavy, 2017).

The population in this study were students of class X SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Bontoala Makassar which consists of 119 students. While the sample of this research is class X AP which consists of 20 students. In selecting the sample, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique by taking one class because this technique is suitable for use in quantitative research that requires special criteria so that the sample taken will be in accordance with the research objectives.

The instrument used in this study is in the form of a test. The test is given twice in the form of pretest and posttest. Both tests are used to measure students' writing ability. In the pretest students were asked to write a descriptive text with the theme "Tourists Destination", while in the posttest students were asked to write a descriptive text about "Historical Building".

The data collection procedure begins with giving a pretest. Pretest conducted to determine the initial ability of students. After that the researcher taught for 4 meetings using the Task-Based Language Teaching method. After that, a post test was carried out to find out whether there was an increase in students' abilities. Pretest and post test results assessed based on the criteria adapted from Hidayah (2020), as follows:

Table 1. Criteria of Grammar and Mechanics

Categories	Score	Description
Grammar	25-22	Excellent to very good: Effective complex construction, few errors of agreement, tenses, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, preposition.

	21-18	Good to average: Effective but simple construction-minor problems in complex constructions, several errors of agreement, tenses, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition but meaning confused or obscured.
	17-11	Fair to poor: Major problems in simple/complex constructions, frequent errors of negations, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning confused or obscured.
	10-5	Very poor: Virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules-dominated by errors, does not communicate, no organization or not enough to evaluate.
<b>Mechanics</b>	5	Excellent to very good: Demonstrates mastery of conventions-few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	Good to average: Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, not meaning confused or obscured.
	3	Fair to poor: Frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting- but meaning confused or obscured.
	2	Very poor: No mastery of conventions-dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing handwriting illegible, or not enough to evaluate.

Data analysis in this study begins with categorizing students scores. After that, the researcher calculate the average scores of the pretest and posttest. Finally, the researcher calculate the value of the Paired-Sample T test to find out whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. This analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS software.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, researcher analysed the data which consisted of pre-test and post-test scores. The research findings are based on the results of data analysis. Data analysis was used to obtain information about the data on students' writing skills.

### **The Improvement of Students' Writing Skills in terms of Grammar and Mechanics**

The first finding in this study was a significant increase in students' scores in terms of grammar and mechanics. This overall score is a combination of students' grammar scores and students' mechanics scores. The treatment carried out by researcher using the Task-Based Language Teaching method was very successful because the increase in students' posttest scores was significant as shown in the table and figure below.

Table 2. Classification of Grammar and Mechanics

Classification	Score	Grammar and Mechanics			
		Pretest		Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	89-100	1	5%	4	20%
Good	79-88	3	15%	11	55%
Fair	66-78	5	25%	5	25%
Poor	46-65	11	55%	0	0%
Very Poor	0-45	0	0%	0	0%

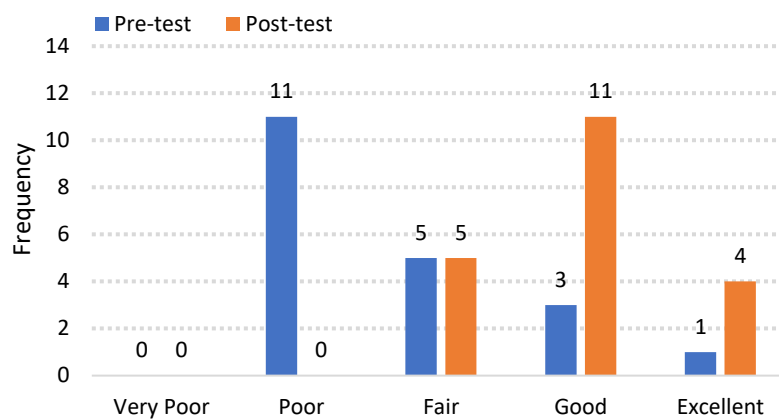


Fig. 1. Classification of Grammar and Mechanics

First, before the treatment was carried out there were 11 (55%) students in the "poor" category, 5 (25%) students in the fair category, 3 (15%) students in the "good" category and only one student in the "excellent" category. After the treatment, there was a significant increase where there were no more students in the "poor" category, there were still 5 (25%) students in the "fair" category, 11 (55%) students in the "good" category and 4 (20%) students in the "excellent." Changes in the number of students who fall into the "good" and "excellent" categories show a significant increase. Next, let's look at the comparison of the average value of the pretest with the average value of the posttest as shown in the image below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest	20	43.33	90.00	65.50
Posttest	20	70.00	90.00	81.67
Valid N (listwise)	20			

Fig. 2. The Mean Score of Grammar and Mechanics

The figure also shows a significant increase in the student's minimum score, from 43.33 on the pretest to 70.00 on the post-test. Meanwhile, the increase in the mean value of students was 16.02 points. Based on this, it can be concluded that the students' scores increased significantly in terms of grammar and mechanics.

**The Improvement of Students’ Writing Skills in terms of Grammar**

After seeing how the overall improvement, this section will discuss the improvement that occurs in each aspect. First aspect is grammar, findings of this study is that there is an improvement in the writing skills of students in terms of grammar. The increase in the value seen more clearly from the table and figure below.

Table 3. Classification of Grammar

Classification	Score	Grammar and Mechanics			
		Pretest		Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	89-100	1	5%	1	5%
Good	79-88	5	25%	13	65%
Fair	66-78	3	15%	6	30%
Poor	46-65	11	55%	0	0%
Very Poor	0-45	0	0%	0	0%

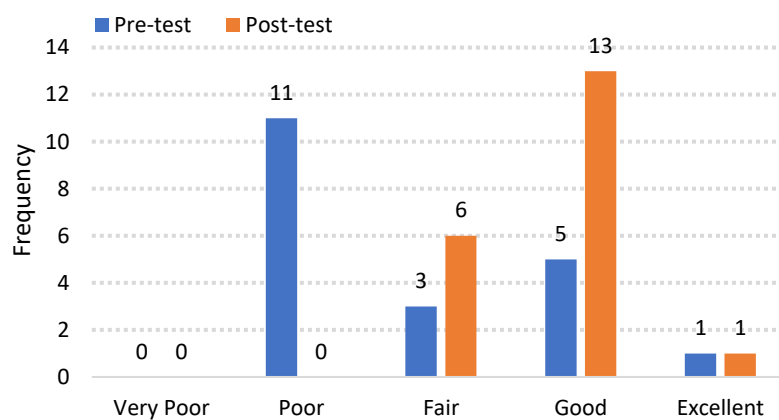


Fig. 3. Classification of Grammar

In the pre-test, only 1 student (5%) in the “excellent” category, some students in the “good” and “fair” category, the remaining 11 students (55%) in the poor category, no one in “very poor” category. On the other side, the post-test shows an increase because 11 students who scored "Poor" in the pre-test decreased to 0 students (0%) and previously only 5 students (25%) with "Good" scores increased to 13 students who scored "Good" and no students scored "Very poor.” This means that the use of Task-Based Language Teaching improves students' writing skills in terms of grammar. Next step, the researcher looked for the minimum, maximum and mean values of the pre-test and post-test and then compared the two to get an idea of the changes that occurred.

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest	20	40	92	65.80
Posttest	20	72	92	81.40
Valid N (listwise)	20			

Fig. 4. The Mean Score of Grammar

As shown in Figure 4.4 above, there was a change in the minimum score from 40 to 72, which means that students who scored low on the pre-test also managed to improve their scores, while their maximum scores did not change. In addition, the mean score of students also improved 15.60 from 65.80 to 81.40. This means that there is an improvement in the value of 23.7% after treatment, so it concluded that students' writing skills in terms of grammar have improved.

**The Improvement of Students' Writing Skills in terms of Mechanics**

The second aspect is mechanics, from this study is that there is an improvement in the writing skills of students in terms of mechanics. This seen from the students' post-test scores which were higher than the pre-test scores as shown in the table and figure below.

Table 4. Classification of Mechanics

Classification	Score	Mechanics			
		Pretest		Posttest	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	89-100	1	5%	7	35%
Good	79-88	8	40%	9	45%
Fair	66-78	0	0%	0	0%
Poor	46-65	11	55%	4	20%
Very Poor	0-45	0	0%	0	0%

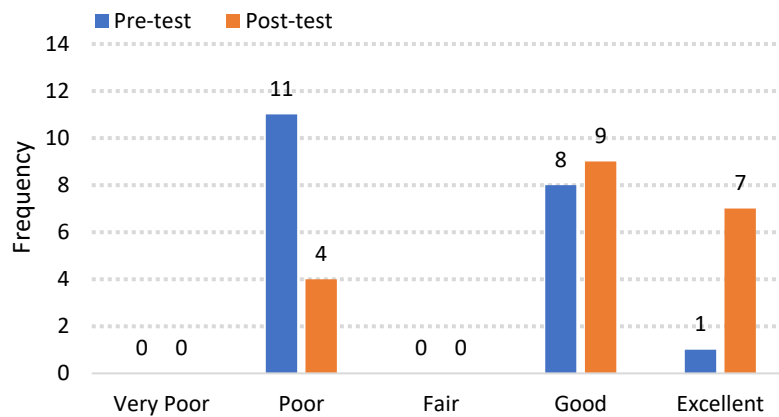


Fig. 5. Classification of Mechanics

Based on the figure above, it seen that at the time of the pre-test there were 11 students (55%) who were in the "Poor" category, 8 students (40%) in the "Good" category and only one student was in the "Excellent" category. Meanwhile, based on post-test scores, the "Poor" category decreased to 4 students (20%), the "Good" category increased to 9 students (45%) and more students entered the "Excellent" category, namely 7 students (35%). Based on these data, it understood that there is an improvement in students' writing skills in terms of mechanics. To be more sure that there really was an improvement in the post-test scores after being given treatment, the researcher also tried to analyze the minimum, maximum, and mean scores of the students' pre-test and post-test scores. These values seen in the table below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest	20	40	100	64.00
Posttest	20	60	100	83.00
Valid N (listwise)	20			

Fig. 6. The Mean Score of Mechanics

Figure 4.4 above shows an improvement in the minimum score from 40 to 60, which means that students who scored low on the pre-test also experienced improvements, while the maximum score did not change. Based on the mean score, there was a significant improvement from 64.00 to 83.00 or 19.00 points or 29.7% after treatment. Therefore, it was found that the students' writing skills in terms of mechanics improved.

**Hypothesis Testing**

The last stage in research findings is hypothesis testing. In testing the hypothesis, the researcher used paired sample t-test. The value tested is the student's overall writing score which is a combination of grammar and writing scores. The results of this hypothesis test will prove the effectiveness of the Task-Based Language Teaching method in improving writing skills.



		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Posttest - Pretest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
		16.167	10.830	2.422	11.098	21.235	6.676	19	.000

Fig. 7. Paired Samples Test of Writing Skills

The figure above is the result of the paired sample t-test using the SPSS software. The test uses a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05. If the value of the “sig (2-tailed)” column is more than 0.05, it means that there is no significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores. On the other hand, if the value of the “sig (2-tailed)” column is less than 0.05, it means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test values. Based on the table above, the value of the sig (2-tailed) column is 0.000 which is smaller than the value of  $\alpha$  (0.05), so it concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>1</sub> is accepted, meaning that the use of the Task-Based Language Teaching method improves students' writing skills.

### Discussion

Based on the results of the data analysis in the previous section, there was an improvement in students' writing skills in terms of grammar and mechanics. The mean score of students' grammar and mechanics at the pre-test was in "poor" category than the mean score of students' grammar and mechanics at the post-test was in "good" category. These results indicates that the use of the Task-Based Language Teaching method improves the student's writing skills.

In this research, before implementing the Task-Based Language Teaching method students had a lot of mistakes in grammar. The most common errors are word order errors such as “stone big”, “sky blue” etc. This is because students think word order in English is the same as word order in Indonesian. Another error that often occurs is the tenses error, which is the wrong use of the verb, for example using verb 1 for the past tense. And the last error that is also frequent is numbers, students often forget to add "s" at the end of plural nouns. Other grammar mistakes also occur, but not very often.

While in terms of the mechanics, the common error is capitalization. The researcher is quite surprised by the number of simple errors such as not using capital letters at the beginning of sentences and people's names. Another common mistake is spelling errors, where there are many words that are either under- or over-written. Paragraphing and punctuation errors not occur too much.

These errors are much reduced when students have been taught using the Task-Based Language Teaching method. This is because at each meeting, the researcher will tell the students the errors found at the meeting, so they improve their grammar and mechanics in subsequent meetings. Based on this, the researcher feels that Task-Based Language Teaching is one of the right methods to improve students' grammar and mechanics.

The results of this study are supported by the research from Milarisa (2019) who found that the Task-Based Language Teaching method is beneficial for students to improve their text writing skills. Task-Based Language Teaching method motivate and encourage them to understand when they write and be active in doing the lesson. This means that the use of Task-Based Language Teaching method helps students learn and makes it easier for them to understand the content of the text in learning English.

Other research that also supports the results of this study is research from Inayanti & Halimi (2019) which found that Task-Based Language Teaching method progressively improve students' writing abilities, especially in writing descriptive text. Almost all students in the study agreed that the tasks given in a structured manner helped them practice expressing their ideas in writing. In addition, research by Karim et al. (2014) shows that the use of the Task-Based Language Teaching method improves students' writing skills in all aspects including grammatical aspects and mechanical aspects.

Finally, the researcher concludes that based on the results of this study which is also supported by theories and previous studies by other researchers, that the Task-Based Language Teaching method is effective in improving students' writing skills in terms of grammar and mechanics. Therefore, the Task-Based Language Teaching method can be an alternative learning method that is suitable to be applied when teaching writing in the classroom.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous section, the researcher concludes that using Task-Based Language Teaching method is significantly effective to improve students' writing skills in grammar and mechanics. This seen from the differences in student achievement in the pre-test and post-test. In grammar, the student's score on the pre-test was 65.8 and the post-test was 81.4. In addition, the mechanics are also improved. This was proved by the student's achievement on the pre-test was 64.0 and the post-test was 83.0.

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