



Fostering Active Learning and Writing Proficiency: The Role of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach in EFL Descriptive Texts

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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out the impact of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach in enhancing EFL learners descriptive text writing skill and also perception of learners about the utilization of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach in writing descriptive text. This study employed experimental research which the experimental group was given treatment using CTL Approach, on the other hand, the control group was given treatment using the conventional way. The participants were forty-eight of the first semester learners of Agricultural faculty at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sinjai, in 2024/2025 academic year. Two intact classes were randomly selected as control and experimental group and each group comprised twenty-four learners. The research instrument that was used in this study were pre-posttest and the perceptual questionnaires. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics on SPSS. The result of this study showed that the significance value (Sig.) in the table is 0.007, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, there was a significant difference between learners who was taught by using CTL approach and those were taught by using conventional teaching. Then, learners responded positively to the implementation of CTL Approach. So that, further researches with deepest investigation to examine follow-up activities after knowing student perceptions are highly recommended.

Keywords: CTL approach; descriptive text; EFL learners



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INTRODUCTION

People utilize writing as a communication skill all throughout the world. When there is no opportunity for thoughts to be delivered vocally or in person, it is utilized to express and transmit them to other individuals. Proficiency in writing in a foreign language, like English, has become increasingly valuable in today's globalized society, particularly with the widespread use of technology. They can use this occasion to write letters, emails, or messages to people in distant countries, sharing any knowledge they may have. In the meantime, teaching pupils to write becomes essential to their language acquisition in the classroom. Writing helps English language learners comprehend language and improve their writing skills, according to (Harmer, 2007). Through writing, learners can pick up new linguistic structures that are required for their writing assignments and learn how to construct paragraphs. For instance, when requested to automatically write a description, they will pick up new linguistic elements.

However, even though learners were expected to be able to communicate in an English-speaking environment both orally and in writing, those competencies were not coming naturally to them. Particularly in cases of English as a second language, where exposure to the language is extremely restricted, learners may not develop a strong habit of learning and using English for communication. Furthermore, writing is a skill that must be continuously taught and developed; it cannot be understood instantly. Put differently, learners must be aware that writing proficiency is a talent that must be acquired in addition to other skills.

The researcher observed learners wrote descriptive texts, she saw that some students continued to receive low marks for errors in syntax and schematic structures. Their descriptions lacked schematic structures, which hindered the effective delivery of their ideas. Additionally, they frequently wrote sentences that lack grammar, despite the fact that grammar helped to clarify meaning. For instance, they frequently overlook pronouns, tenses, have/has, English adjectives, and connecting verbs. When writing descriptive texts, they frequently skip the connecting verb that connects the subject and its subject complement and use incorrect pronouns, have/has, tense, and English adjectives to refer to the subject. In general, the errors that learners made were what led to the explanation above. This case

happens at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sinjai and this problem became urgent to be solved eventually. It needed to be solved earlier.

To overcome the problem above, lecturers to be more creative. The researcher believed that learners' difficulties with producing descriptive texts would be assisted and resolved by contextual teaching and learning. In order to build and apply new knowledge to their lives, learners can build and apply connections between what they desire to study and real-life situations with the use of CTL, (Berns & Erickson, 2001). Through CTL—whether it be within or outside of the classroom—it aids learners in understanding the meaning or purpose of the material. It follows that giving learners context about their immediate surroundings should make it simpler for them to use proper syntax and schematic organization when writing descriptive texts. When a lecturer asked students to describe their favorite friend, for instance, when a lecturer asked learners to describe their best buddy, the lecturer would encourage them to consider the right words and sentence structures to employ given the circumstances.

In addition to giving context, CTL enables learners to be more imaginative and proactive in their exploration and dissemination of writing knowledge. This claim is corroborated by a study conducted by (Satriani et al., 2012), which discovered that CTL encourages learners to write, helps them organize their writing, and engages them in the writing process. When learners struggle and lack motivation to write descriptive texts, instructors can use CTL to boost learners' self-esteem and help them develop a habit of actively engaging with the subject and activities.

The researcher is interested in studying " *Fostering Active Learning and Writing Proficiency: The Role of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach in EFL Descriptive Texts*". Based on the justification provided above, the researcher would like to formulate the research question, "Is there any significance impact on learners writing descriptive text at learners of Agribusiness Study Program Agriculture Faculty by using contextual teaching and learning approach?". It was different from other research; this research examined the use of CTL approach in writing descriptive text among students who study English specific purposes namely Agribusiness study program Agricultural faculty. Based on the background research mentioned above. The aim of the research was to gather empirical data about the impact of a

contextual teaching and learning approach on learners composing descriptive texts in Agribusiness Study Program Agriculture Faculty.

METHODS

This study employed experimental research. It was the pretest-posttest control groups design. It is supported by (Gay, 2006). They stated that the pretest-posttest control groups design requires at least two groups, each of which is formed by random assignment, both groups are administered a pretest, each group receive a different treatment, and both groups are post tested at the end of the study. The experimental group was given treatment using CTL Approach, on the other hand, the control group was given treatment using the conventional way.

1. **Participant.** The participants were forty-eight of the first semester learners of Agricultural faculty at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sinjai, in 2023/2024 academic year. Two intact classes were randomly selected as control and experimental group and each group comprised twenty-four learners.
2. **Instrument.** Pre-posttest and perceptual questionnaires were the research instruments utilized in this study. Writing a description of their study program was a requirement for the test. This test examined the two groups writing performance before and after giving treatment. The perceptual questionnaires were only given to experimental group. This questionnaire involved ten items investigating the perception of the implementation of CTL Approach.
3. **Procedures.** In collection the data, some procedures did by researcher to be collected the data as follows: a) The researcher gave a pre-test to control and experimental group, b) The researcher gave treatments to experimental group. In the control group, there was no treatment given. Learners were only taught by using conventional lecture one in the teaching - learning process, c) The researcher gave a post-test to control and experimental group and gave the perceptual questionnaire for the only experimental group.
4. **Analysis of Data.** The data was collected from each variable were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social and Science (SPSS). a) Calculating the learners pretest and posttest score in writing descriptive text of both groups. In scoring, the researcher used

analytic scoring rubric. b) Calculating Independent t-test value (at the significant level 0.05) both groups. C) The results of perceptual questionnaire data were analyzed employing the Likert scale measurement

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The Implementation of CTL Approach

The results of implementing the CTL approach influence learners descriptive writing skills. The description of the result and statistical analysis of data about the significant difference in the mean score of learners descriptive writing in both experimental and control groups and their perceptions of implementing the CTL approach.

Table 1. The Mean Score Writing of Experimental and Control Groups, both pre-test and post-test

Group	N	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	24	73.70	82.33
Control	24	73.54	73.87

Table 1 explains that the mean score of learner's descriptive skill for both experimental and control group in term of pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test, the mean score of experimental groups is 73.70 and the mean score of control group is 73.54. Furthermore, in the post-test, the mean score of experimental groups is 82.33 and the mean score of control group is 73.87. It shows that the experimental group has high score than the control group in the post-test.

A more in-depth statistical investigation is required to determine whether the difference is significant. First, the researcher uses tests of normality of the post-test score both groups.

Table 2. Normality Tests of Learners Writing

Groups		Kolmogorov-Sminorv			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistics	df	Sig.	Statistics	df	Sig.
Writing Score	Posttest Experiment Group	.212	24	.007	.922	24	.065
	Posttest Control Group	.125	24	.200*	.961	24	.458

Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on table 2, about the results of testing the normality of the data using SPSS with the test of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov, the significant level $\alpha = 0.05$. Posttest for the experimental group obtained significance score = 0.065 and for the control group obtained the significance score = 0.458, it means the significance $0.000 > 0.05$. It can be concluded that the data of experimental group and control group are normally distributed because the significance obtained $> \alpha$.

Furthermore, considering the normally distributed data, the researcher applied an independent t-test to assess the effectiveness of the treatment, as indicated by the difference between the mean values before and after treatment. The use of an independent t-test is contingent upon the normal distribution of the data. The independent t-test results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Independent T-test of Writing Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Writing score	Equal variances assumed	5.773	.020	2.821	46	.007	6.458	2.290	1.849	11.067
	Equal variances not assumed			2.821	38.283	.008	6.458	2.290	1.824	11.092

Table 3 explains that a significance level of less than 0.05 indicates a significant difference between the scores before and after the writing test. Based on the output data, the significance value (Sig.) in the table is 0.007, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between learners who was taught by using CTL approach and those were taught by using conventional teaching.

Learners Perception of the Implementation of CTL Approach to Descriptive Writing Skills

Table 4 Learners perception about the implementation of CTL Approach

No	Statements	Negative	Positive	Highly Positive
1	Learning to write through the CTL approach is more pleasurable and meaningful than teachers' strategy beforehand.	4.2	91.7	4.2
2	Learning to write through the CTL approach enhances my ability to write.	4.2	79.2	16.7
3	Learning to write through the CTL approach motivates me to write well.	0	83.3	16.7
4	Learning to write through the CTL approach helps me understand how to write well more comprehensively than a strategy which an English teacher applies beforehand.	0	83.3	16.7
5	Learning to write through the CTL approach improves my confidence in writing.	0	83.3	16.7
6	Learning to write through the CTL approach enhances my activeness in the learning process	0	75.0	25.0
7	Learning to write through the CTL approach stimulates my critical thinking.	0	87.5	12.5
8	Learning to write through the CTL approach makes me easier convey the idea in writing.	4.2	91.7	4.2
9	Learning to write through the CTL approach makes me optimistic about being able to write better.	0	79.2	20.8
10	CTL approach is suitable to be used in teaching writing.	0	75.0	25.0

Based on table 4 above, the data from questionnaire had shown that from 10 statements in the questionnaire, the participants gave their negative perception to 3 the statements in the questionnaire (i.e., 1= 4.2%, 2=4.2%, 8= 4.2%); the participants gave their positive perception (i.e., 1=91.7%, 2=79.2%, 3 = 83.3%, 4=83.3%, 5= 83.3%, 6 =75.0%, 7 = 87.5%, 8=91.7%, 9=79.2%, 10=75.0%), and the participants also gave their highly positive to all of the statements in the questionnaire (i.e., 1=4.2%, 2=16.7%, 3 = 16.7%, 4=16.7%, 5= 16.7%, 6 =25.0%, 7 = 12.5%, 8=4.2%, 9=20.8%, 10=25.0%). From the result above, only 3 statements which is chosen by learners (those was only 1 student or 4.2%). Others almost gave their positive and highly positive to all statements. It means that the learners positive perceives the implementation of CTL Approach in descriptive writing class.

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the influence of CTL Approach in improving learners descriptive writing skill. Based on the result above, this approach could be effective approach to enhance learners 'ability in descriptive writing. It is related to the previous finding by (Sesar Tamala Yusuf et al., 2018) and (Indrilla, 2018) which found that the use of Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach (CTL) was able to improve the learners ability in writing descriptive text and also improved interest, motivation, and attitudes toward the teaching and learning process and also (Rini, 2016) and (Moybeka et al., 2023) that found there was positive effect of Contextual Teaching and Learning on the learners writing descriptive text. Besides that, (Jubhari et al., 2022) found that implementation of the CTL approach through its components positively contributes to teaching narrative writing skills.

This study implemented some components of CTL Approach; problem-based learning, questioning, reflection, modelling, inquiry, constructivism, learning community and authentic assessment which all of components can influence learner's ability in writing skills. In this study, the learners notice, listen and pay attention to the story or dialogue about their study program. Learners can solve problem based their learning. It aligns with (Windi & Suryaman, 2022), they claimed that advantages of CTL is assist learners in problem solving.

In addition, learners get question which is related about that story of their study program and then learners mention what they have to describe, this can improve critical thinking of learners in writing which this is in line with (Rachmawati et al., 2017) and (Meisuri, 2013) stated that using basic questioning with picture is effective in teaching writing. It is also supported by (Ismail et al., 2022) which stated that Guiding Questions Technique brought significant effect while teaching learners to write content.

As a result, by reflecting on their educational experience, they were inspired to produce work of a higher standard that boosted their motivation and life skills such as their capacity for interpersonal interaction, gathering data, and both spoken and written communication in addition to their cognitive knowledge. It is in line with (Zhang, 2023) and (Deti et al., 2023) which stated that reflection-supported learning of writing has a positive effect on learners writing attitudes and writing achievement goal orientations. Hence, EFL instructors are called on to support their writing teaching with learners guided reflection on

the pieces of writing that they produce.

The CTL approach changes the teacher's role into a motivator and a facilitator. It conforms the research conducted by (Ekowati et al., 2015) and (Ilmiah et al., 2020) who have found out that the use of the CTL causes the alternation of the teacher as an active and creative facilitator and mediator. In this study, learners mention and identify the vocabularies about their study program and the task that ensues, learners take note of or see instances of additional assignments such as got/have got, adjective word order, adverbial pronouns, positive and negative characteristics, simple present, and mechanism, and then they correlate the information to fact. This component also gave positive impact to their writing. It was proved by (E. S. Wahyuni, 2021) which found that the results of implementation CTL Approach gave impact for enhancing the learners creative writing, to provide learning process which was practical in real world situation (inquiry).

Furthermore, the CTL approach is also effective in teaching writing. The CTL approach is based on the constructivist learning theory. This theory is supported by Dewey's theory (Hosnan, 2014) Dewey's research concludes that if what the learners learn connected with their knowledge and environment, they will learn better. In addition, the CTL approach is intended for learners to actively build their knowledge through interaction and experience with others. In addition, (S. Wahyuni, 2017) has stated that the CTL approach constructs the learners interest to learn and let the learners have meaningful learning. The successful learning is perceived if the learners can apply and implement their knowledge in the reality of life. In this study, during its application, the learners have the courage to start interacting with other learners and tend to be more active compared to when the lecturer uses the conventional approach before. Hence, the use of the CTL approach is more effective than that of the conventional approach to teaching writing. It verifies the result of (Sary, 2016) who states that the CTL approach is better than non-CTL as the conventional approach. On other hand, in this study the learners actively construct information and create their knowledge from their experiences. Therefore, (Satriani et al., 2012) and (Jang, 2007) say that the learners learn through 'experiencing' not by 'memorizing'.

Based on the result about learner's perception about the implementation of CTL Approach, almost all learners responded positively to the implementation of CTL Approach.

They argued that the CTL approach enhances their ability to write and motivates them to write well. This is proven by previous finding (Sari, 2018), (Rosyidatul et al., 2019) and (Haerazi et al., 2019). In addition, the CTL approach stimulates their critical thinking and makes them easier convey the idea in writing, this is in line with finding of (Merawan et al., 2021) and (Nurlela et al., 2021) stated that the CTL approach improve language skills, thinking skills, express ideas, feelings, opinions, consent, desires, convey information about an event and the ability to broaden horizons. Furthermore, the CTL approach enhances learner's activeness in the learning process and improves their confidence in writing. It is also in line with (Budiana & Kamil, 2021), they stated that CTL approach can improve learners engagement and provide for learners to discuss or interact with their peers.

Conflicts of Interest

Further researches with deepest investigation to examine follow-up activities after knowing student perceptions are highly recommended.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions, the researcher came to the following conclusion; the researcher concluded that the CTL Approach give significant contribution towards learners descriptive writing skills. It is proven by improvement learner's achievement in descriptive writing skills. In addition, learners responded positively to the implementation of CTL Approach. They argued that the CTL approach enhances their ability to write and motivates them to write well. In the ensuing lines, the researcher addresses the following suggestions in regard to the conclusion. English lecturers should modify the approach or method in teaching English writing especially for learners of English specific Purposes. So that, the learners can improve their effectiveness in English learning.

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