BATARA DIDI:
English Language Journal

The Effectiveness of REALIA as a Medium for Writing Descriptive Text

Ratu Yulianti Natsir[1]

[1]English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract

The goal of this study was to see how effective Realia was at writing descriptive text by the first semester of English at Unismuh Makassar. The sample for this study was drawn from two classes using the purposive sampling technique, with one group serving as the experimental class and the other as the control class, for a total sample of 30 students from the English Department at Unismuh Makassar's first semester. This study's instrument was a writing test. The researcher used a pre-test and a post-test to collect data. The researcher taught the descriptive text using realia. The researcher used the t-test to statistically analyze the data. The t - value was calculated to be 6.55. The t- table value was 2.00 based on the 0.05 significance level, and the computation revealed that the t- value was more significant than the t- table, which was 6.55>2.00. The effectiveness of realia can also be seen in the experimental and control groups' post-treatment scores. The experimental class's mean posttest score was 86.51, putting it in the very good category. The control group's mean posttest score was 76.54, putting it in the good category. The experimental group outperformed the control group, it is possible to conclude. Based on the t-test results, it can be demonstrated that using realia as a media in writing, specifically descriptive text for students, is a reference for teachers.

Introduction

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is taught as a subject starting in elementary school and progressing to university or higher education. This is because of the current situation or the highly competitive era of globalization. Writing, speaking, reading, and listening are the four skills that must be mastered when learning English.

Receptive language skills include listening and reading because the learners receive an input, whereas productive language skills include speaking and writing because the learners produce an output as a result of their language learning, Most people believe that productive language skills are more difficult to master than receptive language skills. People must be more creative and thoughtful when writing and speaking. Writing is one of the useful language skills that will be covered. Writing is essential in both teaching and learning English; it necessitates

considerations such as organization, content, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and quality expression (Javadi-Safa, 2018).

Writing is ranked last in the hierarchy of language abilities, trailing only speaking, listening, and reading, but that does not diminish its significance (Nittrouer & Caldwell-Tarr, 2016). Despite this, many students regard writing as the most difficult aspect of the learning process. It's understandable given that many students have limited vocabularies, which makes developing ideas into written work difficult. Writing is an excellent tool for communication, so students must have it. People can express their thoughts, feelings, and announcements through writing. Furthermore, many people use writing as an effective and efficient communication tool, such as posting letters, business letters, and critical product information.

During their first semester in the learning English department, students are expected to be able to write in a variety of genres. Genre can represent the use of language to respond to a secure situation, so writers recognize that texts are useful when they employ community conventions.

News item, hortatory, anecdote, recount, descriptive, report, procedure, and report are examples of writing genres. To improve their writing, students should learn the general rules, social purposes, and linguistic characteristics of each writing genre. Junior high school students are taught two genres in seventh grade: descriptive and procedural. They have similar general structures, social functions, and linguistic features. This study's primary focus will be on writing descriptive text. A descriptive text describes the characteristics of people or things. It can reveal details about a person's physical appearance, personality, and behavior.

A description is a text in which the writer describes a concrete or abstract object. Identification and description are the generic structures of this text. Furthermore, a good description is one in which the reader can imagine the object, place, or person described.

Unfortunately, most first-semester English department students struggle to write descriptive paragraphs by adhering to existing elements in the descriptive text, both generic structure and language features. The students struggled with writing descriptive text because the teacher only provided general explanations of descriptive text structures and how to write them; the teacher did not use any new techniques or media. Aside from the other difficulties, the students' vocabulary, grammar, and spelling are deficient, and they have fewer ideas for describing things in a logical order. All of the problems listed above can be attributed to the teachers' teaching methods. Teachers used to instruct students by simply displaying a picture on an LCD (liquid crystal display) screen or by using simple explanations with no media. They would then ask the students to describe the image in writing.

Traditional teaching methods are no longer effective because students are disinterested in what they are learning, which causes them to be bored and unmotivated (Pratama & Dewi, 2022). Writing descriptive text while looking at a picture on a screen is insufficient for junior high students; they will struggle to communicate their ideas.

To address the aforementioned issue, teachers must be more responsive in developing engaging lessons that encourage students to learn English, particularly writing. The best way to teach a new approach is to use media to help students write more descriptive texts. The use of media in the teaching of descriptive text is critical for improving students' writing skills.

Realia is expected to be one of the teaching tools for descriptive text. It is a plastic replica object that students can use to express and develop their ideas (El Sulukiyyah & Aisyah, 2019). Realia can assist students in recognizing an object or a person by assisting them with the shape, characteristic, taste, or smell, allowing them to write about their ideas more easily. Realia can

be used by English teachers to help their students learn more about the subject described. Furthermore, realia give students a fresh perspective on writing descriptive text.

Definition of Writing

Learning to write is a stepping stone to learning other abilities like reading, speaking, and listening (Ahmadi & Besançon, 2017). Nunan, mentioned in Alves, claims that writing is a type of cognitive process that requires sustained intellectual effort over time. Writing is a valid mode of communication. The idea in question suggests that people use both verbal and written forms of communication when interacting with one another (Venter, 2017). In addition, the act of writing itself is a means by which the writer can foster language learning and competence (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2017). On the other hand, the art of writing is about more than just conveying one's thoughts and opinions to an audience.

Descriptive Text

A descriptive text as one in which the author provides details about a specific thing, either real or imagined. Descriptive writing is used to provide background information about a topic, be it a person, location, or object. Descriptive writing as that which depicts real-world phenomena like people, animals, and things (Baldassano et al., 2018). Whether the events and phenomena being detailed are real or fictional, descriptive text is merely an account of them. A numeric number for the following aspects of the descriptive text: organization; content; grammar; punctuation; spelling and mechanics; style and quality of expression (Zulaikah et al., 2018).

Media

A medium is "something that affects or conveys something," and media is the plural form of the word. Media as "something used to communicate with other people indirectly," the term "media education" does not have a universally accepted definition. He shows how and why media literacy is crucial to one's education. According to Li & Liu (2020) the term "media" is commonly used to refer to any form of communication that serves to disseminate knowledge and aids in the process of education. In the English language classroom, the incorporation of audiovisual aids has been shown to significantly improve students' retention of lesson content (Ho & Intai, 2017).

Realia

Realia are objects that serve as meaningful examples from the real world. In the classroom, it's used to ensure that all pupils fully grasp the material being presented. However, realia are things that people actually use on a daily basis. Teaching vocabulary with real or realistic-looking props, like plastic produce, is another definition of realia.

Realia's implementation is connected to the natural approach because it places students in a natural context (a foreign language) to better grasp the meaning of words (Matamoros-González et al., 2017). Using their senses, pupils can gain a deeper understanding of the material. (sight, taste, hearing, feeling, and smell). According to Hana, (2020) the only constraints on using realia are the size and quantity of the items, as well as the tolerance of the students; consequently, realia instruction ought to be assessed in light of the responses of the students. Therefore, there is a need for new approaches to education.

Methods

Experimental methods were used, specifically a quasi-experimental approach with baseline and follow-up assessments. Participants were split into two groups in the quasi-experimental design, with one group receiving the study treatment and the other group serving as a control.

The participants in this research were first-year students enrolled in one of eight sections of the English Department at Unismuh Makassar. The researcher used two different classes (1A and 1B) as the research population and selected them using the purposive sampling method. Fifteen 1A students who were instructed in a non-realia environment served as the control group. Fifteen pupils from 1B were selected to participate in the experiment and were given realia to use in class. The exam administered by the researcher was the main instrument used in this investigation. Each participant was offered a pre- and post-test to evaluate their progress. The data was then analyzed using SPSS to compare pupils' pre- and post-Realia writing skills.

Results and Discussion

The researcher analysed the raw data, after being converted the raw data becomes the score that are analysis using SPSS program. The chart below shows the results of student data analysis in the experimental and control classes.
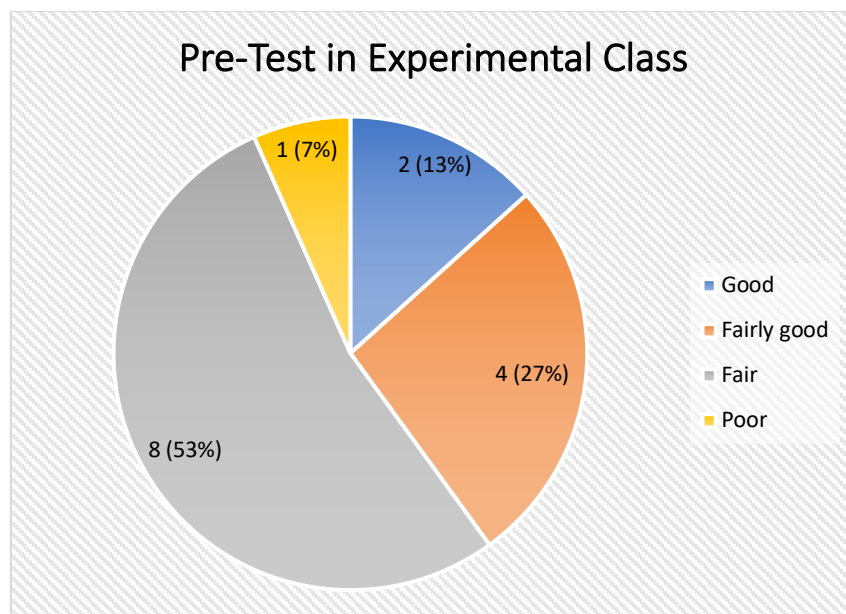

Figure 1. the result of Pre-test in Experimental Class

Pretest scores for students in the experimental group who were able to compose descriptive passages are displayed in Chart 1. There were 15 students in the experimental group; 8 (53%) scored in the very excellent range, 4 (27%), in the good range, 2 (13%), and 1 (7%), in the poor range on the pre-test. The average pre-test result for the experimental group was 66.18, which is considered "fairly good".

Post Test in Experimental Class

2 (13%)

3 (20%)

4 (27%)

6 (40%)

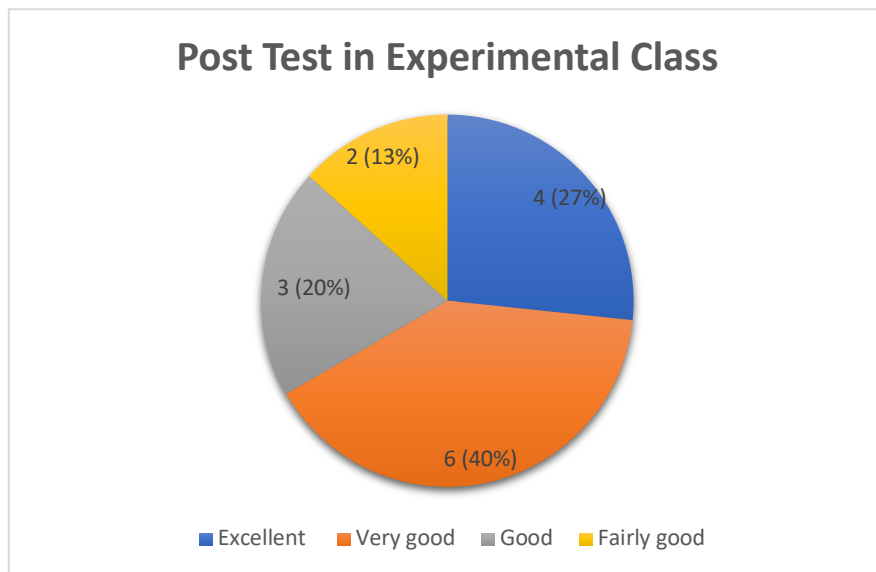■ Excellent ■ Very good ■ Good ■ Fairly good

Figure 2. The Post-test Results in the Experimental Class

As can be seen in the above bar chart, there were 15 students in the experimental session. The findings of the post-test indicated that 27% of the students performed excellently, 40% performed very well, 20% performed well, 10% performed adequately, and 13.3% performed poorly. The average final exam result for the experimental group was 86.61, well above average.

Mean Score in Experimental Class

86,61

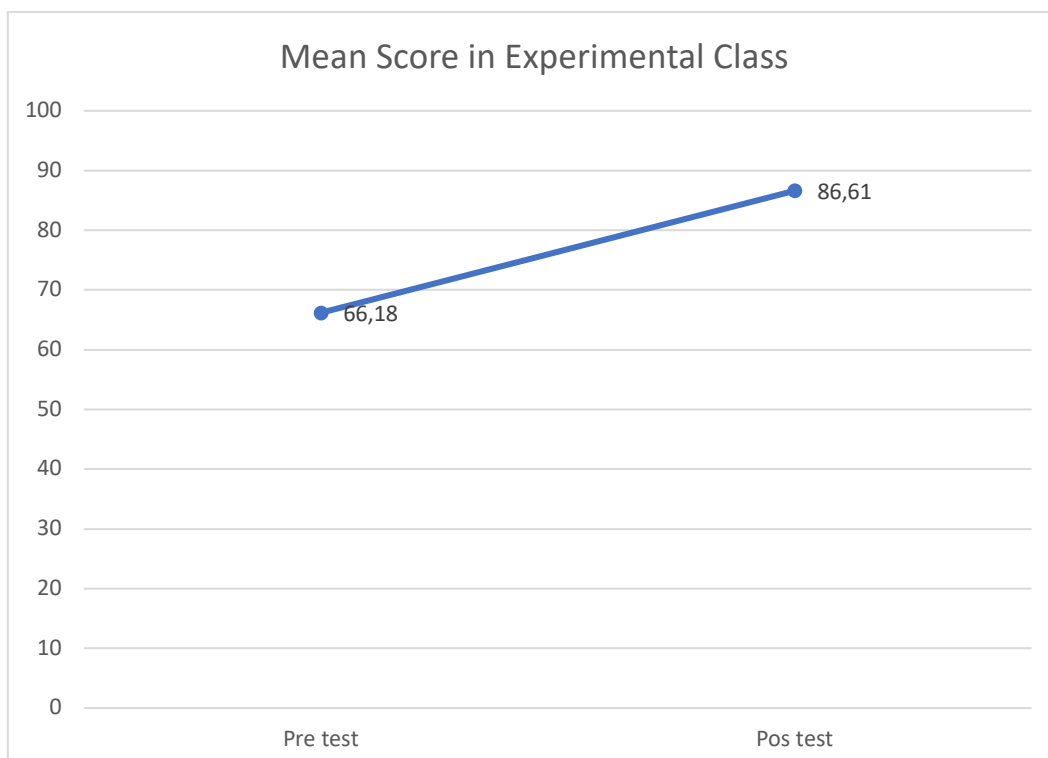66,18

Pre test   Pos test

Figure 3. Mean Score in Experimental Class

When compared to the mean score from before the test, both the actual score and the category of the score increased, rising two notches from the "fairly good" to the "very good" range. Here are the findings from the preliminary exam administered to the control group:

Pre-Test in Control Class

2 (13%)
3 (20%)
4 (27%)
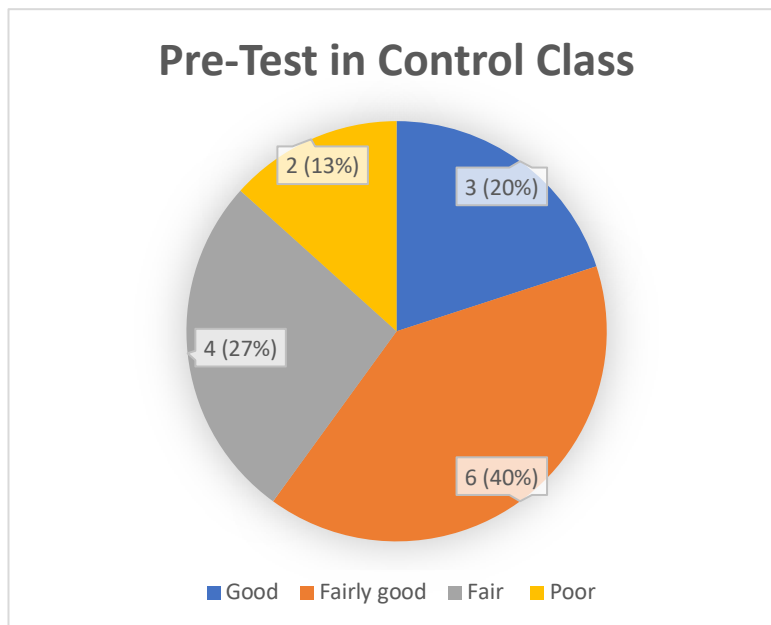6 (40%)

■ Good ■ Fairly good ■ Fair ■ Poor

Figure 4. The Score of Pre-Test in Control Class

Three students (20%) in the control group scored well on the pretest, six students (40%) scored moderately well, four students (26.6%) scored poorly, and two students (13.3%) scored very poorly. The average pre-test score of the control group was 68.21, placing them in the "fairly good" range. These were the posttest results for the control group:

Post Test in Control Class

4 (27%)
9 (60%)
2 (13%)

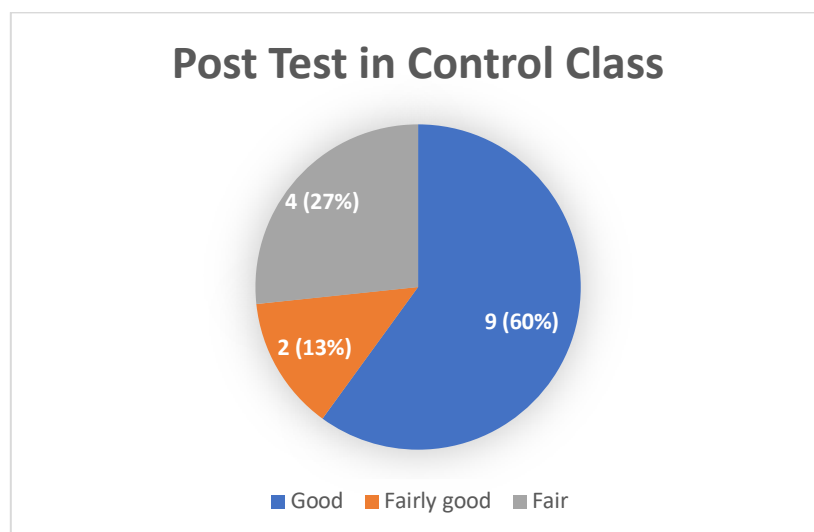■ Good ■ Fairly good ■ Fair

Figure 5. Score of Post-Tests in Control Class

According to the data presented, 9 students (60%) in the control group scored well on the post-test, with another 2 students (13.3%) scoring in the pretty good range and 4 students (26.6%) scoring in the fair range. The average post-test result for the control group was 76.54, which is Good. A comparison of pre- and post-test mean results for the control group is presented in the table below:
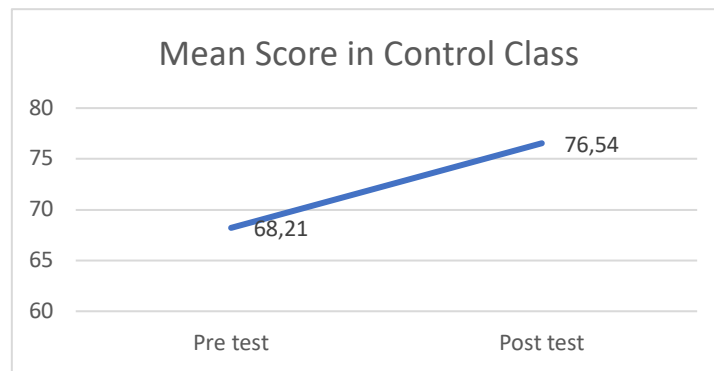
Figure 6. The Means Score in Control Class

There was a statistically significant increase between pre- and post-test mean results for the control group. There was an increase in performance from a mean pre-test score of 68.21 to a post-test score of 76.54, with both scores falling into the "fairly good to good" range. The results showed that the experimental group did better than the control group. The results of the research showed that realia-based instruction led to significant gains in writing ability among students. The experimental group averaged 86.61 points out of a possible 100, while the control group averaged 76.54. A comparison of the t-value with the t-table showed that it was greater than 2.00, so the hypothesis was approved. Consequently, having students practice writing detailed texts through the use of realia was an efficient method of fostering growth in that area. This is in agreement with the results of using realia as a teaching medium may help students become more effective in writing descriptive text, and may also pique their interest in learning writing.

Conclusion

The pupils' descriptive writing improved with the incorporation of relia into the classroom. Students' writing skills were significantly enhanced and they received valuable feedback thanks to the use of realia in the English Department at UNISMUH Makassar during the first term. The students' ability to write descriptive texts improved as evidenced by a statistically substantial difference between their pre- and post-test means. One more piece of evidence in favor of this argument is that the t-test value is larger than the t-table value.

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