

## A MODIFIED ROUNDTABLE TECHNIQUE BASED ON PROCESS APPROACH TO PROMOTE THE STUDENTS' WRITING ACHIEVEMENTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SETTING

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### ABSTRACT

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This study investigated whether students' writing achievements could increase using a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach and to find out what aspects of writing significantly increase. A quantitative study in the form of pre-experimental design was conducted which involved 21 tenth grade students of a 1 Pekalongan– Lampung province senior high school 1 in Indonesia. The overall obtained pre- and post-test writing data were compared through the Paired sample t-test both in the overall sample and for each specific aspect. The results demonstrated that there was a significant increase in the students' writing achievements. The significant increases were found in all writing aspects, except mechanics. This modified roundtable technique makes learning situations enjoyable and allows the students to use the target language and share their ideas in every step of writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). By following these steps, the students gradually have knowledge of how to write a good paragraph by considering aspects of writing (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics).

**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes to the existing literature of roundtable technique in teaching English writing to foreign language learners. In this study, the roundtable is modified based on the process approach where the students share ideas at every stage of writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing).

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Brown (2001) stated that in school, writing is like the way of life because it has an important function. It is needed for passing the course and mastering the subject matter. However, writing is still considered a difficult skill to be mastered. Kellogg (2008); Puengpipattrakul (2009); Javed *et al.* (2013) and Ruiz-Funes (2015) declared that writing is generally considered a complex skill for students. Kellogg (2008) stated that learning how to write a coherent, effective text is a difficult and protracted achievement of cognitive development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speech and advanced writing skills require systematic training as well as instruction so that executive attention can successfully coordinate multiple writing processes and representations, while fluency is associated with the language proficiency level that has a lot to do with L2/FL writing according to Ruiz-Funes (2015). Being someone with good comprehension requires the perception that he is the one who is successful in writing (Keskin, 2015).

Those problems also occur to Indonesian learners. Although they are at senior high school level, they still have problems expressing their ideas in English. One of the reasons is that they have limited time to practice the target language (Mahpul and Rhonda, 2018). Richards and Renandya (2002) declared that the difficulty of writing lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating their ideas into readable text. It can be noted that the students' problems lay not only in pre-writing, but also in other processes of writing namely; drafting, revising, and editing.

Dealing with the problems above, Al-Yaseen (2014) pointed out that some methods of cooperative learning which have been successfully applied in the classroom are the 'Round Table' for writing, the 'Jigsaw' in reading, and the 'Think-Pair-Share' to develop oral and aural skills. Kagan (2009) stated that, the roundtable method is extremely important since students take turns contributing to the group in an oral round robin form and in a written form for the roundtable. For the roundtable, there is usually one piece of paper and one pen for the team. One student makes a contribution and then passes it to the student on his or her left. The paper or pen literally goes around the table. If the contributions are oral rather than written, it is called a round robin.

This idea is in line with Tran (2014) who stated that it comprises instructional methods in which teachers organize students into small groups, which then work together to help one another learn academic content. In addition, Richards and Renandya (2002) asserted that it is more than just placing students in groups and giving them a certain task to do. The principles and techniques are tools which teachers use to encourage mutual helpfulness in the groups and the active participation of all members. This idea implies that the teachers need to think the way how to make all the learners involve and share their ideas during the learning process.

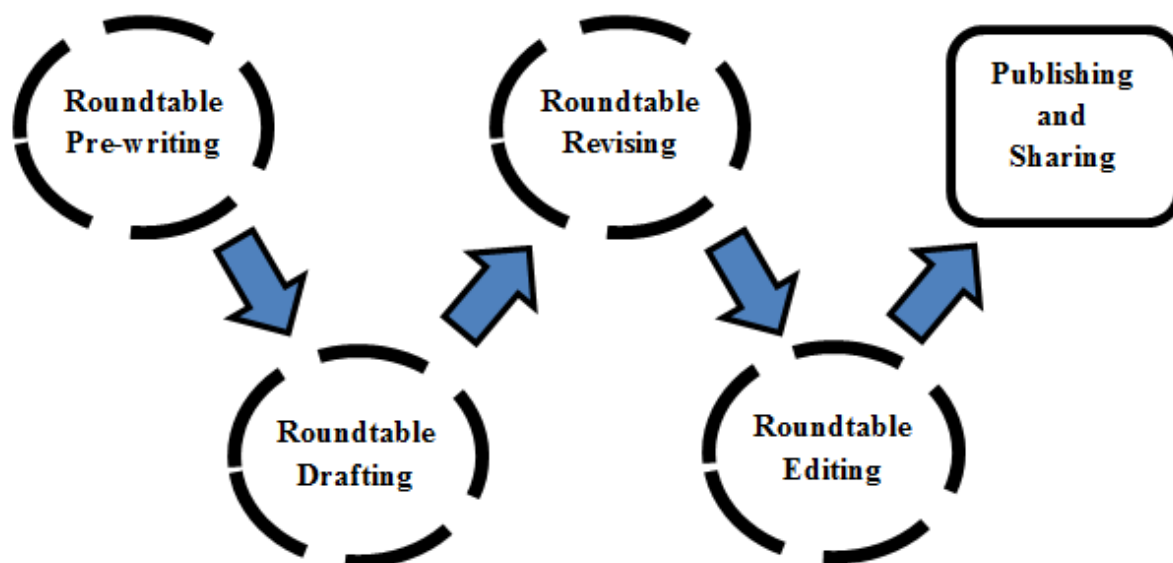
Several empirical studies have proved the effectiveness of a modified roundtable in teaching EFL students. Ningsih *et al.* (2017) concluded that the rally coach and roundtable model of cooperative learning can increase the activity and students' learning outcomes. Urunami *et al.* (2017) also found the effectiveness of the combination of two techniques namely group grid and roundtable technique in teaching writing descriptive text. Norzang (2017) investigated the use of a roundtable structure supplemented by peer editing technique in enhancing students' essay writing skills. The study revealed that roundtable structure which is supplemented by peer editing technique enhances students' essay writing skills.

However, the previous studies were still limited in the implementation which was commonly applied only in pre-writing process as the group brainstorming to share writing ideas with each other in a group. Several researchers above combined the roundtable technique with the other techniques. It means that the roundtable technique also cannot be implemented alone because it still has limitations in solving students' problems with writing. In this present study, the roundtable is modified based on the process approach where the students share ideas during every stage of writing based on the teacher's direction. This was done based on Kagan (2009) study that in cooperative learning if the teacher does not give input or direction, it would be the blind leading the blind. It means that the specific direction modeled by teacher is important in implementing roundtable technique.

In addition, Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) suggested that the process approach to writing should include a number of steps, namely; pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Palpanadan *et al.* (2014) stated that basically, the process approach is a cyclical approach. In this approach, students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities. In line with this, Rusinovci (2015) declared that the role of the process approach in the roundtable technique is as the systematic direction for students to write cooperatively in a group. It emphasizes the importance of a recursive procedure of pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising.

Recalling Richards and Renandya (2002); Alodwan and Ibnian (2014); Palpanadan *et al.* (2014) and Rusinovci (2015) ideas this present study modified the roundtable technique based on the process approach to solve students' problems at each stage of the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising) through learning pairs. It is believed that through working cooperatively in each step of the writing process, the students can help

each other to create mutual success. Essentially, the procedures of a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach can be illustrated as follows [Figure 1](#):



**Figure-1.** Modified roundtable technique based on process approach.

Source: Adapted from [Kagan \(2009\)](#).

At the start, students are divided into several groups of five with a chosen leader and given topic for each group. The teacher then explains the definition, generic structure, language features, example, and models how to write certain text correctly. One pencil, eraser and four worksheet papers are distributed to each group. The teacher then describes the stages and rules for cooperative work in the roundtable group.

Those procedures continue with group brainstorming for the roundtable pre-writing. Each group creates a mind map for a topic given by the teacher on paper. The first student writes his idea in words or phrases on the mind map then passes the paper to the next student on the left. The rest of the members continue contributing their own ideas. In this session, the teacher sets the time limit for each member. Each member can write more than one idea on the mind map but they must be different from the previous ones.

The next procedure is drafting. As drafting is the writer's first attempt to capture ideas on paper, the teacher must give a piece of drafting paper to each group and let it go around the table followed by the mind mapping paper. At this stage, students try to produce many sentences on the list alternately. The first student produces a sentence or more on the first item on the list by considering the mind map and then passes the drafting paper to the next student. The next student reads aloud the first student's writing and continues to write sentences on the next item on the list. This process goes for two rounds.

After the drafting, the core of the writing process, the revision will commence. At this stage the writing is revised and reshaped many times in teacher-controlled activities such as projecting students' writing outlines on a LCD display and providing feedback. Then, the students in each roundtable group are instructed to produce a final text cooperatively by considering the text structure (generic structure of descriptive text) with the support sourced from the previous drafting paper. The teacher only allows each student to write one sentence. At first, a student writes the first sentence of the text by looking at the previous drafting paper and the student on his/her left stands as the mentor. After the paper is passed on, the next student rechecks and revises the first student's writing before writing the next sentence. This process continues for two rounds. Should one student run out of ideas to write, s/he can skip the turn.

Once the revision is completed, the students work together in groups to correct the grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors of their work. This is the editing stage in which the members of the groups take turns to correct

their final writing by first deleting the incorrect ones and taking the responsibility to write the correct ones.

After implementing the four stages above, the work is ready for publishing and sharing. This process is focused on correcting the final project of each group. All groups should submit their final pieces of writing to the teacher for receiving feedbacks. In giving the feedback, the teacher corrects each group's writing and lists their writing errors on the board. The group with the least errors will be rewarded.

With all this in mind, the researchers put forward the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant improvement in the students' writing after being taught by using a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach?
- 2) What aspects of writing significantly improve?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

To answer the formulated research questions, the researcher conducted a quantitative study in the form of pre-experimental design.

**Table-1.** One-group pretest–posttest design.

Pre-test	Independent	Post-test
Y <sub>1</sub>	X	Y <sub>2</sub>

Source: Adapted from Ary (2010).

As shown in Table 1, this research was started by collecting the data of the students' writing achievement before the treatment. It was collected by administering a pre-test at the first meeting. The next meeting was the implementation of the treatment – the modified roundtable technique based on the process approach. It was used in three meetings. At the last meeting, there was a post-test to collect the data on the students' writing after the treatment.

## 3. PARTICIPANTS

There were 21 tenth grade students of Pekalongan – Lampung province's state senior high school 1 in Indonesia in this study. Based on the curriculum, they should have studied English grammar (simple tenses) and have adequate vocabularies. In addition, the learning objective, based on the curriculum used in senior high school, was to enable them to communicate in English using various kinds of texts and one of them was descriptive text.

## 4. INSTRUMENTS

The students were required to write a descriptive text about a famous person individually based on five provided topics (as a pre-test and post-test). The students had 60 minutes to write at least two paragraphs and discussion was not allowed during the test. According to Oshima and Haque (2007) descriptive writing appeals to the senses, so it portrays how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description is a word picture; the reader can imagine the object, place, or person in his or her mind. The students' writing was scored by using rating scales of writing assessment adapted from Heaton (1988) in order to have construct validity. Using this writing assessment scale, the students' writing was scored based on each writing aspect (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) by two qualified English teachers. In testing the reliability of the writing test, inter-rater reliability was used.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS

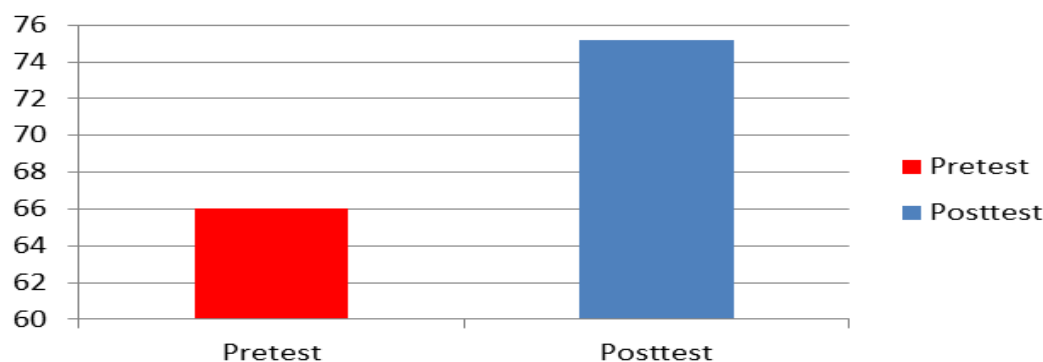
To answer the first research question, the data was analyzed through the paired sample T-test. The second research question was also answered by comparing the students' score based on each aspect of writing namely; content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics through paired sample T-test.

## 6. RESULTS

The results of this research were analyzed based on the formulated research questions.

*Is there any significant increase on the students' writing achievements after being taught by using a modified roundtable technique based on process approach?*

After administering students' writing pre-test and post-test, the data were compared to investigate whether there was a significant improvement in the students' writing. The result can be seen in [Figure 2](#):



**Figure-2.** The mean difference of writing pretest and posttest achievements.

The [Figure 2](#) shows that the mean of the pre-test was 66.0000 and the mean of the post-test was 75.1667. The difference of mean was 9.1667. It indicates that the students' writing in general improved after the application of a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach. To prove the results more accurately, the data were also analyzed to find the  $p$  value and  $t$ -observed through the paired sample T-test.

**Table-2.** Paired samples test of the students' writing achievements in general.

		Paired differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-9.16667	5.87012	1.28097	-11.83871	-6.49462	-7.156	20	.000

In [Table 2](#), it can be seen that the  $p$  value (0,000) was lower than 0.05 and  $t$ -observed (7.156) was higher than  $t$ -table (2.086) at df. (20). It means there was a significant difference between the students' writing pre-test and post-test scores. It can be inferred that there was a significant improvement in the students' writing after being taught by using a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach.

*What aspects which are significantly increase?*

In order to answer the second research question, the difference in the students' writing ability in each aspect between the pre-test and post-test was calculated and compared through the paired sample T-test. The results can be summarized as in [Table 3](#).

Based on [Table 3](#), it can be seen that there were significant differences in the students' writing ability between the pre-test and post-test in all writing aspects, except mechanics. The  $p$  values of content (0.000), organization (0.000), vocabulary (0.047) and language use (0.007) were lower than 0.05. In addition,  $t$ -observed of content (4.417), organization (4.809), vocabulary (2.118) and language use (2.990) were higher than  $t$ -table (2.086) at df. (20). On the contrary, there was no significant difference in the students' writing ability between the pre-test and post-test in the aspect of mechanics since the  $p$  value of mechanics (0.110) was higher than 0.05 and its  $t$ -observed

(1.673) was lower than  $t$ -table (2.021). It can be concluded that all the writing aspects had significantly improved after being taught using a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach, except for mechanics.

**Table-3.** Paired samples test of the students' writing achievements in each aspect.

		Paired differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Co_Pretest - Co_Posttest	-3.69048	3.82909	.83558	-5.43346	-1.94750	-4.417	20	.000
Pair 2	Or_Pretest - Or_Posttest	-2.59524	2.47295	.53964	-3.72091	-1.46957	-4.809	20	.000
Pair 3	Vo_Pretest - Vo_Posttest	-.95238	2.06098	.44974	-1.89053	-.01424	-2.118	20	.047
Pair 4	LU_Pretest - LU_Posttest	-1.76190	2.70009	.58921	-2.99097	-.53284	-2.990	20	.007
Pair 5	Mc_Pretest - Mc_Posttest	-.16667	.45644	.09960	-.37443	.04110	-1.673	20	.110

## 7. DISCUSSION

Considering the result obtained from paired sample T-test, it was found that  $p$  value (0,000) was lower than 0.05 and  $t$ -observed (7.156) was higher than  $t$ -table (2.086). It can be inferred that there was a significant improvement in the students' writing after having experienced learning using a modified roundtable technique based on the process approach. It happens because they have experience sharing ideas in each step of writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing). During the pre-writing, (brainstorming), for example, each student is eager to think of words or phrases related to the topic (a famous person). Each of them writes his/hers and then gives it to his friend who sits on her left. In this process, each student automatically can see what their friends have written.

In this study, the negotiation of meaning in form of clarification (Pica, 1994) also happened, for example, when one of students did not know the meaning of 'humble', he asked his friend and his friend translated it into Indonesian language. In addition, if one did not know how to say something in English, he also asked for help from his friends. They did so because they were instructed by the teacher before they did the activity in this step. Richards and Renandya (2002) asserted that the teachers need to think about how to make all the learners involved and share their ideas during the learning process. In relation to this, Sinaga (2017) promoted that roundtable is one of the teaching techniques which is used by the cooperative learning approach.

The next step (drafting), was also done the same way. But in this step, the students were instructed to produce many sentences based on the lists they had made during pre-writing (brainstorming). The first student, writes his sentence, and gives it to the next student. This student reads it aloud and continues to write his. This is done until they finish writing the sentences using the lists from the pre-writing. This step, automatically, also gives chance for the students to practice their pronunciation because every student was instructed to read his friend's aloud before writing his own sentence. Based on informal observation, there were also spontaneous corrections from the peer for incorrect pronunciation.

Before the third step (revising), the teacher first briefly reviewed the use of conjunctions (and, but, although, however). At the drafting step, the students had only provided some sentences based on the lists on the pre-writing, without having any conjunctions. In addition, the generic structure of descriptive text was also displayed on a LCD screen. Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) declared that revising is viewed as looking at organization, main points and support for main ideas.



In this modified roundtable, the students were instructed to produce a final text cooperatively by considering the generic structure of descriptive text, examples, and connections between ideas. Each student could write only one sentence when it was his turn. Based on the general observation (when the teacher walked around), it was ascertained that each group had a discussion in the form of negotiation meaning, for example, “This one should be the first to make the paragraph more coherent” (they say it in their native language). Using their native language during the discussion made it easy for them to understand how to organize their ideas well.

Badger and White (2000) declared that writing in the process approach is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and that there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar. Contrary to this assumption, in this study, linguistic knowledge also became the focus during the modified roundtable in the last step (editing). During this step, the students were instructed to focus more on grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors of their work. Empirical data showed that they helped each other with some of them acting as a teacher, for example by saying, ‘It is wrong: “He is a person famous”. It should be “He is a famous person”’. Indonesian language is different from English with the adverb said first in the latter. The student made this error because he translated it literally and it was not correct since the formula of the source language and target language is not exactly the same (Newmark, 1988).

All the mistakes they produced had already been learned from before. It might be happening since they rarely practice them in their daily life in meaningful way (Mahpul and Rhonda, 2018). Therefore, in learning English as a foreign language, having sufficient time to use the target language during the learning process is badly needed. Littlewood (1981) mentioned that only a little learning of a new language can take place without practice. The empirical data in this study showed that the students had enough time to practice the target language and also got input from their own output. For example, when the learner produced the sentence, “His hair long”, and other member of the group corrected it ‘His hair is long’. In this study, the student not only by repeated the correct answer but also gave an explanation. For example, “In English we need to use to be”. They did so, because the teacher reminded them to correct and to explain the error. This empirical data is in line with Swain (1985) and Swain and Lapkin (1995) who stated that learners can also get input from their output if there is correction from their interlocutor. However, to make sure whether the correction given by the interlocutor can be comprehensible (i +1) for the learner, for further research, interviews with the learner who got the correction, should be done in order to support comprehensible input as promoted by Krashen (1985; 1994; 2003).

All aspects of writing, except the mechanics improved in this study because during this modified roundtable, the students tried to share their ideas in every step of writing (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). It was done based on Palpanadan *et al.* (2014) who declared that the process approach is a cyclical approach. In this approach, students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities. However, in this present study, the process approach was done in pairs for every stage of writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). The process approach, especially on pre-writing and drafting, made them get used to developing their idea and consequently it influenced the length of their paragraphs (those in the post-test were longer than those in the pre-test). However, there was no significant improvement on the mechanics aspect.

This finding was in line with a study of Astuti and Kumalarini (2013) who found that roundtable brainstorming can improve the students’ writing abilities in all aspects of writing, except the mechanics aspect. It might be because the students did not focus on how to use the mechanics and it did not disturb the message of their writing.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The modified roundtable based on the process approach, can optimally enable the students to cooperatively learn how to write a descriptive text well because the teacher gave them clear instruction on how to do the activity for every stage of the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). In addition, the topic being

discussed was also in their interest. During the pre-writing activities, the students got used to listing the words or phrases related to the topic being discussed and consequently it made them able to write longer text. The discussion was not only about the content and organization of the text but also language components, such as vocabulary and grammar. Empirical data showed that the students did negotiation of meaning in the form of clarification requests if they had linguistic problems. For the vocabulary, most of them were translated directly from the target language to the source language or vice versa and they thought it worked well.

This modified roundtable based on the process approach seems beneficial for foreign language learners because they have sufficient time to practice the target language. Using native language (Indonesian language) in explaining the grammar of the target language to the interlocutor makes it easy for the interlocutor to understand the formula of the sentence in the target language well and consequently it makes their writing better.

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