

The Effectiveness of RAFT Strategy Combined with Process Writing Approach in Teaching Writing for Junior High School Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the impact of the Role Audience Format Topic (RAFT) strategy combined with process writing approach on students' writing achievement. A quasi-experimental, non-randomized pre-test post-test design was employed, involving second-year junior high school students. Class 8A served as the experimental group, while Class 8B was the control group. A pre-test was administered to both groups before the treatment. The experimental group received instruction using the RAFT strategy, while the control group was taught using the grammar translation method. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed a significant difference between the two groups. The p-value of .000, which is less than .05, indicates that students who were taught using the RAFT strategy achieved significantly better writing skills than those who were taught using the grammar translation method.

Keywords: effectiveness, RAFT strategy, teaching writing

Introduction

English is a global language spoken in many countries worldwide. While it's not Indonesia's official language, it's gaining importance as a foreign language. To prepare students for the future, English language education focuses on developing all four core skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Learning English has become a key component of Indonesian education. English proficiency empowers students to access global knowledge and ensures they remain competitive with students from other countries. It means that English as Foreign Language (EFL) has become one of the most needed subject that have to seriously learn. The goal of English language learning at the junior high school level according to the Merdeka Curriculum is to prepare Indonesia's younger generation to compete globally. To achieve this goal, of course, the four language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing, need to be developed so that students can have strong English skills and be ready to compete in a global level.

Recognizing the significance of English proficiency, the Indonesian government continues to refine the education curriculum and explore effective teaching methodologies. Various teaching approaches, including Genre-based Learning, Constructivist Learning, Contextual Teaching and Learning, and Cooperative Learning, are available to educators. The junior high school curriculum includes writing personal letter as a writing topic, which is taught by teachers. The purpose of personal letters in junior high school Indonesia is to help students develop their writing skills, express their thoughts and feelings, and practice formal

and informal communication. In addition, students must comprehend the language features and organizational format of personal letters.

However, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to achieve by Indonesian students since writing is a complicated process that involves the transformation of abstract thoughts into tangible text. Many students encounter difficulties with grammar, mechanics, language choice, content quality, and text structure. Kusumadewi (Kusumadewi, 2023) had interviewed English teacher at SMPN 3 Cikarang Barat and got result that students struggled with writing, particularly descriptive text. They found it challenging to develop ideas, use correct grammar, and employ appropriate vocabulary. The students expressed boredom with writing lessons. Consequently, they lack vocabulary, have difficulty expressing themselves in writing, and are not engaged with the teacher's teaching strategies.

Moreover, most of teachers are still using conventional teaching strategy like using grammar translation method in teaching writing. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is an outdated approach to language teaching that prioritizes the memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary translation over the development of communicative skills. This method is ineffective in developing students' writing skills because it lacks of focus on meaningful communication, has limited exposure to authentic language, overemphasis on grammar, lacks of feedback and revision opportunities, and has limited student engagement.

Thus, Integrating the RAFT (Role, Audience, Format and Topic) strategy with the process writing approach can be the suitable method to significantly enhance students' writing skills. RAFT helps students define their role, audience, format, and topic, giving their writing a clear purpose and direction. This aligns with the process writing approach's emphasis on pre-writing planning. RAFT motivates students to write with enthusiasm and creativity by assigning specific roles and audiences. This engagement fosters a positive writing experience, crucial for the process writing approach. By thinking about these elements, students can create more interesting and relevant writing (Pratiwi et al., 2024).

Rahmasari and Rifa'i (Rahmasari & Rifa'i, 2022) highlight the potential of the RAFT strategy to make writing a positive experience and make students more creative because they can choose their audience, specify their writing style, adopt a particular format and write on a particular subject. Furthermore, Pratiwi et al (Pratiwi et al., 2024) adds that RAFT strategy encouraged students to think more deeply about topics and the purpose of their writing. It allowed them to choose topics freely and express their knowledge creatively. By giving students a clear structure to follow, it simplifies the planning and organizing process, turning a difficult task into a creative experience.

This study was conducted offline, with all teaching and learning activities taking place in the classroom. The unique aspect of this study is the integration of the RAFT strategy in the writing process to write personal letter. Personal letters foster genuine connection, develop strong voices, and enhance language skills crucial for academic and professional success. They prepare students for future correspondence and offer a creative outlet for self-expression, making the writing process engaging and meaningful. This involves providing students with a sample text to analyze and use as a model for their own writing. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of this RAFT strategy in improving students' writing skills and to identify any challenges encountered during its implementation to teach junior high school students.

Research Methods

Because it works with specific figures and numerical data, this study employs quantitative research methods. In addition, for the information is derived from student test scores in two different ways—Role Audience Format Topic and GTM, this study employs interval data. Moreover, this study's methodology is a quasi-experimental design that

involves assignment rather than group assignment at random (Creswell, 2009). Compared to an actual experiment, a quasi-experimental approach poses a far greater risk to internal validity. Potential risks include mortality, maturation, selection, and the interaction of selection with other dangers because individuals are not assigned to groups at random in this study.

Mertens (Mertens, 2009) also supports the design of this quasi-experiment, stating that quasi-experimental designs are "almost" true experimental designs with the exception that participants are not randomized to groups at random. In quasi-experimental research, participants are not randomly assigned to either the experimental or control groups; instead, the researchers examines the impact of the treatment on intact groups. Ary et al. (Ary et al., 2010) adds that although individuals are not assigned to treatment groups at random, quasi-experimental designs differ from randomized experimental designs in that they both entail manipulating an independent variable.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of two instructional strategies: GTM and Role Audience Format Topic (RAFT). The two classes are treated differently by the researchers. The GTM method was used to teach the control group (8A), and the RAFT strategy was used to teach the experiment group (8B).

A. Variables

There are two types of variables in the study: independent and dependent. "A variable is a construct or a characteristic that can take on different values or scores," according to Ary (Ary et al., 2010). Researchers investigate variables and their interrelationships. One example of a variable is height, which can change over time in an individual, among people simultaneously, among group averages, and so forth. Additional examples of factors include social class, gender, language level, IQ, and spelling test results.

B. Procedures of the Research

According to Cash et al. (Cash et al., 2016), the steps to do experimental research like the following:

Conducting research requires a thorough literature review, developing a hypothesis or research question, planning the experiment, selecting participants, developing the necessary instruments and materials, carrying out the experiment, collecting data, analyzing the data, interpreting the results, reporting the findings, and reflecting on the research process. This includes conducting a thorough literature review, selecting relevant procedures, identifying essential variables, and selecting a sample that reflects the target population. The selection of participants is critical for reducing bias and ensuring the validity of the instruments utilized.

The experimental technique is carried out as planned, including the use of interventions and control conditions to prevent influencing outcomes. Data collection is systematic, using quantitative measurements and qualitative observations. The data is analyzed using proper statistical procedures to test the hypothesis and determine whether it is supported or refuted. The results are interpreted while taking into account any limitations and potential biases.

The study process is documented in a detailed report or academic paper that includes the methodology, data analysis, and findings. Finally, the study process is examined and remarked on, determining what worked well and what could be improved for future studies.

However, the researchers conducts it as follows: a) deciding the population and sample, b) preparing the research instrument, c) trying out the research instrument, d) doing pretest, e) giving learning style questionnaire, f) teaching using RAFT to both of the group, experiment group, and control group, g) giving the test to get data of the student's achievement, h) comparing the mean of the treatment group and the mean of the control group to get

information whether giving a different It will report whether the hypothesis (Ho) is accepted or rejected.

C. Population and Sample

Considering that most populations are extremely large to either study or analyze as a whole, a portion of the population referred to as a sample is selected for evaluation. It is very important that this sample is representative of every characteristic of the population (Willard, 2020).

This study focuses on second-year students of SMP Al Muhafizhoh due to their prior knowledge of English learning and difficulties in writing. The sample used total sampling because the number of students is limited and all students have the same opportunity to be researched. And the sample used in this study is the entire population, consisting of two classes: 8A and 8B. Class 8A consists of 30 students, as does class 8B. Class 8A was the control group, taught using GTM, while class 8B was the experiment group, taught using RAFT. In that time, the researchers chose the control and experiment groups by lottery.

D. Data Collector

The researchers themselves collected the data for this study. They administered the test and questionnaire to the students who served as the study's samples, supervised the respondents while collecting the test results, and gathered all of the necessary data.

E. Kinds of Data Instrument

The data instrument used in this study included soft data in the form of a lesson plan and a questionnaire about learning styles. Meanwhile, hard data consists of an English test.

F. Method of Collecting the Data

The method of data collection refers to how data is obtained in relation to the variables of the research. In this study, the researchers collect raw data through tests and questionnaires for interpretation.

G. Research Instrument

The study had one dependent variable that needed to be measured: students' writing achievement in the 8B class, which focused on writing personal letter. This study used two writing RAFTs (pretest and posttest).

H. Time of Collecting the Data

The time of collecting data in accordance with the permission of the Headmaster at SMP Al Muhafizhoh Kota Blitar, Toyibah, S.Pd, was held from March to May 2024.

I. Technique of Analyzing the Data Validity

Validity, according to Ary et al. (Ary et al., 2010), is the degree to which an instrument measured the things it was supposed to measure. Current perspectives on validity place more emphasis on the interpretation and significance of the scores derived from the instrument than on the instrument itself.

The validity of writing assessment results is an abstract concept that can only be predicted by providing validity evidence ((Brown, 2004)Brown; (Latief, 2010)). The validity of a prompt can be established using five types of evidence: construct-related evidence, content-related evidence, criterion-related evidence, consequential validity, and face validity

(Brown, 2004). In this study, the researchers used both construct-related and content-related evidence.

In this study, the writer utilizes validity evidence because the writing test requires students to compose their own answers and choose their own words. Then, conducting the writing test is much easier, and there is no need for preparation.

J. Reliability

According to (Ary et al., 2010), a measuring instrument's reliability is the degree to which it consistently measures whatever it is measuring. This quality plays an important role in any type of measurement.

The researchers use inter-rater reliability to assess the experiment. According to Harris (Harris, 1969), this dimension applies when multiple items are used to measure a single concept. In such cases, responses to a series of questions designed to assess a single concept (such as altruism) should be linked together.

In this study, the researchers emphasized on the scorer or rater reliability. To assess the reliability of a score, the researchers used inter-rater reliability as a test, which was measured against a writing scoring rubric. Using inter-rater reliability, the researchers required another rater to score the writing test. Another rater chosen by the researchers was Toyibah. She is a head master of the school and also an English teacher at SMP Al Muhafizhoh Blitar. She has been teaching English for about 9 years. So, based on her experience in teaching English, the researchers conclude that she is qualified to be the second rater in this study.

K. Normality

To determine the test's normality, the author used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov formula computed with the SPSS Program (Statistical Product Service and Solution) version 17.0 to analyze the post-test results of the control and experiment groups. If the probability is greater than 0.05, it indicates that the data for both groups are normal.

L. Ancova

As recommended by Pallant (Pallant, 2016), who claims that ANCOVA is capable of being used when you have a two-group pretest/posttest design (for example, comparing the effect of two different interventions, implementing before and after measures of the groups), the researchers used the ANCOVA formula to support the hypothesis because this study used a non-randomized pretest-posttest control group design. He continues by saying that in order to take into consideration pre-existing differences between groups, the pretest score is considered as a covariate.

When a researcher needs rely on pre-existing groups rather than randomly assigning people to different groups, ANCOVA can be helpful. Because these groups may differ on a variety of attributes, ANCOVA can be used to help reduce some of these differences. Stevens in Pallant (Pallant, 2016). To obtain accurate and correct data, the researchers calculated it using SPSS for Windows version 20.

Results and Discussions

A. Testing of Linearity

Because the study performed a quasi-experimental, non-randomized control group, pretest-posttest design, ANCOVA was utilized to evaluate the data (Pallant, 2016). The pre-test scores were taken for as a covariate in order to control for any prior differences between the groups.

Before conducting an ANCOVA, the researchers tested two assumptions: a) linearity to determine whether the dependent variable (posttest) and covariate (pretest) have a linear relationship, and b) regression slope homogeneity.

Pallant (Pallant, 2016) says, "If you find a curvilinear relationship, you may want to reconsider the use of this covariate." The scatter plots for each group in figure 4.1 below show a linear (straight-line) relationship rather than a curvilinear relationship, implying that the linearity assumption is not violated show on Figure 1..

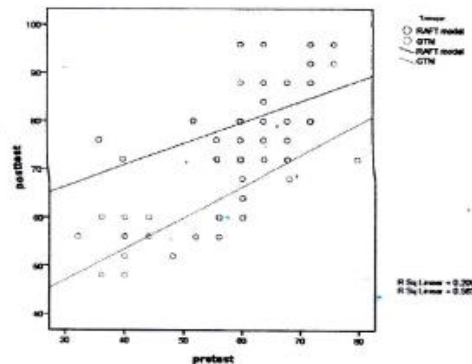


Figure 1. Scatter Plot

B. Testing of Homogeneity of Regression Slopes

The interaction between the covariate and the factor (independent variable) in predicting the dependent variable is evaluated by testing the homogeneity of regression slopes. If the interaction is significant, the results of ANCOVA are meaningless and should not be performed. Referring to Pallant (Pallant, 2016), if the statistical significance level for the interaction is less than or equal to 0.05, the assumption is violated. According to the below data from Group*Pretest, the significant value is 0.935, which exceeds 0.5. The assumption of regression slope homogeneity is shown to be valid. Based on this finding, an ANCOVA analysis can be conducted show on Table 1.

Table 1. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: post-test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected Strategy	8599.915 ^a	3	2866.638	65.368	.000
Intercept	1083.698	1	1083.698	24.712	.000
strategy	42.968	1	42.968	.980	.327
pretest	1529.448	1	1529.448	34.876	.000
strategy*pretest	.293	1	.293	.007	.935
Error	2455.818	56	43.854		
Total	304496.000	60			
Corrected Total	11055.733	59			

a. R Square=.778 (Adjusted R Squared=.766)

C. Lavene's Test of Error Variances^a

Levene's Test for Error Equality Variances are applied to determine whether the assumption of equality of variance is broken. The variances are homogeneous if the significance level is higher than 0.05. The assumption of variance equality is broken, though, if this number is lower than 0.05, which suggests that the variances are not homogeneous or diverge (Pallant, 2016). In this particular instance, the variances are homogeneous, or the

assumption of equal variances is not violated, because the **Sig.** value is 0.085, which is significantly greater than 0.05 show on Table 2.

Table 2. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances
Dependent Variable: post-test

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.071	1	58	.085

Tests the null hypothesis that error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups

D. One Way Analysis Covariance

Pallant (Pallant, 2016) states that if the **Sig.** value is lower than 0.05, the groups (RAFT strategy and GTM) differ meaningfully. The below table (labeled Group on the SPSS output) shows that the null hypothesis that both methods (RAFT and GTM) are equivalent should be rejected, $F(1.57) = F 52.373$, $P 0.000 < 0.05$. The test compares the adjusted means of two groups, which are conveyed in the Estimated Marginal Means box as 77.025 for students taught using RAFT and 62.841 for students taught with GTM show on Table 3.

Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Dependent Variable: post-test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Strategy	8599.622 ^a	2	4299.811	99.788	.000	.778
Intercept	1620.994	1	1620.994	37.619	.000	.398
pretest	2026.556	1	2026.556	47.031	.000	.425
strategy	2256.729	1	2256.729	52.373	.000	.479
Error	2456.111	57	43.090			
Total	304496.000	60				
Corrected Total	11055.733	59				

a. R Squared=.778 (Adjusted R Squared=.770)

E. Assumption of Research

Since the mean score for the RAFT method is 77.025, higher than the mean score for the conventional method of 62.841, a substitute hypothesis that students taught using the Group Investigation Method achieve higher writing achievement than those taught using the conventional method is accepted based on the Estimated Marginal Means. It shows on Table 4.

Table 4. Estimates Marginal Means
Dependent Variable: post-test

strategy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
RAFT	77.025 ^a	1.296	74.431	79.620
GTM	62.841 ^a	1.296	60.247	65.436

a. Covariates appearing in the strategy are evaluated at the following values: pre-test = 58.00

Discussion

In this discussion, the research findings will be analyzed from two different perspectives: a statistical perspective and a practical perspective. From the statistical perspective, there were a number of interpretations from the output of ANCOVA that were

used to response the statement of problem in this study. The ANCOVA analysis did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances. The variances across the groups were not substantially different, as indicated by the Sig. value of .085 exceeding the alpha level of .05. This finding supports the validity of the subsequent analysis, which relies on the assumption of equal variances.

The ANCOVA results demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The p-value of .000 was less than the alpha level of .05, indicating that the difference in English writing achievement between the RAFT and GTM groups was not due to chance. In other words, students who were instructed using the RAFT strategy exhibited superior performance in English writing compared to those who were instructed using GTM.

From a practical perspective, the research findings demonstrate that RAFT strategy combined with process writing approach can positively influence students' writing skills. This was probably because RAFT strategy, which was employed at pre-writing stage of the writing process, assists students in comprehending their writing by helping them identify their roles as writers, audience, or readers, the structure of their writing, and the topic they have chosen.

These findings are in line with the research of Pratiwi et al. (Pratiwi et al., 2024), who demonstrated that the RAFT strategy prompted students to think more expansively about a topic and the objective of their writing. This strategy afforded students the opportunity to freely select topics of their interest and demonstrate their knowledge in a specific manner. The results of this study provide support for the established theoretical framework concerning the nature of writing. It confirms that writing is a process of exploration, facilitating the writer's investigation of their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas, with the ultimate goal of sharing them with the reader (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Conclusions

The findings of the study indicated that the RAFT strategy combined with process writing approach has a substantial impact on students' capacity to produce personal letter writing. The data analysis supports the research hypothesis and rejects the null hypothesis. This suggests that the RAFT strategy combined with process writing approach can significantly enhance students' ability to create effective personal letter. RAFT provides clear and simple steps that can be more understandable by the students.

Based on the experimental results, the researchers offer suggestions for teachers to implement the RAFT strategy to enhance students' writing skills and to foster creativity in writing by guiding students through a structured process. The researchers also suggest to students that they should be adaptable to the teacher's methods and have a clear understanding of writing tasks to facilitate a smooth and creative writing process. To further advance the field of educational research, future researchers could explore the synergistic effects of combining the RAFT strategy with other learning strategies. This could be applied to a broader range of subjects, beyond English language arts.

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