

# STUDENTS' RESPONSE TO SCHEMA THEORY APPLIED IN WRITING CLASS FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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**Abstract.** Much research analyzed the application of schema theory in classroom. However, few research have discussed about students' response in writing class that applied schema theory, especially in Foreign Language Class. This research aims to find students' response applied schema theory in writing class foreign language learning. It discovers what student's opinion to the schema application in writing class. Finally, it discusses the implication of the research's finding towards the schema theory, and encourages further study relating different groups of students in different contexts.

*Keywords Writing, Schema Theory, Foreign Language Learning*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing assumes as significant skill in learning language. However, writing is complex process. Writing is a skill that needs process for building the sequence of words for expressing the ideas. In developing ideas, requires process selecting, combining, and arranging individual lexical (Sun, 2014). Therefore, writing is assumes as difficult skill to comprehend. Nunan (1999) argues that the most complex task to do even for native is arrange coherent, fluent and extended essay. The complex skill in writing requires various factors. Wall (1981) states that writing needs complexes characteristics such as range of mechanical control to creativity, appropriate grammar, knowledge about what will write, and many mysterious factors in between.

Despite its complex, writing is written communication and the reader cannot confirms its content directly. Pilus (1993) states that writing is one-side of communication which means that the meaning rely on the linguistics elements.

Therefore, comprehension of language is significant in writing skill.

Cumming (2001) argues that writing requires complex syntax and morphology, greater range of vocabulary, and rhetorical form. The process of language learning needs the sequence of process. Numerous research about language first language learning concludes that the process is similar. Cumming (2001) states that individual process of learning second language is similar with the mother tongue.

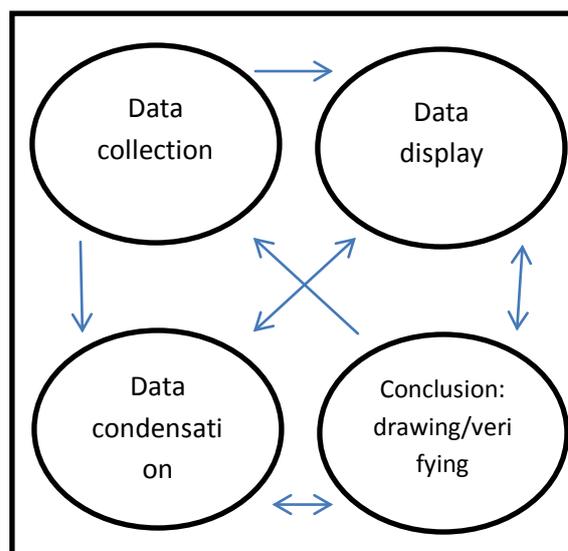
Numerous researches about writing conducted but only focus on English as foreign language. More rarely, research on Indonesian as Foreign language (Muslim, 2014; Hamed, Behnam, Saiedi, 2014; Tuan, 2010; Basmalah, 2013). Furthermore, the studies do not discuss about the student's response of schema that is applied in foreign language learning's class.

Considering, the limited discussion about students' response in using schema theory that is applied in foreign language class. Rea and Mercuri (2006) states that

schema is mental framework that construct from background knowledge. Carrell (1983) states schema is divided into three: content schema refer to the prior experience and background knowledge, formal discuss about discourse level items, linguistics schema discuss about how to recognize words and building the word into sentence. Schema also depends on the cultural background. Different cultural background reflects different interpretation. Carrell & Eisterhold (1983) argue that particular content of schema may not exist for reader and cannot reflects in writing because of different background knowledge of culture. BIPA students have different cultural background. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze further about BIPA students' writing by using schema

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative research because it focuses on the phenomena (Cresswell, 2003). This research focuses on the phenomena about the students' response in BIPA class, Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya. The subject of the research is five foreign students who learn Indonesian language. The data is taken from questionnaire and field note. There are two steps for analyzing the data. First, recording and taking note in the class. Second, recording student's response through questionnaire. After collecting the data, the next step was data analyzing. According to Miles and Huberman (2014:8) data collection, data display, data, data condensation and conclusion. The step of analyzing the data illustrated in the graphic 1.



Picture 1. Qualitative Data Analysis (Miles, Huberman, Saldana Johnny, 2014)

Based on the graphic 1, data analysis techniques, as follow:

1. Data collection, the first of analysis is collecting the data, the data was collected from field note in the classroom and outdoor learning. Another source was taken from questionnaire.
2. Data condensation, selecting the data based on the aims of the research
3. In data display, transforming the data into graphic
4. Conclusion, summarizing the finding.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of Schema Theory in Teaching Writing

In writing class, students gave reading text about the topic that they will write. The students also are given the background knowledge by practicing directly such as in traditional games topic and taking the students in the place that they will be write such as *monkasel*. The students also gave the topic that they have known directly such as Bali. None of the students has visited Bali yet. Students give

three different topics of writing in 3 meetings.

a. First Meeting, the topics is traditional games

As the research is carried out in writing class by using schema theory in BIPA class. In learning process, the schema theory is implemented in the following two steps based on Carell (1983) three main type schemas, content schemata, formal schemata and linguistic schemata), the result of class observation, as follow:

1. Activate student's previous schemata

Before writing, students watched video about traditional games in Indonesia. Students also gave opportunities to play traditional games such as *dakon* and *bakel*. Students from Thailand are familiar with the traditional game because the Indonesian and Thailand traditional games are mostly similar.

2. Consolidate students' schemata by writing

After knowing the traditional game and play it directly, students asked to discuss and verbalize their ideas in pairs. Students discussed in pairs with friend from other countries. It can enrich their knowledge and opinion about Indonesian traditional games. Students from Thailand do not have difficulties in remembering the rule of game because Indonesia traditional games are mostly similar with Thailand traditional games. After discussion, students decode information through schema knowledge by giving a note. Students wrote all information that they have about Indonesian traditional games. The last step was writing. Students developed writing essay based on the note that they had already written. The students motivated to write because they already achieve the idea for writing.

b. Second Meeting, the topics is *monkasel*

The second meeting is similar with the first topics. It also consist two steps of learning process, as follow:

1. Activate student's previous schemata

In order to activate students' schemata, students visited *monkasel* and gave article about *monkasel*. Students were divided in groups. Furthermore, they had a task to explore *monkasel* by taking a note for describing each part of *monkasel* and also taking a picture. One of students from Turkmenistan already has schemata about submarine because his father is a navy.

2. Consolidate students' schemata by writing

After visiting *monkasel*, students had group discussion. The group was different from the group when visited *monkasel*. It is because different group had different experience. After discussing, the students wrote about *monkasel*. In this part, students are enthusiastic to write about traditional games because they can compare with their country.

c. Third Meeting, the topics is Bali

The third meeting was different from the previous meeting. In the previous meeting, students gave schemata before writing. However, in this meeting students directly gave writing task.

1. Activate student's previous schemata

Students already had knowledge about schemata Bali. However, students did not stimulate to activate schemata. Students also did not have discussion session to share their background knowledge about Bali.

2. Writing Task.

Students directly wrote about Bali. They also had similar experience never visited Bali. In writing about Bali, students mostly had similar opinion such as, Bali is beautiful Island and the most famous island in Indonesia. In this part, students felt confuse to decide the idea in writing about Bali.

**Students' Response**

Implementing the schemata theory in writing class is the step of collecting and condensation of the data. It gets the information how students enthusiastic in writing class. the next step is how students' opinion by giving the questionnaire. The students' response about the topic that thy write, as below:

**Students' response about traditional games topic**

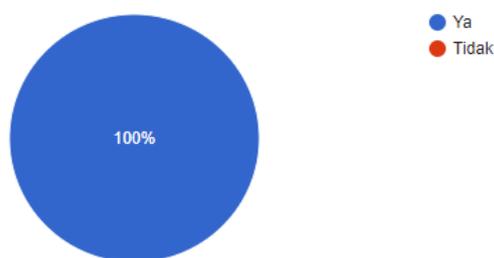


Diagram 1. Student's opinion about the easiness in writing traditional games

All of students have opinion that writing traditional games is easy because they have background knowledge about the traditional game. 2 students have opinions that traditional game in Indonesia is similar with Thailand. A student also has similar opinion that traditional games in Indonesia are similar with Turkmen. Furthermore, a student from Thailand has opinion that the writing topic is easy because they can directly practice.

**Students' response about *monkasel* topic**

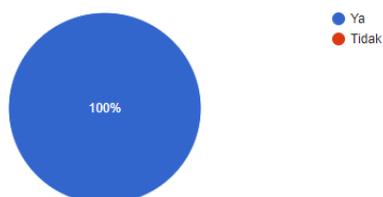


Diagram 2. Student's opinion about the easiness in writing *Monkasel*

In writing *monkasel* topic, students also have opinion that it is easy. 2 students have opinion that it is easy because they have already read the text about *monkasel* and also visited directly. Two students also have similar opinion because they visited directly. In addition, one student has opinion that they have already known about the tools in submarine because his father is a navy. It means that he has background knowledge.

**Students' response about Bali topic**

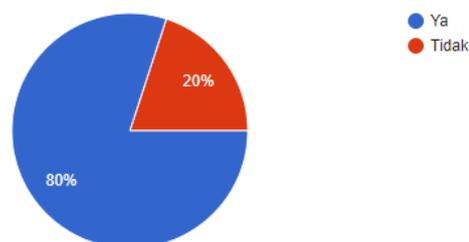


Diagram 3. Student's opinion about the easiness in writing Bali

Bali is topic that students never visited the place. In writing Bali, four students have opinion that writing about Bali is more difficult than the other topic, only one students who has opinion that it is not difficult. All students have opinion that they have not yet visited, and they only read and see in photograph about Bali. These reasons made writing about Bali is difficult. However, they had similar idea that Bali is beautiful island. They got the idea from tourist information book and also article from internet.

**Students' Idea Sources**

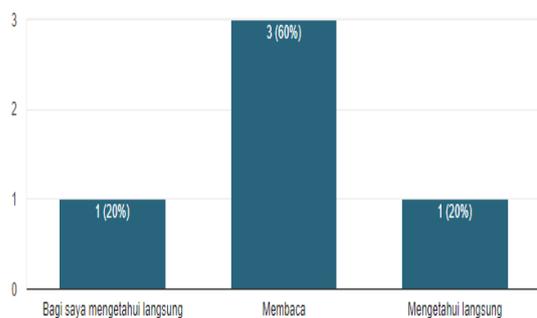


Diagram 4. Student's opinion about the idea source in writing

Based on the diagram above, students prefer to read instead of reading for building or activate schemata in writing. Two students had opinion that know directly are easier. Furthermore, three students had opinion that reading is easier. Reading and directly know are two ways for building mental schemata. Then, it becomes linguistic schemata as the source of idea in writing Carrell (1983).

Based on the finding, background knowledge plays significant role in writing (Mercuri, 2006). It is reflected in the writing about traditional games and *monkasel*. Thailand's students have opinion that Thailand traditional games are similar with Indonesia traditional games. Similar culture recall the students schema (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). In writing about *monkasel*, background knowledge also plays role. A students have already known about submarine because his father a navy. Whereas, in writing about Bali, students have limited background knowledge. Therefore, it is more difficult. The students also had opinion that reading and directly know are the source of building schemata. Therefore, they had idea of writing.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the students' response schema were found effectively to make writing task easily. Visited the place, similar culture, reading and have real experience can improve the student's vocabulary building and encourage the students to write fluently. These findings have implication for effectively using schema in writing foreign language class. However, the finding in this study is conducted by primarily examining qualitative data. Therefore, this study cannot be generalized. This study is lack of data, especially in the score of the essay. Further research also needs to consider correlating the score of the essay and the students' response in using schema theory. Furthermore, the implication of the research is in teaching writing, teachers have a role to activate students schemata in order to stimulate students' idea in writing.

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