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## Exploring Theme-Based Tasks Using Familiar Topics in Promoting Secondary Learners' Speaking and Writing Skills

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempted to explore theme-based tasks using familiar topics to promote learners' productive skills, namely speaking and writing skills, in an Indonesian secondary school context. This study was pre-experimental research undertaken in five junior secondary schools. There are eighty-six students participated as research respondents. Test and observation checklists were used as research instruments. The research findings reported that the mean scores on productive skills acquired by the students improved from the pretest to the posttest. In speaking skills, the mean score of the posttest was 58.95 was better than 40.76 in the pretest mean score. Similarly, the mean score of the writing posttest was 76.85 was higher than 63.86 in the pretest. It indicated that the progress of students' scores in speaking skills was 18.19, and the progress of students' scores in writing skills was 12.99. Although the gain scores in speaking and writing tests are slightly different, it can be stated that the students' productive skills promote significantly. Then, the result of the t-test value on students' speaking skill posttest and pretest was 18.37, while the t-test value on students' writing skill posttest and pretest were 16.42. Both of these values are higher than the t-table value. It indicated a significant difference between the pretest and posttest for both tests. The students' productive English skills after being treated by the implementation of theme-based tasks were categorized as a good achievement. Additionally, the majority of students' learning activities in English class are categorized as a good category. They participated positively in English learning activities in terms of good attention, high seriousness, and activeness in group work.

**Keywords:** familiar topics, improvement, productive language, theme-based tasks

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### INTRODUCTION

Instruction explores the process of teaching and learning (Sugandi, 2004). Teaching means giving lessons related to a particular subject to a learners group, and learning means gaining knowledge by studying, being taught, being educated and experiencing the existence of the instructional model in the teaching process determines the quality of teaching and learning process. The instruction is recognized as a process involving teachers, students, and all components such as goals, materials, methods, tasks and assessment tools. Thus, the instructional process can be meant as an interconnected system between its components in achieving the appointed goals of learning.

Through the instructional model applied by the teachers, the students can acquire English abilities, not only to communicate but also to use as a tool to comprehend the subject matter in school and college. Therefore, the instructional models need to be presented to the students in a valuable activity and task that help the learning process in the classroom. Besides, it can facilitate the teachers to meet the student's needs in the learning activity. It also improves the teacher's performance as the instructor in the classroom. Therefore, in teaching the students how to comprehend the content of materials fully, the

students should be facilitated with a good instructional model that assists them in having broad meaning comprehension, a much wider knowledge, valuable study and thinking skills, enhancing students' critical thinking ability and promote the students' motivation and interest.

The purpose of designed instruction is to activate and support the learning of the individual student. The learning aids should bring all individuals closer to the goals of optimal use of their talents, enjoyment of life, and adjustment to the physical and social environment. A teacher is expected to use a variety of teaching methods customized to the individual needs of the students and will be more successful in engaging them towards achieving the L2 learning targets (Renandya, 2020). He enriched his statement about instructional skills, that teaching is more than just making decisions about which specific teaching methods to adopt. It is a complex process that involves making decisions about what we want to teach, how we want to teach it, and how we know that we have been successful in teaching it. Effective teachers are those who are very skillful in formulating the objective of the course, designing learning activities and evaluating the students by using an appropriate instrument.

This present study has significant relations with the previous studies that elaborate on content-based instruction in terms of language skills, sub-skills and cognitive development. A previous researcher conducted a study that aimed to find out content-based instruction as an ideal approach to help the students who took English for academic purposes (EAP) programs in developing their critical thinking and language skills (Stroupe et al., 2014).

The instructional model of this study covers three stages, namely, meaningful input, critical processing, and meaningful output. This study focused on classroom activities that were designed systematically from meaningful input, critical processing and meaningful output. It was called a content-based input model for EAP instructions which is integrated with cognitive skills (interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation). This model can potentially encourage the students to participate actively in the classroom. However, some limitations of this study were that due to the authentic materials where most of the students said that it was difficult to identify the meaning. Besides, this study needed more time to apply this model because it must be mapped the activities in detail from week one until week ten. A recommendation for the present research would be to look closely at how to construct good learning activities in productive skills classes by implementing a content-based instruction model developed by the researcher. An instructional activity development is recommended to include class preparation activity until assessment activity.

Another previous researcher also explores a study with the purpose of describing the implementation of Content-Based Instruction at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) in a state university in Turkey (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013). This research found that the teachers language use mainly used English (L2) as a means of instruction. The lesson structure was identified from two steps, a summary of the previous class and the delivery of the lesson. The teachers tended to switch to Turkish to summarize the points of the lesson one more time, mainly to emphasize the students' comprehension. When the teachers gave the points, the students noted the summary, and they tended to ask their questions mostly in Turkish (L1). The teachers use English (L2) to ensure the students' comprehension of lessons by giving some questions. But, if the teachers could not get any answers from the students, they switched to Turkish (L1) to more explain the points.

The strength of this study is making the students be able to perform better if they are given the tests in L2. In other words, they can improve their foreign language skills. Nevertheless, this study is limited to the time, setting and participants. It was conducted during a semester at a state university with some of the teachers. The outcome could have been more diversified and comprehensive if followed by different time slots, different universities, both state and private, as well as in different parts of Turkey. Besides, there is no interview given to the students to know their attitude and perception of CBI activity. It should be more lesson observation. Therefore, the present research evaluated deeply theme-based tasks in English subjects in terms of speaking and writing subjects, especially in secondary education. In particular, how to integrate theme-based tasks into instructional planning or lesson plans and how to manage the learning activities by implementing theme-based tasks.

Moreover, a study reported research related to the learners' responses on the course content which world heritage sites as a basis for a content class in a private Japanese University and the role of the content in learner improvement of skills, confidence and feelings towards world heritage sites (Lang, 2012). The findings of this research are the learners responded positively to the world heritage content. A clear majority of the learners gave written course feedback. This positive response to the course could

have been affected by the nature of the feedback. Additionally, it reported progress in discussion skills, increased skills for explaining things and presenting information about their world heritage sites to other students, advancement in group work, confidence improvement in presentation skills, positive feelings toward the content and a high level of interest. In brief, the students actively give their opinions in English about different aspects of world heritage sites. They empower collaborative work to gather and incorporate information that had a major impact on their positive experiences in the class. Detailed theme-based task activities have not been elaborated systematically in this research. Therefore, the present research organized a learning activities model using theme-based tasks that started from preparation until evaluation activity.

In relation to content-based instruction (CBI) as a principal theory of theme-based tasks in language teaching, Elaggoune (2015) refers to the fact mentioned that content-based instruction is a curricular model that allows foreign language learners to simultaneously improve the content of the subject matter and language skills. He reinforces that content-based instruction is implemented to foster the integration of content and language in order to provide a means for foreign language learning. He encourages to implementation CBI approach because it has great advantages in classroom activities that offer a framework for language learning. Besides, it can trigger the students can successfully get both language and subject matter knowledge by acquiring content input through activities in the target language. The components of the target language, which include four language skills, must work together as a cohesive system (Rambe et al., 2022).

The use of CBI in the language classroom is one crucial thing. It is not enough to simply integrate content into the language classroom; it must be done effectively. Stoller (2002) lists eight practices that allow for natural content integration; 1) extended input, meaningful output, and feedback on language and grasp of content; 2) information, gathering, processing and reporting; 3) integrated skills (using reading, writing, speaking, and listening in natural classroom activities); 4) task-based activities and project work, enhanced by cooperative learning principles; 5) strategy training (to produce more metacognitive aware strategic learners); 6) visual support (images, graphic organizers, language ladders, etc.); 7) contextualized grammar instruction; 8) culminating synthesis activities (knowledge is displayed in writing and orally).

An integrated approach to content and language instruction aims to engage students fully with teaching activities and pedagogical materials. Teaching serves to provide opportunities for students to engage themselves in learning about content through language (Snow et al., 1989). In ESL or EFL classes, the teacher integrates language instruction with the content of the student's social studies lessons in a very interesting way. The teacher asks the students to talk about what they have learned about the topic. After the question and answer session, the students practice working with the information in different ways, such as writing short summaries or describing the chronology of events to their partners. It can also be a speaking, reading and listening activity. The students in the classroom try to practice asking and answering questions, taking notes, summarizing information in written form and retelling the content of the topic. Therefore, it is highly suggested that all language teachers in improving their teaching styles. It supports a previous study from Riandi (2022) stated that good teaching styles of teacher affect the student's learning motivation and proficiency. The possibility of increasing student motivation and changing students' behaviour towards learning will be more influenced by how teachers act in the classroom than by how parents encourage learning.

This present research integrated theme-based tasks by using familiar topics of learning. Regarding familiar topics, it is covered the concept of theme familiarity. The theme familiarity or topic familiarity is regarded as the topics of learning materials. In line with topics of familiarity, there are several previous studies that described its strengths of it. Some of them, namely (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) and (Norman, 2017), showed the relevance of topics of familiarity with background knowledge. They stated that if EFL learners are provided with background knowledge, they will be able to understand unfamiliar texts easily. Background knowledge assists them in matching new information with what they already know about the text and also fosters vocabulary knowledge. It is similar to research that describes topics of familiarity influenced the student's listening comprehension positively because topics of familiarity provided background knowledge which facilitated comprehension of an unfamiliar topic (Othman & Vanathas, 2005). Therefore, this research concerns tasks-based English learning activities by utilizing familiar learning topics.

This present study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of content-based instruction on the productive language competencies of secondary school students in Indonesia. There are two researcher focuses, namely, the effect of theme-based tasks in promoting the students' speaking and writing skills.

**METHOD**

This research used a quantitative approach by employing pre-experimental research. This design can be presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Research design (Gay & Mills, 2019)**

Class	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
E	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>

Note. E = Experimental Class; X = Treatment; O<sub>1</sub> = Pretest; O<sub>2</sub> = Posttest

This research was conducted in secondary education classroom in Parepare, Indonesia, specifically in the English subject class, including the students. This study used a purposive sampling technique in choosing research samples. There are eighty-six students taken as samples of this research. The eighty-six students were chosen from different schools in Parepare, Indonesia. They are studying at Junior High School 2, Junior High School 4, Junior High School 5, and Junior High School 12 and Junior High School 13. It chooses those schools as part of the setting of this research because the researcher has conducted a preliminary investigation in those schools, hence, easing the continuation of further research.

This study employed a test as a research instrument. The test was delivered twice in the pretest and posttest. In the pretest and posttest of writing, the students were requested to make a descriptive essay based on five choices of composition titles. They have to choose one of the provided titles of composition. In the pretest and posttest of speaking, they were requested to make a dialogue in pairs. Also, they have to choose one of the speaking topics provided. The students were treated through an instructional activity model regarding theme-based tasks. After that, they were given tests on speaking skill and writing skills. These tests aim to obtain data related to the effects of theme-based tasks on the student's speaking and writing skill improvement. In other words, these tests were used to find out the data of the student's achievement in the subject of integrated, productive skills, namely speaking and writing. The test will be constructed suitable with designed theme-based tasks. In other words, the theme-based tasks are implemented for groups of students to see the effectiveness of designed learning tasks in a teaching and learning process, particularly speaking and writing activities. The researcher applied a one-group pretest-posttest design to see the impacts of these theme-based tasks on students' integrated, productive skills.

In the procedure of collecting data, this present research employed a test. The test was divided into two sessions, namely, the pretest and the posttest. The data obtained from writing skill tests were scored based on Jacobs et al.'s (in Weigle 2002), in which the scoring rubric of the students' writing viewed from five components of writing essay, namely content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Based on the scoring system of the writing test profiled by Jacob et al. (Weigle, 2002), then it is formulated into the capacity of the percentage of students' writing scores on every component of writing skill. The following table 2 figured the percentage score of the student's writing skills.

**Table 2. The Percentage's Score of Students' Writing Skill**

No. Percentase	Aspect	Score
1.	Content	30%
2.	Organization	20%
3.	Vocabulary	20%
4.	Language Use	25%
5.	Mechanic	5%

After scoring and marking the students' speaking and writing results, the researcher is going to tabulate the students' scores and classify the students' scores by employing the five levels of range. The following range level is based on (Depdiknas, 2005). It is figured out in the following table 3.

**Table 3. The Level of Achievement**

No.	Range	Classification
1.	86 – 100	Very Good
2.	71 – 85	Good
3.	56 – 70	Fair
4.	41 – 55	Poor
5.	< 40	Very Poor

The table will be used in finding the percentages of five components in writing and three components in speaking for groups of students that were treated by theme-based task development. The researcher bases on Gay et al. (2012) in presenting the percentage data of students’ performance on speaking and writing skills.

After obtaining data from the rating of the student’s scores on the writing and speaking test, the researcher analyzed the data by employing descriptive statistics to find out the students’ mean scores and the t-test. In calculating the student’s mean scores on the pretest and posttest, the researcher implemented functions of Microsoft Excel of Microsoft Office 2010. Then, in finding the significant difference between the pretest and posttest, the researcher employed the descriptive formula of the t-test (test of significance) for no independent sample by using the following formula from Gay et al. (2012).

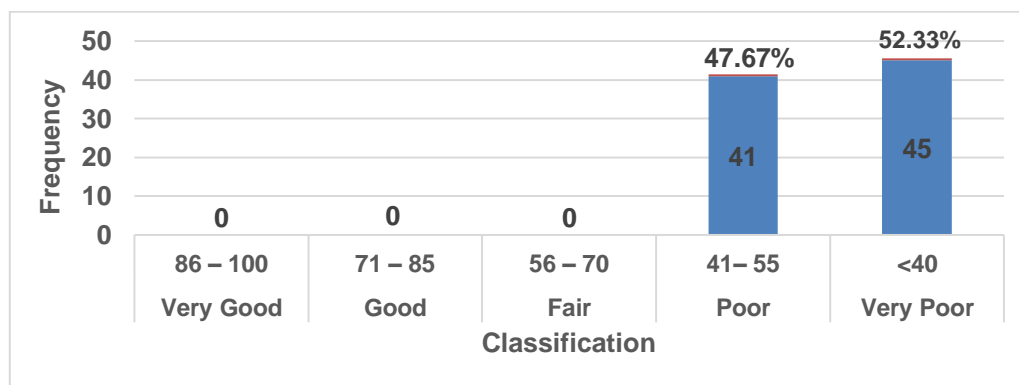
**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

There are two terms of skill tested in the pretest, namely speaking skills and writing skills. In the speaking test, the students were asked to speak English as determined topics. While writing the test, they were asked to write a composition in English based on determined themes. For further data, it presents the results of the pretest and posttest for both speaking and writing skill, the mean score, as well as the t-test value for both speaking skills and writing skills.

**Results**

***The result of the Speaking Test in the Pretest***

This part deals with the result of students’ achievement in the pretest. In this case, the percentage of the student’s achievement in speaking skills before being treated by implementing developed theme-based tasks. This part aimed at investigating the prior students’ skills in a speaking activity.

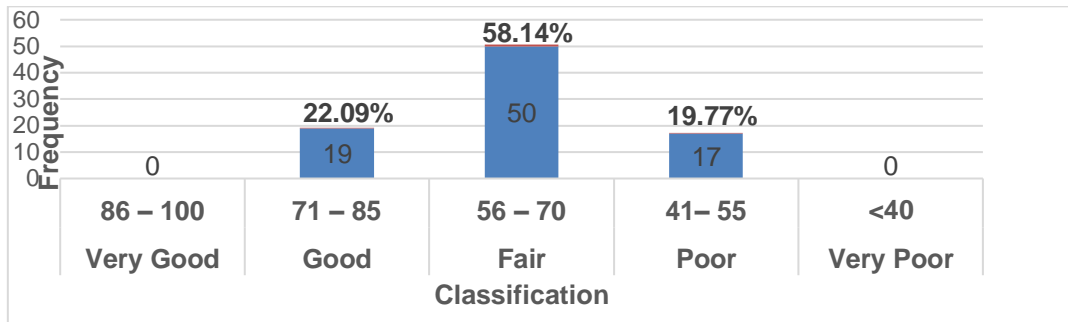


**Figure 1. The Percentage of Students’ Pretest Scores in Speaking Skill**

Figure 1 above shows that in the pretest activity, most students are categorized as having very poor classification. There are 45 students (52.33%) among 86 students who got very poor classification. From this data, it can be concluded that all students have very low achievement in speaking skill competence, particularly in the pretest. In other words, their competence in speaking using English is still categorized as low ability before getting treatment through developed theme-based tasks. This speaking pretest result indicated that the students’ speaking skill is very crucial to be improved in order to give the satisfied English achievement.

**The result of the Writing Test in the Pretest**

This part reveals the result of students' achievement in the pretest, particularly writing skills. This writing test attempts to find out the prior students' skills in writing activity. In this case, the researcher intends to obtain students' data on their competence in constructing an English simple composition. The percentage of the student's achievement in writing skills before being taught by the implementation of theme-based tasks is mostly categorized as fair classification.

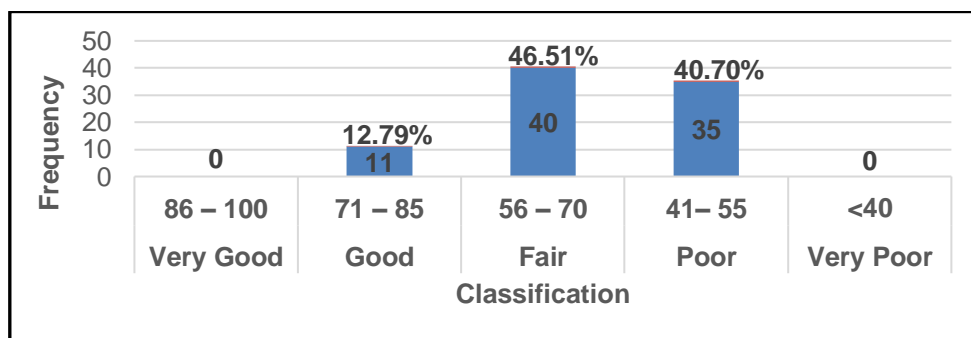


**Figure 2. The Percentage of Students' Pretest Scores in Writing Skill**

Figure 2 illustrates that most students are categorized as fair classification in the pretest. It is proved by the percentage of the students who got fair classification is 58.14% or 50 students among 86 students as a sample of this research. There are 19.77% even categorized as poor classification. Although several students are in the poor classification, some are also categorized as having good writing skill classification. However, the majority of students were categorized as fair level. Therefore, their English writing skill needs to be improved to very good or good classification. From this data, it can be described that more than 60% of students had low achievement in writing skills before they got treatment by theme-based tasks implementation. The indication of this writing pretest result is the same as the result of the speaking pretest in which it is also very urgent to be improved in order to make the students capable of writing English writing.

**The result of the Speaking Test in Posttest**

This part deals with the result of students' achievement in speaking tests. It covers the percentage of the student's achievement in speaking skills after treatment by implementing developed theme-based tasks. This part has the purpose of investigating how far the students' skills progress in a speaking activity. Besides, the researcher intends to know the effectiveness of theme-based tasks in promoting the students' speaking skills.



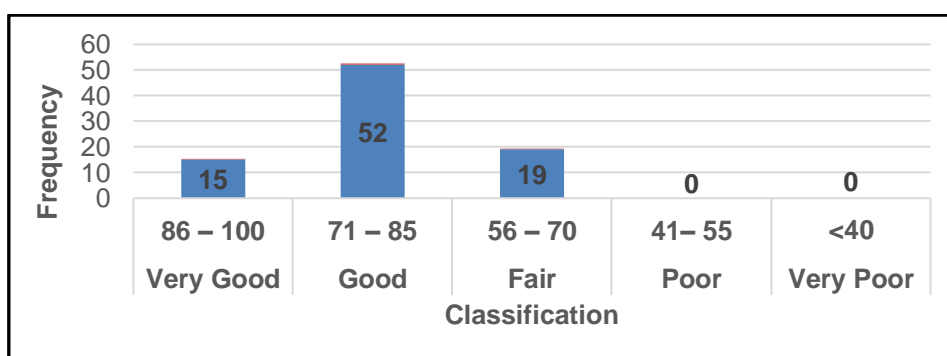
**Figure 3. The Percentage of Students' Posttest Scores in Speaking Skill**

Figure 3 shows that in posttest activity, the majority of students are categorized as fair classification. It is proved that 46.51% are in fair classification. If it is compared to the pretest, the students' speaking skills are getting improvement in the posttest, in which none of the students achieved fair and good classification in the pretest. While in the posttest, there are 12.79% of students achieved good classification, and 46.51% achieved fair classification. Nevertheless, there are still 40.70% of students are in poor classification. However, it has made good progress because the number of students who got poor classification has decreased from the pretest to the posttest, with the number percentage of 47.67% to 40.70%.

From this explanation of data, it can be stated that the students' speaking skills can improve after they are treated by the implementation of theme-based tasks developed by the current researcher. At least, there are approximately 12% of students could speak English in group work, and approximately 45% of students reached fair achievement in speaking English. It means that their speaking skill still needs to be improved until they can be categorized as good classification. In brief, their capability in speaking skills has already been stated as satisfactory competence after they got treatment theme-based tasks implementation. One thing that should be stressed is that they have been good at expressing their ideas using English, although they are still often spoken with some intermissions.

**The result of the Writing Test in the Posttest**

This point illustrates the result of students' achievement in the writing test of the posttest. It covers the percentage of the student's achievement in writing skills after they were taught English subjects through the implementation of developed theme-based tasks. This session aims at investigating how far the students' writing improvement was obtained by them in the English learning process. This goal leads the researcher wants to find out the effectiveness of theme-based tasks in promoting the students' writing skills.



**Figure 4. The Percentage of Students' Posttest Scores in Writing Skill**

Figure 4 illustrates that in the posttest, the majority of students are categorized as having good classification on writing skills. This statement is proved by the fact that 60.47% of students are in good writing classification, or the number 52 students are good at writing simple essays in English. The students' achievement achieved in the posttest was getting significant improvement from the pretest to the posttest after they were given a treatment of theme-based tasks implementation. In the pretest, none students are in very good and good classification. But, in the posttest, there are 17.44% of students classified as very good classification. Then, the number of students in fair classification has reduced to only 22.09%. As well as in poor and very poor classification, no one else is in that classification.

Based on this data, it can be stated that the student's writing skills made significant progress after they were taught through theme-based task implementation. The average of student's skill on writing aspect could be stated they have been capable and competent in arranging simple sentences into a good composition. There are approximately more than 50% of students have skills in a writing activity. It can be concluded that they have been able to express their ideas in writing form, are proficient in organizing them into simple writing, and are good at vocabulary mastery.

**The Mean Score of Students' Pretest and Posttest in Speaking Skill**

This session aims to describe the students' achievements before and after being treated by theme-based task implementation. The researcher wants to know how far the students' skills are in expressing their ideas orally and the effectiveness of this task in promoting the students' productive skills, namely speaking competence.

**Table 5. The Mean Score of Students' Pretest and Posttest in Speaking Skill**

Test	Mean Score
Pretest	40.76
Posttest	58.95

Table 5. confirms the students' achievement in speaking skills. The mean score of the students' pretest is 40.76, and is categorized as poor classification. Meanwhile, the mean score of the students' posttest is 58.95 and is categorized as fair classification. It indicates that the student's achievement in speaking skills is getting improvement from poor classification to fair classification. It is proved by the students' mean score in the posttest being higher than the pretest mean score. It means that the implementation of theme-based tasks could effectively promote the students' productive skills; one of these skills is speaking skill.

**The Mean Score of Students' Pretest and Posttest in Writing Skill**

This session aims to describe the students' achievements before and after being treated by theme-based task implementation. The researcher wants to know how far the students' skills are in writing English essays.

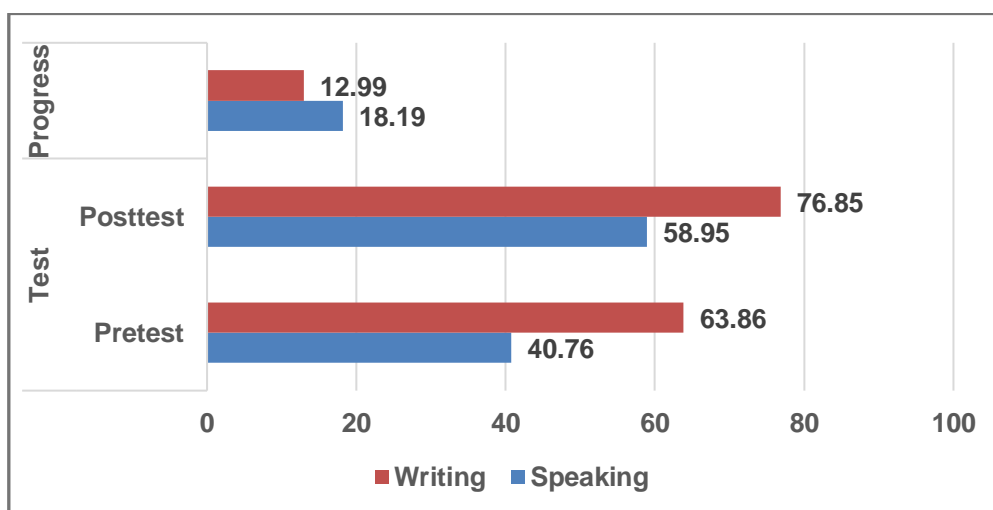
**Table 6. The Mean Score of Students' Pretest and Posttest in Writing Skill**

Test	Mean Score
Pretest	63.86
Posttest	76.85

Table 6 confirms the students' achievement in writing skills. The mean score of the students' pretest is 63.86 and is categorized as fair classification. Meanwhile, the mean score of the students' posttest is 76.85, which is categorized as a good classification. It indicates that the student's achievement in writing skills is getting significant improvement from fair classification to good classification. It is proved by the students' mean score in the posttest being higher than the pretest mean score. It means that the implementation of theme-based tasks could be effective in promoting the students' productive skills; one of these skills is writing skill. Suppose the mean score of the pretest and posttest for both speaking and writing skill is a little different from the score classification change. In speaking skills, the student's score is getting changed from poor to fair classification. Whereas, in writing skills, the student's achievement is getting improvement from fair to good classification. However, both productive skills, speaking and writing, are similar in the case of improving the score, which moves to better classification.

**The Students' Mean Score Progress**

The following part presents the progress of the students' mean scores on speaking and writing skills. This calculation aims to find out how far the gained score achieved by the students before and after got the treatment of theme-based tasks implementation for both speaking and writing skill.



**Figure 5. The Students' Means Score Progress on Speaking and Writing Skill**

Figure 5. shows that the mean score reached by the secondary education students in Parepare improved from the pretest to the posttest. It happens in both speaking and writing skills. However, the gain scores obtained by the students in speaking and writing test is different. The progress of students' mean scores in speaking skills is higher than in writing skills. It is proved by the progress score on the speaking test being 18.19 and the progress score on the writing test being 12.99. Although the gain



scores in speaking and writing test are slightly different, it can be stated speaking and writing skills improve significantly. It means that the students' speaking and writing skills after being taught English subject by implementing developed theme-based tasks are categorized as a good achievement.

#### ***The t-Test value of Students' Tests on Speaking Skill***

The t-test value (test of significance) is aimed to see the significant difference between the result of students' mean scores in the pretest and posttest in the experimental class after being taught productive skills through the implementation of theme-based tasks. The researcher employed a t-test (test of significance) on tests of speaking and writing competence. The level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, and the degree of freedom ( $df$ ) = 86, where  $N - 1 = 86 - 1$ . The result of the t-test is presented in Table 7. The following is the result of the t-test on students' speaking skills.

**Table 7. The t-Test of Student Achievement on Speaking Skill**

Variable	t-Test Value	t-Table Value	Remarks
Pretest and Posttest on Speaking Skill	18.37	2.000	Significantly Different

After calculating the student's scores on the pretest and posttest on speaking skills, the researcher found that the t-test value is 18.37. The t-table value is 2.000 based on Gay's book in terms of the critical value of students' distribution. It indicates that the t-test is higher than the t-table ( $18.37 > 2.000$ ), which means that there is a significant difference. The mean scores of the pretest and posttest are remarked to be significantly different. It reveals that the implementation of CBI approach tasks significantly promotes the students' speaking achievement.

#### ***The t-Test value of Students' Tests on Writing Skill***

This research used the t-test (test of significance) on the writing skill test. The level of significance is similar to the t-test on the speaking skill, namely ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, and the degree of freedom ( $df$ ) = 86, where  $N - 1 = 86 - 1$ .

**Table 8. The t-Test of Student Achievement on Writing Skill**

Variable	t-Test Value	t-Table Value	Remarks
Pretest and Posttest on Writing Skill	16.42	2.000	Significantly Different

After calculating the student's scores on writing skills in the pretest and posttest, the researcher found that the t-test value is 16.42. The t-table value is 2.000 based on Gay's book in terms of the critical value of students' distribution. It indicates that the t-test is higher than the t-table ( $16.42 > 2.000$ ), which means that there is a significant difference. It is similar to the test of significance on the writing test. Also, the mean scores of the pretest and posttest are significantly different. It reveals that the implementation of CBI approach tasks significantly promotes the students' writing achievement.

### **Discussion**

The results indicated that before the students were treated with theme-based tasks using familiar topics implementation, they were lack of vocabulary and ideas in expressing their minds orally. They were not facilitated by sufficient English instructional activities to trigger and exercise them to produce their thoughts in English. They even seemed did not have too many ideas of what they had to say in English. They were difficult to arrange word to word in English, to become good sentences and utterances produced orally. What the researcher found in the pretest of speaking was an unsatisfying thing. Then, this unsatisfying thing was moved to a satisfying thing in order to support the statement described regarding second language acquisition that the students must be given adequate opportunities in making interact with the teachers and other students (Nattinger, 2014). Besides, the students are encouraged to improve their speaking skills in order to create the English learning situation more live and communicative (Leong et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the mean score of the students before the researcher delivered the CBI tasks implementation was classified as a poor achievement based on the (*Depdiknas*, 2005) category, which range of <40 scores covered in very poor classification. Consequently, the researcher applied theme-based tasks in order to promote the students' speaking skills. Theme-based tasks developed by a present researcher are a sequence of learning activities involving the students actively in doing speaking activities

from pre-task until systematic assessment task. The very poor classification obtained by students in the pretest meant that they had not already achieved the optimal learning objectives. The finding of this pretest indirectly contradicted a statement that an English class activity is a teacher's process in assisting the students to reach learning outcomes (Richards, 2018). In supporting the students' speaking skills to reach significant improvement, the researcher applied theme-based tasks. Kennedy (2008) outlined theme-based can develop the students' speaking ability by providing adequate learning time, a positive learning environment, and clear language instruction. Theme-based is trusted that content-based language teaching can promote content knowledge and target language development (Loewen & Sato, 2017).

Therefore, in theme-based task implementation, the researcher facilitated the English student instructional activities as needed. One of the main points of CBI is the learning content and activities of theme-based should correspond with the student's interests (Allen, 2014). Classroom activities designed by the researcher are directed to engage the students actively in making interaction and communication with classmates. Classroom activities aimed to direct the students' participation in completing learning tasks (Guthrie, 1988). In brief, theme-based tasks enabled the students to acquire significant knowledge and language learning experiences (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994).

The good progress in speaking skills reached by students is caused by several contributive things. The contributive things are the students followed learning activities in the speaking process. The learning activities covered learning materials as the preferences gathered by the researcher in the learning need process. As mentioned, the selection of learning materials themes must meet the needs of groups of teachers and students (Allen, 2014). Learning materials are considered influential factors in getting the students' participation and attention to speak in English. Therefore, the learning materials taken from various resources were under the theme of culture and surrounding, such as My Lovely Persian Pet, Tana Toraja, a Wonderful Tourism Object, A Traditional Dance in South Sulawesi, Orchid, B.J. Habibie, Borobudur Temple, My Hobby is Reading, and The Natural Resources. These learning materials are regarded as influential factors in getting the students' participation and attention to speak English in pairing and grouping work. These materials were then extracted and modified into activities of learning which gave the students many opportunities to practice their speaking ability. The finding supported a report that theme-based tasks created an effective learning strategy to involve the students' engagement and interaction in a learning situation (Elaggoune, 2015).

Besides, the students demonstrated the activities of learning based on the teachers' instruction. From the learning materials given, firstly, in the pre-task, the students expressed the meaning of the topic and related information. These ways aim to train the students to enlarge their minds, open their prior knowledge, enrich their insights and think broadly. As explored by some previous authors that theme-based tasks are the potential to improve critical thinking, content knowledge, and academic performance (Crocker & Bowden, 2011; Song, 2006; Stroupe et al., 2014; Rodgers, 2006). Moreover, it is back to the natural concept of the CBI approach that CBI is one of the ways to perform the students' content of subject matter and language skills (Allen, 2014). Moreover, Brinton (Snow et al., 1989) supported this research by saying that CBI requires the students' attention to prior knowledge and existing knowledge which means integrating the content knowledge and language skills later on in the process of language learning and teaching.

Also, in pre-task, the students were facilitated to expand their vocabulary mastery by asking the students to find out new words for them. In this way, the students showed good improvement in vocabulary aspect. The students gained a lot of new vocabulary from the reading text. They mentioned the vocabulary that they did not know the meaning of, and then they were instructed to find out their meaning by using the English dictionary and Google translation. So, the way contributed very well to their vocabulary mastery. Consequently, this way supported what (Spencer & Guillaume, 2006) found that CBI can enhance vocabulary acquisition while building understanding in the content areas. Additionally, Lang (2012) also supported this research by reporting that CBI, through world heritage content, positively impacted the students' vocabulary development.

Furthermore, the researcher trained the students to answer the questions orally by giving very simple questions based on the theme of the learning materials delivered. In other words, the students were exercised to practice English oral production. The students were able to respond spontaneously and the researcher's simple questions related to learning topics. Even though the students just responded to the researcher's questions using simple responses or short answers and combining Indonesian and English. However, this way is effective in building up the student's understanding of the materials. This

contributive step is covered in whilst task conducted inside the class. This finding supported CBI approach implementation, enabling the teachers to use the first language and second language as a means of instruction and emphasizing the lesson points in order to construct the students' comprehension (Bozdoğan & Karlıdağ, 2013). The finding also supported a statement that occurring very simple questions regarding the learning topic uttered by teachers are a good step to trigger the students to acquire new knowledge and interesting information (Kasper, 1995). As a result, there is a significant improvement in content knowledge (Rodgers, 2006).

Besides, they also showed an improvement in their pronunciation than before. They were active and serious in practising their English-speaking ability; even if they sometimes stopped speaking and paused while they were thinking of English vocabulary or asking the researcher, then they could continue their talks with their group. The researcher designed this CBI class in order to contribute to the student's content knowledge and language skills. As ascertained (Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson, 2011) that CBI activities must be designed actively to address both language and content in order to improve thinking skills, in which a main goal of CBI is helping the students complete the assigned academic tasks. The students' comprehensibility was also making good progress. The students showed positive progress in their speaking ability from one meeting to the next meetings, and other friends could understand and comprehend what they said.

In the implementation of theme-based tasks, the researcher used authentic materials to assist the students in a writing activity. The use of authentic materials used by researchers was similar to the previous research conducted in CBI classes such as Baecher et al. (2004); Chapple and Curtis (2000); Ercan et al. (2014); Salataci et al. (2010). They reported from their findings research that the use of authentic materials used in the content-based instruction approach was regarded as a valuable source of learning that supported the students to express their ideas in a simple paragraph. However, the current researcher did not just focus on authentic materials but also emphasized the organization of learning activities done by teachers and students. So, it made the current research different from the previous research.

The researchers noted the contributions of CBI approach-based activity implemented in secondary-level students on the learners' writing competence. These theme-based tasks contribute effectively to the students' descriptive writing skill progress by relation to some aspects such as writing learning materials as the input for language learning, the learning activities as the interactive writing process, and the writing skill evaluation as the learning output. Concerning with the learning materials given to the students provided good chances for the students to list the difficult words as much as possible. They were instructed to identify the difficult words and tried to find the meaning of the words. This activity is very influential in enriching the student's vocabulary mastery. As an article shared by (Baecher et al., 2014) that, one of the language learning objectives using CBI was focused on new vocabulary acquisition. Listing the difficult words assisted them in the writing process. At least, through new vocabulary found, they can use it if they need to arrange a composition in the writing process. Vocabulary is one of the main components in the writing process as well as emphasized by Jacob et al. (in Weigle, 2002) that there are five main writing components, namely content, organization, vocabulary language use, and mechanics.

Moreover, the learning tasks using the CBI approach guided the students to relate one idea to other ideas related to the writing topics given. CBI approach-based learning tasks trained the students to increase their ideas chronologically. Providing pictures related to learning topics and then they were asked to describe the pictures assisted them in associating their ideas into some sentences, then became a paragraph or more. This learning activity positively influenced the students' organization aspect in writing competence. It trained the students to write a very simple paragraph coherently even though they just arranged three sentences to five sentences based on the pictures provided. Last but not least, this study developed the theory of content-based instruction pioneered by Brinton et al. (1989). The new thing of that theory focused on theme-based tasks by integrating them with familiar learning materials.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of theme-based tasks using theme familiarity can promote the learners' productive skills. Based on the performance of students' achievement on productive skills from the comparison of the pretest and posttest has shown significant progress and improvement after they got learning treatment through theme-based tasks implementation. This improvement was shown by the students in the poor achievement category can be enhanced to the good achievement category on

productive skills. Even though, based on the students' mean progress achieved from the pretest to the posttest, the students' speaking skill achievement increased more than the students' writing skills achievement. However, both students' productive skills reached significant improvement after they experienced the English learning process through theme-based tasks. Moreover, the significant improvement in the student's achievement can be seen in aspects of vocabulary where theme-based tasks are effective in enriching the student's vocabulary mastery. Besides, CBI tasks enlarged the students' knowledge and enabled the students to think and come up with their ideas as much as possible in order to ease them to organize one idea into other ideas to be used in speaking and writing activities. Additionally, theme-based tasks are potentially enhanced the students' involvement, participation and activeness in English learning activities.

In line with the implication of this study, it has contributed to the learning models that are highly recommended to be applied by English teachers in teaching English. Moreover, theme-based tasks using topics familiarity are potentially inserted in the curriculum and syllabus of English courses in secondary education. It aims to enrich the development of the syllabus of secondary, particularly the framework of teachers' and students' activities in learning situations by extension of integration of content and language learning. Therefore, the researchers suggest that the local government, especially the curriculum designer, should involve instructional components of theme-based tasks in a set of English curriculums.

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