

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CLASSICAL MUSIC BACKGROUND IN TEACHING WRITING

**Ishak<sup>1</sup>, Wahyu<sup>2</sup>, Nirwana Darwis<sup>3</sup>**

*Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone<sup>1,2,3</sup>*

ishak@iain-bone.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, wachyou92@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>, nirwana.darwis01@gmail.com<sup>3</sup>

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### Abstract

This study discusses the effectiveness of incorporating classical music in teaching writing, using a quantitative research method with quasi-experimental design. The research was conducted on 39 students from two groups in the fifth semester English Educational Program of IAIN Bone, with the experimental group consisted of 20 students, while the control group had 19 students. The researcher administered pretests, treatments, and posttests, and analyzed the data using mean score and t-test formulas. The results of the study indicate that the students in the experimental group who received treatment with classical music background showed improvement in their writing achievement compared to the control group, who received treatment without the classical music background as the average score of the experimental group's posttest (80.95) surpassed that of the control group's posttest (75.47). However, the improvement was not considered significant. Based on the result of test of significance, the outcome of the data analysis using the t-test, with a value of 2.076, was found to be below both the critical t-value of 2.101 at a significance level of  $\alpha$  0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 18, as well as the critical t-value of 2.093 at a significance level of  $\alpha$  0.05 and df 20. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of classical music background in teaching writing did not have a significant impact on the writing achievement of fifth-semester students in the English Educational Program of IAIN Bone.

**Keywords:** *Classical Music Background, Writing, Achievement.*

### Introduction

Writing skill is more complicated than other skills in English language (Famularsih & Helmy, 2020). Writing skills encompass not only grammatical and lexical knowledge but also abstract and evaluative elements that make writing challenging to

acquire. It is the responsibility of English teachers to address the difficulties faced by language learners in this regard. Effective teaching and learning of writing can be facilitated by utilizing appropriate and engaging instructional materials in the classroom. Among these, media is an essential tool that can take the form of audio, visual, or audio-visual resources. For instance, music can be utilized as a background element during writing activities to support the learning process (Berk, 2009). Playing background music is a specific strategy that is often used to improve and support student learning. The integration of appropriate and engaging instructional materials, including various forms of media such as audio, visual, and audio-visual resources, is crucial for promoting effective teaching and learning of writing in the classroom (M. Aswad & Sardi, 2023). As demonstrated by the use of music as a background element in writing activities, these multimedia tools not only enhance engagement but also contribute significantly to the overall learning experience. By incorporating multimedia elements, educators can create a more dynamic and immersive learning environment, ultimately fostering better writing skills and comprehension among students.

Music is very effective to be used in teaching because it can directly affect someone emotion when hear it. The scene and the music create a mood that influences how we feel. The music has a powerful impact on people's emotions (R. A. Berk, 2008). Listening to music while studying is a preference for many students who think it helps them to concentrate on their work (Silor, 2012).

Classical music encompasses the art music originating from Western musical traditions, spanning from the 11th century to the contemporary era (Kalsum et al., 2023). It includes both sacred and secular compositions. The fundamental principles of this musical tradition were established during the common practice period, spanning from 1550 to 1900. Unlike many other popular and non-European forms of music, European music is characterized by its use of staff notation, which has been in use since the 16th century (Rashidi & Faham, 2011).

Classical music, by the definition according to Sandow (2007), Classical music can be encountered through live performances held in concert halls and opera houses, as well as through classical radio stations. Its origins lie in Europe, Great Britain, and Russia during the period spanning the 16th to the 19th centuries, and it primarily

received patronage from the ruling classes. During the 16th century, classical music was closely associated with the church, whereas India's classical music found its roots in the courts of great emperors. However, in the early 17th century, the influence of the reformation led to the emergence of a new secular form of classical music in Italy, breaking free from church ties. It was during this time that the first operas were composed in Venice. Notably, classical music, whether sacred or secular, possesses distinct characteristics that set it apart from folk or popular music. (Cook, 2018).

Numerous studies have explored the connection between incorporating classical music as a backdrop in writing instruction. White (2007), in his research entitled "the effects of background music in the classroom on the productivity, motivation, and behavior of fourth grade students" conducted by a Columbia graduate student and teacher at Logan Elementary School found that the introduction of background music in their fourth-grade classroom facilitated a comprehensive exploration of its effects on students' motivation to learn, concentration, and overall behavior. The results suggest that incorporating background music in the classroom has a positive influence not only on individual students but on the entire class as well.

Meanwhile, Karimnia & Sadeghzadeh Lari (2012), in their study, "attention drainage effect: How background music effects concentration in Taiwanese college students", demonstrated in their study that was the influence of background music, particularly hip hop, on the performance of cognitive tasks like reading.

Parivash J. Kivi and Omid Pourkalhor (2013) in their article, "the effect of Mozart sonata (background classical music) on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency", discovered that incorporating music, even as background noise, into language instruction enhances the speaking abilities of both male and female students. Music has the ability to remove obstacles and establish an atmosphere that promotes language acquisition, thus facilitating the process of learning a second language for students.

Syamsuddin (2013), in his thesis "Improving Students' Writing Skill through Instrumental Music Background to The Students of Grace English Home" revealed that utilizing instrumental music in the background during writing instruction for students at Grace English Home had a positive impact on their writing skills. The researcher

concluded that incorporating instrumental music was an effective technique to enhance students' writing abilities. Additionally, the researcher noted that the students at Grace English Home showed high levels of motivation when instrumental music was used during writing instruction.

The other researcher is Muthmainnah (2005), in her thesis "Using Parallel Writing Technique with Classical Music Background in Teaching Writing". The researcher discovered that employing the parallel writing technique in conjunction with classical music during English writing instruction led to an improvement in students' writing productivity. The researcher further noted that the experimental group showed high levels of motivation when the parallel writing technique with classical music was implemented.

According to the aforementioned research findings, it was deduced by the researchers that when it comes to instructing writing, educators need to identify the appropriate media that can be employed to enhance both student performance and motivation. Therefore, to improve students' writing achievement, the teacher should consider using classical music background in teaching writing.

## **Method**

This research study employed a quantitative approach and a quasi-experimental design involving two distinct groups: a pretest group and a posttest group. The pretest group underwent the treatment before taking the posttest, and the effectiveness of the treatment was assessed by comparing their pretest and posttest scores. In the experimental group, the students' initial knowledge was assessed through a pretest, and they were given the treatment while writing with classical music playing in the background. On the other hand, the control group received the conventional treatment. The research was conducted among fifth-semester students enrolled in the English Education Program at IAIN Bone, comprising a total of approximately 84 students. The researchers used purposive sampling to select a sample of 39 students, with 20 students assigned to the experimental group (TBI 2) and 19 students to the control group (TBI 4).

For this research, the researchers conducted two writing assessments on the students: a pretest and a posttest. The pretest was administered during the initial

meeting to assess the students' writing skills. They were asked to write a descriptive text on a topic chosen by the researchers. The posttest took place after the treatment phase to gauge the students' writing achievement. The researchers then compared the results of the pretest and posttest to determine if there was a notable enhancement in the students' writing abilities following the treatment. The writing assessment used to evaluate the students' writing prowess comprised elements such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The researcher assessed each component and assigned scores according to a set of rules based on a standardized writing assessment by Wello & Dollah (2008). To determine the t-test value for the hypothesis regarding the disparity between pre-test and post-test, one can employ the subsequent formula (Hermawan, 2019):

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}$$

**where:** t = Test of significance  
 $\bar{D}$  = The difference of mean score  
 $\sum D^2$  = The sum of the difference score  
N = Total numbers of sample.

The formula provided is utilized to compute the t-test value for testing the hypothesis regarding the disparity between post-test outcomes in both the experimental and control groups. (Hermawan, 2019):

$$t = \frac{\bar{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \frac{(\sum D)^2}{N}}{N(N-1)}}$$

**where:** t = Test of significance  
 $\bar{D}$  = The difference of mean score  
 $\sum D^2$  = The result obtained by adding up the scores of the differences  
N = Number of total samples.

## Results

After administering treatment to both the experimental and control groups, the researcher observed and compared the pretest and posttest scores for each group.

### a. Evaluating the categorization of students' pretest results.

Table 1 displays the writing achievement percentages of both the experimental and control groups in their pretest.

Table 1. The pretest score percentage of students

Classification	Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	80-100	5	25%	5	26.32%
Good	66-79	9	45%	11	57.89%
Fairly Good	56-65	6	30%	3	15.79%
Fair	46-55	0	0%	0	0%
Poor	0-45	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	19	100%

Based on the information provided, the data shows that in the experimental group, 25% of the 20 students were identified as excellent, 45% received a good score, and 30% were given a fairly good score. None of the students in this group received a fair or poor score. In contrast, the control group, consisting of 19 students, had 26.32% of them achieving an excellent score, 57.89% receiving a good score, and 15.79% being categorized as fairly good. Similar to the experimental group, no students in the control group received a fair or poor score.

### b. Assessing the students' posttest through a scoring system for classification

The table displays the writing achievement percentages of students in both the experimental and control groups during the posttest.

Table 2. The posttest score of students expressed as a percentage

Classification	Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	80-100	13	65%	6	31.58%

Good	66-79	5	25%	11	57.89%
Fairly Good	56-65	2	10%	2	10.53%
Fair	46-55	0	0%	0	0%
Poor	0-45	0	0%	0	0%
Total		20	100%	19	100%

The data presented shows that in the experimental group of 20 students, there was a notable improvement in their scores after they underwent a treatment involving classical music background. Before the treatment, only 25% (5 students) received an excellent score on the pretest. However, after the treatment, the number of students who received an excellent score increased significantly to 65% (13 students). It is worth noting that no student received a fair or poor score.

Furthermore, during the pretest, 45% (9 students) received a good score, which decreased to 25% (5 students) in the posttest. Similarly, the number of students who received a fairly good score decreased from 30% (6 students) in the pretest to just 10% (2 students) in the posttest.

In conclusion, the treatment involving classical music background resulted in a substantial improvement in the students' scores, particularly in the percentage of students achieving excellent scores, signifying the effectiveness of this approach.

Based on the table data, the control group comprised 19 students. Among them, 6 students (31.58%) achieved an excellent score, 11 students (57.89%) received a good score, and 2 students (10.53%) obtained a fairly good score. After the treatment, the students' scores improved in the posttest. In the posttest, 6 students (31.58%) attained an excellent score, which was similar to the pretest, where only 5 students (26.32%) were classified as excellent. The number of students with a good score remained constant at 7 (36.84%), whereas the number of students with a fairly good score decreased from 3 (15.79%) in the pretest to 2 (10.53%) in the posttest.

#### 1) Comparison of the significance of the posttest results between the experimental and control groups

The T-test value was employed to determine if there was a significant distinction between the posttest outcomes of two groups of students studying writing.

The experimental group was taught using classical music background, while the control group received conventional writing instruction. The significance level chosen was 0.05 (5%), and the sample size was 20 students, resulting in 19 degrees of freedom ( $df = 20 - 1 = 19$ ).

The outcome of the t-test classification is presented in the table below.

Table 3. The posttest results of both the experimental and control groups were analyzed using a T-test

Variable	T-table df 19	T-table df 18	T-test
X-Y	2.093	2.101	2.076

The outcome of the data analysis using the t-test, with a value of 2.076, was found to be below both the critical t-value of 2.101 at a significance level of  $\alpha$  0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 18, as well as the critical t-value of 2.093 at a significance level of  $\alpha$  0.05 and df 20. As a result, it indicates that there is no significant difference between the posttest results of the students in the experimental and control groups.

## Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the data collected during the pretest and posttest showed a considerable enhancement in the students' writing performance. This improvement was clearly observed in the average scores of the experimental group's pretest and posttest. Specifically, the students' mean score on the pretest was 73.1, while on the posttest, it increased to 80.95.

Furthermore, the data from the preceding section indicated that utilizing classical music as a background in writing instruction proved to be more effective in enhancing students' writing achievement when compared to traditional methods. This conclusion was supported by a significant difference in the posttest results between the experimental and control groups. The average score of the experimental group's posttest (80.95) surpassed that of the control group's posttest (75.47).

Following the administration of treatments, both the experimental and control groups exhibited a rise in their average scores. The experimental group received



instruction accompanied by classical music, whereas the control group was taught using conventional methods without any musical background. The advancement in the students' writing proficiency was apparent in the posttest outcomes for both groups, with the experimental group displaying a more substantial improvement compared to the control group. This contrast in progress between the two groups can be analyzed by comparing their posttest results.

According to the data, there appears to be a distinction in the effectiveness of employing classical music background versus conventional methods for teaching writing, as indicated by their impact on students' English writing performance. Both approaches had an influence on students' writing achievement, but using classical music background demonstrated a more favorable outcome compared to the conventional method. This conclusion is supported by the average score and standard deviation of students' posttest results after undergoing the respective treatments.

However, it is important to note that the results of the significance test did not show a significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups. This suggests that the use of classical music background may not be a suitable approach for enhancing students' writing achievement.

It shows inline result from the studies conducted by previous researchers explained previously. The studies conducted by Karimnia & Sadeghzadeh Lari (2012), Parivash J. Kivi and Omid Pourkalhor (2013), Syamsuddin (2013), and Muthmainnah (2005) proved that the use of music background gives positive effect to the learning process. However, the effect of classical music background is not enough to improve students' writing achievement significantly. It is important to consider other factors that could impact students' performance, such as the environment where the treatment and test were conducted, and the teacher's ability.

## **Conclusion**

The use of classical music as a background does not improve the student's achievement in learning writing more significant than using conventional method (without employing classical music as a background). Hence, This illustrates that the use of classical music background may not be a suitable approach for enhancing students' writing achievement

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