

## THE USE OF GUIDING QUESTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS SKILL IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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### Abstract

This research is aimed at finding out whether or not the use of guiding questions can improve the students' descriptive text in writing skill of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea. This research used quasi experimental research design with 43 students as the sample selected by using total sampling technique. The population of this research is eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea. It is VIII A as the experimental class that consist of 20 students and VIII B as the control class that consist of 23 students. Based on the result of the pre-test and post-test, the research show that the  $t_{\text{counted}}$  is 7.99 is higher than the  $t_{\text{table}}$  (1.68) by applying 0.05 level of significance and df 41 (20 + 23 - 2) degree of freedom. It means that the use of guiding questions can improve the skill of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea in writing descriptive text.

**Keywords:** Writing, Descriptive Text, Guiding Question Technique

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan Teknik Pertanyaan Membina dapat meningkatkan keterampilan siswa kelas delapan SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Dalam Penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan desain penelitian kuasi eksperimen dengan sample 43 siswa yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik total sampling. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea. Kelas VIII A sebagai kelas eksperimen yang terdiri dari 20 siswa dan kelas VIII B sebagai kelas kontrol yang terdiri dari 23 siswa. Berdasarkan hasil pre-test dan post-test, penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai  $t_{\text{hitung}}$  adalah 7,99 lebih tinggi dari  $t_{\text{tabel}}$  (1,68) dengan menerapkan tingkat signifikan 0,05 pada tes satu arah dan df 41 (20 + 23 - 2). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan Teknik Pertanyaan Membina dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa kelas delapan SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea dalam menulis teks deskriptif.*

**Kata Kunci:** Menulis, Teks Deskriptif, Teknik Pertanyaan Membina

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four skills in language learning in addition to listening, speaking, and reading. As the one of the four skills in language learning, ability in writing also has to be improved. Writing has been taught from elementary school level to university level. Through writing, the students may express their ideas freely without having to face the reader directly.

According to 2013 curriculum, one of the main goals of English language teaching at Junior High School is that the students must be able to expose and be able to write different kinds of texts. It is obviously stated in the Kompetensi Inti (KI) and Kompetensi Dasar (KD) that “The students of Junior High School are expected to be able to compile descriptive texts about people, animal, or things by observing the aim, text structure, and language feature correctly and contextually”.

Based on the writer’s observation at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea, she found that the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea had difficulties in learning writing. The first, the students still got confused on how to write their text. The second, the students’ limited of vocabularies. The last, sometimes the students put the wrong punctuation and capitalization.

Concerning the problem that the students faced when they tried to express their ideas into written form, the researcher chooses guiding questions. This technique can help the students to explore their idea in learning writing skill, as Raymond (1980:15) said that questions can be a way to help exploring topic in writing skill. According to Traver (1998:70), “a guiding questions is the basic question that directs students for understanding”. This technique provides a list of questions that can make the students think about the topic. Furthermore, Brown (2001:169) says that the question can help learners to express idea because the communication can make class interactive.

Considering that problem, the researcher formulated the research question as follows: “Can the writing skill of the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea be improved through guiding questions?”

## **METHODS**

This research used a quasi experimental research design, a non-equivalent control group design. The design of this research proposed by Cohen, et.al (2000:231) as follow:

$$\frac{\text{Experimental}}{\text{Control}} = \frac{O_1 \times O_2}{O_3 O_4}$$

Where:

E: experimental group

C: control group

X: treatment

$O_1$ : pre-test for experimental group

$O_2$ : post-test for experimental group

$O_3$ : pre-test for control group

$O_4$ : post-test for control group

The researcher administers pre-test to the both groups to know their pre-existing knowledge of writing. At the end of the treatment, she provides the two groups with post-test to know the effect of the treatment to improve the students' skill in writing descriptive text. The population of this research was the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea consisting of 2 classes. Each class consisted of 20 up to 23 students. The total number of the students was 43.

After collecting the data of pre-test and post-test from the experimental group and control group, the researcher measured the score differences from pre-test and post-test by the statistical calculation. To analyze students individual score in pre-test and post-test of both groups, the researcher applied formula recommended by Arikunto (2006:240) as follows:

$$\Sigma = \frac{X}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

$\Sigma$  : Individual Score

X : Obtained Score

N : Maximum Score

100: Constant Number

After that, the researcher computed the mean scores of pretest and posttest based on formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:306):

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Where:

M : Mean score

$\sum x$  : Sum of achieved value

N : total number of students

After analyzed the students' individual score, the researcher computed the sum of square deviation between the result of the experimental and control group by using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006:312) as follows:

a. The formula for experimental group:

$$\sum x^2 = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}$$

b. The formula for control group:

$$\sum y^2 = \sum Y^2 - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N}$$

Where:

$\sum x^2$  : a sum of square deviation of experimental group

$\sum y^2$  : a sum of square deviation of the control group

$\sum x$  : a sum of deviation of experimental group

$\sum y$  : a sum of deviation of control group

N : number of students

Then, to find out  $t_{\text{counted}}$ , the researcher used the formula by Arikunto (2006:311) as follows:

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{\Sigma X^2 + \Sigma Y^2}{Nx + Ny - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny}\right)}}$$

Where:

t : significant difference between experimental and control group

Mx : the mean deviation of experimental group

My : the mean deviation of control group

$\Sigma x^2$  : the sum of square deviation of experimental group

$\Sigma y^2$  : the sum of square deviation of control group

Nx : number of students in experimental group

Ny : number of students in control group

## FINDINGS

In these findings, the researcher presents the result of the research and the analysis of the data. The research was conducted from January 6<sup>th</sup> until February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea. The data was collected by the researcher using tests as the main instruments of the research and the result is presented in the form of numeric data. The result of this research was acquired from a writing test. The writing test was divided into pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was given in the first meeting and post test was given in the last meeting into both classes (VIII A as an experimental group and VIII B as a control group). The result of the students' achievement on both tests can be seen in the following tables.

Table 1: The Pretest and Posttest Results of the Experimental Group

Tests	Scores	
	Total Score	Mean Score
Pretest	816.67	40.83
Posttest	1550.00	77.50

Based on the table 1 above, it can be seen that total score (sum of scores) of the experimental group on the pretest is 816.67 and the mean score is 40.83. Additionally, this group obtained 1550.00 as the total score on the posttest, and the

mean score obtained is 77.50. It means that there was a significant progress of mean score of the experimental group from (55.80) in the pre-test to (77.50) in the post-test.

Furthermore, the researcher not only analyzed the pre-test result of the experimental group, but also the pre-test result of control group. The researcher provides the pre-test result table of the control group as follows:

Table 2: The Pretest and Posttest of the Control Group

Tests	Scores	
	Total Score	Mean Score
Pretest	1283.33	55.80
Posttest	1358.33	59.06

Based on the table 2 above, it can be seen that total score (sum of scores) of the control group on the pretest is 1283.33 and the mean score is 55.80. Additionally, this group obtained 1358.33 as the total score on the posttest, and the mean score obtained is 59.06. By determining the total scores and the mean scores of this group on both tests, that there was a significant progress of mean score of the control group from (55.80) in the pre-test to (59.06) in the post-test.

Table 3: Deviation and Square Deviation of Experimental Group

Tests	Scores	
	Total Score	Mean Score
Pretest	816.7	40.83
Posttest	1550.04	77.502
Deviation	733.4	36.67
Square Deviation	28475.11	1423.76

As written on the table 3, the total score of the experimental group on the pre-test is 816.7, while the total score they gained on the post-test is 1550.04. In addition, to get the deviation scores, the researcher subtract the students' scores on the post-

test from the students' scores on the pre-test. Further, the researcher square the deviation score of each student in order to get the square-deviation. Thus, the researcher compute the mean deviation of pre-test and post-test in experimental group by using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006):

$$M_x = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$M_x = \frac{733.4}{20}$$

$$M_x = 36.67$$

Therefore, by dividing the total deviation by the number of the students of the experimental group, it can be found out that the mean score of deviation of the experimental group is 36.67. In order to find out the deviation of the control group, the researcher continues calculating the students' score as presented in the following table:

Table 4: Deviation and Square Deviation of Control Group

Tests	Scores	
	Total Score	Mean Score
Pretest	1283.36	55.79
Posttest	1358.35	59.05
Deviation	74.99	3.26
Square Deviation	624.83	27.17

From the above table, it can be seen that the students' total score of the control group on the pre-test is 1283.36 while students' total score on the post-test is 1358.35. After computing the deviation scores of the control group, the score analysis is continued to calculate the mean score deviation. The researcher used the same

formula as what was used to calculate the previous mean score deviation. The researcher then provides the calculation as follows:

$$M_y = \frac{\sum y}{N}$$

$$M_y = \frac{74.99}{23}$$

$$M_y = 3.26$$

Then, the researcher determined the t-table value of df 41 (20+23-2). By applying 0.05 level of significance on one-tailed test, it is found that the t-table value of df 41 is 1.68. Hence, by looking at the value, the researcher affirms that the research hypothesis is accepted for the reason that the t-counted (7.99) was higher than the t-table (1.68). In other words, guiding questions technique is effective in teaching writing skill to the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea. Based on that analysis, it was concluded that the researcher hypothesis was accepted. In conclusion, the use of guiding questions can improve students' writing skill especially in writing descriptive text.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this part, the researcher discusses about the findings of the research. After conducting the treatment to the students for eight meetings, the researcher administered the post-test to the students of the experimental and control groups. The result showed that guiding questions improved the eighth grade students' writing skill in descriptive text. The improvement could be seen from the deviation between the pre-test and the post-test.

The students' scores of both groups have increased on the post-test. Assuming the students' scores of the experimental group rocketed from 40.83 on the pre-test to 77.50 on the post-test. This proved that there was a significant difference between the students' score on the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group.



Meanwhile, the students' scores of the control group improved from 55.80 to 59.42, which was lower than the result of the experimental group.

There was only one student of the experimental group (5%) who could meet the minimum passing grade of 65 on the pre-test. Whereas, there were ten students of the control group (43%) who met the criterion. Thus, students' writing skill of the control group is better than of the experimental group. In other words, students' writing skill of both groups on the pre-test was different.

As mentioned in the scope of this research, there were three components of writing assessed. There were vocabulary, mechanics and organization. In vocabulary on experimental group shows that students score increased to 35%. This can be seen from score that the students got 50% on pre-test. While on post-test the numbers increase to 85%. It indicates that the improvement in vocabulary is significant.

By seeing the data, in mechanics consist of capitalization and punctuation on experimental group shows that students' score increased to 37.5%. This can be seen from score that the students got 36.25% on pre-test. While on post-test the number increases to 73.75%. This indicates that the improvement in mechanics is significant.

Moreover, in organization on experimental group shows that students score increased to 37.5%. This can be seen from score the students got 36.25% on pre-test. While on post-test the numbers increase to 73.75%. This indicates that the improvement in organization is significant.

However, after receiving treatment for eight meetings, the students' writing skill of the experimental group increased. All students met the criterion (100%). Meanwhile, the students' writing skill of the control group was slightly improved, from 43% to 47%. Therefore, the treatment given brings positive impact on students' writing skill of the experimental group.

As mentioned in the scope of this research, there were three components of writing assessed: vocabulary, mechanics and organization. The result showed that the students' ability of the experimental group in the three components got increased on

the post-test. Their vocabulary mastery was increased by 85%. Mechanics of writing and organization of ideas rose by 73.75%.

The students' vocabulary mastery can be increased through guiding questions as they are accustomed to hearing and practicing some words relating to identification and description of people, place or thing. During the treatment the researcher asked the students some questions related to the topic (previewing questions) in pre-activity. When the students answered the questions, they indeed built their vocabulary. She also provided a list of vocabulary to help them improve their vocabulary.

Furthermore, guiding questions helps the students increase their organization of ideas. By answering 5WH questions they automatically arranged their ideas. It allows students to construct their ideas in a good way of descriptive text. In other words, this technique helps students to write descriptive text with the right generic structure consisting of identification and description.

In addition, guiding questions helps students with mechanics of writing (capitalization and punctuation). While answering questions one by one of 5WH, the students practically used capital letters in the beginning of a sentence and period at the end of the sentence. Undeniably, the students' knowledge on their first language, in this case the Indonesian language (Bahasa), helps them a lot with the mechanics of writing matter.

Nevertheless, using guiding questions technique in the teaching of writing skill is quite challenging. The researcher encountered some problems regarding to students' vocabulary and grammar. Students' lack of vocabulary impeded their understanding of questions provided and ideas development. For that reason, she provided them with a list of vocabulary to help them write a good paragraph. Besides, the students got problem in grammar. For example, when they made a sentence they did not put the words in order. To solve the problem, she directly corrected the students' mistakes.

Like other techniques, guiding questions has a limitation. This technique may not be effective to be applied in big classes. With 23 students in a class, the researcher found it difficult to provide individual students help in classroom activity. Therefore, the researcher divided the students to work in groups so that they can help each other. Shortly, having many students in a class may not be working well by applying guiding question technique, except they put to work independently in groups.

It has been proved that using guiding questions technique can improve students' writing skill of descriptive text; thus, the researcher expects that further researchers to investigate the use of this technique for teaching other kinds of text such as, procedure text, analytical exposition text, recount text, etc. She also expects that SMPN 1 Tanantovea may receive some benefits from this experiment. The English teacher for example, can use this technique as one of the alternative ways for teaching writing skill. The students writing skill will be better if they continuously apply this technique.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the result of the data analysis that have been presented before, the researcher concludes that use of guiding question technique can improve the skill of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea in writing descriptive texts. This can be proved by comparing the mean score of both the control and experimental groups before and after the treatment. The results of the post tests of both groups show that mean score of the experimental group is significantly higher than that of the control group. This proves that the guiding question technique is effective in improving the skill of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Tanantovea in writing descriptive text. It can be proved by the value of  $t_{\text{counted}}$  (7.99) which is greater than  $t_{\text{table}}$  (1.68). It means that, the hypothesis is accepted.

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