

# IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH GUIDED QUESTIONS TECHNIQUE

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah melihat perbedaan kemampuan menulis siswa setelah diajarkan menggunakan teknik guided questions. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif. Sasaran penelitian ini sebanyak 30 siswa kelas dua di SMPN 23 Bandar Lampung. Tes menulis digunakan sebagai alat pengambilan data. Analisis data menggunakan Paired Sample T-Test. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa ada perbedaan yang signifikan pada pretest dan posttest dalam penulisan teks deskriptif siswa. Dapat disarankan bahwa teknik guided questions memfasilitasi siswa untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka.

**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to explore whether there was the difference of the students' ability in writing descriptive text after they were taught through guided questions technique. This research was quantitative research. The subjects of this research were 30 students at the second grade of SMPN 23 Bandar Lampung. The writing test was administrated as the instrument of the research. The data was analyzed by using Paired Sample T-Test. The result showed that there was a statistically significant difference of students' writing ability between the pre test and the post test. This suggests that guided questions technique facilitates the students to improve their writing ability.

**Keywords:** guided questions technique, writing, and descriptive text.

## INTRODUCTION

As one of language skills, writing plays an important role in the formal communication. Writing is an activity to express idea, thoughts, or even experiences in form of paragraph. The second grade of junior high school, based on the English competence requires the students to be able to compose written descriptive paragraph in simple form. To do so, the students should be able to develop their ideas by using English correctly.

According to Setiyadi (2007:7.9), even though writing in the target language, it involves the ability to shape the letters of the alphabet and the knowledge of the right combination of letters, the real writing is the skill in expressing ideas through the written words of the target language, which is called composition.

However, writing is a complex skill to be learned. It is supported by Negari (2011) who stated that learning to write is difficult especially for those writing in a second and foreign in academic contexts. In writing, students face many difficulties such as lack of grammar understanding, lack of vocabulary, confused about the content, mechanics, and organization. Those difficulties are related to the aspects of writing. The difficulty in terms of grammar is usually related to tenses. In constructing English sentences, time plays an important role. Different time of situation needs different tense which also means different type of verb. The change of words used in constructing sentences in English may confuse the students to write their writing.

Lack of vocabulary is also a common cause of students' difficulty in writing. The students sometimes do not know the right word which they need to put in their writing. This case is found in the research conducted by Jamil (2005) where the students were assigned to write a descriptive text about their dream house. One of the students wrote "guest room" instead of "living room", "eat room" instead of "dining room". This finding can be considered as students' difficulty in terms of vocabulary.

One of the difficulties which is also commonly found related to the content or ideas about what to write. Since one of the criteria of good paragraphs proposed by Smalley and Ruetten (1986) is about the unity, the students have to think about every idea that might help them to support the main topic. In fact, although they have been given a topic to be developed, it will be difficult for the students to develop their idea of what to write. Another difficulty found is in organization. The students do not know what to write first and what to write last. They cannot link the ideas into a coherent paragraph. They still have a problem with the organization of the ideas.

Byrne (1988:4) says that writing is difficult for most people both in mother tongue and in foreign language. The researcher assumed that the students are still confused in developing their writing. So, they need guidance in writing descriptive text to make them easier in expressing their ideas and also make their writing well organized. This is because Guided Questions requires students to write the text based on the set of questions that is given by the teacher.

Therefore, after considering the fact in the field, the researcher uses guided questions technique to guide the students in their writing. This technique provides a list of questions that can make the students think about the topic. This technique is expected to give guidance about what should be included in students' writing. By guided questions technique, the students are not confused of what to write first and next because they have guidance in its process. The questions are chosen as a technique to improve the students' ability in understanding descriptive paragraph, for instance the students can develop their own ideas by answering the questions given by the teacher based on the features of descriptive text.

Iwan (2010) conducting research at SMPN 1 Terbanggi Besar Central Lampung explored how guiding questions could develop the students' ability in writing. He found that after being taught by using guiding questions in the experimental class increased from 53.90 up to 69.96. This result of research proves that this technique can help the students improve their writing ability. Therefore, the researcher used this technique to teach writing descriptive text. Based on the problems above, the researcher conducted a research entitled Improving the Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text through Guided Questions Technique at the Second Grade of SMPN 23 Bandar Lampung.

## **METHODS**

The purposes of this research were to find out whether there is difference of students' ability in writing descriptive text after being taught through guided questions technique, to investigate

which aspect of writing improved the most. The one group pretest post test design was used in conducting the research.

The population of this research was the second grade students of SMPN 23 Bandar Lampung in academic year of 2016/2017. One class was chosen as the experimental class which consisted of 30 students. The research was conducted in several procedures; they were giving pre test, giving treatment, giving post test, and analyzing the data.

The instrument of this research was writing test which consisted of pretest and posttest. Between the two tests there were treatments held in three meetings. In this research, the learning material was focused on descriptive text. Then, the test was constructed and scored based on writing theory.

Inter-rater reliability was used to determine the reliability in this research. So, the raters scored students' works from pre test and post test and then the reliability from the each test could be determined. The researcher had asked the English teacher as another rater to score the students' works. The result of inter-rater reliability tend to be very high reliability which was 0.95 in pretest and 0.98 in posttest

## **RESULTS**

The result from the calculation by using *Repeated Measure T-Test* (SPSS 16.0) shows the mean score of pretest result is 64.36 while in the posttest is 77.33 in which the difference is 12.97 points. It can be seen from the following table.

**Table 1. The Difference of Students' Score in Pretest and Posttest**

Category	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
Mean	64.36	77.33	12.97

From the table above, it can be seen that there was a difference of students' ability in writing descriptive text after being taught through guided questions technique and it answers the first research question. Meanwhile, the second result of the study shows that organization is the aspect of writing that improves the most after being taught through guided questions technique. The summary can be seen from the following table below.

**Table 2. The summary of the students' result in each aspect of writing.**

Aspects of Writing	Aspects Improvement (PoS - PrS)	(%)*
Content	4.51	15.03%
Organization	4.69	23.45%
Vocabulary	1.93	9.65%
LU	1.5	6%
Mechanic	0.33	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.96</b>	<b>60.73</b>

The table shows that the students' score improves in all aspects of writing and aspect of organization improves the most after being taught through guided questions technique. This result answers the second research questions.

After the research was conducted, it can be seen that guided questions technique improves the students' ability in writing descriptive text. Through this technique, the students were given guidance in a set of questions to help them in expressing and developing their ideas. Bramer and Sedley (1981:24) stated that

asking and answering questions is a good method to discover details of experience. So, giving questions to the students is expected to stimulate students' thoughts and they can compose the paragraph by answering the questions given to them. In this way, the students can write well because they are guided by the questions.

## DISCUSSIONS

Referring to the research questions, the researcher would like to find out whether there was any difference of students' ability in writing descriptive text before and after being taught by using guided questions technique, and what aspects of writing improves the most after the students are taught by using guided questions technique.

As the researcher observed from the first until fifth meeting, she found some problems of students' writing ability. From the content aspect, it was found the limitation of the students' ability in developing the idea, so they cannot develop the text. In their writing, the researcher found that they just wrote some simple characteristics of the subject, which actually they could develop the topic sentences like; physical appearance, quality, or personality traits.

From the organization aspect, it was found in the students' writing, the ideas was disconnected, and lack of logical sequencing and development. The students also mostly wrote just 1-2 paragraphs which should be 3 paragraphs. From the vocabulary aspect, the students' vocabulary ability was still low. Sometimes they made mistakes in choosing and using the right words in a sentence.

From the language use aspect, it was found the students did not know the concept of present tense, meanwhile the teacher had taught it to them. They did not know the use of attributive “has” for singular subject and “have” for plural subject. Besides, they did not know what the verb they should use in present tense, such as “she like to eat” the word “like” should be added “s”. The last, from mechanics aspect, it was found the students did not use capitalization of the first sentence, place’s name, person’s name, and also in spelling.

Furthermore, after the treatment was conducted, the difference of the students’ writing ability had an improvement, it could be seen from the comparison between the students’ pretest score and posttest score. It can be seen from mean score from pre-test and post-test where the difference is 12.97 (from 64.36 to 77.33). Mean score for the pretest is 64.36. Pretest was administered before the researcher implemented guided questions technique in learning writing in order to find out the students’ writing ability. On the other hand, the mean score for the posttest is 77.33. Then, the result was analyzed by using Paired Sample T-Test, it was also found that the t-value was higher than the t-table and the significant level was achieved. Therefore, it was confirmed that there was a significant difference of students’ writing descriptive text after the students were taught by using guided questions technique.

Then, this study also analyzed the improvement of each aspect of writing. The gain obtained in each aspect, they are: content 4.51, organization 4.69, vocabulary 1.93,

language use 1.5 and mechanics 0.33. It can be concluded that organization aspect improved the most among the other aspects.

In other words, guided questions technique can be used to improve students’ ability in writing. Through Guided Questions, the students were given guidance in form of set of questions in writing descriptive text to help them expressing their ideas. By guiding the students, they will have something to write and their piece of writing would be well organized. Therefore, by answering some questions related to the topic, which was going to be written by students, hopefully it could minimize the mistake made by students. Bramer and Sedley (1981:24) stated that asking and answering questions is a good method to discover details of experience. So, giving questions to the students is expected to stimulate students’ thoughts and they can compose the paragraph by answering the questions given to them. In this way, the students can write well because they are guided by the questions.

It is line with Iwan (2011) conducted a study in order to find out whether there is improvement of students’ ability in writing after being taught using guided questions technique. He conducted the research at SMPN 1 Terbanggi Besar. The researcher found that the score of the pretest was unsatisfying, the mean of the score was 53.90. It was far from the standard of minimum completeness of mastery learning for junior high school (KKM). After the treatment was conducted, the mean score of posttest was 69.96, which the gain was 16.06. He affirmed that by using

guided questions technique, the students' ability in writing descriptive text improves.

Supported by several researchers, Agustina (2015) conducted a research to find out whether guiding questions could improve the ability in writing narrative text of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Belitang. The result showed that this technique could improve the students' writing skill, the gain obtained was 13.71 (57.27 to 70.98). Furthermore, Rivers (1964:262) also supports this idea by saying "...a series of questions may be constructed that the students write continues story as they answer the question. This means that, when the teacher asks the questions, it will make the students to open their brain to create their ideas.

According to the explanation above, it can be concluded that the implementation of guided questions technique can improve students' writing. By using guided questions technique, the students are helped in expressing and developing their ideas into a well organized text as they answer the questions given to them.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and its analysis, the researcher concludes that there is a difference of students' ability in writing descriptive text before and after being taught through guided questions technique. The posttest score of students' writing is significantly higher the students' pretest score. It can be concluded that guided questions technique can improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text. Meanwhile, this technique improved all aspects of writing descriptive text including

content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The aspect of writing that improved the most is organization, the gain obtained is 4.69.

### SUGGESTIONS

From the findings of the research, it is fully hoped that it can be useful and applied in practical uses. As the suggestions, the researcher suggests English teachers to use guided questions as one of the alternative techniques to improve the students' writing ability in writing descriptive text. This is because the technique can help the students who still have problems in expressing their ideas in written form to generate their ideas related to the topic and it helps the students to write with well organized sentences in descriptive text. Then the researcher suggests the further researchers to apply this technique with another kind of text, procedure, analytical exposition, or other kinds of text, also can conduct this technique in different level, such as in senior high school.

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