

# Improving students' writing achievement in descriptive text through FRESH technique at the first grade of SMPN 32 Bekasi

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## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to find out whether there is a significant improvement in students' writing achievement of descriptive text because of using FRESH (Fact, Reason, Elaboration, and Shift) and to determine which aspect of writing improves the most. The population of this research was the first-grade students of SMPN 32 Bekasi in the academic year 2021/2022. The sample of this research was class VII I which consisted of 29 students. This research was quantitative research by using One Group Pre-test and Post-test Design. The writing test was used as the instrument for pre-test and post-test. The data were taken from the test and they were analyzed by using *Paired Sample T-test*. The result of this research showed there is a significant improvement of students' writing achievement of descriptive text after the implementation of FRESH since the value of the significant level was 0.00 that lower than 0.05. On the other hand, all aspects of writing improved regarding the results, but the organization was improved the most. Briefly, it could be concluded that FRESH enabled to improve the students' writing achievement.

**Keywords:** *writing, descriptive text, FRESH technique*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Richards & Renandya (2002) state that writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered for EFL learners since the difficulties starting from organize the ideas and deliver them into readable text. When the teacher asked students to write texts, they still seem to be confused about what should be written and how to organize the writing (Suyanto, 2015). They may have to write a lot of things, but they cannot express their ideas well in writing. The main problem student face is that they are confused about what is first, next, and on to write a text, in other words, they did not have any concepts to write something. Moreover, some learners were very insecure and reluctant to write for several factors, namely grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. Poor grammar mastery will make the writing process more difficult and lack of vocabulary will limit the ideas to be developed (Sartika, 2017).

Among several types of texts commonly used in learning English in high school such as narrative, recount, report, descriptive, procedure, and argumentative text, there is one type of text that is often known and related to everyday life, namely descriptive text. Descriptive text is used in daily life to describe everything they see, feel, and hear in detail to inform other people about things to make it easier to understand. This is why the researcher chooses descriptive text. The term "descriptive text" refers to a type of text that is used to describe a real object (person, place, and things). According to Wardiman, Jahur, and Djusma (2008), Descriptive text is a text with purpose to give information about description the features of someone, something, or a certain place. It will help the reader to understand clearly about the real object. It is important that the writer must be able to provide details of the object being described in composing descriptive text so that a mental picture of people, places, or objects can be created by the reader (Wyrick, 2000). The descriptive text consists of identification and description. Identification is a process of how to an object that wants to describe. The description is a process of how to describe the object. The use of adjectives is needed to help the reader to create a mental picture of the object described.

In writing descriptive text, the students should get the object to be described and generate the idea. Also, they have to develop the idea into one or more paragraphs. However, while the teacher inquired them to write a descriptive text, some students often found some difficulties. The students feel difficult to build their imagination and organize their ideas. Besides that, they find difficulties in grammar and lack of vocabulary so that some students are confused which appropriate words to use in their writing (Husna, Zainil, & Rozimela, 2013). Those difficulties are related to the aspects of writing which consist of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Based on students' difficulties in writing a descriptive text, the researcher wants to try to solve the problem by using the technique in the learning process. The researcher tries to do a research on improving students' writing skills in descriptive Text through FRESH Technique. FRESH stands for fact, reason, elaboration, and shift. According to Faisal and Suwandita (2013) FRESH is a technique that can help students in writing descriptive texts, especially in generating and organizing their ideas through each letter of the acronym and the meaning of FRESH. F stands for "Fact" in this research means the general description of the subject or it can be called the identification of the object. It usually includes information like as name of the object, kind or type, etc. R stands for "Reason". It means a supporting idea that can strengthen the fact. E stands for "Elaboration". Elaboration means the explanation of the reason. The writer should elaborate it in detail, so the reader can get a clear description of the object. SH stands for "Shift". It means the conclusion of the information that the writer has written.

By using every letter of FRESH, it can help the students in making a good descriptive text and in improving students' writing skills because it can guide the students to get ideas from the topic they choose so that they can arrange and make a coherent text. FRESH as a technique is also easy to be understood, so the students can follow the lesson properly.

There are also some previous research results dealing with FRESH conducted by other researchers. The first was conducted by Achmad, Fitriani, Rusli, and Yulia (2019) showed that the findings of this study indicated that the highest improvement came from organization and content aspect. Vocabulary, grammar and mechanics were improve, but not as much as two aspects above. The second was conducted by Ria and Novtapianti (2019) showed that the researcher did experimental method by using quasi-experimental design to the two groups of students, they are experimental group and control group. The use of FRESH proved to be an effective technique to help the students in improving writing achievement. The third was conducted by Faisal and Suwandita (2013) showed that the method of this study was quasi experimental method. After data analyses, the students in the experimental class had better achievement than those in the control class. it can be concluded that FRESH technique is effective for teaching descriptive paragraph at the tenth grade students of one of the state Madrasah Aliyah in Purwokerto.

Referring to those explanations above, FRESH can be an alternative to improve students' writing skills in Descriptive Text. The researcher is interested to analyze and focus on the effectiveness of FRESH used in descriptive text to see how this technique is improved including in the aspects of writing, such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research with the title "Improving Students' Writing Achievement in Descriptive Text through FRESH Technique".

## **II. METHODS**

This research was quantitative research by using One-Group Pretest-Posttest design. The research was intended to find out whether there is any significant improvement in students' writing achievement of descriptive text because of using FRESH and to know which aspect of writing improves the most because of using FRESH. The population of the research was the first grade students of SMP Negeri 32 Kota

Bekasi with the sample of this research was VII I which consists of 29 students. The sample was chosen by using simple random sampling. To figure out whether the objectives of the research has been achieved or not, the researcher used writing test as the research instrument. The test were measured by using scoring rubric. The data were analyzed by using *Paired Sample T-test*.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Result

The researcher conducted the pre-test and the post-test in order to find out whether there is any significant improvement in students' writing achievement of descriptive text because of using FRESH and to determine which aspect of writing improves the most because of using FRESH.

**Table 1. Distribution of Students' Writing Achievement in Pre-Test**

Mean	60.0345
Median	60.0000
Minimum	45.00
Maximum	71.50
Sum	1741.00

The table shows the students' score ranged from 45.00 until 71.50 and it showed the means of students' pre-test was 60.03. Furthermore, the table showed the lowest score of pre-test was 45.00 and the highest was 71.50 with the median was 60.00.

**Table 2. Distribution of Students' Writing Achievement in Post-Test**

Mean	78.1379
Median	78.0000
Minimum	66.00
Maximum	87.00
Sum	2266.00

Concerning with the table, it indicated the mean score of post-test was 78.13. The range of students' score was from 66.00 until 87.00. The table noted the minimum score of pre-test was 65.00 and the maximum score was 87.00 with the median was 78.00. It can be concluded that the students' post-test scores improved because of the implementation of FRESH.

**Table 3. The Improvement of The Students' Achievement in Each Aspect of Writing**

No	Aspect	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain	Sig.
1	Content	16.60	22.72	0.456	.000
2	Organization	14.63	19.90	0.508	.000
3	Vocabulary	13.10	15.95	0.413	.000
4	Grammar	13.24	16.09	0.421	.000
5	Mechanic	2.46	3.46	0.393	.000

The table shows that there is an increase in every writing including content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic. The aspect with the highest improvement was organization with the gain was 0.508. The second was content with the gain was 0.456, then grammar with the gain was 0.421, vocabulary with the gain was 0.413, and the lowest improvement was mechanic with the gain was 0.393.

**Table 4. Paired Sample T-Test**

		<b>Paired Samples Test</b>								
		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	- 18.1034	5.34586	.99270	- 20.13690	-16.06999	- 18.23	28	.000	
		5					7			

The table shows that the result of the computation that the value of two tailed significant is 0.000. It indicates that H1 is accepted because the significant value (0.00) is lower than 0.05. In addition, the gain score shows the improvement of students' writing achievement from the pre-test to the post-test which is 18.10. Therefore, it can be justified that there is a significant improvement of students' writing achievement of descriptive text after the implementation of FRESH. For the second research question, the data is analyzed one by one by seeing the score of all the aspects of writing and then it can be known the aspect improved the most was organization.

## Discussion

### Discussion on Finding 1

The result of this research showed that there was a significant improvement of the students' writing achievement because of using FRESH. The improvement of the students' writing could be seen from the comparison of mean score of the students' pretest and posttest. A good and an effective technique used in the class gave the contribution in the improvement of the students' score. In line with the research result conducted by Kurniawati, Syafar, and Hastini (2016) which stated that the FRESH is effective technique to improve writing skill of the seventh grade EFL-Learners especially in the some aspects of writing, there are organization, grammar and mechanics. They said that the students were interested, active, and enthusiastic in the process of teaching learning. It can be seen when in the learning process, the learners could be active when the learners getting and organizing idea from the topic. Also, they gave their participation to do the task and asked the researcher about related vocabulary and the things that they did not know.

Another research conducted by Faisal and Wulandari (2013) at one of the junior high school in Banyumas found that there was an improvement of students' writing score after applying FRESH in the learning process. Most of students could provide enough information about what they described. They could more understand in choose appropriate words that suitable with the sentences and understand the use of simple present tense. Furthermore, the students understand and apply the rule of writing descriptive text well. Because of "FRESH" arrangement, students can make their descriptive text fluent and easy to understand.

The guiding steps provided in the acronym form FRESH can help students create their meaningful sensory descriptive paragraph. As supported by Somsai and Buttapeng (2022), the written descriptive paragraph would be fluent, easy to understand, and clear enough for readers to picture the object

described. Such success might lead to positive attitudes towards learning English in the study. The technique was genuinely help the students in developing an effective paragraph with good content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and even mechanics so they could produce a better text as well. The result showed that the students' descriptive paragraph writing competence improved after practicing FRESH.

From those explanations, it can be concluded that FRESH is effective to improve students' writing achievement in descriptive text. Accordingly, based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there is significant improvement of students' writing achievement of descriptive text after the implementation of FRESH.

## **Discussion on Finding 2**

The research findings finally revealed that there was improvement in each aspect of writing. It can be seen in the organization. The researcher explained to students about the generic structure of the descriptive text that was in line with the FRESH structure, this could help them to organize their ideas step by step according to the generic structure of descriptive text to produce a complete and clear text. It was in line with the previous research finding conducted by Kurniawati, Syafar, and Hastini (2016) who said that the use of the FRESH was effective to improve the students' writing skill especially in organization. This is because by applying FRESH in the teaching and learning writing process, the learners could be active when the learners getting and organizing idea from the topic, the technique was guided the learners to organize their idea in the written form.

In content, the students could develop their topic and add more information related to topic. By arranging ideas and sentences, it will produce quality content as well. Through FRESH, the students could write much more than before by showing that he had ideas about what to write, and could develop those ideas. It was supported by Faisal and Suwandita (2013) that said the implementation of FRESH technique gives positive impact for the students' writing skill in writing a descriptive text, especially in content. Through the element of FRESH, students will be able to give more complete information as the content of their descriptive text.

Next is grammar, the students also had difficulties using a correct grammatical form. In addition, the students were less motivated and scared if they made mistakes in grammar whenever they started writing in English. Without a doubt, not only improve students in their developing their writing but also through FRESH, the students had a lot chances to practice their grammar. This was in line with Achmad, Fitriani, Rusli, and Yulia (2019) who said the use of FRESH help the students in improving students writing skill in grammar aspect even though only improve slightly. Although few grammatical inaccuracies were found, the students understood that the grammar especially simple present tense was required in writing descriptive text.

In vocabulary aspect, the students were limited in English vocabularies. They seemed hard at choosing words such as adjectives, nouns, conjunctions, and verbs. Several times the researcher found out some that some students made mistakes on their tasks such as on the use of adjectives and conjunctions. This finding of this research supported by the study of Achmad, Fitriani, Rusli, and Yulia (2019) stated the use of FRESH help the students in improving students writing skill in vocabulary aspect even though only improve slightly. This is because the students have the insufficient vocabulary. Sometimes, some of the students put words which were unsuitable contextually.

Next is mechanic. The students had better writing in the posttest even only several minor errors of mechanics were made by the students. By paying attention to the problems that occur in mechanics, students still need to pay more attention to punctuation errors, spelling, and use of capital letters. To support this finding, Somsai and Buttapeng (2022) implied that the students provided occasional spelling,

punctuation, and capitalization errors. However, it was better than those found in the pretest. This is because when in the teaching process, the researchers emphasized spelling, punctuation, and capitalization when writing. The researchers also kept checking errors while they were writing, which might lead to a few mistakes in the posttest.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

##### Conclusions

Based on the result of the research, there is significant improvement on students' writing achievement of descriptive text after the implementation of FRESH. It is because of the teaching learning activity. During the learning activity, the students were interested, active and also enthusiastic. The researcher found that FRESH helped students in generating and organizing ideas through each letter of the acronym of the FRESH. The technique could make the students become creative in obtaining ideas. Thus, it can be claimed that the treatments using FRESH as teaching writing technique successfully can improve the students' writing achievement, especially in descriptive text. The organization has the highest score than other aspect. It is because it is easy for students to do writing since they can organize and arrange ideas step by step from the topic, they choose by using every letter of FRESH as a guidance to get a complete clear text according to its general structure. The lowest score is Mechanic. This happens because the students sometimes did not pay attention in the using of mechanic.

Based on the conclusion above, the researchers would like to propose some suggestions as follow: English teachers are suggested to use FRESH as a technique in teaching writing, since by using FRESH, the researcher found that the students are able to generate and organize ideas related to the topic to the coherent paragraph. Also, the activities in the classroom will be more fun and the students become more enthusiastic in learning writing. Media, such as: videos, posters, pictures, and songs, could be the alternative in teaching while using FRESH. It is because the students are more encouraged when the teacher uses media in teaching learning activity. Also, the situation in the classroom becomes not boring.

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