

***IMPROVING STUDENTS WRITING SKILL OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT
THROUGH GUIDED QUESTIONS TO GRADE X CLASS STUDENTS AT SMA
IT BUDI LUHUR***

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PENDAHULUAN

Writing is one of the essential language skills that plays a significant role in language learning, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through writing, students are able to express their ideas, opinions, experiences, and feelings in a clear and organized written form. Writing also helps students develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to communicate ideas logically. Unlike oral communication, written communication requires accuracy and careful organization, making writing a complex and demanding skill to master. In the context of EFL learning, writing is often considered the most difficult skill compared to listening, speaking, and reading (Sobirin et al. 2022). This difficulty occurs because writing requires the integration of several language components at the same time, such as vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, coherence, and organization of ideas. Students must not only understand the topic but also be able to arrange their ideas systematically and express them using correct language forms. Consequently, many students experience anxiety and lack confidence when asked to produce written texts in English.

In Indonesian senior high schools, students are expected to master various genres of texts in accordance with the curriculum, including narrative, recount, procedure, and descriptive texts. Descriptive text is one of the basic text types that students learn at the tenth-grade level. The purpose of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place, animal, or object in detail so that readers can clearly imagine what is being described. This type of text requires students to use appropriate adjectives, sensory details, and clear organization. However, in practice, many students encounter difficulties in writing descriptive texts effectively (Kholik, Warisno, and Hidayah 2026).

Based on preliminary observation conducted at SMA IT Budi Luhur, it was found that the tenth-grade students' achievement in writing descriptive texts was relatively low. Many students faced difficulties in starting their writing, determining which aspects should be described, and developing ideas into well-organized paragraphs. They often produced short and incomplete

texts with limited vocabulary and unclear descriptions. As a result, their writing lacked detail, coherence, and overall clarity, which affected their writing performance.

One of the main factors contributing to this problem is the lack of appropriate and effective teaching strategies in writing instruction. Writing activities are often carried out without sufficient guidance, leaving students to work independently without clear direction. This condition causes students to feel confused, bored, and unmotivated during the writing process. Therefore, it is important for teachers to apply suitable instructional strategies that can guide students step by step in developing ideas and organizing their writing systematically (Warisno and Hidayah 2021).

One effective strategy that can be applied in teaching writing is the use of guided questions. Guided questions are structured prompts that help students generate ideas by answering specific questions related to the topic. This strategy assists students in organizing their thoughts before writing and encourages them to focus on important aspects of the object being described. Through guided questions, students can develop their ideas gradually and produce more detailed, coherent, and well-structured descriptive texts.

Based on the explanation above, this study focuses on improving the writing skills of tenth-grade students in writing descriptive texts through the use of guided questions at SMA IT Budi Luhur. It is expected that the implementation of guided questions will help students overcome their writing difficulties and enhance their ability to write descriptive texts more effectively.

KERANGKA TEORETIK

Writing Skill

Writing skill is one of the most important language skills in English language learning, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Writing skill refers to the ability to produce written texts that are meaningful, coherent, and grammatically accurate. Through writing, students are able to express ideas, opinions, and feelings in a written form using appropriate language structures.

According to Brown (2007), writing is a cognitive process that involves several stages, namely planning, drafting, revising, and editing. These stages indicate that writing is not a one-step activity, but rather a continuous process that requires careful thinking and practice. In writing, students are required to organize their ideas logically, select appropriate vocabulary, and apply correct

grammar and sentence structure so that the intended message can be clearly understood by the reader.

Furthermore, writing skill requires the ability to maintain coherence and cohesion within a text. Coherence refers to the logical connection of ideas, while cohesion relates to the use of linguistic devices such as conjunctions and references to link sentences and paragraphs. Due to these complex requirements, writing is often considered a challenging skill for EFL learners, especially for students who have limited vocabulary and insufficient mastery of grammatical rules.

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is a type of text that aims to describe a particular person, place, animal, or object in detail. The main purpose of descriptive text is to provide readers with a clear and vivid picture of the subject being described so that they can easily imagine it. Descriptive text is one of the text genres taught to senior high school students as part of the English curriculum.

The generic structure of descriptive text consists of two main components: identification and description. The identification introduces the subject that will be described, while the description provides detailed information about the characteristics, qualities, or features of the subject. In writing descriptive texts, students are expected to use appropriate adjectives, descriptive phrases, and specific vocabulary related to the object being described.

However, many students encounter difficulties in writing descriptive texts. These difficulties include generating ideas, organizing sentences into coherent paragraphs, and selecting suitable vocabulary. As a result, students often produce descriptive texts that lack detail, clarity, and coherence. Therefore, effective instructional strategies are needed to assist students in developing their ability to write descriptive texts.

Guided Questions

Guided questions are instructional prompts provided by teachers to assist students in developing ideas before and during the writing process. These questions are designed to guide students in focusing on important aspects of the topic and organizing their ideas systematically. By responding to guided questions, students are able to generate ideas more easily and structure their writing in a clear and logical manner.

Harmer (2004) states that guided questions can help reduce students' anxiety in writing and increase their confidence. When students are given clear and structured questions, they are less likely to feel confused about how to begin writing or what to include in their texts. This strategy also encourages students to be more actively involved in the writing process.

Previous studies have indicated that guided questions are effective in improving students' writing performance. Through guided questions, students can develop their ideas step by step, produce more organized paragraphs, and write more coherent texts. Therefore, guided questions can be considered an effective strategy to improve students' writing skills, particularly in writing descriptive texts.

Research Design

This research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design. Classroom Action Research was selected because it is specifically designed to improve teaching and learning processes through systematic actions implemented in the classroom. CAR allows teachers and researchers to identify problems that occur during the learning process and apply appropriate strategies to overcome those problems in order to improve students' learning outcomes.

The research was conducted in two cycles, following the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Each cycle was implemented based on the results of the previous cycle. The second cycle was conducted to improve and refine the actions that had been implemented in the first cycle.

Research Setting and Subject

The research was conducted at SMA IT Budi Luhur. The subjects of this study were the tenth-grade students (Grade X) of the school. The students were selected as the research subjects because they experienced difficulties in writing descriptive texts, as identified through preliminary observation. The class consisted of students with varied levels of English proficiency, which made it appropriate for the implementation of Classroom Action Research.

Research Procedures

The research was carried out in two cycles, and each cycle consisted of the following stages:

Planning

In this stage, the researcher prepared the lesson plans, learning materials, and teaching media related to writing descriptive texts using guided questions. The researcher also designed writing tests, observation sheets, and other research instruments. The planning stage aimed to ensure that the teaching and learning activities were conducted systematically.

Action

In the action stage, the researcher implemented the teaching strategy in the classroom based on the prepared lesson plans. The students were taught how to write descriptive texts using guided questions. The learning activities included explaining the characteristics of descriptive texts, providing guided questions, and asking students to write descriptive texts based on the given prompts.

Observation

During the observation stage, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process to collect data related to students' participation, motivation, and responses toward the use of guided questions. Observation sheets were used to record students' activities and classroom interactions during the learning process.

Reflection

In the reflection stage, the researcher evaluated the results of the action based on the data collected from the writing tests and classroom observations. The strengths and weaknesses of the implementation were identified to determine whether improvements were needed in the next cycle.

Data Collection Techniques

The data in this research were collected using several techniques, including writing tests, classroom observation, and documentation.

Writing Tests

Writing tests were administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' writing achievement in writing descriptive texts. The students' writing was assessed based on several criteria, such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was conducted to observe students' participation, motivation, and engagement during the teaching and learning process. The observation data were recorded using observation sheets to support the results of the writing tests.

Documentation

Documentation was used to collect supporting data, such as students' worksheets, lesson plans, photographs of classroom activities, and students' writing results during the research process.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis was conducted by comparing the students' writing scores from Cycle I and Cycle II to determine the improvement in students' writing skills. Quantitative data from the writing tests were analyzed by calculating the mean scores and comparing the results between cycles.

Qualitative data obtained from classroom observation were analyzed descriptively to describe students' participation, motivation, and responses toward the implementation of guided questions. The qualitative findings were used to support and strengthen the quantitative data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Cycle One

The results of Cycle One indicated that there was a slight improvement in students' writing skills after the implementation of guided questions. Some students were able to write descriptive texts with better organization compared to the preliminary condition. However, the improvement was not yet optimal, as many students still experienced difficulties in developing ideas and applying correct grammatical structures.

Most students were still limited in vocabulary usage, which affected the clarity and completeness of their descriptive texts. In addition, several students produced short paragraphs with insufficient details. Grammatical errors, particularly in the use of simple present tense and adjective order, were still frequently found in students' writing. Classroom observation also revealed that some students were hesitant to start writing and lacked confidence when expressing their ideas in English.

Results of Cycle Two

In Cycle Two, the implementation of guided questions was improved by providing clearer, more detailed, and more structured questions. The questions were designed to guide students step by step in describing the object, including its physical appearance, characteristics, and additional details. This improvement helped students generate ideas more easily and organize their writing more systematically.

As a result, students' writing performance showed significant improvement. Most students were able to write longer and more complete

descriptive texts. Their writing demonstrated better organization, clearer descriptions, and improved grammatical accuracy. The use of appropriate vocabulary and adjectives also increased, which made the descriptive texts more vivid and understandable. The number of grammatical errors decreased compared to Cycle One, indicating better language control.

Discussion

Classroom observation during Cycle Two revealed positive changes in students' learning behavior. Students became more active and enthusiastic during writing activities. They showed greater confidence in answering guided questions and transforming their answers into complete paragraphs. Students were also more willing to participate in classroom discussions and share their ideas with their classmates. The improvement in students' writing skills and learning behavior indicates that guided questions are an effective strategy in teaching writing, particularly descriptive texts. Guided questions help students overcome writing difficulties by providing clear guidance and reducing confusion during the writing process. This finding supports Harmer's (2004) theory that guided questions can reduce students' anxiety and increase their confidence in writing. Furthermore, the structured nature of guided questions allows students to focus on specific aspects of the topic, which leads to more organized and coherent writing. The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research showing that guided questions can improve students' writing performance and motivation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of guided questions effectively enhances students' writing skills and engagement in the writing classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the use of guided questions has a significant positive effect on students' writing skills in writing descriptive texts at SMA IT Budi Luhur. The implementation of guided questions enables students to generate ideas more easily, organize their thoughts into coherent paragraphs, and apply appropriate language features, including vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. As a result, students' descriptive writing becomes more detailed, organized, and grammatically accurate. In addition, guided questions contribute to positive changes in students' learning behavior during the writing process. Students show increased confidence, motivation, and participation in classroom activities. The structured guidance provided through guided questions reduces students'

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confusion and anxiety, allowing them to engage more actively in writing tasks. These findings indicate that guided questions are an effective instructional strategy for improving both students' writing performance and their attitude toward learning writing. Based on the conclusions above, it is suggested that English teachers apply guided questions as an alternative and effective strategy in teaching writing, particularly in teaching descriptive texts. Teachers are encouraged to design clear, detailed, and well-structured questions that can guide students step by step in developing their ideas. By doing so, teachers can help students write more systematically and confidently, as well as improve their overall writing achievement. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on the use of guided questions in different types of texts, such as narrative, recount, or procedure texts, and at different educational levels. Further research may also explore the combination of guided questions with other teaching strategies or learning media to obtain more comprehensive findings regarding the effectiveness of guided questions in enhancing students' writing skills.

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