

## INVESTIGATING ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF GRADE VIII STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 18 SIGI

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aims to find out whether the application of descriptive text is effective in improving the writing skills of grade 8 (eight) students at SMP Negeri 18 Sigi. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. This population is students in class 8 (eight) of Sigi State Middle School, consisting of 100 people. Sample selection was carried out in total. The test was used to collect data consisting of a pre-test and post-test. The test results showed that the average pre-test score obtained was 59.58. After carrying out the post test the results showed that there were 85% of students who were competent and 15% who were not competent. Increasing students' abilities means that the application of descriptive text to grade 8 (eight) students at SMP Negeri 18 Sigi was declared successful.*

**Key Words:** *Improve; Writing; Story Mapping; Abilities*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four English *skills that is used to deliver ideas, opinions, thoughts and feelings in written form*. The writing has known to have for skills categorized as productive and receptive skills. Receptive skills require people to receive and understand incoming information. The productive skills consist of producing spoken or writing belongs to productive skills which make to product can be to present convey ideas and emotions. The product can be form narrative text, descriptive text, recount text and procedure text.

Writing skill becomes very important for students because it is essential skill for them in their future live. Simples (1999:8) states that writing is an opportunity for students to express, explore and explain ideas themselves. They can express the ideas which are in their minds by making them into good text. Therefore, developing writing ability is very important in developing English ability, especially in Indonesia. Writing is categorized as one of the difficult skill for the students because must have a good writing. They must have capabilities in writing process and components of writing organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.

Writing is one of the skills that need to be mastered by students. Among the skills, writing is the most complicated skill to learn because students have to pay attention on those aspects in writing order to produce a good paragraph. Based on the curriculum 2013 mentions that in writing students are expected to develop their skills in expressing meaning and rhetorical structures through simple text using written language varieties accurately, fluently, and appropriately in daily life context to interact with others in the form of descriptive, recount, narrative, procedure and report. Grade eight students, in particular are expected to write a descriptive text, how to describe something using appropriate social function, generic structure and language features of the text.

However, based on the preliminary research done by researcher at SMP Negeri 18 Sigi, the researcher found that the students faced some problems in writing, First, they did not have ideas to write. Second, they have lack vocabulary and grammar errors. Third, they have difficulties in organizing their ideas. Fourth, they have low motivations to write. To minimize these problem, the teacher needs to create good academic writing skills by giving them the suitable technique in teaching writing descriptive text.

In this case the research investigated students' level of writing of grade eight of SMP

Negeri 18 Sigi. When the researcher did preliminary research at the school, some of the students lacked writing components. The scope of this research is limited on components of writing descriptive text (mechanics, vocabulary, and grammar).

## METHOD

In this research, the researcher use a quantitative descriptive research. Burn (2005) states quantitative research is a formal and systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the world. In the case, the focus of research is one finding out the level of ability of students' vocabulary (Sugiyono, 2011).

The researcher choose to use this research method aiming to determine the level of students' descriptive text writing skills based on aspects of the content of the writing. This is because the data needed by the researcher in the form of statistical data or numbers.

Research instruments are all tools used by the researcher in collecting data. Sugiyono (2011) states research instrument is tool which is used by the researcher in collecting the data in order to make the research provides and get better result, in this research, the writer will use a writing test to collect the data.

In the text analysis, the researcher used a descriptive text. Then the topic of the test is about describing the person. The components of writing that analyzed by the researcher are mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary. In terms of mechanics, the researcher analyzed punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Students who get score between 77-100 are categorized into high level (competent), then the range of score between 66-76 are categorized into middle level (incompetent), and 65 or less are categorized into low level (Incompetent).

In this research, the researchers will use the paper and pencil method to collect data. Specifically, the researcher use tests to obtain data. The form of test used in this test is a type of descriptive text. Students are assigned to write about person which the title is my parent, my sister, and my friend, and they are free to choose the title of the topics above. Then they describe their title.

In analyzing the student' writing test, she analyzed the students' descriptive texts based on the scoring rubric as presented below:

Table 1- Scoring Rubric of Writing

Criteria	Scores	Description
Grammar	4	Very few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.
	3	Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not effect meaning.
	2	Numerous grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.
	1	Frequent grammatical or agreement inaccuracies.
Vocabulary	4	Effective choice of words and words forms.
	3	Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not effect on meaning.
	2	Limited range confusing words and words forms.
	1	Very poor knowledge or words, word forms, and not understandable.
Mechanics	4	Is uses correct spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
	3	It has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
	2	It has frequent errors spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
	1	It is dominated by errors spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

The researcher then compute the individual score both in pretest and posttest by using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2006 :240) as follows:

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

Where:

$\Sigma$  : Standard score

X: Obtained score

N: Maximum score of the test

In determining and analyzing the students' ability the researcher use the passing grade standard used at SMP Negeri 18 Sigi level below:

Table 2- Level of Achievements

Score Range	Category of Achiever	Ability
77-100	High Level	Competent
66-76	Middle Level	Incompetent
<65	Low Level	Incompetent

*Source: Brown*

Therefore, students who get score between 77-100 are categorized into high level (competent), then the range of score between 66-76 are categorized into middle level (incompetent), and 65 or less are categorized into low level (Incompetent).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Students' Ability In Writing Descriptive Text

Table 3- The Students' Score in Writing Descriptive Text

No	Student's Initial	Individual Score			Obtained Score	Maximum Score	Standard Score
		G	V	M			
1	RN	2	3	3	8	12	66.66
2	RF	3	4	3	10	12	83.33
3	NK	2	1	2	5	12	41.66
4	AEW	3	4	3	10	12	83.33
5	RA	2	2	3	7	12	58.33
6	DSS	2	3	3	8	12	66.66
7	HQA	1	2	1	4	12	33.33
8	INS	2	3	2	7	12	58.33
9	JR	2	3	2	7	12	58.33
10	LRD	2	2	2	6	12	50
11	GA	2	2	2	6	12	50
12	MAM	2	1	2	5	12	41.66
13	MYA	1	2	3	6	12	50
14	AD	2	2	3	7	12	58.33

15	ON	3	2	3	8	12	66.66
16	PR	2	1	2	5	12	41.66
17	SJK	2	3	4	9	12	75
18	SYH	3	2	3	8	12	66.66
19	UPL	1	4	3	8	12	66.66
20	Z	2	3	4	9	12	75
<b>Total Score</b>							1191.66
<i>G: Grammar</i>		<i>V: Vocabulary</i>			<i>M: Mechanics</i>		

Based on the data above, the highest score on the test is 83.33 reached by 2 students and the lowest score is 33.33 reached by 1 student. Therefore, 2 students got 75, 5 students got 66.66, 4 students got 58.33, 3 students got 50, and 3 students got 41.66. No student got 100 on the test. The mean score of the test is 59.58. It declared that the ability of students' writing is low.

The result above shows the student's total score on the first test. The way to get the standard score, the researcher computed the average score of students' grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Based on the data above the researcher computed the students' mean score by using the formula as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\Sigma &= \frac{X}{N} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{1191.66}{20} \times 100 \\ &= 59.58\end{aligned}$$

It was found that the mean score of the first test is 59.58. It declared that the students' ability skill level is low.

Table 4 - Category Level of Students' Achievement

No	Score Range	Category of Achiever	Number of Student	Ability
1	77-100	High Level	3	Competent
2	66-76	Medium Level	7	Incompetent
3	<65	Low Level	10	Incompetent

From the data presented of 20 students in class VIII A, there were 15% of the population in class VIII A were classified into high level with score range of 77 to 100, 35% students in a middle level in range score of 66 to 76; and there were 50% students which placed in low level who got scores in the range of under 65. The result shows that the students are weak in grammar and vocabulary.

## CONCLUSION

The competency to write good academic writing is very important for students. In getting the main data, the researcher analyzed the data obtained from the test that she offered to VIII A students. The researcher has done quantitative descriptive research and she analyzed the data. Based on the data analysis, the researcher found that the dominant level ability of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 18 Sigi to write descriptive text is a low category (incompetent). It is proved by the finding of the students got middle level and low level that have not reached the standard passing grade (KKM) as seen in table 4.2. and categorized as incompetent. The problems faced by the students were many grammatical errors, misspellings, does not use the punctuation well, and unable to select the appropriate diction. The data show that 12 students score below 65 (low category and incompetent), there were 2 students who score between 66-76 (middle category and incompetent), and 6 students score between 77-100 (high category and competent). In other words, the result of this research shows that 85% of students were incompetent and 15% of students are competent as seen in table 4.2.

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