



A Guided Writing Technique based on Project-Based Learning to Improve Students' Descriptive Text Writing

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to find out whether the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning could improve the students' descriptive text writing. The research was a quantitative research. The design was one-group pretest-posttest design where there was only one group as the experimental class. The study was done in SMPN 1 Dente Teladas Grade VII, consisting of 32 students. There was a total of six meetings, which were 1 meeting for pretest, 4 meetings for the treatment, and 1 meeting for the posttest. The data was collected from a writing test and analyzed using SPSS v.25. The result shows that the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning could improve the students' descriptive text writing. In conclusion, the use of Guided Writing technique is maximized when it is used based on Project-based learning, and applying the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning is able to cover the weakness that the Guided Writing technique has.

KEYWORDS: Descriptive Text, Guided Writing Technique, Project-based Learning, Quantitative Research, Writing.

INTRODUCTION

As defined by Nordquist (2019), writing is symbols used to convey meaning. It could be in the form of alphabets, graphemics, ideograms, etc. Harmer (2004) believes these symbols have changed for centuries. In this era, written forms can even be found on mobile phones and notes. However, writing has been an obstacle for both teachers and students. Barokah (2021) states that students still find it difficult to compose writing, especially descriptive text. Harmer (2004) also states that most writing remained the same compared to the past because all humans start by speaking first. Only for around the last two hundred years, reading and writing have gotten attention from people. As most education fields require a written test to see the capability of human resources, it is important to create a learning situation that helps the students to write and focus on the meaning.

A Guided Writing technique (GWT), according to Tyner (2004), is an instructional writing context through modeling, support, and practice. The principle of the Guided Writing strategy is to provide instructional materials or relevant media to help the students write. The teacher guides the students to express ideas by providing paper-based text, pictures, or video media related to the writing subject. The process of guiding the students through modeling, support, and practice will encourage the students to develop and extend their writing since it stimulates the students to think in their writing.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the Guided Writing technique. A study conducted by Khatri (2014) investigated the effectiveness of Guided Writing in teaching composition. The study compared two groups in which the experimental group was taught using Guided Writing while the control group was not taught using Guided Writing. The result showed that the experimental group which was taught using Guided Writing showed better scores compared to the control group. So, Guided Writing can improve writing skill, especially in composition.

Ernawati, Budiman, and Latifa (2020) studied the Guided Writing technique to improve the students' writing. The focus of the writing was the announcement. The study was done in classroom action research that consisted of two cycles. The result of the second cycle showed that the Guided Writing technique could improve the students' announcement text writing. It could be seen from the level of the students which were in good and very good level.

Ismiati and Fitria (2021) combined diary and the guided strategy in their study. The research was done in a qualitative study. First, the writers analyzed the students' writing difficulties.



Second, the authors applied the combination of the diary and the guided strategy as a solution to the problems. The finding implied that combining diary and the guided strategy could reduce the writing difficulties of the students. According to this study, most students enjoyed and were motivated to practice diary writing and made good progress in their writing ability because of the regular and constant writing activities. Most students were able to reduce their writing difficulties through continuously writing guided activities.

Another study combining the use of Guided Writing with others was done by Virgiawan, Suryani, and Sutimin (2020). The research combined the Guided Writing and virtual reality video as teaching media to improve students' writing achievement. The findings showed that students' writing achievement improved and the classroom situation became more active and interactive. Thus, this study confirmed another positive result of combining the Guided Writing with other media.

Lan, Hung, and Hsu (2011) researched to develop the Guided Writing technique based on media richness theory. The study observed the effects of these writing strategies on younger students' writing attitudes in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety. The result showed that providing a web-based learning environment with high-richness media could guide students to write and achieve more positive writing attitudes in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety.

Although previous studies related to the use of the Guided Writing Technique (GWT) have been conducted in link with writing achievement and motivation, Indahriyani, Sada, and Sutapa (2015) found that one of the weaknesses of the Guided Writing is that it is too limited by the model given by the teacher. This can cause the students to follow the text model too closely or even too far due to many mistakes that the students produce.

To overcome this problem, applying GWT based on Project-Based Learning could make the technique focus more on meaning. Simpson (2011) states that PjBL is the means that enable students to develop language and communicative skills by integrating their knowledge in real-life situations while creating a project, contrary to traditional methods where the teachers convey knowledge from textbooks to the students. Furthermore, Jalinus et.al (2017) believe that Project-based learning (PjBL) is a constructivist approach focusing on gaining deep learning in a process of inquiry-based approach used by the students through relevant topics and questions. This approach pays attention to the inquiry process and the students' ability to create solutions based on their perspectives and ways of thinking. A research done by Alotaibi (2020) shows that PjBL was able to improve the persuasive writing skill of Saudi EFL secondary school students since the students were motivated, collaborative, and engaged in the learning process.

From the explanation above, it could be seen that implementing the Guided Writing Technique based on Project-based Learning would help the students to write based on certain rules and real-life situations. The influence of Project-based Learning in the Guided Writing technique done in the form of a project would produce a product of writing that relates to real-life situations and the meaning of the writing is gained through the independent inquiry. For this purpose, this study aims to improve students' descriptive text writing using the Guided Writing technique based on Project-Based Learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing

Nordquist (2019) defines writing as symbols used to convey meaning. It could be in the form of alphabets, graphemics, ideograms, etc. Harmer (2004) believes that those symbols have changed over the centuries. In this era, written forms can even be found on mobile phones and notes. However, writing has been an obstacle for both teachers and students. Harmer (2004) also states that most writings remained similar compared to history because all humans started by speaking first. Only for around the last two hundred years, reading and writing have gotten attention from people. As most education fields require a written test to see the capability of human resources, it is important to create a learning situation that helps the students to write and focus on the meaning.

Guided Writing Technique

There are many definitions of the Guided Writing technique given by the experts. Hyland (2003) defines Guided Writing as a technique where learners imitate model texts. In this technique, the learners are given short texts and asked to fill in gaps, complete sentences, transform tenses or personal pronouns, and complete other exercises that lead the students to achieve accuracy and avoid errors. The structural orientation thus emphasizes writing as combinations of lexical and syntactic forms and good writing as the demonstration of knowledge of these forms and of the rules used to create texts.



Another definition is given by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, corp. creator of Great Britain (2007). Guided writing is seen as an important component of a balanced writing curriculum since it provides an additional supported step towards independent writing. Guided writing contributes to the teaching sequence. Through this technique, children are supported during the different stages of the writing process. The aim of this technique is to provide support that is going to help children improve their writing and to work with increasing independence.

Some previous studies are related to the Guided Writing technique (GWT) and its application to improve writing. For instance, a study conducted by Khatri (2014) investigated the effectiveness of Guided Writing in teaching composition. The study compared two groups in which the experimental group was taught using Guided Writing while the control group was not taught using Guided Writing. The result showed that the experimental group taught using Guided Writing, showed better scores compared to the control group. So, Guided Writing can improve writing skill, especially in composition.

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Another study was done by Milaningrum, Damayanti, and Gafur (2018). This research aimed to find out the progress of the students' ESP writing skill through the implementation of the Guided Writing technique and the ESP students' attitude towards the Guided Writing technique. It was a quantitative and qualitative research. The findings were that there was a visible improvement in the students' writing scores and the ESP students' attitudes also were enthusiastic and more active in ESP writing class.

Project-based Learning

Project-based Learning, according to Simpson (2011), is the means that enables students to develop language and communicative skills by integrating their knowledge in real-life situations while creating a project, which is contrary to traditional methods where teachers convey knowledge from textbooks to students.

In addition, Grant (2002) said that Project-based learning is a student-centered approach that provides learners with the opportunity for in-depth investigations of worthy topics. As the activities focus on the learners, they become more autonomous in constructing personally meaningful artifacts that are representations of their learning. Project-based learning and the process of creating products enable the expression of diversity in learners, such as interests, abilities, and learning styles. The roots of PjBL, according to Grant (2002), are constructivism, constructionism, and cooperative/collaborative learning which make Project-based Learning have a strong theoretical support for achievement. The examples of PjBL from the literature are project-based science and disciplined inquiry and WebQuests.

Teaching Writing Using Guided Writing Technique based on Project-based Learning

In Guided Writing, Indahtriyani, Sada, and Sutapa (2015) found that one of the weaknesses of the Guided Writing is that it is too limited by the model given by the teacher. This can cause the students to follow the text model too closely or even too far due to many mistakes that the students produce.

To fill this weakness of Guided Writing, the researcher inserted activities of Guided Writing technique into the activities of Project-based learning to create a meaningful learning process in this study. The activities of the Guided Writing technique help the students to compose writing better as the students are guided to follow a certain model supported by questions and a picture. In addition, the activities in overall Project-based learning focus on making meaningful writing by relating it to the student's real life. In implementing the Guided Writing technique based on Project-Based Learning, the procedures of the Guided Writing technique proposed by Parsons (2001) are expanded with the stages by Hamidah et al (2020). Thus, the activities that consist of the Guided Writing technique based on Project-Based Learning become as follows:

- 1) The students choose a project topic
- 2) The teacher asks essential questions about the topic
- 3) The teacher prepares the students for the content in the writing by providing students with models, pictures, and worksheets
- 4) The students practice to make words and sentences by following the given model



- 5) The students design a project plan and create a project timeline
- 6) The students create the product of the project, specifically focusing on how to communicate the ideas of the writers to the readers
- 7) The teacher assesses the project result from the presentation or product displaying
- 8) Both teacher and students evaluate the project.

In some previous studies about GWT and PjBL, some similarities in the results could be found. Lestari and Margaretha (2019) researched to find out the effectiveness of the Guided Writing technique to improve students' recount text writing. The outcome of the study showed that the students' scores after being taught using Guided Writing improved. In line with this study, Nursalimah and Muljanto (2020) conducted research on improving students' writing recount text through Project-Based Learning. It was found that there was a significant improvement in students' writing because of PjBL. It shows that both GWT and PjBL have been able to improve students' writing, especially in recount text.

Additionally, a study that incorporates a technique and approach was done by Handayani, Rasyid, and Lustyantie (2021). This study tried to find out the effectiveness of feedback and process approaches to improve students' writing achievement. This study used a process approach and feedback focusing on the content and organization of students' writing. The finding was that the combination of feedback and process approach has a significant impact on students' writing achievement.

As Project-based learning is not specific to certain subjects, the addition of the Guided Writing technique in the process will make the activities specific to language learning, especially writing. As some studies of both of them have been known to successfully improve students' writing, implementing the activities of the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning would fill the weakness of the original Guided Writing technique activities that focus only on accuracy of exposition, not meaning.

METHODS

In administering the study, the researcher used a quantitative research method. The design was one-group pretest-posttest design where there was only one group as the experimental class. The study was done in SMPN 1 Dente Teladas Grade VII, consisting of 32 students. In collecting the data, six meetings were applied consisting of a pretest, four meetings of treatment, and a posttest. The activities of the students in the four meetings were taught using the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning.

The instrument used in the pretest and posttest was a writing test to describe a person. The data was then collected and scored using the analytical Scoring Rubric by Hyland (2003). Afterward, the data was analyzed using the Independent Sample Test in SPSS Statistics v. 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The students in the experimental class were given the pretest to find out their initial scores. Then, they were taught using Guided Writing technique based on Project based Learning in four meetings before finally they got to do the posttest. The analysis was used to find out whether the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning could improve the students' descriptive text writing. Here is the result of the analysis.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Scores in Pretest and Posttest

Range of Scores	Pre-test	Post-test
1-20	0	0
21-40	13	0
41-60	15	8
61-80	4	22
81-100	0	2



Table 4.1 shows that there were no students in the experimental class that gained the scores between 1 to 20 both in the pretest and posttest. The number of students getting scores between 21 to 40 in the pretest was 13 students and in the posttest were 0 students. Then, there were 15 students in the pretest and 8 students in the posttest who gained scores between 41 to 60. In the range between 61 to 80, there were 4 students who gained it in the pretest and 22 students who got it in the posttest. There were only 2 students in the posttest and no student in the posttest who gained scores between 81 to 100. It could be seen that the frequency of scores of the students' descriptive text writing increased positively from the pretest to the posttest. To support this, the statistics counting was taken using SPSS v.25 to compare the mean scores. Here is the result.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest EC	45.5000	32	12.67204	2.24012
	Posttest EC	67.8750	32	9.96364	1.76134

It could be implied from Table 4.2 that the mean score in the experimental class from the pretest to the posttest has improved. From 32 students in the who took both pretest and posttest, the mean score of the pretest was 45.50 which then improved to be 67.87 in the posttest. For further analysis, the significance of the improvement was also tested in SPSS v.25 that is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Paired Sample t-Test of Experimental Class

Paired Sample t-Test									
		Paired Differences				t	f	l	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			(2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest	-	10.05389	1.77729	-	-	-	.000	
	Posttest	22.37500			25.99981	18.75019	12.589	1	

Table 4.3 shows that the *p*-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is .000 which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the scores of the pretest and the posttest in the experimental class. It means that all the three tables show the same finding regarding to the data, which is significant improvement in the students' descriptive text writing. Thus, the result found that Guided Writing Technique based on Project-based Learning could improve students' descriptive text writing.

Discussion

The improvement in the students' descriptive text writing after they were taught using the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning was caused by several reasons. First, the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning helps the students to write a final project based on certain guidance and rules. Barokah (2021) believed that students still find it difficult to compose writing, especially descriptive text. However, the limitation of errors that the Guided Writing technique does to the students in their writing process as stated by Robinson (1969) helps the students to face this problem. The Guided Writing technique provides repeated exercises for the students to learn the pattern of the writing. The exercises were given for the students to understand the pattern of the writing that they were about to write.

In addition, Hyland (2003) believes the structural orientation of the Guided Writing technique assists the students to demonstrate the forms and the rules of good writing. According to this technique, the learners are given short texts and asked to fill in gaps,



complete sentences, transform tenses or personal pronouns, and complete other exercises that lead the students on achieving accuracy and avoiding errors. Thus, in this study, the students were asked to do some exercises in the first meeting, such as transforming pronouns, error analysis, and completion exercises. These tasks were given in the beginning so that the students understand the standard of good writing for them to write. As the result of this study shows improvement in the students' descriptive text writing, it could be said that the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning has become the solution to difficulty in composing writing.

Second, the use of project creation in the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning enhances the students' creativity to explore their ideas in writing based on the real-life situation. As stated by Indahtriyani, Sada, and Sutapa (2015), one of the weaknesses of the Guided Writing is that it is too limited by the model given by the teacher. This can cause the students to follow the text model too closely or even too far due to many mistakes that the students produce.

However, the characteristics of Project-based Learning that allows the students to connect their knowledge to real life situations as believed by Simpson (2011) and focuses on gaining deep learning in a process of inquiry used by the students through relevant topics and questions as stated by Jalinus et.al (2017) help the process of the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning to not only imitate a model, but also to link the model to the project that relates to their life situations.

Additionally, Hamidah et al. (2020) thinks that Project-based learning is an approach that emphasizes on assigning tasks, particularly in the form of projects that can lead students to an experience of an inquiry process. The use of tasks in the principle of Guided Writing technique and Project-based learning makes the learning process does not limit the students' ideas, yet help them to explore more. Thus, the process of making a final project in the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning created an experience for the students to not only learn the structural orientation, yet the integration of the knowledge in the real life. The questions that were asked in the first meeting became the project goal of the students for their writing. They were asked to write based on their project to describe their classmates to remember them in the future, so they made sure that they wrote what they knew about their friends for the yearbook project.

Third, the application of the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning created a learning environment that supports the students to be both guided and independent. According to Parsons (2007) as cited in Ismiati and Fitria (2021), guided writing is the process where teachers develop and guide students' writing through discussion, joint text construction, and evaluation of their independent writing. This guide and control provide the students with opportunity to discuss, exercise, and revise their writing. It means that that the supervision and feedback from the teacher are important parts in the Guided Writing technique for the students to write.

Furthermore, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, corp. creator of Great Britain (2007) views the Guided Writing technique as an important component of a balanced writing curriculum because it is an additional supported step towards independent writing. The aim of this technique is to provide support that is going to help children improve their writing and to work with increasing independence.

As a matter of independence, Grant (2002) states that Project-based learning is a student-centered approach that provides learners with the opportunity for in-depth investigations of worthy topics. The activities in the Project based Learning focus on learners to become more autonomous in creating the project that becomes the expressions of diversity in learners, such as interests, abilities, and learning styles. Thus, it could be concluded that the supervision and support given by the teacher in the Guided Writing technique become the guidance in doing the project, while the autonomy of Project-based learning helps the students to be independent.

The finding of this study supports the finding of other previous studies in relation with the Guided Writing technique, Project-based Learning, and modified technique based on approach or theory-studies. Related to the Guided Writing technique, the result of this study was in line with the study conducted by Khatri (2014) who investigated the effectiveness of the guided writing technique in teaching composition and Ernawati, Budiman, and Latifa (2020) who focused the study on announcement writing. It means that this study adds the variety of writing types in using the guided writing technique. The Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning could be used not only in composition and announcement writing, but also descriptive text writing since all the studies mentioned resulted in the same finding which is the students' improvement.



The result of this study is also in line with the study done by Milaningrum, Damayanti, and Gafur (2018) that took a research on the effectiveness of the guided writing technique in improving ESP students' writing and their attitudes towards this technique. The results were that there was a progress in ESP students' writing and they were enthusiast and active in the ESP writing class. The result of this study and the result of the study done by Milaningrum, Damayanti, and Gafur (2018) reveal that the Guided Writing technique is not only intended for beginners and intermediate but also for higher levels. To be specific, the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning is applicable for various levels of students.

Related to the Project-based learning, the study conducted by Alotaibi (2020) showed that PjBl has successfully improved persuasive writing skills of Saudi EFL secondary school students since students were motivated, collaborative and engaged in the learning process. Other two studies were done by Lestari and Margaretha (2019) and Nursalimah and Muljanto (2020). Both studies analyzed the effectiveness of PjBl in improving students' recount text writing. The result showed that PjBl could increase the students' recount text writing. In conclusion, the finding of this study adds the variety of writing text type that has been able to be improved using the PjBl. They are persuasive, recount, and descriptive text writing.

Afterwards, the application of the Guided Writing technique based on Project based Learning is in line with the definition of writing by Nordquist (2019), that is symbols used to convey meaning. In this model, the students do not only pay attention to the structure and language features of the descriptive text shown by the models, but also to the social function that the Project based Learning provides in the context of real-life situations.

The analysis of this study in which the Guided Writing technique based on Project based Learning also supports some previous studies' finding in relation to use of the Guided writing technique based on approach or theory. One of them is the study conducted by Lan, Hung, and Hsu (2011). The research found that developing guided writing based on media richness theory showing that providing a web-based learning environment with high richness media could guide the students to write and achieve more positive writing attitudes in terms of motivation, enjoyment and anxiety. This means that the Guided Writing technique could increase the students' writing achievement when it is used based on certain approach/theory.

Additionally, this research is also in line with the finding of Virgiawan, Suryani, and Sutimin (2020) that combined guided writing and virtual reality video as teaching media to improve students' writing achievement. The findings showed that students' writing achievement improved and the classroom situation became more active and interactive. Thus, this study confirmed another positive result of combining guided writing with other newer media.

In conclusion, the use of the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning has been able to improve the students' descriptive text because it has become the rules of good writing, it helps the students to explore their creativity in writing and it helps the students with supervision and support but also boost their independency. The influence of PjBl helps the students to also focus on the meaning of the writing, instead of on the construction of the text only. It could be said that the Guided Writing technique based on Project based Learning covers the weakness of the Guided Writing technique.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding and discussion in this study, there are several conclusions that could be taken. They are:

1. The use of the Guided Writing technique is maximized when it is used with the Project-based Learning. As the finding of this study shows positive result in the students' descriptive text writing, the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning proves that the use of technique based on certain approach could be effective. It is also supported by the findings of some previous studies that show improvement in the students' writing when a technique is used based on approach.
2. Applying the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning is able to cover the weakness that the Guided Writing technique has. The improvement in each feature of writing in the students' descriptive text writing, especially the format and content feature, shows that the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning has solved the weakness of the Guided Writing technique that uses model. By implementing the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based learning, the students do not only follow the model text, yet relate it to the real-life situations to create meaningful text.



SUGGESTIONS

There are some suggestions that the researcher of this study provides. The suggestions are aimed at teachers and future researchers. For the teachers, it is suggested to plan the time thoroughly since applying the Guided Writing technique based on Project-based Learning takes a longer time, especially in the process of creating a product.

For other researchers, it is suggested to study the Guided Writing Technique based on Project-based Learning in focusing on the levels at the same time as it could broaden the information of the effectiveness of the technique. Next, it is also suggested to explore other theories or approaches that are suitable to be used as a base for the Guided Writing technique.

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