



## IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL BY USING INQUIRY TECHNIQUE AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTS NEGERI 2 PALEMBANG

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this study was to find out whether or not there was any significant difference on students' writing achievement between the students who are taught by using inquiry technique and those who are taught by using teachers' technique at the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palembang. This research was conducted through quasi-experimental method and used nonequivalent control group design. The population was 287 students of the eighth grade of MTs Negeri 2 Palembang in the academic year 2013/2014. Sixty two students were chosen as the sample by using convenience sampling technique. The sample were assigned into two groups; the experimental group and the control group. Each group consisted of thirty one students. The data were obtained by written test. A test was given both to the experimental group and control group but only one group given treatment. The result of the test was analyzed by means of SPSS 16. Based on the result of the data analysis that is the result of hypothesis testing using independent sample t-test, the significant difference was found the p-output (0.000) lower than 0.05. It means that, there was a significant difference between students' pretest and posttest scores in experimental group taught using inquiry technique. Therefore, it can be concluded that inquiry technique was significantly improved. The writer also found that most of the students of both groups made a good writing improvement. However, there were still some students who were poor in writing skill.

**Keywords:** inquiry technique, writing skill.

### Introduction

In Indonesia, many people learn the International language. One of the International languages is English. It is taught at school from the elementary level up to the university as foreign language. It has become a required subject that needs to be taught to all students. So, it has an important role in communication to interact with another people in the world.

Basically, there are four language skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (Saleh 1992: 27 as cited by Sari 2013: 1). Writing as a part of the language skills besides listening, reading, speaking. According to Zamel (2007: 207), writing is a process which the people can explore and discover their thoughts and ideas in written form. Besides that, writing system is a system of written symbols which represent the sounds, syllables, or word of language (Richards, 1985: 409).

From statement above, it can be assumed that writing is a very important subject because we have to share idea from our brain in writing. It is not easy to choose the words and combine them into a good paragraph. Beside that we have to pay attention in the grammatical sentence. So it is normal, if the students think that writing is difficult subject because they have to pay attention many things such as; idea, concept, vocabulary and grammar. Based on Curriculum of junior high

school which recommended by the government, there are some texts which have to be mastered by the junior high school students, one of the texts is descriptive text.

According to Sari (2013: 2), there are three reason that the students have difficulties in writing; they are: (1) the students are lack of vocabulary mastery so they are not able to express their ideas in appropriate English words; (2) the students are lack of grammar mastery so they are not able to write grammatical sentence; (3) the students are lack of motivation in learning writing so they have a bad performance in writing.

When the writer observed teaching learning process at eight grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palembang, the writer found some problems faced by students especially in writing, they are: (1) the students have lack of vocabulary, especially in choosing the words and combining them into a good paragraph. So, the students are still in doubt and confused to start writing well; (2) the students felt difficult to choose an ideas and combine them into a good sentence arrangement. If this condition continued, the students' competences are not able to fulfill in teaching learning process. To solve the problems above, the writer is interested to apply inquiry technique in teaching of writing skill to improve students' writing skill at MTs Negeri 2 Palembang.

According to Roestiyah (2008: 76), inquiry can develop *self concept* on students' selves, so the students can understand about basic concept (steps) and the students can propose their ideas and make report from observation result. By applying inquiry technique, students are encouraged to discover for themselves what should they describe about the object. For example, the students found the information about the object being observed by themselves. After that, the students wrote the data in descriptive paragraph form after they got the data.

From definition above, it can be assumed that by applying inquiry technique, the students got the information from the object being observed by themselves, and the students could express their ideas into good writing. So, inquiry technique can be done by introducing topics and processing good writing. In other words, students are not only as receiver through teacher's explanation but they are active to find the information from observation result and the teacher as a facilitator and motivator to students in teaching learning process.

### **Writing Concept**

Writing is a way for communication to express our feels, ideas, thoughts in written form. According to Hogue (1996: 2), writing to explain something or give information about something with people in writing form. Moreover, writing is not only require mastery of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgemental elements (Heaton 1990: 135). Beside



that, Triagan (1986: 15) as cited by Zhaminang (2013: 2), adds that writing is an activity which expression of idea, message or information in written form. Furthermore, according to Basturmen cited by Cenrikawaty (2008: 7), mentions that writing is a way to express the ideas, emotion, feels, and opinion in written form. Writing is considered as a difficult skill because it involves many aspects.

Some of them refer to language use is the ability to write correctly and appropriate sentences; mechanical skills refer to the ability to use punctuation correctly and grammatical sentence; the content refers the ability to think creatively and develop thought including all relevant information; stylistic skill refers to the ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively; judgment skill refers to the ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

From definition above, it can be assumed that writing is a process of expressing ideas, thoughts, feels in order to communicate to other people in written form but we have to pay attention of grammatical sentence.

### **Concepts of Inquiry Technique**

According to Kuhlthau, Collier Carol (2007: 22), mention that inquiry is a technique that develop a conceptual understanding of the subject or topic from investigation. In this way, when the writer explore and formulate idea, but the writer is able to know the writing process well. In other words, inquiry is closely related to the writing process that prepare to students by giving something to talk and write about in writing. It is during the inquiry process that the students build construction such as writing, composing and creating in writing. Besides that Inquiry engages students in analyze, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for writing (Graham and Perin 2007: 27). Beside that inquiry can develop *self concept* on students' selves, so the students can understand about basic concept (steps) and the students can propose their ideas and make report from observation result (Roestiyah 2008: 76). Lane ( 2007: 1), adds that inquiry is a technique that actively students in the exploration of the content, issues, and questions surrounding area or concept.

Moreover, according to Vancouver (2011 : 6), mentions that there are five steps in inquiry technique in writing:

1. Connect and wonder:

It means that the students are able to identify subject or topic from investigation; the students are able to give predict and hypothesize about the object.

2. Investigate

It means that the students are able to select information or data about the object; the students are able to difference main ideas from supporting details; the students are able to the sort information by topic and sub-topic.

3. Construct

It means that the students are able to organize the information or data about object and develop the information into a good paragraph.

4. Express

It means that the students are able to communicate using a variety of expressive formats, such as: software, and technology tools, music, art, drama, and writing.

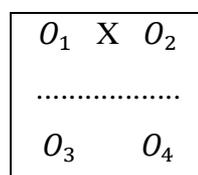
5. Reflect

It means that the students are able to reflect the central concepts of the material learned.

There are some advantages of applying Inquiry Technique for teaching writing (Roestiyah 2008: 76). First, The situation becomes more stimulating to students in teaching learning process. Second, it helps to use memory and transfer in new learning situation.

**Research Design**

In doing this research, the writer used an experimental method. The design selected for this study was quasi-experimental research design. It means a design does not random in selecting sample of the research (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990: 242). In this study, nonequivalent control group design was used. There were two groups such as experimental and control group which both were given pretest and posttest, but only experimental group was given treatment by using inquiry technique. According to Sugiono (2012: 77), the form of this design as follows:



In which

..... : dash line present that the experimental and control group that have not been equated by randomization

$O_1$  : Pretest of experimental group

$O_2$  : Posttest of experimental group



- $O_3$  : Pretest of control group  
 $O_4$  : Posttest of control group  
X : Treatment by using inquiry technique

### Validity Test

A test as the instrument of collecting the data should be valid and reliable. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990: 127), validity refers to the extent to which an instrument gives us the information we want. The writer measures the content of validity. To provide the content validity of the test, the writer should check to the curriculum and syllabus. The result analysis in content validity is described in table of specification test. In the table of specification test, it includes: objectives of the test, material title, test indicators, type of test, number of item and the total number.

### Reliability Test

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990: 127), mention that Reliability is the consistency of scores or answers, how consistent they are for each individual from one administration of an instrument to another from one set item to another. In this study, the writer used inter-rater reliability to find out the result reliability test, because writing is concluded as subjective test. Furthermore, According Holandyah (2013: 185) adds that inter-rater reliability refers two or more raters are required to avoid the inconsistency or biases from scoring. Before giving pretest to the experimental and control groups, the writer did try out the instrument using interrater reliability which given score by two raters. The raters on writer's research were Teddy Arif Muljadi S.Pd, he is a teacher of SDN 179 Palembang, and second rater was Niko Eka Apriansyah S.Pd, he is a teacher of SMA Muhammadiyah 6 Palembang. To make sure that the test is reliable, before using the test items for the pretest and posttest, the writer tried out the test to check the reliability of the test. The writer took 50 students of eight grade students in MTs Negeri 1 Palembang on 20 Agustus 2013, and MTs Negeri 2 Palembang on 26 Agustus 2013 as the subject of reliability test.

Before the raters gave scores for the students, the instrument of scores earlier was given to the raters based on weigle's book in scoring writing. According to Weigle (2002: 117) there are five components of scoring in writing test; they are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. After that, scores that given by raters were calculated by using spearman rank (Rank order) formula to find the differences between two sets of rankings, using the formula:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 (\sum D)^2}{N (N^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

$\rho$  (Rho) : Spearman rank-order correlation

$\sum d^2$  : The sum of the squared differences

N : Number of sample

The test score is considered reliable whenever the reliability coefficient of test should be at least 0.70 and preferably higher (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990: 136).

From the result of rank order correlation above (0.888), it was stated that the score was higher than 0.70. It means that the assessment results was very reliable.

### Population and Sample

The population of this study were all the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palembang. The total number of the population is 287 students which consist of 10 classes. The sample of this study was taken through convenience sampling. In this study, the writer chose two classes of the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palembang. The classes were VIII A, 31 students and VIII B, 32 students. The total numbers of the students were 62 students. The writer divided the class into two groups: experimental and control. Finally, the writer got VIII A as the experimental group and VIII B as the control group.

### Normality test

After the result to the 31 sample of the students pretest in experimental and control groups was measured, it was found that the normality score in experimental and control was 0.237 and 0.259. From the result of the output, it can be stated that the students' pretest score in experimental and control groups was normal since it was higher than mean significant different at 0.05. Then, after the result to the 31 sample of the students posttest in experimental and control groups was measured, it was found that the normality score in experimental group was 0.167 and while the normality score in control group was 0.143. From the result of the output, it can be stated that the students' posttest score in experimental and control groups was normal since it was higher than mean significant different at 0.05.



### Homogeneity test

After the result to the 31 sample of the students pretest in experimental and control groups was measured, it was found that the significant score was 37.182. From the result of the output, it can be stated that the students' pretest score in experimental and control groups was homogen since it was higher than mean significant different at 0.05. Then, after the result to the 30 sample of the students posttest in experimental and control groups was measured, it was found that the significant score was 0.182. From the result of the output, it can be stated that the students' posttest score in experimental and control groups was homogen since it was higher than mean significant different at 0.05.

### Results of hypothesis testing

A significant difference is found from testing students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental group using independent sample t-test. A significant difference is found whenever the p-output was lower than a significant difference at 0.05 level.

The result analysis using independent sample t-test found the p-output 0.000. It can be stated that there was means significant difference on students' speaking skill average scores taught using inquiry technique since the p-output was lower than 0.05.

### Conclusion

Based on result of hypothesis testing using independent sample t-test measuring a significant difference was found the p-output (0.000) lower than (0.05). So that it can be stated that there was a significant difference from students' pretest to posttest scores in experimental group taught using inquiry. Therefore, it can be concluded that Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted.

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