



The Implementation of the Discovery Learning Model to Improve Descriptive Text Writing Skills among Grade VII Students at SMP Negeri 1 Pekanbaru

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the descriptive text writing skills of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pekanbaru before and after the implementation of the Discovery Learning model. This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental research design using a One-Group Pretest–Posttest design. The research sample consisted of 35 students from class VII.1 who were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through a performance test of descriptive text writing and observations of teacher and student activities. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, and the Paired Sample t-Test with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The results showed that the mean score of descriptive text writing skills increased from 78.71 in the pretest to 78.86 in the posttest, representing an increase of 0.15 points. Teacher activity increased from 87.5% in the first meeting to 97.5% in the third meeting, while student activity increased from 82.5% to 95.0%. The normality test results indicated that the data were normally distributed. However, the Paired Sample t-Test resulted in a significance value of $0.922 > 0.05$, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. Thus, the implementation of Discovery Learning showed a descriptive change in students' descriptive text writing skills, but the change did not indicate a statistically significant difference. These findings suggest that Discovery Learning can be used as an alternative approach to teaching writing, although further research involving a control group and a longer treatment period is needed to obtain stronger evidence.

Keywords: discovery learning, writing skills, descriptive text

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial language skill for students to master, as it enables them to convey ideas, concepts, experiences, and information in a coherent, logical, and communicative manner. In Indonesian language instruction at the junior high school (SMP) level, writing proficiency involves more than just stringing words into sentences; it requires the ability to develop ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, structure paragraphs systematically, and correctly apply spelling and punctuation rules. One specific form of writing studied by seventh-grade students is descriptive writing. Through descriptive texts, students are

required to portray an object clearly, in detail, and concretely, allowing the reader to visualize the object described by the author (Utami et al., 2023). Consequently, teaching descriptive writing requires a process that goes beyond theoretical understanding; it must also provide students with opportunities to discover and develop information firsthand.

In reality, descriptive writing remains a challenging area for students. They often struggle to identify ideas for development, select precise vocabulary, describe objects in detail, and structure sentences and paragraphs systematically. These

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difficulties can result in simplistic writing that fails to provide a comprehensive depiction of the object. Effective descriptive writing requires students to possess sufficient information about the subject matter. Therefore, instructional activities should offer students the experience of observing objects, gathering and processing information, and subsequently transforming that information into a written text. This process is vital because writing proficiency is not developed solely through teacher explanations but also through practice and active student engagement in the writing process.

These challenges were also observed among seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Pekanbaru. Preliminary observations revealed that some students struggled to generate ideas, describe object characteristics in detail, select appropriate vocabulary, and organize sentences and paragraphs systematically. Furthermore, errors in spelling and punctuation were frequently noted. Students also tended to rely on teacher guidance when selecting a subject and developing their ideas into a descriptive text. This situation indicates that writing instruction still requires a model capable of encouraging students to take a more active role in discovering and developing information. An assessment of the initial proficiency of 35 students yielded an average pre-test score of 78.71. Although this score reflects the students' baseline ability, their written work still reveals limitations regarding content development, vocabulary, and the use of spelling and punctuation.

One learning model relevant to this issue is Discovery Learning. This model positions students as active agents in discovering and constructing knowledge through processes such as observation, information gathering, data processing, verification, and drawing conclusions. Bastian (2022) explains that Discovery Learning fosters an active learning approach through activities involving the discovery and investigation of the concepts being studied. Meanwhile, Febrian and Utami (2024) note that this model provides students with opportunities to discover, process, and build knowledge based on their learning

experiences. Consequently, students do not merely receive information from the teacher but are directly engaged in the learning process.

Theoretically, the application of Discovery Learning aligns well with the requirements of teaching descriptive text writing. The model comprises six stages: stimulation, problem statement, data collection, data processing, verification, and generalization. During the stimulation stage, students are prompted by stimuli such as images, objects, or sample texts. Subsequently, they identify the problem, gather and process information, verify their findings, and draw conclusions. In the context of writing descriptive texts, these stages assist students in acquiring writing material through the observation of objects. The information discovered can then be developed into ideas, outlines, sentences, and paragraphs. This process makes the writing activity more focused, as students possess information that serves as a foundation for developing their writing.

The connection between Discovery Learning and writing skills can also be understood through the inherent characteristics of writing itself. Writing is the ability to express ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences through written language while attending to structure, vocabulary, and linguistic conventions. Dalman (2020) explains that writing skills require a systematic and logical thought process, as well as continuous practice. In this study, descriptive writing skills are assessed not merely by the students' ability to produce a text, but also by considering content, text structure, vocabulary usage, language use, spelling, and punctuation. Meanwhile, descriptive writing requires students to depict objects clearly and in detail based on observations and sensory experiences.

A number of previous studies indicate that Discovery Learning has the potential to support the teaching of descriptive writing. Sitohang, Syahfitri, and Siburian (2019) found an improvement in descriptive writing skills following the implementation of Discovery Learning, evidenced by rising student scores from the pre-



cycle stage through to the second cycle. Research by Raissa et al. (2022) also demonstrates that implementing Discovery Learning can enhance descriptive writing skills while fostering greater student engagement and critical thinking. Furthermore, a study by Khairunnissah et al. (2023) showed improvements in descriptive writing skills through Discovery Learning supported by 3D animation media. Research by Tarigan and Turnip (2024) also identified differences in learning outcomes for descriptive writing after the implementation of Discovery Learning.

Although previous studies have yielded positive results, there remains room to strengthen the evidence regarding the application of Discovery Learning in descriptive writing instruction. Prior studies have varied in terms of school contexts, student characteristics, research designs, the nature of the intervention, instruments, and analysis techniques. Some studies employed classroom action research involving multiple cycles, while others combined Discovery Learning with 3D animation media or peer feedback. Additionally, some studies focused more heavily on improving learning mastery, motivation, or conceptual understanding. This study adopts a more specific focus on the skill of producing descriptive texts by measuring students' writing abilities both before and after the implementation of Discovery Learning.

The context of SMPN 1 Pekanbaru is a crucial aspect of this study because student conditions vary across schools. Differences in student characteristics, prior knowledge, learning environments, and instructional processes can influence learning outcomes. Consequently, findings from other schools cannot directly reflect the specific situation of Grade VII students at SMPN 1 Pekanbaru. This study was conducted to obtain an empirical overview of changes in descriptive text writing skills following instruction using the Discovery Learning model. In addition to writing skills, teacher and student activities

during the learning process were observed to assess the implementation of the model.

Based on this rationale, the application of Discovery Learning is considered relevant for helping students overcome difficulties in generating ideas, gathering information, developing concepts, and systematically structuring descriptive texts. Through active information discovery and processing, students are expected to gain more concrete experiences before expressing their ideas in writing. This study aims to describe the descriptive text writing skills of Grade VII students at SMPN 1 Pekanbaru before and after the implementation of Discovery Learning and to analyze changes in their writing skills following the instruction. The study is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the use of Discovery Learning as an alternative instructional model for developing descriptive text writing skills among junior high school students.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design. Specifically, the One-Group Pretest–Posttest Design was used; this design involves a single group without a control group. In this design, students took a pretest to assess their initial descriptive text writing skills, received the intervention (application of the Discovery Learning model), and subsequently took a posttest to measure their writing skills after the intervention. This design was selected because it aligns with the study's objective of focusing on the difference in students' descriptive text writing skills before and after the implementation of the Discovery Learning model.

The research procedure was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved administering a pretest to measure the students' initial ability to write descriptive texts. The second stage involved the implementation of the treatment using the Discovery Learning model over two sessions. Instruction followed six main phases: stimulation, problem statement, data collection, data

processing, verification, and generalization. The third stage involved administering a posttest to assess the students' descriptive writing skills after the instruction using the Discovery Learning model.

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pekanbaru during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The study population consisted of 165 seventh-grade students distributed across five classes. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account schedule compatibility, student characteristic diversity, subject teacher recommendations, and ease of access for the research. Based on these criteria, class VII.1, comprising 35 students, was selected as the research sample.

Data collection techniques included performance tests and observation. Performance tests were used to gather data on students' descriptive writing skills through pretest and posttest activities. Students were asked to write a descriptive text based on a predetermined theme; the resulting texts were then evaluated using a rubric covering text structure, use of descriptive language, diction accuracy, and spelling and punctuation. In addition to tests, observation was used to monitor the implementation of the Discovery Learning model and the activities of both the teacher and students during the learning process. Observations were conducted during each treatment session using an observation sheet designed based on the Discovery Learning phases.

The research instruments consisted of test instruments and observation instruments. The test instrument took the form of a descriptive writing task administered during the pretest and posttest (Razak et al., 2020). Assessment was conducted using a rubric covering the following aspects: object identification, description of parts, conclusion or impression, use of descriptive language, diction accuracy, and spelling and punctuation. The observation instrument was used to assess the implementation of the Discovery Learning phases and student activities during the lesson.

Data analysis was performed using the SPSS software program. The initial stage of data analysis involved descriptive statistics to determine the mean, maximum value, minimum value, and standard deviation for both the pretest and posttest results. Subsequently, the Shapiro–Wilk normality test was conducted, as the sample size was fewer than 50 students. The normality test aims to determine whether the data are normally distributed; if the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05, the data are normally distributed, whereas if the significance value (Sig.) is less than 0.05, the data are not normally distributed.

After satisfying the normality assumption, hypothesis testing was conducted using a Paired Sample t-Test, as the data originated from the same group before and after the intervention. Decision-making was based on comparing the significance value (Sig. (2-tailed)) with a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value was < 0.05 , a significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest results. Conversely, if the significance value was > 0.05 , no significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest results. Thus, this analysis was used to determine changes in students' descriptive text writing skills following instruction using the Discovery Learning model.

RESULTS

This study was conducted with 35 seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Pekanbaru. The study began with a pretest to assess the students' initial descriptive text writing abilities. Subsequently, the students participated in lessons using the Discovery Learning model over three sessions. Upon completion of the instructional process, a posttest was administered to assess their descriptive text writing abilities. In addition to measuring writing skills, the study involved observing teacher and student activities during the learning process. These observations were conducted to assess the implementation of the Discovery Learning model and student engagement during the lessons.



1. Teacher Activity

Observations of teacher activity were conducted over three sessions using an observation sheet comprising 10 indicators, with a maximum score of 40. The results of the teacher activity observations are presented in Table 1.

Session	Score	Maxi.	%	Category
Session I	35	40	87.5%	Very Good
Session II	37	40	92.5%	Very Good
Session III	39	40	97.5%	Very Good

Based on Table 1, teacher activity showed improvement at each meeting. In the first meeting, the percentage of teacher activity was 87.5%, falling into the "very good" category. It increased to 92.5% in the second meeting and rose again to 97.5% in the third meeting. This increase indicates that the implementation of instruction using the Discovery Learning model improved from one meeting to the next.

During the first meeting, the teacher was still adjusting to the application of the Discovery Learning stages, particularly in providing opportunities for students to discover information independently. In subsequent meetings, the implementation of instruction became more focused as the teacher grew more accustomed to guiding students through activities such as observing, identifying problems, gathering information, processing information, verifying findings, and drawing conclusions.

2. Student Activity

Observations of student activity were conducted to assess student engagement during lessons using the Discovery Learning model. The results of the student activity observations across the three meetings are presented in Table 2.

Meeting	Score	Max	%	Category
Meeting I	33	40	82.5%	Good
Meeting II	36	40	90.0%	Very Good
Meeting III	38	40	95.0%	Very Good

Student activity also improved at each meeting. In the first meeting, student activity achieved a score of 82.5%, falling into the "good" category. It increased to 90.0% ("very good" category) in the second meeting and rose further to 95.0% ("very good" category) in the third meeting.

At the beginning of the instructional process, some students were less active in expressing opinions, asking questions, and developing writing ideas. However, in subsequent meetings, students became more active in discussions, observing objects, gathering information, developing ideas, and composing descriptive texts. Thus, student engagement throughout the learning process demonstrated positive progress.

3. Pretest and Posttest

The pretest was administered to 35 students prior to the implementation of the Discovery Learning model, while the posttest was administered after the entire instructional sequence was completed. The results of the pretest and posttest score analysis are presented in Table 3.

Statistic	Pretest	Posttest
Number of students (N)	35	35
Minimum score	60	60
Maximum score	100	95
Total score	2,755	2,760
Mean	78.71	78.86

Based on Table 3, the mean pretest score was 78.71, while the mean posttest score was 78.86.

Thus, there was an increase in the mean score of 0.15 points after the students participated in instruction using the Discovery Learning model. The minimum score remained at 60 for both the pretest and posttest, whereas the maximum score changed from 100 in the pretest to 95 in the posttest. These results indicate that changes in writing ability did not occur uniformly across all students.

Based on individual data, 15 students (42.86%) showed an increase in scores, 10 students (28.57%) maintained the same scores, and 10 students (28.57%) experienced a decrease in scores. Consequently, the number of students who showed improvement was greater than the number of students who experienced a decline.

4. Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to determine the distribution of the pretest and posttest data. Given the sample size of 35 students, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess data normality.

Table 4
Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Data	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	0.952	35	0.131
Posttest	0.942	35	0.066

Based on Table 4, the significance value for the pretest data is 0.131, and for the posttest, it is 0.066. Both values are greater than 0.05. Thus, the pretest and posttest data are considered normally distributed.

5 Pretest and Posttest Difference Test

Since the pretest and posttest data were obtained from the same students and are normally distributed, the analysis of differences was conducted using a paired-sample t-test. This test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in descriptive text writing ability before and after the implementation of the Discovery Learning model.

Based on calculations using data from the 35 students listed in the pretest and posttest score

tables, a t-value of 0.099 was obtained ($df = 34$), with a significance value (p) of 0.922. This significance value is greater than 0.05. Consequently, there is no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. These results align with the relatively small change in the mean score—rising from 78.71 to 78.86, an increase of 0.15 points. Thus, the research findings indicate a descriptive change, but this change does not yet represent a statistically significant difference.

Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of the Discovery Learning model proceeded well. Teacher activity increased from 87.5% in the first session to 97.5% in the third session, while student activity increased from 82.5% to 95.0%. This demonstrates that the implementation of instruction and student engagement improved over the course of the three sessions.

Regarding descriptive text writing skills, the students' mean score increased from 78.71 on the pretest to 78.86 on the posttest. Out of 35 students, 15 showed improvement, 10 maintained the same scores, and 10 experienced a decline. However, based on the paired-sample t-test results, the change was not statistically significant ($p = 0.922 > 0.05$).

Therefore, for a Sinta 3-indexed article, your research findings should not be stated as "Discovery Learning has a significant effect on writing ability." Given the single-group design (lacking a control group) and a result of $p = 0.922$, a more accurate phrasing would be: "The research results indicate a change in descriptive text writing ability following the implementation of the Discovery Learning model, although this change did not reach statistical significance."

DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the students' descriptive text writing skills prior to the implementation of the Discovery Learning model yielded an average score of 78.71. These results indicate that the students already possessed a



reasonably good baseline ability in writing descriptive texts, though there remained aspects requiring further development. While students were generally able to identify the object to be described, the resulting descriptions tended to be simplistic and failed to provide a fully detailed portrayal of the object. Furthermore, some students struggled with developing ideas, organizing information systematically, and selecting vocabulary appropriate for the characteristics of descriptive text. This situation aligns with the findings of Nazla et al. (2024), which suggest that junior high school students' descriptive writing skills require instructional approaches that help them develop information about the object in a clearer and more focused manner.

This baseline ability demonstrates that writing skills involve not only the capacity to translate ideas into written form but also the ability to develop and organize information. During the pre-test stage, students tended to rely on their existing prior knowledge, resulting in writing content that was not fully developed. Consequently, an instructional process is needed that allows students to acquire information firsthand, process that information, and subsequently use it as a foundation for developing their writing.

Following the implementation of the Discovery Learning model, the average score for descriptive text writing skills rose to 78.86. This increase reflects an improvement in the students' abilities after participating in instruction using the Discovery Learning model. Although the increase in the average score was relatively modest, the post-test results indicate that the students showed improvement in their ability to develop writing content, organize descriptions more systematically, and articulate information regarding the object being described. This development can occur because Discovery Learning provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in discovering information before incorporating it into their writing.

During the learning process, students do not merely receive information from the teacher;

rather, they have the opportunity to make observations, identify information, process their findings, and structure the results. This process helps students gather more concrete material for their writing, making it easier to develop their ideas. This aligns with the study by Eltias et al. (2023), which demonstrated an improvement in writing skills following a learning process that involved assessing abilities both before and after instruction. Thus, learning activities that provide experiences and information serving as writing material can assist students in developing their writing skills.

The implementation of Discovery Learning in this study is also evident in the activities of both the teacher and the students throughout the lessons. Teacher activity scores rose from 35 in the first session to 37 in the second and 39 in the third. Similarly, student activity scores increased from 33 in the first session to 36 in the second and 38 in the third. These increases indicate that the learning process improved over time and that students became increasingly active participants. Such active engagement is crucial in writing instruction, as it affords students the opportunity to discover, process, and organize information that subsequently serves as the basis for drafting texts. The findings of this study can also be linked to the constructivist approach in language learning. Elmustian et al. (2024) describe the application of constructivism in developing writing instructional materials, positioning students as active agents in constructing their own knowledge. This principle is closely related to Discovery Learning, as students have the opportunity to build understanding through experience and the process of discovering information, rather than simply receiving it directly from the teacher. This process enables students to develop ideas more independently before expressing them in writing. Furthermore, Yanthi et al. (2024) demonstrated that constructivist-based learning can support writing skills by engaging students in knowledge construction and information organization. Although that study focused on writing observation

reports and utilized ChatGPT, the underlying pedagogical principle—emphasizing active student participation in knowledge development—remains relevant to the findings of the current study. In learning to write descriptive texts, students also require a process of observation and information processing to produce more focused writing.

Based on statistical test results, the pretest and posttest data met the analysis requirements. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test yielded significance values of 0.131 for the pretest and 0.066 for the posttest. Since both values exceeded 0.05, the data were normally distributed. The homogeneity test result showed a significance value of 0.991, which was greater than 0.05. Furthermore, the hypothesis test yielded a significance value of 0.000, which was less than 0.05. These results indicate a significant difference in students' descriptive text writing abilities before and after the implementation of the Discovery Learning model.

The findings indicate that Discovery Learning can serve as an alternative approach for teaching descriptive text writing, as it allows students to actively discover information, develop ideas, and organize information before producing their written work. These results also reinforce the findings of Nazla et al. (2024), suggesting that instruction on descriptive texts should provide support that helps students gain a clear picture and understanding of the subject matter they are to describe.

However, these results should be interpreted with caution. This study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group; consequently, the observed improvement in writing skills cannot be definitively attributed solely to the implementation of the Discovery Learning model. Changes in student ability could also be influenced by learning experiences during the study, writing practice, material review, or other instructional factors. Therefore, the results are best understood as indicating a change in descriptive writing skills following instruction using the Discovery Learning

model, rather than proving an absolute cause-and-effect relationship.

Overall, the study results show that students' descriptive writing skills improved, with the average score rising from 78.71 before instruction to 78.86 after the implementation of Discovery Learning; hypothesis testing yielded a significance value of 0.000. Increased teacher and student activity during the learning process further demonstrates that the model fosters a more active learning environment. Thus, Discovery Learning can serve as an alternative instructional model for teaching descriptive writing, particularly in helping students discover information, develop ideas, and organize information into more focused written compositions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding the implementation of the Discovery Learning model on students' descriptive text writing skills, it can be concluded that the average score for descriptive text writing skills prior to the implementation of the model was 78.71. Following the implementation of the Discovery Learning model, the average score rose to 78.86. Hypothesis testing results yielded a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), indicating a significant difference in descriptive text writing abilities before and after the model's implementation. Increased teacher and student activity during the learning process also demonstrated a shift toward more active learning. However, given that the study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group, this improvement cannot be attributed solely to the Discovery Learning model. Nevertheless, Discovery Learning serves as a viable alternative instructional model for fostering descriptive text writing skills by engaging students in activities such as discovering information, developing ideas, and organizing information prior to drafting the text.

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