

ANALYSIS OF WRITING PRACTICE FREQUENCY AND PROSE WRITING ABILITY AT VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

The ability to write descriptive prose is influenced by a person's linguistic insights and language skills, which can be actualized through regular writing practice. This quantitative research with a correlational approach aims to examine the relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose of grade X students of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe, 2023 school year. Data was taken from 45 students in grades X-2 as a sample representing a population of 135 students. Data collection techniques are done through interviews, questionnaires, and essay tests. Data analysis uses the Product Moment correlation statistical technique. The results showed a significant relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose with an R_value of 0.871, which was higher than the r -value in the table of 0.294. It is proven that the frequency of writing practice plays an important role in improving students' descriptive prose writing skills.

Keywords

Frequency, Writing Practice, Writing Ability, Students, Prose.



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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the key skills that students must master in language learning, especially the Indonesian Language because it allows them to express ideas, ideas, and thoughts systematically and logically. The ability to write descriptive prose, as one of the important aspects of writing, allows students to describe things in detail and clearly (Fadhillah, 2022), which requires technical skills and creativity. However, reality shows that many students struggle to produce quality descriptive prose. These limitations are often due to a lack of consistent, structured practice and understanding of effective writing techniques. This indicates an urgent need to improve the teaching methods for writing and the frequency of exercises given to students (Graham, 2019).

Writing descriptive prose can be achieved if students consistently participate in targeted and routine writing activities (Gereda, 2020). Structured and intensive exercises allow students to develop their writing skills by processing descriptions using effective and adequate language (Hyland, 2019). Learning to write should focus on theory. Educators should seriously consider the importance of descriptive prose writing practice in improving students' skills (Suastra & Menggo, 2020).

Several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between the frequency of writing practice and improving students' writing skills. First, research (Bulqiyah et al., 2021; Jayanti, 2019) revealed that the frequency of writing practice significantly influenced students' ability to write descriptively, suggesting that the more often students practiced, the better their writing skills would be. Second (Maulana et al., 2024; Taye & Mengesha, 2024) reported that students who regularly practiced writing experienced a significant improvement in their prose abilities, confirming the importance of consistent practice. Third (Nejm2, 2019; Qian & Lin, 2019) found a positive correlation between intensive writing practice and the ability to compose good descriptive texts, reinforcing the argument about the importance of intensive practice. Fourth (El Soufi & See, 2019; Syamsuddin, 2021) suggests that a learning approach that emphasizes self-practice contributes to improving writing skills, underlining the role of individual practice in skill development. Lastly, the research emphasizes that descriptive prose writing mastery improves with proper guidance from teachers, which suggests that practice supported by good guidance can improve students' writing skills (Darnisyah, 2021; Septa Cahyani, 2023).

However, although previous studies have highlighted the importance of writing practice, most studies have not specifically examined the relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose at the vocational school level. Most studies focus more on the general high school level and pay less attention to the unique context of vocational schools with different learning characteristics. Thus, this study adds uniqueness by examining the relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose in the vocational school environment. This study aims to explore this relationship and provide a deeper understanding of how practice frequency affects students' writing skills in vocational schools.

This research is very important because it makes a new contribution to understanding the factors that affect students' writing ability in vocational schools. By considering the difference in context between public schools and vocational schools, the results of this study are expected to provide better guidance for teachers in designing teaching strategies that follow the characteristics of students in vocational schools. In addition, this research is expected to strengthen empirical evidence regarding the importance of regular and structured writing exercises in building descriptive prose writing skills, a challenge often faced by students. This increased understanding can help create a more effective learning approach and support the development of better writing skills among students.

METHOD

Using a correlational method, this quantitative research aims to test the relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose. The correlational method was used to determine the extent to which the independent variable (frequency of writing practice) was related to the dependent variable (the ability to write descriptive prose) in grade X students of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe. The object of this research is the ability to write descriptive prose of students, while the subject of the study is class X students of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe for the 2023 academic year. The research population consisted of 135 students divided into three classes, and the purposively selected sample was class X-2, with a total of 45 students. This sample is considered representative of the entire population.

This research's primary and secondary data sources are primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained directly from students through interviews, questionnaires, and essay tests, while secondary data is obtained from relevant school documents and records. The data collected

included information about the frequency of writing exercises, students' ability to write descriptive prose and other factors that affect the teaching and learning process in schools. The data collection techniques used in this study are as follows:

1. Interview: Conducted interviews with Indonesian language teachers to obtain data on teaching strategies for developing students' descriptive prose writing skills and learning conditions at school.
2. Questionnaire: This questionnaire will be given to students to obtain general data on students' tendencies in learning the Indonesian language, especially in descriptive prose writing materials. This questionnaire is also used to measure the frequency of writing exercises carried out by students.
3. Essay Test: Used to measure students' ability to write descriptive prose. This test aims to evaluate the extent to which students can apply the theory and techniques of descriptive prose writing that have been taught.

The data analysis in this study uses the Product Moment correlation technique to test the relationship between the variable frequency of writing practice (X) and the ability to write descriptive prose (Y). The calculation of the correlation coefficient is carried out with the formula (Humphreys et al., 2019). The correlation data calculation uses the Product Moment formula, namely:

$$R_{xy} = \frac{N\sum xy - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{N\sum x^2 - (\sum X)^2} \sqrt{N\sum y^2 - (\sum Y)^2}}$$

T_{xy} = Correlation coefficient between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose

XY = Product of writing practice frequency and descriptive prose writing ability

X^2 = Writing practice frequency quadratic product

Y^2 = The product of the quadratic ability to write descriptive prose

N = Number of respondents or students

Research Hypothesis

H_0 : There was no significant relationship between the frequency of writing practice (X) and the ability to write descriptive prose (Y) of grade X students of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe.

H_1 : There was a significant relationship between the frequency of writing practice (X) and the ability to write descriptive prose (Y) of grade X students of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe.

The results of this correlation calculation will be used to determine the strength of the relationship between the two variables. Hypothesis testing is carried out by comparing the value of the correlation coefficient obtained with the value of the r-value of the table at a certain level of significance. Suppose the correlation coefficient found is greater than the r-value of the table. In that case, the hypothesis is accepted, which indicates a significant relationship between the frequency of writing practice and the ability to write descriptive prose.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Student interest in the field of Indonesian language studies

Students' interest in Indonesian language studies is the basic capital for them to master other fields of knowledge. Therefore, the data needed to be presented in this research is to determine student interest in Indonesian language studies.

Table 1. Student Interest in the Field of Indonesian Language Studies

No	Interest	f	%
4	Very delighted	8	17,8
3	Like	35	77,8
2	Middle happy	2	4,4
1	Not happy	-	-
0	Don't know	-	-
	Amount	45	100

Based on the data in the table above, it turns out that, in general, students are happy and very happy (95.5%) with the field of Indonesian language studies. However, some students are less happy with the field of Indonesian language studies (4.4%).

2. Students' interest in reading descriptive prose

Table 2. Students' Interest in Reading Descriptive Prose

No	Interest	f	%
4	Delighted	7	15,8
3	Like	26	57,8
2	Middle happy	5	11,1
1	Not happy	4	8,9
0	Don't know	3	6,6
	Amount	45	100

Based on the data in the table above, it turns out that, in general, students are happy and very happy (73.4%) reading descriptive prose. However, some students were unhappy (11.1), unhappy (8.9%), and didn't know (6.6%).

3. Students' interest in writing descriptive prose.

Table 3. Students' Interest in Writing Descriptive Proses

No	Interest	f	%
4	Very delighted	9	20
3	Like	28	62,2
2	Middle happy	6	13,3
1	Not happy	1	2,2
0	Don't know	1	2,2
	Amount	45	100

Based on the data in the table above, it turns out that, in general, students are happy and very happy (82.2%) writing descriptive prose. However, some students were less happy (13.3%), 2.2% unhappy, and didn't know (2.2%).

4. Frequency of Terms for Writing Descriptive Prose

Table 4. Frequency of Practice in Writing Descriptive Prose

No	Interest	f	%
4	Very delighted	7	15,6
3	Like	23	51,1
2	Middle happy	7	15,6
1	Not happy	6	13,3
0	Don't know	2	4,4
	Amount	45	100

Based on the table above, it turns out that (2.6%) often practice writing descriptive prose. Some (4.4%) students do not know how to make a choice. The data in the table above shows that, in general, students have descriptive prose skills.

Discussion

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most of the students (95.5%) show that based on Table 1, the data shows that most students (95.5%) show a very positive interest in the field of Indonesian Language study, with 77.8% of them feeling "liked" and 17.8% feeling "very happy". This high interest is an important basic capital in learning (Adiyono et al., 2023). Students who are enthusiastic about studying the Indonesian Language have a greater tendency to be actively involved in teaching and learning activities and more easily absorb the subject matter. However, 4.4% of students feel unhappy with this field of study, which may reflect dissatisfaction or lack of connection between the

teaching methods applied and students' needs and preferences. Factors such as teaching methods that may be considered unattractive or limited facilities and infrastructure that support Indonesian Language learning can cause this dissatisfaction (Zarkani, 2019). To address this, educators need to maintain and even increase this interest by designing more innovative teaching methods relevant to students' needs and preferences (Akbar et al., 2023; Firdaus et al., 2023).

Interest in learning is one of the important factors that affect academic success. Students with a high interest in a field tend to show a stronger intrinsic motivation to continue learning and develop their abilities (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022; Malone & Lepper, 2021). On the other hand, less interested students often face difficulties in understanding the material and lack active participation in the learning process. Data from Table 1 shows that most students have a high interest in Indonesian language studies, so it is important for educators to maintain and utilize this interest by implementing teaching methods that are more interesting and follow student needs. Innovative teaching strategies can help keep students motivated and increase learning effectiveness (Fitri & Dilia, 2024).

Table 2 shows that the majority of students (73.4%) have a good interest in reading descriptive prose, with many in the "happy" and "like" categories. This interest in reading descriptive prose is an important aspect of developing descriptive prose writing skills, as reading actively contributes to developing vocabulary and a better understanding of language structures. However, about 26.6% of students showed lower interest, which was reflected in the categories of "unhappy," "unhappy," or "not knowing." Unhappiness or indifference to reading descriptive prose can indicate a challenge in increasing students' interest in reading materials that require imagination and descriptive skills (Sutanto, 2020). Therefore, the role of teachers is very important in creating reading materials that are varied and relevant to students' daily lives to increase their interest in reading.

Reading interest greatly affects the ability to write descriptive prose. Students who are avid readers tend to have a richer vocabulary and a deeper understanding of the structure and style of the language. This contributes to their ability to write descriptive prose more effectively. Although most students enjoy reading descriptive prose, the data from Table 2 shows that some students still need to improve their reading interests. Teachers must create a learning environment supporting literacy culture by providing interesting and varied reading materials (Ma et al., 2024). In this way, it is expected that students will be more engaged in reading activities and, in turn, improve their ability to write descriptive prose (Barnes et al., 2023; Feng & Xiao, 2024).

Based on the data in Table 3, it can be seen that most students (82.2%) show a positive interest in writing descriptive prose. This high interest in writing descriptive prose is a good starting capital for developing students' writing skills. However, 15.5% of students showed low interest in writing descriptive prose, which could be caused by a lack of understanding of writing concepts or boredom with monotonous assignments. Teachers need to apply a more creative and diverse approach to teaching writing to address this issue. For example, using visual media or project-based techniques can make writing-learning more engaging and relevant for students (Wei et al., 2022).

Consistent writing practice is a key factor in honing students' writing skills. Data from Table 4 shows that only 15.6% of students practice writing descriptive prose frequently, while most students rarely practice. The low frequency of this practice shows that there is a gap between students' interest in writing and the practice they do. Although students show a high interest in writing, the low frequency of practice can hinder the development of their writing skills. Therefore, teachers need to encourage students to practice writing more often by giving structured and interesting writing tasks (Jug et al., 2019) and providing constructive feedback to help students improve their skills (Ayu et al., 2023).

The results of the data analysis show that although students have a high interest in studying Indonesian Language and writing descriptive prose, the low frequency of practice is an obstacle to improving their skills. Although students generally show a positive interest in writing descriptive prose, the low frequency of practice indicates a gap between interest and practice. Therefore, addressing this gap with more effective task management and exercises is important. Teachers are important in bridging this gap by providing more structured and engaging exercises and creating a supportive learning environment (Sharma & Mullick, 2020).

Teachers should consider various strategies to motivate students to practice writing more often. One approach is to provide constructive and personalized feedback after each writing practice (Latifi et al., 2023). In addition, teachers can create writing competitions or provide special time for creative writing during class hours. This approach can help students feel more motivated to practice and improve their writing skills significantly. Implementing this strategy will help maintain students' interest and improve the frequency of writing practice (Hoerudin, 2022).

The results of this study have important implications for curriculum design and teaching methods. The curriculum needs to emphasize more on learning to write with a continuous practice approach (Crites & Rye, 2020; Janes & de Voest, 2024; Ray et al., 2020). Meanwhile, teaching methods

must be more varied and creative to keep students interested. Monotonous learning can cause students to get bored quickly and lose interest, even though they have great potential. Therefore, teachers must create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment so students remain motivated to practice writing and improve their skills (Filgona et al., 2020; Nugroho et al., 2020).

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that although students are highly interested in the Indonesian language and descriptive prose writing activities, the low frequency of writing practice is an obstacle to improving their skills (Afzal, 2019). Therefore, teachers need to continue motivating students through creative teaching approaches and providing structured and continuous writing exercises (Cremin, 2022). Support from a conducive learning environment is also key to optimizing student potential. With improvements in teaching methodologies and the addition of structured practice frequencies, it is hoped that students can achieve better and satisfactory descriptive prose writing skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's results, it was found that most students in grade X of SMK Immanuel Kabanjahe have a high interest in Indonesian language studies and reading and writing descriptive prose. However, the low frequency of writing practice indicates a gap between interest and practice. Most students are interested in descriptive prose, but few practice writing frequently. This indicates that although students' interest in writing is quite high, consistent and regular practice still needs to be improved to optimize their writing skills.

The strength of this research lies in the use of various data collection methods, such as interviews, questionnaires, and essay tests, which provide a comprehensive picture of students' interests and abilities. However, this study has shortcomings regarding a relatively small sample size and less diverse training frequency. To improve learning outcomes, it is recommended that teachers apply more creative teaching methods and provide more opportunities for writing practice. An emphasis on constructive feedback and engaging writing assignments can help increase the frequency of practice and students' writing skills.

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