

# THE USE OF DIALOGUE JOURNAL TO IMPROVE DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF MTS NEGERI 1 PALEMBANG

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## Abstract

The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not: 1) there was any significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang who were taught by using dialogue journal and those who were not and 2) whether or not there was any significant difference in descriptive writing achievement before and after the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang were taught by using dialogue journal. There were 60 students of eighth grade taken as the sample. They were divided into control and experimental groups which both of the groups were 30 students. The technique of selecting the sample was purposive sampling method. In collecting the data, both groups were given pretest and posttest. The data were analyzed by using Paired Sample t- Test and Independent sample t- Test. The results obtained from Paired Sample t- Test showed that there was a significant difference in students' writing achievement before and after the students were taught by using dialogue journal since the  $p$ -value was lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). The results obtained from Independent Sample t- Test of the posttest in both experimental and control groups showed that there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between the students who were taught by using dialogue journal and those who were not as the  $p$ -value lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). So, dialogue journal was effective to be applied in teaching descriptive writing for the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang.

**Keywords:** Writing, Descriptive Writing, Dialogue Journal

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the skills in English that students need to master beside the other language skills. Writing is a skill which requires organization of ideas to be communicated in a text. To produce a good writing, a writer needs to consider all of the components of writing. Indeed, writing entails many complex components such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary, mechanics, unity, coherence, and cohesion (Hogue, 2003). Hogue also states that writing a good paragraph cannot be done without any planning, editing, or rearranging. Moreover, the students need concentration and more practice to learn how to organize a good writing to make it perfect.

The students may have some problems in writing. When they try to write, sometimes they get stuck with some words they are going to use. Even though the topic has been given, they do not know how to express their ideas. It makes them frustrated because even though the ideas are flowing over their mind, they do not know how to write a paragraph in the right way. Therefore, the teacher must be creative in order to make writing a pleasant activity. It is important for teachers to teach by using a suitable technique.

Based on the contents of junior high school syllabus (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional, 2013), the writer found there are two types of writing applied in teaching English for the eighth grades' junior high school namely descriptive and procedure. Between the two types of writing, the writer focused her study on descriptive writing.

One of the text types taught for junior high school students is a descriptive text. Kane (2000) states that description is about sensory experience-how something looks, sounds, and tastes. Mostly, it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception. Moreover, Savage and Shafiei (2007) state that in descriptive paragraph, the writer uses words that create an image and help the reader sees, touches, feels, smells or tastes the topic that she or he is describing. In other words, descriptive text is a kind of text which describes the particular person, place, or thing.

English has been taught in Indonesia for several purposes; to give knowledge of English, make students be able to communicate and compete in the globalization era because everything used English. Teaching English is considered to be one of the most challenging teaching practices. However, to produce a piece of writing is a challenge task for EFL students. Students are usually afraid of joining English classes. Their mindsets say English is difficult to learn. There are some facts of problems in students' writing. First, the study conducted by Imron (2000) showed that Indonesian students' writing ability is the lowest in Asia. Second, some studies report that most of the EFL/ ESL students are still in the low level in terms of their writing ability (Ihsan, 2016; Nordin & Mohammad, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2005). Third, Afrilyasanti (2013) states that "in Indonesia 75% of students are unable to write since they face some problems in learning EFL writing for example; the time given to the students to write is limited to expressing their idea freely, and also many EFL students do not feel confident with their sentence structures" (p.1). The students commonly find the difficulties in grammar, choice of words, and coherence.

Based on the interview with the English teacher in MTs Negeri 1 Palembang on October, 26th 2017, the writer found that most of the eighth graders had problems in writing like; the students did not put the capital letter in the sentence because they were careless of writing, and they had a lack of vocabulary which made them difficult to write, so every student needed a dictionary. Moreover, the students had grammatical errors which made them difficult to develop their writing. The students had to know the elements of grammar that would be used in their writing. The other problem was that the students were confused in developing the structure of their writing, so it was difficult for the students to organize the ideas into a paragraph. The students needed the teacher to guide them in developing their ideas with the right structure. Because of that, teacher in that case needs to use suitable teaching technique to make the classroom atmosphere becomes unstressful and interesting, because it can help the students relax to express their writing without pressure and also less their afraid in learning English.

In this study, the writer used dialogue journal as a technique to improve students' descriptive writing achievement. Dialogue journal is a written conversation between a teacher and an individual student (Peyton and Reed, 1990). In other words, it can be said that dialogue journal is unlike oral conversations, this is a learning tool that gives the students something to look back and review. Teachers regularly are writing their side of the dialogue, commenting on any aspects of a learner's writing, responding to questions,

posing questions and challenges, and initiating their own dialogue topics (Peyton, 1993). Therefore, from the teacher's response above, it can guide the students to write a good paragraph. To support this study, there are some investigations related to writing and the use of dialogue journal. Firstly, according to Collins (2003) in her research with the title, "Connecting with Elementary School ESL Students through Dialogue Journals" dialogue journal has benefits not only to the students but also to the writer. They are both become more fluent, expressive, and worried in writing. Secondly, according to VanderMolen (2011) in her research with the title, "Does the Use of Dialogue Journals Affect the Writing Fluency of Low-Literacy Adult Somali Students" through the dialogue journal, the communication is expanded and deepened, which enables to develop new understanding and respect for each other. It means the students feel to be respected of their writing by the teacher and grow their writing ability indirectly.

Based on the discussions above, the writer can conclude that dialogue journal gave many advantages to improve the students' descriptive writing achievement, like expressing ideas through writing, practicing their fluency in writing, or building a good relationship between teacher and students. Because of that, the writer chose dialogue journal as a technique that was applied to her study and it could motivate the students to write about something without feeling afraid that the teacher would check the form of their writing. By using dialogue journal, they did not realize that they had already practiced their writing. Writing the dialogue journal could also make the students interested and decrease their boredom in learning English. Problems of the study related in questions were as follows: (1) was there any significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang who were taught by using dialogue journal and those who were not?, (2) was there any significant difference in descriptive writing achievement before and after the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang were taught by using dialogue journal?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used quasi-experimental design, with pretest posttest non equivalent control group design to know whether or not there was a significant difference in students' descriptive writing achievement between the eighth grade students who were taught by using dialogue journal and those who were not. In this study, the writer conducted 16 meetings including pretest before giving treatment and posttest after implementing treatment by using dialogue journal.

In this study, all of the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang in the academic year of 2016/2017 were treated as the population with the total number 223 students in 7 classes. The samples chosen in this study were VIII.A and VIII.D by using purposive sampling. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) state that in doing purposive sampling, the writer selected the sample for a specific purpose, which means he/she had already determined how his/her sample would be. The writer selected the sample based on the criteria, 1) both classes were taught by the same teacher, 2) the total number of the students of both classes was same, 3) the average of English score based on report book was almost the same. Then, considering the English score on report book of both classes, VIII. A should belong to the experimental group since it had lower score, while VIII. D should belong to the control group.

In collecting the data, writing test was conducted. In writing test, the students were asked to write a descriptive text by choosing one of the topics. They were favorite pet, favorite movie, and hobby with at least 80 words. Time allocation of the test was 40 minutes and the results of the test were rated by two raters based on the descriptive rubric developed by Weigle (2002). Then, this study used validity and reliability test. In order to create a valid test, the writer created the test based on the syllabus and 2013 curriculum of the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang. To make the test with a high degree of content validity, the writer devised the test items in accordance with the table of test specifications. The writer also asked some expert judgments who had the following criteria: (1) having a master degree in English teaching, (2) having TOEFL score above 530, and (3) having been teaching English for more than three years. In this study, to estimate the reliability of test, the inter-rater reliability was used. To minimize the subjectivity in scoring process, there were two raters that got involved in giving scores. The raters were chosen based on some criteria: (1) having a master degree in English teaching, (2) having TOEFL score above 530, and (3) having been teaching English for more than three years. The raters used the rubric provided by the writer. Then, the writer applied Pearson Product Moment Correlation SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for Social Science) to find out the correlation coefficient. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990), for the research purpose, a useful rule is that reliability should be at 0.70 or preferably higher. The reliability coefficients of pre-test and post-test in the experimental group respectively were 0.926 and 0.968, while the reliability coefficients of pre-test and post-test in the control group were 0.895 and 0.897. In consequence, it can be concluded that the data were reliable.

Before analyzing the data, the writer tested the assumption of normality and homogeneity of the data. The normality was used to find out whether or not the data of pretest and posttest in experimental and control groups gained and distributed normally. In analyzing the normality of the data, the writer used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 22. If the normally spread  $p > 0.05$ , it is normal. Statistical output of the normality tests done in the experimental and control is shown in the following table.

From statistical calculation by using normality test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was found that the students' pre-test and post-test in experimental group were 0.142 and 0.200. Meanwhile, the students' pre-test and post-test in control group were 0.189 and 0.200. It means that all scores were categorized into normal since the p-outputs were higher than the mean significant different at 0.05 level. Therefore, the data were normal. The further calculation of the normality test from the students' pre-test and post-test in experimental and control groups can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Normality Test of the Experimental and Control Groups  
Tests of Normality

| Group    |              | Kolmogorov-Smirnova |           |    |       |
|----------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|----|-------|
|          |              | Mean                | Statistic | f  | Sig.  |
| Pretest  | Experimental | 60.50               | .139      | 30 | .142  |
|          | Control      | 57.70               | .133      | 30 | .189  |
| Posttest | Experimental | 78.90               | .123      | 30 | .200* |

|  |         |       |      |   |       |
|--|---------|-------|------|---|-------|
|  | Control | 59.07 | .095 | 0 | .200* |
|--|---------|-------|------|---|-------|

To determine whether the samples were homogenous or not, the students' pre-test and post-test scores in experimental group and control group were analyzed by using Levene's statistics. The samples were considered homogenous whenever the  $p$ -value was higher than mean significant statistic difference at the 0.05 level.

Based on the calculation of Levene's statistics by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 22, it was found that  $\rho$ -output of pre-test and post-test in experimental group was 0.574, and pre-test and post-test in control group was 0.106. Then,  $\rho$ -output of pre-test in experimental and control groups was 0.621 and post-test in experimental and control groups was 0.165. From the  $\rho$ -output, it can be said that the samples were homogenous since the  $\rho$ -outputs were higher than the mean significant difference at the 0.05 level. The further calculation of test homogeneity by using Levene's Statistics can be seen in following table 2.

Table 2. Results of Homogeneity Test

| Group                                    | Levene Statistic | f1 | f2 | Sig.  |
|--|------------------|----|----|-------|
| Experimental Group (Pretest-Posttest)    | 0.319            |    | 8  | 0.574 |
| Control Group (Pretest-Posttest)         | 2.698            |    | 8  | 0.106 |
| Experimental-Control (Pretest-Pretest)   | 0.247.247        |    | 8  | 0.621 |
| Experimental-Control (Posttest-Posttest) | 1.979            |    | 8  | 0.165 |

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

### The Results of the Pretest and Posttest in the Experimental Group

From the results of students' pretest scores in the experimental group, it was found that the lowest score was 47 and the highest was 71. There were 30 students in VIII. A class, most of them were in poor and average categories. There were no students in very poor category, 10 students in poor category, 19 students in average category, 1 student in good category, and no one was in the excellent category. The mean score of the pretest of experimental group was 60.50.

Moreover, the statistical data also described the results of posttest in the experimental group. After doing the treatment, it was found that the results of the posttest improved. The students could write better in the posttest. The lowest score of posttest was 67 and the highest score was 89. Most of the students were in the good category. There were no student in very poor and poor categories, 8 students in average category, 13 students in good category and 9 students in the excellent category. The mean score of the posttest of experimental group was 78.90. The score distribution of the pretest and posttest in experimental group can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. The Score Distribution in the Experimental Group

| Score interval | Category  | Dialogue Journal |     |          |     |
|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----|----------|-----|
|                |           | Pretest          |     | Posttest |     |
|                |           | req              | %   | req      | %   |
| 86-100         | Excellent | 0                | 0%  | 0        | 0%  |
| 71-85          | Good      | 3                | 4%  | 3        | 3%  |
| 56-70          | Average   | 9                | 30% | 9        | 27% |
| 41-45          | Poor      | 0                | 0%  | 0        | 0%  |
| <40            | Very Poor | 0                | 0%  | 0        | 0%  |
| Total          |           | 0                | 00% | 0        | 00% |

Source: MTs N 1 Palembang

Table 3 also shows the percentage of pretest of the students' writing achievement in the experimental group. It shows that 0% of the thirty students were in the very poor category, 33% students were in poor category, 63% students were in average category, 4% were in good category, and none of them was in the excellent category. It means almost all of the students were in average and poor categories in the pretest. Meanwhile, the percentage of posttest of the students writing in the experimental group showed that 0% of the thirty students were in very poor and poor categories, 27% students were in average category, 43% students were in good category, and 30% students were in excellent category. It can be concluded, dialogue journal gave improvement in students' writing achievement.

#### The Results of the Pretest and Posttest of Writing Tests in the Control Group

The results of students' pretest scores in the control group found that the lowest score was 48 and the highest was 70. There were 30 students in VIII. D class, most of them were in poor and average categories. There were no students in very poor category, 15 students in poor category, 15 students in average category, and none of the students in good category and excellent category. The mean score of the pretest of control group was 57.70.

Moreover, the statistical data also described the results of posttest in the control group. It showed the lowest score of posttest was 50 and the highest score was 72. There were no students in very poor category, 10 students in poor category, 19 students in average category, 1 student in good category and none of the students in the excellent category. The mean score in the posttest of control group was 59.07. The score distribution of the pretest and posttest in control group can be seen in table 4.

Table 4. The Score Distribution in Control group

| Score interval | Category  | Dialogue Journal |      |          |      |
|----------------|-----------|------------------|------|----------|------|
|                |           | Pretest          |      | Posttest |      |
|                |           | F req            | %    | F req    | %    |
| 86-100         | Excellent | 0                | 0%   | 0        | 0%   |
| 71-85          | Good      | 0                | 0%   | 1        | 4%   |
| 56-70          | Average   | 1                | 5%   | 1        | 6%   |
| 41-45          | Poor      | 5                | 0%   | 9        | 3%   |
| <40            | Very Poor | 1                | 5%   | 1        | 3%   |
|                |           | 0                | 0%   | 0        | 0%   |
| Total          |           | 3                | 100% | 3        | 100% |

Source: MTs N 1 Palembang

Table 4 also shows the percentage of pretest of the students' writing in the control group. It shows that 0% of the thirty students were in the very poor category, 50% students were in poor category, 50% students were in average category, and none of the students were in the good and excellent categories. It means almost students were in average and poor categories in the pretest. Meanwhile, the percentage of posttest of the students writing in the control group showed that 0% of the thirty students were in very poor category, 33% students were in poor category, 63% students were in average category, and 4% of the thirty students in good category, and none of the students were in excellent category. It can be concluded, there was no writing score improvement in control group because the writing score either in pretest or posttest was still in poor and average categories.

#### Paired Sample t-Test of Experimental and Control Groups

Paired sample t-test was used to see whether or not there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement before and after the students were taught by using dialogue journal. The results of paired sample t-test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The Results of Paired Sample t-Test of Experimental and Control Groups

| Group   | Test     | Mean  | Mean Difference | Std. Dev. | Std. Error Mean | T     | df | Sig. |
|---------|----------|-------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|----|------|
| Exp     | Pretest  | 60.50 | 18.400          | 7.528     | 1.374           | 2.098 | 9  | .000 |
|         | Posttest | 78.90 |                 | 7.275     | 1.328           |       |    |      |
| Control | Pretest  | 57.7  | 1.367           | 7.086     | 1.294           | 0     |    | 0    |

|  |          |       |  |       |       |      |   |      |
|--|----------|-------|--|-------|-------|------|---|------|
|  |          | 0     |  |       |       | .889 | 9 | .381 |
|  | Posttest | 59.07 |  | 5.988 | 1.093 |      |   |      |

Based on the results of paired sample t-test in the experimental group, the mean score of the posttest (78.90) was higher than the mean score of the pretest (60.50) with the mean difference of 18.400. The standard deviations of the pretest and posttest were 7.528 and 7.275. The standard error mean of the pretest and posttest were 1.374 and 1.328. Since the  $\rho$ -value (sig. (2-tailed)) of the experimental group was lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis (H01) was rejected, and the research hypothesis (H11) was accepted. Therefore, there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement before and after the eighth grade students were taught by using dialogue journal.

Meanwhile, the results of paired sample t-test in the control group showed the mean score of the posttest (59.07) was higher than the mean score of the pretest (57.70) with the mean difference of 1.367. The standard deviation of the pretest and posttest were 7.086 and 5.988. The standard error mean of the pretest and posttest were 1.294 and 1.093. Since the  $\rho$ -value (sig. (2-tailed)) of the control group was higher than 0.05 ( $0.381 > 0.05$ ), it could be concluded that there was no significant difference in students' scores between the pretest and posttest of the control group.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that dialogue journal was successfully in increasing descriptive writing achievement of the students.

Table 6 The Results of Paired Sample t-Test of Aspects of Writing in Experimental Group

| Group        | Aspects      | Test      | Mean  | Mean diff | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t      | Df | Sig (2-tailed) |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|--------|----|----------------|
| Experimental | Content      | Post-test | 22.97 | 4.000     | 2.133          | .390            | 10.269 | 29 | .000           |
|              |              | Pre-test  | 18.97 |           |                |                 |        |    |                |
|              | Organization | Post-test | 17.53 | 4.233     | 1.331          | .243            | 17.422 | 29 | .000           |
|              |              | Pre-test  | 13.30 |           |                |                 |        |    |                |
|              | Vocabulary   | Post-test | 17.13 | 4.133     | 1.432          | .261            | 15.810 | 29 | .000           |
|              |              | Pre-test  | 13.00 |           |                |                 |        |    |                |
|              | Language Use | Post-test | 18.53 | 5.133     | 1.502          | .274            | 18.713 | 29 | .000           |
|              |              | Pre-test  | 13.40 |           |                |                 |        |    |                |
|              | Mechanics    | Post-test | 3.77  | .933      | .365           | .067            | 14.000 | 29 | .000           |
|              |              | Pre-test  | 2.83  |           |                |                 |        |    |                |

Based on the results of paired sample t-test of each aspect of writing in the experimental group showed that in the posttest of the mean scores were for the content 22.97, organization 17.53, vocabulary 17.13, language use 18.53, and mechanics 3.77 with the mean differences of each aspect 4.000, 4.233, 4.133, 5.133, 0.933. Since the significance values (2-tailed) were lower than  $< 0.05$ , it could be concluded that there were significant improvements in all aspects of writing in the experimental group.



Table 7. The Results of Paired Sample t-Test of Aspects of Writing in the Control Group

| Group   | Aspects      | Test      | Mean  | Mean diff | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T     | Df | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---------|--------------|-----------|-------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|-------|----|----------------|
| Control | Content      | Post-test | 19.03 | 1.267     | 2.803          | .512            | 2.475 | 29 | .069           |
|         |              | Pre-test  | 17.77 |           |                |                 |       |    |                |
|         | Organization | Post-test | 13.17 | .300      | 1.968          | .359            | .835  | 29 | .411           |
|         |              | Pre-test  | 12.87 |           |                |                 |       |    |                |
|         | Vocabulary   | Post-test | 12.50 | .100      | 2.074          | .379            | .264  | 29 | .794           |
|         |              | Pre-test  | 12.60 |           |                |                 |       |    |                |
|         | Language Use | Post-test | 12.30 | .367      | 2.723          | .497            | .738  | 29 | .467           |
|         |              | Pre-test  | 12.67 |           |                |                 |       |    |                |
|         | Mechanics    | Post-test | 3.00  | .200      | .610           | .111            | 1.795 | 29 | .083           |
|         |              | Pre-test  | 2.80  |           |                |                 |       |    |                |

The results of paired sample t-test of each aspect of writing in the control group showed that in the posttest the mean scores were for the content 19.03, organization 13.17, vocabulary 12.50, language use 12.30, and mechanics 3.00, with the mean differences of each aspect 1.267, 0.300, 0.100, 0.367, 0.200. Since the significance values (2-tailed) were higher than 0.05, it could be concluded that there was no significant improvements in all aspects of writing in the control group.

#### Independent Sample t-Test

Independent sample t-test was used to compare the students' scores between experimental group and control group. It was used to see whether or not there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement between the students who were taught by using dialogue journal (experimental group) and those who were not (control group). The results of independent sample t-test presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of Independent Sample t-Test of Experimental and Control Groups

| Pretest  |       | Mean diff | Std. Dev | T      | Sig   |
|----------|-------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|
| Exp      | 60.50 | 2.800     | 7.528    | 1.483  | 0.143 |
| Con      | 57.70 |           | 7.086    |        |       |
| Posttest |       | Mean diff | Std. Dev | T      | Sig   |
| Exp      | 78.90 | 19.833    | 7.275    | 11.529 | 0.000 |
| Con      | 59.07 |           | 5.988    |        |       |

Based on the results of independent sample t-test above, in the pre-test of independent sample t-test showed that t-obtained was 1.483 and  $p$ -value was 0.143. Since  $p$ -value was higher than 0.05 ( $0.143 > 0.05$ ), there was no significant difference in the pre-test between the experimental and control groups. In other words, the students in both groups had the same level of English proficiency before the treatment was given. While in the post-test, the results of independent samples t-test showed that t-obtained was 11.529 and  $p$ -value was 0.000. Since  $p$ -value was lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), the null

hypothesis (H02) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H12) was accepted. Therefore, there was a significant difference in descriptive writing achievement of descriptive text between the students who were taught by using dialogue journal and those who were not.

Table 9 The Results of Independent Samples t-Test of Aspects of Writing in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Aspects      | Group        | N  | Mean  | Mean diff | Df     | Sig (2-tailed) | t      | Std. Error Dif |
|--------------|--------------|----|-------|-----------|--------|----------------|--------|----------------|
| Content      | Experimental | 30 | 22.97 | 3.933     | 58     | .000           | 6.885  | .571           |
|              | Control      | 30 | 19.03 |           | 55.677 |                |        |                |
| Organization | Experimental | 30 | 17.53 | 4.367     | 58     | .000           | 11.312 | .386           |
|              | Control      | 30 | 13.17 |           | 52.323 |                |        |                |
| Vocabulary   | Experimental | 30 | 17.13 | 4.633     | 58     | .000           | 11.852 | .391           |
|              | Control      | 30 | 12.50 |           | 57.883 |                |        |                |
| Language Use | Experimental | 30 | 18.53 | 6.233     | 58     | .000           | 12.402 | .503           |
|              | Control      | 30 | 12.30 |           | 54.562 |                |        |                |
| Mechanics    | Experimental | 30 | 3.77  | .767      | 58     | .000           | 8.332  | .092           |
|              | Control      | 30 | 3.00  |           | 47.979 |                |        |                |

The results of independent sample t-test of each aspect of writing showed that the mean difference in the post-test of the control group and the experimental group were for content 3.933, organization 4.367, vocabulary 4.633, language use 6.233, and mechanics 0.767. Since the significance values (2-tailed) of all the aspects were less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), it could be concluded that there were significant improvements in all aspects of writing between the experimental group and control group.

#### INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings in this study, the writer made some interpretations. After giving the treatment, the students' descriptive writing achievement in experimental group was better than those in control group. The writer would explain the interpretation based on some analysis related to the whole data that were found from during the research study.

There was significant difference between pre-test and post-test in experimental and control groups. In the pre-test, most of the students could not organize and develop their thoughts about what they were writing based on the provided topic well. It influenced the students' way in writing because the students were too busy to choose the vocabulary or arrange a good sentence based on the topic without thinking that they were wasting their time. Another error that was made by students was the structure part. In pre-test, the students' structure in the writing was they did not know where the identification and description, they did not have much knowledge about what descriptive text itself and the students really needed to know how to organize it to become a good paragraph, while in the post-test of experimental group, the students' structure in their writing was well written because during the treatment the students were taught by using dialogue journal and they were explained well about descriptive text by the writer.

It could be said that the students of experimental group could not write academic writing well. However, in the post-test, the students could do better in organizing and developing their idea. They were able to focus on what they should write and the students could also choose the appropriate words and arrange the words into a good sentence based on the topic that were provided. They could write their ideas more academically than in pre-test, before getting the treatment.

In teaching the experimental group, the writer provided topic lesson that had been harmonized to the school-based curriculum of 2013. First in the classroom, the writer gave the students the example of descriptive text. Then, the writer explained the structure of the descriptive text, so the students could understand and write the descriptive text well. After that, the writer gave some questions based on the text, so that the students could understand the topic and information of the text. Then, the writer asked the students to write a descriptive text in their dialogue journal based on the topics that were given by the teacher or used their own topic. The writer tried to make sure that the students could write freely without worried about the grammar and vocabulary. The important thing was the students wanted to write as much as they can based on the topic.

By using dialogue journal, the writer asked the students to explore their ideas without feeling afraid of making mistakes. The students could write anything based on the topic that they had chosen before without considering the grammar and vocabulary. They could share their thought freely in the dialogue journal because dialogue journal is a kind of learning technique which based on the ideas that the students write to learn. The role of the writer was as the responder of the students' writing and gave some comments for the students to read and could give response back for the teacher. Godev (1994) explains that dialogue journal writing can successfully be integrated into a conversation class, because dialogue journal is interactive. Typical for this kind of writing is a close collaboration of at least two writers. Furthermore, the interaction that is present in the dialogue journal allows both writers to share an equal effort to keep the communication flows going quiet easily. This is one of the features which makes dialogue journal writing interactive in almost the same way as a conversation.

The application of using dialogue journal offered the students a lot of chance to write and made the students more active in writing. This tool offered a meaningful dialogue between the teacher and the students. According to Harmer (2004), dialogue journal provides the opportunity for teacher and their students to enter into a new and different kind of dialogue. Through this dialogue, the writer could force the students to write and even checked the students' personal problems in writing. The used of dialogue journal offered the chance for the students to explore their ideas and write it in a descriptive text. By reading and giving comment on the students' dialogue journal, the writer could see and analyze the problems from each student. The writer did not tell the students about their problem directly. But, the writer taught how to solve the problem in the next meeting and made the students understood how to solve their problem. The students could be more active to discover their weak points and learned by themselves.

The improvement of the students' writing achievement was also proved by statistical analysis. First, there was significant difference between experimental and control group in pre-test and post-test. Second, the students who were taught by using dialogue journal tended to be more active in studying English.

The students in the experimental group who were taught by using dialogue journal had better increase score than the students in the control group who were taught without using dialogue journal because the students who were taught by using dialogue journal were more active in studying English. Based on the results of paired sample t-Test, p-value of the experimental group was lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), while p-value of the control group was higher than 0.05 ( $0.381 > 0.05$ ). It could also be seen from the results of paired sample t-test of aspects of writing in experimental and control groups. The p-value of all aspects in experimental group were lower than 0.05 while p-value of all aspects in control group were higher than 0.05. It could be interpreted that dialogue journal was a good technique to improve students' writing achievement.

The students' progress in learning English could also be seen from the result of the post-test, which was higher than the result of the pre-test. Based on the result of independent sample t-test, p-value of posttest in experimental and control groups was lower than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). From the results of independent sample t-test of aspects of writing, p-value of all aspects in experimental and control groups were lower than 0.05. The post-test gained by the experimental group was higher than the post test gained by the control group by using the same test. It was because the students were more active when they were taught by using dialogue journal. The students were interested even more sharing their thoughts, ideas, comments, which would help the students in developing their ideas that they would write. The writer interpreted that this technique could help students to learn better, motivate the students to write, and develop their self confidence better than before.

At the end of this research, the writer recommended that the teacher could use dialogue journal as another technique to be applied in teaching writing as it guided the students in organizing and developing their ideas.

## **CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the findings and interpretations of the study, it was concluded that teaching descriptive writing by using dialogue journal could improve the students' achievement in writing descriptive text which it can be seen from the results of the students' difference in descriptive writing achievement from the mean score of the post-test in experimental group was higher than the mean score of the post-test in control group (independent sample t-test). Besides, dialogue journal also showed that the students had improvement before and after they were taught by using dialogue journal (paired sample t-test), it can be seen from the difference of mean score of pre-test and post-test in experimental group.

Therefore, from the explanation above dialogue journal has advantages in students' descriptive writing achievement. It provided a technique to improve students' writing achievement and helped them to write a good descriptive text, like expressing the ideas through writing, practicing their fluency in writing, and the students had a chance to build a private discussion and deep review with the teacher in writing activity.

It can be concluded that using dialogue journal is a good way to teach descriptive writing achievement to the eighth grade students of MTs N 1 Palembang.

## SUGGESTIONS

Based on the explanation above, the writer would like to give some suggestions to the English teachers, students, and the further researchers.

Some suggestions for the teachers:

1. The teachers of English should develop various techniques and methodologies in writing classes. The technique that is used should be fun and interesting for the students, so the teacher can avoid the bored atmosphere in the class. Besides, the teachers can choose the technique which can build a good relationship between the teacher and the students. One of the techniques is by using dialogue journal.

2. The teachers of English can use dialogue journal as a technique to improve the students' writing achievement. If the teachers want to use this technique, the teachers need to create a comfort atmosphere for the students to make them can express their opinions and thoughts freely. In the dialogue journal, the teachers should act as their friends.

Some suggestions for the students:

1. The students should be more diligent to write their dialogue journal everyday. The students can start writing about their daily activities.

2. The students should be more brave and creative to explore and express their ideas or interesting topic that can be explored well in writing.

3. The students should do more practicing their writing skill, not only in the school but also in the outside of the school. They should practice it to increase their mastery in every aspect of writing in order to have a good writing.

Some suggestion for the researcher:

The writer hopes this study can be a reference for the next researchers who are interested in conducting a study about improving students' descriptive writing achievement using dialogue journal.

The writer suggests the future researchers provide more text and apply dialogue journal not only for descriptive writing but also for other kinds of the text such as recount or narrative text.

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