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The Effectiveness Of The Outlining Technique In Overcoming Writing Difficulties In Descriptive Text Among Eight-Grade Students Of SMP Negeri 31 Medan

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the outlining technique in improving students' writing skill in descriptive texts among Grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 31 Medan in the 2025–2026 academic year. This study is motivated by students' low writing skill in descriptive texts, particularly in developing ideas, organizing text structure coherently, and using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and post-test control group design. The sample consisted of 60 Grade VIII students, divided into two groups: the experimental class (VIII-7) and the control class (VIII-8), each consisting of 30 students selected through purposive sampling. The experimental group was taught using the outlining technique, while the control group was taught using conventional teaching methods. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test assessments and analyzed using normality test, homogeneity test, independent samples t-test, and paired sample t-test. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups based on the independent samples t-test result, with a t-value of 6.063 and a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, leading to the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a . Furthermore, the paired sample t-test results show that both groups experienced a significant improvement; however, the experimental group achieved a higher increase compared to the control group. The mean score of the experimental group increased from 69.33 to 88.33, while the control group increased from 62.33 to 77.17. Therefore, it can be concluded that the outlining technique is effective in improving students' writing skill in descriptive texts.

Keywords: Writing Skill, Outlining Technique, Descriptive Text.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas teknik outlining dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 31 Medan pada tahun ajaran 2025–2026. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masih rendahnya kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif, terutama dalam mengembangkan ide, menyusun struktur teks secara koheren, serta menggunakan kosakata dan tata bahasa yang tepat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode quasi-experimental design tipe pre-test dan post-test

control group. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 60 siswa kelas VIII yang dibagi menjadi dua kelompok, yaitu kelas eksperimen (VIII-7) dan kelas kontrol (VIII-8), masing-masing berjumlah 30 siswa yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Kelas eksperimen diberikan perlakuan menggunakan teknik outlining, sedangkan kelas kontrol menggunakan metode pembelajaran konvensional. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui tes pre-test dan post-test, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, uji independent samples t-test, dan uji paired sample t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan antara kelas eksperimen dan kelas kontrol berdasarkan hasil uji independent samples t-test dengan nilai $t = 6,063$ dan signifikansi $0,000 < 0,05$, sehingga H_0 ditolak dan H_a diterima. Selain itu, hasil uji paired sample t-test menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan yang signifikan pada masing-masing kelompok, dengan peningkatan yang lebih tinggi pada kelas eksperimen dibandingkan kelas kontrol. Rata-rata nilai kelas eksperimen meningkat dari 69,33 menjadi 88,33, sedangkan kelas kontrol meningkat dari 62,33 menjadi 77,17. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa teknik outlining efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa.

Kata Kunci: *Kemampuan Menulis, Teknik Outlining, Teks Deskriptif.*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the essential subjects taught in schools because it functions as an international language used in various fields of global communication. In the process of learning English, students are expected to master four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing is often considered the most challenging skill because it requires not only knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to organize ideas logically and coherently. Writing is an active cognitive process that involves planning, drafting, and revising in order to produce clear and meaningful communication (Nuralisaputri, 2023). It is also a complex skill that demands critical thinking and the ability to structure ideas effectively so that the message can be understood by readers (Rahman, 2024). Therefore, writing is not simply about forming sentences, but about constructing ideas in an organized and meaningful way.

In the context of Indonesian education, English learning in junior high schools is implemented based on the Merdeka Curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2022. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, competency development, and the strengthening of critical thinking skills through genre-based text learning. One of the text types that must be mastered by eighth-grade students is descriptive text, which aims to describe people, places, animals, or objects in detail by paying attention to structure and language features. However, in classroom practice, students still face difficulties in developing descriptive writing skills.

Observations at SMP Negeri 31 Medan show that many students struggle to generate ideas, organize paragraphs coherently, and use appropriate grammar and vocabulary. As a result, their writing tends to be unstructured and difficult to understand. These conditions indicate the need for an effective strategy to help students improve their writing performance.

A number of previous studies have shown that the outlining technique is effective in improving students' writing skills. Research by (Damayanti, Afni, & S, 2025). found that students experienced difficulties in organizing ideas and developing descriptive texts; however, after the implementation of outlining, the experimental group's mean score increased significantly from 48.57 to 82.75. Similarly, (Agustina, 2025). reported that students who were taught using outlining showed significant improvement in organizing ideas and developing coherent paragraphs, with mean scores increasing from 55.47 to 74.84. These findings indicate that outlining can help students structure their ideas before writing and improve the overall quality of their texts. Nevertheless, most of these studies were conducted in different contexts and educational settings, and there is still limited empirical evidence regarding the implementation of the outlining technique in SMP Negeri 31 Medan, particularly for eighth-grade students in writing descriptive texts.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this study lies in the application of the outlining technique in the specific context of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 31 Medan to examine its effectiveness in improving students' descriptive writing skills. This study is expected to provide contextual empirical evidence on how outlining can support students in generating ideas, organizing paragraphs, and producing coherent descriptive texts in a junior high school setting. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether the outlining technique has a significant effect on students' writing skill in descriptive text at SMP Negeri 31 Medan.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of the outlining technique on students' writing skill in descriptive text. The quantitative approach was used because the data were obtained in the form of numerical scores and analyzed statistically (Prayuda & Ginting, 2024). A quasi-experimental design was applied because the researcher worked with existing classes

without random assignment of subjects (Sugiyono, 2024). The research design used was a non-equivalent control group design involving two groups, namely the experimental class and the control class. Both groups were given a pre-test to measure students’ initial writing ability in descriptive text. The experimental group was taught using the outlining technique as a pre-writing strategy, while the control group was taught using the conventional method. After the treatment, both groups were given a post-test to measure students’ writing improvement. The research design is presented in table 1.

Table 1. The Quasi-Experimental Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	O_1	Outlining Technique (X)	O_2
Control Group	O_3	Conventional Method (-)	O_4

(O_1 - O_4 represent pre-test and post-test scores; X represents the outlining technique treatment)

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 31 Medan, located at Jl. Jamin Ginting KM. 13, Lau Cih, Medan Tuntungan District, Medan, North Sumatra, in the 2025/2026 academic year. The school was selected based on preliminary observation indicating that students had difficulties in organizing ideas and developing descriptive texts coherently.

The population of this study was all eighth-grade students consisting of 284 students from nine classes. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique. Two classes were chosen based on similar characteristics such as low writing achievement and similar English learning conditions. Class VIII-7 was assigned as the experimental group, while class VIII-8 was assigned as the control group, with a total of 60 students. The instrument used in this study was a writing test in the form of a descriptive text task. The test was administered twice, namely pre-test and post-test. Students were asked to write a descriptive text based on a given topic such as a person, place, animal, or object. The writing was assessed using a rubric covering five aspects: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Brown, 2001). Documentation such as students’ test results and classroom activities was also used to support the data. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. The analysis included mean score calculation, normality test using Shapiro-Wilk test, homogeneity test using Levene’s test, and hypothesis testing using Independent Sample t-test and Paired Sample t-test. The decision criteria for hypothesis testing were that if the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was lower than 0.05, then the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted.

The mean score was calculated using the following formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Explanation:

- $\bar{X}$: Mean score (average score)
- $\sum X$: The total score obtained by all students
- N : The number of students

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the research conducted at SMP Negeri 31 Medan. The data were collected from the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control classes to determine the effect of the outlining technique on students' writing skill in descriptive text. The experimental class was taught using the outlining technique, while the control class was taught using the conventional teaching method. To analyze the data, the researcher employed descriptive statistics, normality testing, homogeneity testing, and hypothesis testing using Independent Sample t-test and Paired Sample t-test through SPSS version 25.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

		Statistics			
		Posttest_Expe rimental	Pretest_Exp erimental	Posttest_Contr ol	Pretest_Cont rol
N	Valid	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0
	Mean	88.33	69.33	77.17	62.33
	Std. Deviation	7.466	9.714	6.783	7.397
	Variance	55.747	94.368	46.006	54.713
	Range	25	35	25	25
	Minimum	75	55	65	50
	Maximum	100	90	90	75

Based on table 2, the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test (88.33) is higher than that of the control group (77.17). This indicates that there is a noticeable difference in students' writing performance between the two groups after the treatment. The higher improvement in the experimental group suggests that the outlining technique is more effective in improving students' writing skill compared to the conventional

method. This is because outlining provides students with a clear framework that helps them organize ideas systematically before developing them into complete paragraphs. In addition, the improvement in the experimental group is not only reflected in the mean score but also in the range of scores, which shows more consistent performance among students after the treatment.

Normality Test

Table 3. Result of Normality Test

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Posttest_Experimental	.155	30	.064	.933	30	.058
Pretest_Experimental	.139	30	.145	.952	30	.188
Posttest_Control	.159	30	.052	.944	30	.115
Pretest_Control	.174	30	.021	.931	30	.052

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on table 3, all significance values obtained from the Shapiro-Wilk test are higher than 0.05. This indicates that the data from both the experimental and control groups are normally distributed. This result shows that the distribution of students' scores does not deviate significantly from normal distribution. Therefore, the data meet the assumption required for further parametric statistical analysis.

Homogeneity Test

Table 4. Result of Pre-test Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Value	Based on Mean	2.451	1	58	.123
	Based on Median	2.245	1	58	.139
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.245	1	57.709	.139
	Based on trimmed mean	2.507	1	58	.119

Based on table 4, the significance value of 0.123 is higher than 0.05. This indicates that the variances of both groups are homogeneous. This result confirms that the experimental and control classes had relatively similar initial conditions before the treatment was applied. Therefore, any differences found in the post-test results can be attributed to the teaching method used rather than differences in initial ability.

Hypothesis Testing

1. Independent Sample t-test

Table 5. Result of Independent Sample t-test

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Value	Equal variances assumed	.348	.557	6.063	58	.000	11.167	1.842	7.480	14.853
	Equal variances not assumed			6.063	57.473	.000	11.167	1.842	7.479	14.854

The Independent Sample t-test shows a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the treatment. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. It can be concluded that the outlining technique has a significant effect on students' writing skill in descriptive text.

2. Paired Sample t-test

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	Posttest_Experimental - Pretest_Experimental	19.000	5.632	1.028	16.897	21.103	18.476	9	.000
Pair 2	Posttest_Control - Pretest_Control	14.833	4.450	.812	13.172	16.495	18.259	9	.000

The results of the Paired Sample t-test indicate that both groups experienced improvement from pre-test to post-test. However, the experimental class shows a greater

improvement, with a mean difference of 19.00, compared to the control class, which shows a mean difference of 14.84. This indicates that although both teaching methods contribute to improving students' writing skill, the outlining technique is more effective in enhancing students' performance in descriptive text writing.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, the outlining technique has a significant effect on students' writing skill in descriptive text among eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 31 Medan. This is indicated by the improvement in the mean score of the experimental class from 69.33 in the pre-test to 88.33 in the post-test. Meanwhile, the control class showed a lower improvement, from 62.33 to 77.17. In addition, the result of the Independent Sample t-test revealed a significance value lower than 0.05, which indicates a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. These findings suggest that the outlining technique helps students organize their ideas before writing, which leads to better paragraph development and more coherent descriptive texts. By using an outline, students are able to identify main ideas and supporting details in a systematic way before constructing the final text. As a result, students become more focused and confident in developing their writing. Furthermore, the use of outlining also contributes to improved text organization. Students are able to arrange ideas in a logical sequence, which reduces confusion during the writing process.

This condition makes it easier for students to develop their writing in a more structured and meaningful way. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research which states that outlining is effective in helping students produce more coherent and well-organized writing (Damayanti et al., 2025). In addition, another study by (Beiki & Gharagozloo, 2020) also supports that structured pre-writing activities can improve students' writing quality by assisting them in organizing and developing ideas before writing. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the outlining technique is an effective teaching strategy to improve students' writing skill in descriptive text. It can be concluded that outlining helps students in organizing ideas, improving coherence, and producing clearer and more structured writing.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that the outlining technique gave a significant effect on students' writing skill in descriptive text at SMP Negeri 31 Medan. The result of the Independent Sample t-test showed that the significance value was 0.000, which was lower than 0.05, with the obtained t-value of 6.063. This result indicated that the outlining technique was effective in overcoming students' difficulties in organizing ideas and developing descriptive paragraphs. The study also found that the outlining technique significantly improved students' descriptive writing performance. The mean score of the experimental class increased from 69.33 in the pre-test to 88.33 in the post-test, while the control class only improved from 62.33 to 77.17. These findings indicate that students who were taught by using the outlining technique achieved better improvement compared to students who were taught by using the conventional method. Therefore, the outlining technique can be considered an effective teaching strategy to improve students' writing skill in descriptive text, especially for eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 31 Medan.

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