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The Effect of Inquiry-Based Learning on Students' Writing Skills at Senior High School 1 Kampar Utara

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A B S T R A C T

Writing is a productive skill that involves expressing thoughts and ideas effectively in written form. However, mastering writing in English is often challenging. At SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara, students still face difficulties in developing clear and coherent text. It has been observed that the students struggle to organize ideas and construct well-structured writing. One of the contributing factors to these writing difficulties is the reliance on conventional teaching methods, such as the expository teaching method which tend to be teacher-centered, and result in low writing skill achievement. This study aims to investigate the effect of inquiry-based learning on students' writing skill at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara. Employing a quantitative quasi-experimental design, the research involved 52 students selected through a total sampling technique. The participants were divided into two groups: Class XI-1 as the experimental group class (26 students) and the Class XI-2 as the control group class (26 students). The instrument of the research was writing test; data were collected though pre-test and post-test. The data analysis techniques include normality testing, homogeneity, and T-tests. The independent samples t-test obtained a t-value of 2.863 > t-table 2.009 with significant value of p = 0.006 < 0.05, then H0 was rejected and Ha was accepted. These findings demonstrate that IBL produced a statistically significant effect on writing skill compared to the expository teaching method. Thus, inquiry-based learning significantly enhances students' writing skill at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara.

Keywords: *Inquiry-Based Learning, Writing Skill, Quasi-Experimental Design*

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most important productive language skills in English language learning. As a productive language skill, writing involves various aspects of language, including vocabulary, rules of language, and the organization of larger chunks of text (Purnamasari et al., 2021). These components work together to enable effective communication, allowing writers to express their thoughts, convey information, and engage with their audience clearly and coherently. Mastering these components is essential for producing high-quality written work that effectively resonates with readers (Sa'adah, 2020). Moses & Mohamad (2019) argued that writing is not only crucial for enhancing students' academic performance but also contributes to their social and emotional development. Moreover, It functions as an essential means of self-expression and , allowing individuals to convey their thoughts, opinions and emotions in a clear and persuasively.

However, behind the significance of writing as a productive skill, the process itself is far from sismple. Writing is a difficult task because learners have to pay attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar, word choice, and how sentences and paragraphs are organized (Parupalli, 2017). Moreover, Harmer in Sa'adah (2020) argued that writing is a complex process that involves various stages including planning, drafting, editing and final version, which contributes to the development of effective written text. The writing process help students learn how to write clearly, apply correct grammatical structures, and spell words properly (Durga & Rao, 2018). Writing can be challenging for some students because mastering it requires a strong understanding of many different aspects of the writing process

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(Purba & Sihombing, 2020). These include grammar, punctuation, correct word formation (spelling), vocabulary, and stylistic choices, all of which are essential for effective communication.

These challenges become even more apparent in the field of English language learning. Students frequently faced a lot of difficulties in writing, which may hinder their ability to produce clear and well-structured texts. Fauzan as cited in Taye & Mengesha (2024) explains that students frequently struggle with grammatical accuracy, syntactic complexities, ad challenges in arranging ideas in a coherent manner. Common difficulties also involved a limited range of vocabulary, incorrect use of grammar, lack of coherence between ideas, and weak organizational structure. These problems often result in writing that fails to meet academic expectations and can lead to frustration, reduced motivation, and poor learning outcomes.

This phenomenon regarding students' low achievement in writing tasks is also observed in the real classroom setting. Observations and interviews conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara on March 12, 2025, revealed a pressing issue student often find it difficult to express their opinions clearly and effectively. Compounding these issues, they frequently produce texts riddled with grammatical errors and poor sentence structure, making their writing difficult to comprehend.

One of the contributing factors to these writing difficulties is the reliance on conventional teaching methods, such as the expository teaching method which tend to be teacher-centered. In such approaches, students are passive recipients of information and have limited opportunities to actively engaged with the material. This passive learning environment hinders their ability to practice writing, think critically, and develop their unique voice as writers. As a result, students become disengaged from the learning process, which limits their progress and weakens their writing skill.

To resolve this problem, it is crucial to implement instructional strategies that prioritize student engagement and active participation. A student-centered approach can foster an interactive learning environment where learners are encouraged to take ownership of their writing journey, explore their ideas, and collaborate with peers. Such method not only enhances writing skill but also empower students to communicate their thoughts more confidently and effectively.

One promising student-centered approach is Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). Millatasari (2017) describes Inquiry-Based Learning is a way of learning where students take an active role. They search for information, discover new ideas, and analyze questions using critical thinking. Futhermore, Sam (2024) also emphasizes that a student-centered pedagogical approach designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, and active learner engagement. Similarly, Gholam (2019) highlight that this approach fosters active student engagement and significantly improves the quality of the learning experience. This empowers students to take charge of their education, leading to increased engagement and deeper knowledge retention.

Moreover, this approach aligns with the standards of the 21st-century skills and the Indonesian national curriculum, which emphasizes the development of independent, critical thinkers who can collaborate, communicate, and solve problems creatively. Aizri Fadillah et al. (2024) stated that IBL has received significant attention in Indonesia, particularly as part of the national education reform. Through IBL enables students to explore ideas more deeply, construct coherent arguments, and organize their thoughts more evectively in writing. They are guided through each stage of the writing process. As a result, students gain a stronger understanding of how to produce clear and effective written texts.

The effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in enhancing writing skill is supported by research. A pre-experimental study conducted by Hamid et al. (2021) entitle "The Effect of Inquiry-Based Learning on Secondary Student Learning Outcomes in Writing Ability", showed that the use of Inquiry-Based Learning led to a significant improvement in students' writing skill. The findings revealed that the mean score for students' post-treatment learning outcomes in writing descriptive texts, using Inquiry-Based Learning, increased from a pre-test mean of 60.00 to a post-test mean of 78.50.

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The findings indicated a notable difference in students' learning outcomes between the pre-test and post-test, which was attributed to the application of IBL. Students taught using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) demonstrated a notable increase in their writing performance. This indicates that Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) has a positive and measurable effect on students' ability to produce written text, supporting the idea that IBL encourages critical thinking, creativity, and more coherent written expression.

However, although previous studies confirmed the positive effect of Inquiry-Based Learning on students' writing skill, it generally focused only on whether Inquiry-Based Learning improves students' writing skill. It only looked at whether Inquiry-Based Learning improves writing skill, without comparing it directly with conventional instructional approach, such as the expository teaching method. Therefore, this research is not limited to exploring the effect of IBL on writing skill, but also aims to determine its significant effect compared to expository teaching method. It seeks to identify the significance of the difference between Inquiry-Based Learning and expository teaching method in enhance students' writing skill. In additions, this study aimed to investigates whether Inquiry-Based Learning can produce better writing performance outcomes than the expository teaching method and examines the improvement in students' writing skill after its implementation.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research methodology using a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group. The design was chosen to examine the effect of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) compared to the expository teaching method on students' writing skill. Two classes were assigned as the experimental and control groups without randomization. Both groups were given a pre-test and a post-test to measure changes in students' writing performance after the treatment.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were 52 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara in the academic year 2024/2025. The participants where drawn from two classes: Class XI-1 and Class XI-2 consisting of 26 students from each class. Class XI-1 was assigned as the experimental class received instruction using Inquiry-Based Learning, while Class XI-2 assigned as the control class and was taught using the expository teaching method. Total sampling was applied, meaning all individuals of the population were included as study participants.

Instruments

In this study, the researcher utilized a singular type of instrument for data collection, namely a writing test. Students were tasked to produce an analytical exposition text based on a specified topic. Different instructions were provided for each class according to the learning approach applied. The instrument was designed to align with the English syllabus of the school, ensuring that it correspond with the objectives outlined in the school curriculum. The students' writing test was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric covering five indicators of writing skill: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. The scoring rubric was adapted from Heaton (1990) writing assessment framework, as cited in (Rini & Sugiyarni, 2023).

Procedures

This study was conducted from 12th June to 24th July 2025. The procedures of this study were conducted in three main stages: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. In the pre-test phase, both classes completed a writing assessment to evaluated their baseline proficiency in composing analytical exposition texts. The pre-test outcomes served to verify the comparability of writing abilities between the two classes initial to the treatment. During the treatment stage, each class received instruction in four meetings. The experimental class received instruction using Inquiry-Based Learning. Students were encouraged to explore topics through guided questions, gather information from various sources, organize ideas, and develop arguments before composing their texts. Meanwhile, the control class was instructed through expository teaching method, in this approach the teacher explained the learning

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material directly and students practiced writing with limited exploration and interaction. In the post-test stage, both classes were administered the same writing test as in the pre-test. The post-test was aimed to measure students' improvement in writing skill after the implementation of the instructional treatments.

Data analysis

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to describe students' writing performance. Before conducting hypothesis tests, normality and homogeneity assumptions were verified to confirm suitability for parametric procedures. An independent samples t-test then assessed whether significant differences existed in writing achievement between the both classes, with significance set at the 0.05 level. Additionally, a paired sample t-test was used to examine the improvement in students' writing skill within the experimental class before and after the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Data Presentation of Students' Writing Skill by Using Inquiry-Based Learning

Pre-Test

A pre-test was given before the implementation of the teaching treatments began in order to assess the students' proficiency in writing. The descriptive statistic data by using SPSS 27.0 were show up below at table 1. as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Pre-test Score of Experimental Class

	Pre-test Score of Experimental Class	
N	**Valid**	26
	Missing	0
Mean		55,69
Std. Error of Mean		1,036
Median		56,00
Std. Deviation		5,282
Minimum		46
Maximum		67
Range		28
Sum		1448

Source : Results of SPSS 27 data processing for 2025

Table 1. shows that the mean score of the pre-test in the experimental class was 55.69. It implies that the students' writing skill at the pre-test stage were at a fair level, suggesting they had considerable difficulty composing analytical exposition texts. Scores ranged from 46 to 67, with a range of 28, reflecting notable variation in writing ability within the class.

Post-Test

After four instructional meetings using Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), a post-test was conducted in the experimental class to assess students' improvement in writing skill. The same instrument in the pre-test used in the post-test, ensuring consistency in the assessment criteria and the ability to directly compare pre-test and post-test results.

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Students were instructed to produce a written text, focusing on the same analytical exposition structure as in the pre-test. This allowed for a clear evaluation of students writing skill indicators progress. The calculations of post-test data by using SPSS 27.0 and show up below at table 2. as follows:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Pre-test Score of Experimental Class

		Post-test Score of Experimental Class
N	**Valid**	26
	Missing	0
Mean		69,35
Std. Error of Mean		1,471
Median		69,00
Std. Deviation		7,499
Minimum		54
Maximum		82
Range		28
Sum		1803

Source : Results of SPSS 27 data processing for 2025

Table 2. shows that mean of post-test score of 69.35. This indicated that the students' writing skill were categorized in good level. Scores ranged from 54 to 82, matching the pre-test range of 28 points and indicating variability in individual performance.

Data Presentation of Students' Writing Skill by without Inquiry-Based Learning

Pre-Test

The control class gave a pre-test to measure students' writing abilities in analytical exposition texts. The assessment criteria for the pre-test were consistent with those used in the experimental class, ensuring comparability between the two classes. Students were required to produce a written text, evaluated based on five key indicators of writing skill. The descriptive statistics were presented in Table 3. below:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Pre-test Score of Control Class

		Pre-test Score of Control Class
N	**Valid**	26
	Missing	0
Mean		53,54
Std. Error of Mean		1,466
Median		54,00
Std. Deviation		7,474
Minimum		39
Maximum		67
Range		28
Sum		1392

Source : Results of SPSS 27 data processing for 2025

Table 3. shows that the mean score of pre-test in the control class was 53.54 It means that the students' writing skill were categoriezed in fair level. The minimum score was 39 and maximum score was 67.

Post-Test

In the control class, students participated in a post-test conducted after the same period as the experimental class. However, the control class did not receive instruction through Inquiry-Based Learning during the treatment phase.

The same instrument was used for both the pre-test and the post-test to ensure consistency in assessment and allow for a direct comparison of student progress. Students were required to write a text, following the same genre and evaluation criteria as in the pre-test. The descriptive statistics of the post-test results are presented in Table 4.

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Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Post-test Score of Control Class

		Post-test Score of Control Class
N	**Valid**	26
	Missing	0
Mean		64,31
Std. Error of Mean		,967
Median		64,50
Std. Deviation		4,930
Minimum		55
Maximum		73
Range		18
Sum		1672

Source : Results of SPSS 27 data processing for 2025

Table 4. shows that the mean score of the post-test in control class was 64.31. It means that the students' writing skill were categoriezed in good level. The lowest score achieved was 55 and highest score was 73.

Normality Test

Table 5. Normality Test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Class	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Score	Pre-test Experimental Class	,105	26	,200*	,963	26	,455
	Post-test Experimental Class	,072	26	,200*	,977	26	,812
	Pre-test Control Class	,118	26	,200*	,962	26	,435
	Post-test Control Class	,095	26	,200*	,976	26	,777

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to the table above, all significance values for both the experimental and control classes are exceed the 0.05. Specifically, In the experimental class, the pre-test had a significance value of 0.455, and the post-test had 0.812. In the control class, the pre-test significance value was 0.435, and the post-test showed a value of 0.777.

Since all values exceed the 0.05, it can be assumed that the data for both classes are normally distributed, and thus the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. Indicating that the normality assumption required for conducting the t-test has fulfilled.

Homogeneity Test

Table 6. Homogeneity Test

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Score	Based on Mean	3,659	1	50	,062
	Based on Median	3,491	1	50	,068
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3,491	1	41,058	,069
	Based on trimmed mean	3,710	1	50	,060

Based on table 6. above the significance value of 0.062>0.05. This indicates both classes have equal variance in the post-test scores. This confirms the assumption of both groups are homogeneous. Therefore, the assumption of equal variance is satisfied, allowing the use of parametric tests such as the independent-samples t-test.

Independent Sample T-test

Table 7. Independent Sample T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	3,659	,062	2,863	50	,006	5,038	1,760	1,503	8,574
	Equal variances not assumed			2,863	43,207	,006	5,038	1,760	1,490	8,587

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The results presented in Table 7. show that the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.006, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05 (0.006 < 0.05). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean post-test scores between the two classes. Additionally, t-value is 2.863, and the critical value (t-table) for df = 50 at α = 0.05 is approximately 2.009. Since t-value > t-table (2.863 > 2.009) and Sig. < 0.05, H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted.

Thus, it can be concluded that the mean score of the experimental class is significantly higher than the control class. This confirms that Inquiry-Based Learning had a statistically significant positive effect on students' writing skill in the second semester of Grade XI at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara during the 2024/2025 academic year.

Paired Sample T-test

Table 8. Paired Samples T-Test

Paired Samples T-Test									
		Paired Differences							
				Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-13.654	4.489	.880	-15.467	-11.841	-15.508	25	.000

Based on the results in Table 4.18, the mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores is -13.654, indicating a significant increase in writing performance. The t-value is -15.508 with 25 degrees of freedom, and the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05 (α < 0.05). This confirms that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant.

Therefore, the H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. It can be concluded that there is a significant improvement in students' writing skill after the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara.

Discussion

The result of this study showed that Inquiry-Based Learning significantly effect students' writing skill across several aspects, including ideas, structure arrangement, word choice, language use, and spelling. Quantitative analysis further supported the effectiveness of IBL. The independent samples t-test showed a t-value of 2.863 with 50 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.05. This t-value exceeded the critical t-table value of 2.009, and the two-tailed significance value was 0.006, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 (0.006 < 0.05). These results indicate a significant difference in the mean scores between the experimental and control classes. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. It can be concluded that Inquiry-Based Learning has a significant positive effect on students' writing skill compared to expository teaching method at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara. These findings align with the research of Hamid et al. (2021), highlighting the value of Inquiry-Based Learning significantly enhances students' writing skill by fostering independent thinking, clearer idea organization, and active participation in constructing meaning through exploration and analysis.

The research findings indicate a significant difference in writing performance outcomes between students taught using Inquiry-Based Learning and those taught through expository teaching method. The experimental class achieved a higher average post-test score of 69.35, compared to 64.31 in the control class. This suggests that students in the experimental class performed better in writing after exposure to Inquiry-Based Learning. Both classes started with comparable writing skill levels, as shown by the pre-test means: 55.69 for the experimental class and 53.54 for the control class, indicating homogeneity of initial skills. Following the treatment, the experimental class showed greater improvement (+13.65 points) than the control class (+10.77 points). These results support the conclusion that Inquiry-Based Learning leads to superior writing performance compared to expository teaching method at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara.

This outcome is consistent with Wale & Bogale (2021), whose study found that Inquiry-Based Learning in academic writing classes enhances students' writing skill by allowing them

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to take active roles in discovering writing topics, investigating relevant information, and producing well-structured texts based on constructive feedback.

The findings of this study indicate that students' writing skill improved significantly following the implementation of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). This improvement is evidenced by the results of the Paired Sample T-Test, which showed an increase in the average score of the experimental class from 55.69 in the pre-test to 69.35 in the post-test, representing a gain of 13.654 points.

Progress was observed across all five writing indicators and the most notable improvements occurred in ideas of content and organization. Regarding content, students demonstrated an improved ability to write more meaningful and well-developed ideas. IBL encouraged them to explore topics in depth and think critically, enabling them to construct stronger arguments and express clear main points. In terms of organization, many students initially struggled to structure their writing coherently. However, after engaging with IBL, they learned how to arrange their ideas logically starting with a thesis, followed by supporting arguments, and concluding with a reiteration. This resulted in writing that was more coherent, connected, and easy to follow. For vocabulary, students began to use a wider variety of appropriate words and expressions. IBL motivated them to explore new language that was relevant to their topics, leading to more precise and effective word choices. In the area of language use, students showed improvement in grammar and sentence structure. While many initially produced short or grammatically incorrect sentences, regular practice and teacher feedback helped them write longer, more accurate sentences. Although mechanics was not the primary focus, there was noticeable progress in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Students' writing became cleaner and more polished due to consistent editing and guidance. The substantial improvements in content and organization can be largely attributed to the use of guided questions, which helped students analyze information and identify the key points necessary for their writing. Moreover, students received direct training through each stage of the writing process, which is a fundamental element of IBL.

These findings are consistent with Derseh (2020), who highlights how Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) significantly enhances content and organization in the writing of EFL learners by promoting exploration and step-by-step training.

Thus, Inquiry-Based Learning proved effective in enhancing students' writing skill, both in critical thinking and in the clarity of their written expression. The structured inquiry stages assisted students to think critically, structure their ideas in a clear, and communicate more effectively in writing.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) has a significantly effect on students' writing skill compared to expository teaching method at SMA Negeri 1 Kampar Utara. The result of hypothesis test using independent sample t-test, The sign (2-tailed) value for post-test between experimental and control class are 0.006, this value was lower than the significance 0.05 ($0.006 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternatif hypotheis (H_a) was accepted. The findings confirm that the use of IBL improves students' writing performance, particularly in content development, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. These results suggest that actively engaging students in inquiry and exploration fosters critical thinking and deeper understanding, leading to more coherent and well-structured writing. So, it can be concluded that IBL has positive and significant effect on students' writing skill and proves to be a valuable pedagogical approach in language education, particularly in fostering writing skill. Future studies may examine its long-term effects of IBL on language proficiency and its applicability to other language skill and educational contexts.

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