



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING EXPOSURE, GENERALIZATION, REINFORCEMENT, AND APPLICATION (EGRA) TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application (EGRA) technique integrated with the Discovery Learning model and evaluated its contribution to enhancing eighth-grade students' recount text writing proficiency at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang. Particular attention was given to two fundamental dimensions of writing performance: content development and paragraph organization. Employing a pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design, the study involved 29 students (N = 29). Data were obtained through essay-based writing performance assessments and scored using an analytical rubric addressing content and organization. The resulting data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, incorporating descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality, Levene's test for variance homogeneity, and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test for inferential analysis. The findings revealed a statistically significant increase in students' writing performance, with the mean score rising from 40.69 on the pre-test to 64.83 on the post-test. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank analysis produced a Z value of -4.691 and an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of < .001, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that the integration of EGRA with Discovery Learning can serve as a practical instructional approach for strengthening EFL writing proficiency, particularly by providing systematic scaffolding for idea development, content elaboration, and paragraph organization. The study further suggests that process-oriented and discovery-based instruction can help address students' difficulties in initiating and structuring written expression, particularly in rural secondary-school contexts where access to sophisticated instructional resources may be limited.

Keywords: *EGRA Technique, Recount Text Writing, Content Development, Paragraph Organization, Discovery Learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a multidimensional productive language competence through which learners transform experiences, ideas, interpretations, and information into purposeful written discourse. Contemporary perspectives on writing emphasize that successful text production extends beyond grammatical accuracy to encompass idea generation, content elaboration, coherence, audience awareness, organization, and strategic management of the writing process (Bailey, 2021; Casanave, 2022; Hyland,

2022; Tardy et al., 2022; Wingate, 2021a, 2021b). Writing therefore entails the interaction of linguistic, cognitive, and metacognitive resources, requiring learners to formulate ideas, establish relationships among propositions, and arrange information into texts that are comprehensible and rhetorically meaningful (Ellis, 2021; Emilia, 2021; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2023). In EFL contexts, these demands can become particularly challenging because learners must simultaneously negotiate language form and meaning while developing

content and maintaining textual coherence.

At the junior secondary level, writing instruction is expected to equip learners with the capacity to communicate personal experiences, opinions, information, and ideas through appropriately structured texts. The Indonesian *Merdeka Curriculum* places emphasis on functional communication and the development of integrated language competencies, while the Grade VIII *English for Nusantara* materials provide contextualized English learning for Indonesian adolescents (Damayanti et al., 2022). Such curricular expectations position writing not merely as an exercise in sentence formation but as a process of constructing meaningful texts for communicative purposes. Nevertheless, recent research indicates that Indonesian EFL learners continue to encounter substantial obstacles in writing, including difficulties with organization, content development, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Setiani et al., 2023; Silaban & Tarigan, 2023; Pramadanti, 2023; Pambayun, 2024). These challenges reinforce the need for instructional practices that combine linguistic support with explicit opportunities for learners to develop, organize, and communicate ideas.

The difficulty becomes particularly visible in recount text writing because learners are required to reconstruct past experiences through a coherent sequence of events while maintaining appropriate textual organization and linguistic control. Recent studies in Indonesian EFL settings have reported persistent problems in recount writing, including insufficient ideas, weak paragraph organization, grammatical inaccuracies, vocabulary limitations, and problems with cohesion and mechanics (Budiarsih et al., 2023; Tadah & Anggreni, 2023; Pramadanti, 2023; Hutabarat et al., 2024; Prameswari et al., 2025). Research

involving junior high school learners has likewise shown that students frequently struggle to elaborate content and organize recount texts effectively, suggesting that writing instruction needs to provide structured support for both the generation and sequencing of ideas (Setiani et al., 2023; Yahrif et al., 2026). Similar difficulties were identified during preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang, where eighth-grade students experienced problems in developing relevant content, providing supporting details, and arranging events into logically connected paragraphs. These conditions indicate a pedagogical need for an approach that can reduce students' dependence on direct teacher explanation while providing sufficient scaffolding for independent text construction.

One instructional technique that offers such potential is Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application (EGRA). EGRA adopts an inductive learning sequence in which learners encounter contextualized language input, identify patterns, formulate generalizations, consolidate their understanding through guided practice, and subsequently apply the acquired knowledge in productive language use. This orientation is compatible with communicative and learner-centered principles because students are positioned as active participants in discovering how language functions rather than as passive recipients of predetermined rules (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2023; Ellis, 2021). Empirical evidence from Indonesian EFL classrooms also indicates that EGRA can support writing development. Wahyu and Citrawati (2022), for example, reported improvements in students' writing performance following EGRA-based instruction, while Ladoma et al. (2023) examined the implementation of EGRA specifically for developing the writing skills of eighth-grade learners. More recent work has further explored EGRA

in writing instruction, including descriptive-text writing among secondary students (Afifah, 2024) and the integration of EGRA with a process approach to strengthen writing achievement (Pratiwi et al., 2026). These studies suggest that EGRA can provide a systematic pathway from language awareness to independent written production, although its integration with Discovery Learning for recount text writing at the junior secondary level remains insufficiently examined.

The Discovery Learning model provides a complementary pedagogical framework because it emphasizes exploration, observation, analysis, and independent construction of knowledge. Evidence from Indonesian EFL research has demonstrated positive associations between Discovery Learning and writing development, including improvements in hortatory exposition writing (Satriani et al., 2022), essay writing (Yuliani et al., 2023), and general writing performance (Andung et al., 2024). Studies have also reported that Discovery Learning can encourage students to engage more actively with textual structures and writing tasks (Prima & Abdurahman, 2024). In recount-text instruction, alternative learner-centered strategies such as peer response and genre-based approaches have likewise demonstrated the value of guided interaction, staged writing activities, and structured attention to text organization (Budiarsih et al., 2023; Alwasilah, 2025). Taken together, these findings suggest that combining EGRA's inductive progression with Discovery Learning's exploratory orientation may create a coherent instructional sequence in which learners first encounter model texts, discover linguistic and organizational patterns, reinforce their understanding through guided practice, and finally apply those discoveries in their own recount texts.

Despite the growing evidence supporting EGRA and Discovery

Learning as individual instructional approaches, limited attention has been given to their explicit integration for improving the two writing dimensions most problematic for the learners in the present context: content development and paragraph organization. Existing EGRA studies have predominantly examined grammatical mastery or specific genres, while Discovery Learning research has generally investigated its broader effects on writing performance rather than its integration with EGRA for recount text construction (Wahyu & Citrawati, 2022; Ladoma et al., 2023; Afifah, 2024; Andung et al., 2024). This study therefore addresses a contextual and pedagogical gap by examining the use of EGRA within Discovery Learning to scaffold eighth-grade students' recount text writing at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang. The study specifically focuses on whether this integrated approach can facilitate richer content development and more coherent paragraph organization, thereby contributing empirical evidence from an Indonesian rural-school EFL setting.

Accordingly, the present study investigates the extent to which the integration of the EGRA technique within the Discovery Learning model improves the recount text writing skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang, with particular emphasis on content development and paragraph organization. The research question is formulated as follows: To what extent does the integration of the EGRA technique within the Discovery Learning model improve the recount text writing skills of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Tarigan (1997), writing serves as a language skill intended for indirect communication. It requires a sequence of cognitive

processes where the writer organizes and expresses ideas through text. Rivers (1981) states that "writing is conveying information or expression of original ideas in a consecutive way in the new language." Mastering writing skills requires understanding various components, particularly content and organization. According to Hyland (2022), organization is the arrangement of ideas and sentences logically to create coherent writing; writing is not merely choosing words, but building structure from general to specific in an effective sequence. Wingate (2021) adds that well-organized writing will have a flowing structure, making it easier for readers to follow the writer's thought process thoroughly. Content is the essence of a piece of writing that encompasses all thoughts, information, and ideas relevant to the topic being discussed. Hyland (2022) emphasizes that the quality of content greatly determines how effectively information can be communicated through in-depth engagement of ideas.

Recount text is a type of text that serves to retell a series of events, incidents, or experiences that have occurred in the past in chronological order (Hyland, 2022). Unlike narrative texts that require conflict, recount texts focus on conveying what happened, who was involved, and where and when the events took place (Hyland, 2022). According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), the generic structure of recount text consists of three main parts: Orientation (providing background information on who, what, where, and when), Sequence of Events (arranging main activities chronologically), and Reorientation (a closing statement containing personal reflection).

The EGRA (Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, Application) technique is an inductive method designed to guide students to understand language structures

independently before applying them in productive tasks (O'Neill, 1986). Operationally, Exposure subconsciously encounters material through model texts; Generalization leads students to analyze patterns and discover rules independently; Reinforcement provides focused exercises to refine understanding; and Application gives students freedom to produce their own original texts. Previous studies support EGRA's effectiveness: Wahyu and Citrawati (2022) found EGRA improved writing performance in descriptive texts; Pilu (2021) and Fatoni et al. (2020) proved EGRA increased past tense mastery; and Rezeki and Sagala (2022) confirmed EGRA was effective in improving students' writing ability in recount texts compared to conventional methods.

3. METHODS

This study applied a pre-experimental research design, specifically using a one-group pre-test and post-test format. The participants in this study consisted of only one experimental group that received treatment during the learning process. The pre-test was given at the initial session, while the post-test was conducted in the last meeting.

O1 X O2

O1 = pre-test for the experimental group

O2 = post-test for the experimental group

X = treatment given

The population of this research was the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang. The total number of the population are 55 students and divided into two classes.

The researcher designates classes as clusters and deliberately selects Class VIII B based on the consideration of

subject density, in which this class has the largest number of students that is representative for the research data needs. Class VIII B (N = 29) was selected as the experimental group. The independent variable was the EGRA technique consisting of Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application, while the dependent variable was the development of recount text writing skills of eighth-grade students, focusing specifically on Content and Organization.

Data were collected using writing tests administered as a pre-test (O1) before treatment and a post-test (O2) after treatment. The treatment was implemented over six meetings using the EGRA technique integrated within Discovery Learning across three topics: Camping, Favorite Day, and School Holiday. Writing tasks were evaluated using an analytical scoring rubric adapted from Hyland (2022) for Content (scale 1–5) and Organization (scale 1–5). Final standard scores were computed as:

$$\text{Final Score} = \frac{\text{Earned Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100$$

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's test of homogeneity of variance, and the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test were computed for hypothesis testing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting, calculating, and analysing the data, the results are presented as follows:

4.1 Results

The study was conducted using a single-group experimental design (N = 29). A pre-test was administered to assess baseline recount text writing skills in content and organization. After treatments were delivered through Discovery Learning integrated with the EGRA technique, a post-test was administered.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest	29	50	80	64.83	11.219
Valid N (listwise)	29				

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	29	20	60	40.69	10.327
Valid N (listwise)	29				

As presented in Table 1, the pre-test results showed that students' initial

writing competence was low, with scores ranging from 20 to 60 and a mean score

of 40.69. Following intervention, the post-test scores showed significant

advancement, ranging from 50 to 80 with a higher mean score of 64.83.

Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Group	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.230	29	<.,001	.888	29	.005
Posttest	.184	29	.014	.863	29	.001

Because sample size was $N = 29$, the Shapiro-Wilk test was interpreted. As shown in Table 2, both pre-test (Sig. = 0.005) and post-test (Sig. = 0.001) values were below 0.05, indicating non-

normally distributed data. Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance (Statistic = 0.990, $p = 0.324 > 0.05$). Therefore, the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was employed.

Table 3. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Analysis

Ranks		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Posttest - Pretest	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	28 ^b	14.50	406.00
	Ties	1 ^c		
	Total	29		

a. Posttest < Pretest

b. Posttest > Pretest

c. Posttest = Pretest

Table 3 shows zero negative ranks ($N = 0$) and 28 positive ranks ($N = 28$), proving that 28 out of 29 students achieved higher scores after treatment. The test yielded a Z-statistic of -4.691 with an Asymptotic Significance (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) of <0.001 ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted.

4.2 Discussion

The pre-test findings indicated that the students' recount text writing proficiency was relatively limited prior to the intervention. The mean score of 40.69 suggested that many students had not yet developed sufficient competence in the two assessed dimensions, namely content and organization. Their difficulties were particularly evident in generating relevant details, elaborating ideas, and arranging

events in a coherent chronological sequence. These weaknesses suggest that students experienced challenges not only in producing linguistic forms but also in transforming their ideas into logically structured written discourse. Such difficulties are consistent with previous research indicating that EFL learners commonly encounter problems with idea development, textual coherence, and paragraph organization when producing written texts (Lestari, 2020; Hyland, 2022).

In response to these identified difficulties, the intervention employed the Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application (EGRA) technique within the Discovery Learning model. The instructional process was organized around four sequential stages

that progressively moved students from contextual exposure to independent written production. During the Exposure stage, students were introduced to model recount texts that provided examples of relevant vocabulary, linguistic patterns, and organizational structures. The Generalization stage subsequently encouraged learners to examine the texts, identify recurring patterns, and formulate their own understanding of how recount texts are constructed. Through Reinforcement, students consolidated their understanding through guided and focused practice, before applying the knowledge independently in the final Application stage. This progression provided a structured form of scaffolding while maintaining students' active involvement in the learning process.

The improvement observed in the post-test suggests that the systematic sequence of EGRA may have supported students in addressing several of the difficulties identified in the pre-test. The increase in the mean score from 40.69 to 64.83 indicates substantial improvement in overall writing performance following the intervention. Furthermore, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test produced a statistically significant result ($Z = -4.691$, $p < .001$), with 28 of the 29 participants obtaining higher post-test scores. These findings provide empirical evidence that students' writing performance improved after participating in the EGRA-based learning activities. However, because the study employed a one-group pre-test–post-test design without a control group, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of improvement following the intervention rather than definitive evidence that EGRA was superior to conventional instruction.

The observed improvement can be explained by the complementary characteristics of EGRA and Discovery Learning. EGRA provides a clearly sequenced pathway from exposure and pattern recognition to guided practice and independent application, whereas Discovery Learning encourages learners to actively investigate information and construct knowledge rather than simply receive explanations from the teacher. The combination of these principles may have enabled students to engage more deliberately with both the linguistic features and organizational conventions of recount texts. Instead of immediately being required to produce a complete text, students were gradually supported in recognizing how ideas, events, and language patterns were organized within model texts. Such staged instructional support is particularly relevant for EFL learners who may experience cognitive overload when they are expected to generate content and manage linguistic accuracy simultaneously.

The findings are also broadly consistent with previous studies reporting positive outcomes from EGRA-based writing instruction. Wahyu and Citrawati (2022) found that EGRA could improve students' writing performance, while other studies have reported its usefulness in supporting learners' mastery of language patterns and written production. The present findings extend this body of evidence by applying EGRA in combination with Discovery Learning and by concentrating specifically on content development and paragraph organization in recount text writing. This focus is important because writing quality cannot be adequately represented by grammatical accuracy alone; learners

must also be able to generate relevant information, elaborate ideas, and organize those ideas into a coherent textual structure (Hyland, 2022; Tardy et al., 2022).

The role of Discovery Learning is also noteworthy. The model encourages students to observe examples, identify patterns, formulate interpretations, and test their understanding through active learning. In the present intervention, these characteristics complemented the inductive orientation of EGRA by creating opportunities for students to discover how recount texts function structurally and linguistically. Rather than receiving the generic structure and linguistic features of recount texts exclusively through direct explanation, students were encouraged to identify these features through engagement with model texts and subsequent guided activities. This learning process may have contributed to their improved ability to organize events chronologically and elaborate the content of their writing.

The improvement in students' performance also has implications for the teaching of writing in resource-constrained EFL settings. The intervention did not depend on sophisticated digital platforms or specialized technological resources; instead, it relied primarily on carefully selected texts, guided activities, teacher scaffolding, and students' active engagement. This suggests that process-oriented and learner-centered writing instruction can potentially be implemented in contexts where access to advanced educational technology is limited. Nevertheless, the findings should not be interpreted as demonstrating that EGRA alone produced the observed

gains, since the intervention involved the simultaneous use of Discovery Learning and several instructional activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that integrating EGRA with Discovery Learning was associated with meaningful improvement in the recount text writing performance of the participating eighth-grade students. The approach appeared particularly useful for providing a gradual pathway through which learners could move from observing textual models and discovering language patterns to practicing and independently producing recount texts. The results therefore support the potential of combining inductive, discovery-oriented, and scaffolded instruction to address difficulties in content development and paragraph organization. Future studies employing larger samples, control or comparison groups, and additional qualitative evidence are needed to determine the extent to which these improvements can be attributed specifically to the EGRA–Discovery Learning combination and whether they can be sustained over time.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating the EGRA (Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application) technique with the Discovery Learning model can substantially improve the recount text writing performance of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang. The mean score increased from 40.69 in the pre-test to 64.83 in the post-test, while the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test indicated a statistically significant improvement (Z

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= -4.691, $p < .001$), with 28 of 29 students showing higher post-test scores.

The findings suggest that the systematic progression of EGRA provides effective scaffolding for developing content, organizing ideas, and sequencing events coherently. Its integration with Discovery Learning also promotes active learner engagement and independent discovery without requiring sophisticated instructional resources, making the approach particularly relevant to resource-constrained EFL contexts.

Pedagogically, the findings highlight the value of incorporating inductive, learner-centered, and process-oriented activities into junior secondary writing instruction. Teachers can employ contextual model texts and guided practice to help learners progressively transform ideas into coherent recount texts. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the study employed a one-group pre-test–post-test design with a relatively small sample from a single school. Future research should therefore employ larger samples, control or comparison groups, longitudinal designs, and mixed-method approaches to establish the durability and broader applicability of EGRA-based instruction. Further investigation could also examine its integration with digital writing tools, collaborative platforms, or AI-assisted feedback to determine whether technology-enhanced EGRA can provide additional benefits for EFL writing development.

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Ethical considerations

Prior to data collection, the researchers obtained permission from the relevant academic and school authorities to conduct the study at SMP Negeri 3 Balaesang. The researchers adhered to established ethical principles throughout the research process, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and secure handling of students' data, and the use of the collected information solely for research purposes. Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and their participation did not involve any coercion or adverse consequences.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors declare that this article is based on original research conducted by the authors. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were not used to generate, fabricate, manipulate, or replace the research data, statistical results, findings, or interpretations. The responsibility for the research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and final content of the manuscript rests entirely with the authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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