

A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 TUALANG IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Tualang in writing descriptive texts. In this research, the data was obtained from students' writing scores. The test is in the form of an essay because the test required the respondents to give the answer in the form of written descriptive text. There are five components of writing: grammar, organizing ideas, vocabulary, fluency / content, and mechanics (Harris : 1974). The writer analyzed the ability of the second year students based on five category: excellent, good, mediocre, poor, and very poor. The participants in this study are 26 students from XI IPA² of SMAN 1 Tualang. The result of this study described that a number of students faced a problem in mechanics. Grammar is the highest average score. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Tualang is in good level. Although the students still faced some difficulties in writing descriptive texts.*

Key words: *writing ability, descriptive text*

SEBUAH PENELITIAN MENGENAI KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS 2 SMAN 1 TUALANG DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa kemampuan siswa kelas 2 SMAN 1 Tualang dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Dalam penelitian ini penulis memperoleh data dari nilai menulis siswa. Tes yang diberikan dalam bentuk sebuah essay karena tes yang digunakan memerlukan jawaban peserta dalam bentuk karangan teks deskriptif. Tes akan mengukur kemampuan siswa kelas 2 SMAN 1 Tualang dalam menulis teks deskriptif melalui 5 aspek penilaian menulis: tata bahasa, pengorganisasian ide, kosakata, kelancaran dalam isi, dan tanda baca (Harris, 1974). Penulis mengalisis kemampuan siswa kelas 2 SMAN 1 Tualang berdasarkan 5 kategori: sangat baik, baik, cukup, kurang, dan sangat kurang. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah 26 Orang siswa kelas 2 SMAN 1 Tualang. Hasil penelitian ini menggambarkan bahwa beberapa siswa menghadapi masalah dalam tanda baca. Nilai rata – rata tata bahasa adalah aspek yang tertinggi diantara aspek lainnya. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini, dapat diambil kesimpulan bahwa kemampuan siswa kelas 2 SMAN 1 Tualang dalam menulis teks deskriptif berada pada level baik. Walaupun siswa masih mengalami beberapa masalah dalam menulis teks deskriptif.

Kata kunci: *kemampuan menulis, teks deskriptif*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is different from other skills; it can be said as the combination of all skills. Heaton (1975:127) states that writing composition is a task which involves the students in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences, and in linking those sentences to form a piece of continuous writing which successfully communicates writer's thought and ideas of a certain topic. To make a good writing, it must be constructed according to rules or conventions of the target language. Learners must apply the five general components of the writing process: content, form, grammar, style, and mechanic. The learners often make errors in writing an English composition because they are still influenced by Indonesian language. One of the types of composition is descriptive text. It is needed very much to give a clear description of a place, a person, or an object. To make the readers understand the content or the meaning of each sentence in the paragraphs forming a descriptive text, the sentences must be acceptable and grammatically correct.

Based on the 2013 Curriculum, the students are expected to be able to communicate in English both in oral and written forms. In senior high school in Indonesia, writing skill is taught by using genre based approach. Students are introduced to some genres and taught through the model of reading texts where they are explicitly taught about the social function, the generic structures, and the language features of the genres. By introducing them to the reading model texts, they are expected to know and understand the differences between one genre to another in English, so that they are able to write the genres by themselves with the right order of generic structures and the correct use of the language features of genres.

Based on the researcher's interview with the school teachers, many students have difficulties in writing English. There are some factors that the writer found from the teacher's explanation. The first problem is the students have limited vocabulary because when the teacher asked the students to rewrite the text, they did not have any ideas. As known already that vocabulary plays a very important role in writing so that the students can convey their ideas in words. As most of the students have limited vocabulary, they often lose interest in writing because they do not know how to express their ideas in writing. In addition, low motivation in learning English especially writing based on the text organization of descriptive text also becomes the reason for the students to have problem in writing.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is descriptive quantitative research. The purpose of the research is to gain information about phenomena in order to describe existed condition in the field. Gay (2005:208) states that descriptive quantitative research involves collecting numerical data to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning current status conducted either through self-reports collected through questionnaires or interviews or through observation. The participants of this research were the second year students of SMAN 1

Tualang. For this purpose class XI IPA² became the sample of the research which consists of 26 students.

Instruments Technique and Analysis

In this research the writer obtained data from the students' writing scores. The test is in the form of an essay because it requires the respondents to give the answer in the form of written descriptive text. The test measured the second year students' ability in writing a descriptive text using 5 aspects of writing: mechanics, grammar, fluency, vocabulary and organization.

To analyze the students' writing ability, the raters uses the following formula:

$$\mathbf{S = G + V + M + F1 + F2}$$

Where :

- S = Students' score
- G = Students' ability in Grammar
- V = Students' ability in Vocabulary
- M = Students' ability in Mechanics
- F1 = Students' ability in Form or organization
- F2 = Students' ability in Fluent

The researcher analyzed the data in order to know the ability of the second year students at SMAN 1 Tualang in writing descriptive texts after the test are given.

To know the students score in answering the test, the following formula is used:

$$\mathbf{RS = \frac{TS}{100} \times 100}$$

Where :

- RS= Real score of each individual
- TS= Total score of the aspect of writing

To find out the Mean score the writer calculates the score by using the formula:

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

Where : \bar{X} = The mean
 $\sum X$ = The summation of the score
 N = The number of the students

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

In order to know the classification of students' score the writer used the following scales:

The Classification of Students' Score		
No.	Scores	Category
1.	81 – 100	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	Good
3.	41 – 60	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	Poor
5.	0 – 20	Very Poor

(Adapted Harris, 1986)

To find out the percentage of the classification of the students' ability in writing descriptive texts, the writer used the following formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{R} \times 100$$

Where: P = Percentage
 f = Number of frequency
 R = Number of respondents

(Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

RESEARCH FINDING

In this study the writer presents the test result showing the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Tualang in writing descriptive texts. There are 26 students who took the test. The students' writing was scored by using Harris' writing assessment (1974) to find out the students' ability in all writing aspects. The students' scores start

from 1 up to 20 for each aspect of writing. The score of 1 is the lowest and score of 20 is the highest one.

1. The Description of the Students' Scores in Writing Descriptive Texts

Table 1. The Classification of the Students' Ability Level

No.	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of Ability		
1.	81-100	Excellent	5	19%
2.	61-80	Good	16	62%
3.	41-60	Mediocre	5	19%
4.	21-40	Poor	0	0%
5.	0-20	Very Poor	0	0%
Total			26	100%

In this study the writer presents the percentage of the students' ability levels and their score range in writing descriptive texts. It was found out that 5 students (19%) were in excellent level with the score range of 81-100, 16 students (62%) were in good level with the score range of 61-80, and 5 students (19%) were in mediocre level.

2. The Presentation of the Students' Ability for Each Aspect of Writing

a. The Students' Ability in Terms of Grammar

Table 2. The Students' Ability in Terms of Grammar

No.	Scores	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Level Ability
1.	81 – 100	10	38%	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	15	58%	Good
3.	41 – 60	1	4%	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	0	0%	Poor
5.	0 – 21	0	0%	Very Poor
Total		26	100%	

Table 2 indicates that the students' ability in grammar was categorized into some levels ability, percentages, and frequency. It can be seen that in terms of grammar 10 students (38%) were in excellent level, 15 students (58%) were in good level, 1 students (4%) was in mediocre level and none of the students was classified into poor and very

poor levels (0%). It can be inferred that based on the average score their writing ability in terms of grammar was in good level (75,69).

b. The Students' Ability in Terms of Organizing Ideas

Table 3. The Students' Ability in Terms of Organizing Ideas

No.	Scores	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Level Ability
1.	81 – 100	5	19%	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	17	66%	Good
3.	41 – 60	4	15%	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	0	0%	Poor
5.	0 – 21	0	0%	Very Poor
	Total	26	100%	

Table 3 shows that in terms of organizing ideas 5 students (19%) were in excellent level, 17 students (66%) were in good level, 4 students (15%) were in mediocre level and none of the student was classified into poor and very poor levels (0%). In the average score they were in good level (73,34).

c. The Students' Ability in Terms of Vocabulary

Table 3 The Students' Ability in Terms of Vocabulary

No.	Scores	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Level Ability
1.	81 – 100	6	23%	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	16	62%	Good
3.	41 – 60	15	15%	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	0	0%	Poor
5.	0 – 21	0	0%	Very Poor
	Total	26	100%	

Table 3 shows that 6 students (23%) were in excellent level, 16 students (62%) were in good level, 4 students (15%) were in mediocre level, and none of the students was classified into poor and very poor levels (0%). In the average score they were in good level (70,53).

d. The Students' Ability in Terms of Fluency

Table 4 The Students' Ability in Terms of Fluency

No.	Scores	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Level Ability
1.	81 – 100	9	35%	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	12	46%	Good
3.	41 – 60	3	11%	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	2	8%	Poor
5.	0 – 21	0	0%	Very Poor
	Total	26	100%	

Table 4 shows that in terms of fluency 9 students (35%) were in excellent level, 12 students (46%) were in good level, 3 students (11%) were in mediocre level, 2 students (8%) were in poor level and none of the students was classified into very poor levels (0%). It can be inferred that based on the average score their writing ability in terms of fluency was in good level (71,96).

e. The Students' Ability in Terms of Mechanic

Table 5 The Students' Ability in Terms of Mechanic

No.	Scores	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Level Ability
1.	81 – 100	3	12%	Excellent
2.	61 – 80	17	65%	Good
3.	41 – 60	6	23%	Mediocre
4.	21 – 40	0	0%	Poor
5.	0 – 21	0	0%	Very Poor
	Total	26	100%	

Table 5 shows that in terms of mechanic 3 students (12%) are in excellent level, 17 students (65%) were in good level, 6 students (23%) were in mediocre students, and none of the students was classified into poor and very poor levels (0%). It can be inferred that the students' writing ability in terms of mechanic was in good level (69,30).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the data presentation and its analysis in the previous part, there were two points as the conclusions of the study. The first point is that the ability of the second year students of SMAN 1 Tualang in writing descriptive texts is in good level, with the average score of 72,11. Among 26 students, 5 students (19%) are in excellent level, 16 students are in good level, and 5 students (19%) are in mediocre level. It means that most of students can write descriptive texts well.

The second point is that based on the score for each aspect of writing, it is found out that the students' ability in terms of grammar is the highest among all aspects, with the average score of 75,69. While mechanics is the lowest one, with the average score of 69,30. The students' problem in mechanics is that their writing did not show their mastery of using capital letters, punctuation devices, and word spelling. Vocabulary is included into the low aspect, with the average score of 70,53. Then, the average score in terms of fluency is 71,96. The last aspect is in terms of organizing ideas with the average score of 73,34.

Based on the result obtained and the conclusions in this study, the writer would like to propose some recommendations related to the students' ability in writing descriptive texts. Firstly, the students should pay more attention to the mechanics and the vocabulary aspects since in the scores for these two aspects are low. The possible way to solve this problem is probably by reading more and doing more practice in writing activity, particularly in writing descriptive texts. By reading more, the students can improve their vocabulary and by doing more practice writing activity, they can improve their knowledge in using capital letters, punctuation devices, and word spelling. It will make them more capable in writing.

Secondly, after knowing the students' ability in writing, the teachers should be able to make the students feel more interested in learning English, particularly in writing. Furthermore, the teacher can apply methods or strategies in order to fix and to improve the students' ability in terms of mechanics and vocabulary as well as the other aspects: grammar, organizing ideas, and fluency.

And the last but not least, the next reseachers are expected to find another problems in writing a descriptive text. By knowing some problems, it will be helpful for teachers to find some strategies to solve it.

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