A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 1 PEKANBARU IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *This study is entitled "A Study on the Ability of the Second Year Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in Writing Descriptive Texts. This study concerns with five aspect of writing. They are: Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanic, Organization, and Fluency. The aim of this study is to find out the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in writing Descriptive text. The data collecting technique is using a writing test. The students' writing results are checked and scored by three raters. They are Elmalia Santos S.S, Erva Yanti S.Pd, and Rita Dwi Indah Wulandari S.Pd. The writer chose these three raters because they teach English in junior high school and they have experienced as an English teacher. Thus ,their assessments are believed and to be a reference in collecting the data.The research findings are as follows: first, the ability of the second year students in writing descriptive texts is in good level with the average score of 62.75. Second, the students' average score in terms of Grammar is 61.80, in terms of Vocabulary is 68.80, in terms of Mechanic is 70.02, in terms of Organization is 61.80, and in terms of Fluency is 52.40. It is the most difficult problem faced by the students in writing descriptive texts. The findings show that the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru have relatively good level in writing descriptive texts. But with the average score of 62.75, they need to practice more in writing a text.*

Key Words: *Study, Ability, Writing, Descriptive Texts.*

PENELITIAN TENTANG KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS VIII SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 1 PEKANBARU DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini berjudul " Penelitian Tentang Kemampuan Siswa-siswi Kelas VIII SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru dalam Menulis Teks Deskriptif". Penelitian ini berfokus pada kelima komponen penulisan yaitu: Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanic, Organization dan Fluency. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa kelas VIII dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Teknik yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data adalah tes mengarang. Tulisan siswa diperiksa dan dinilai oleh tiga orang rater. Mereka adalah, Emalia Santos S.S, Erva Yanti,S.Pd, dan Rita Dwi Indah Wulandari. Penulis memilih ketiga rater tersebut karena mereka mengajar bahasa inggris di SMP dan sudah berpengalaman sebagai guru bahasa inggris. Oleh karena itu, penilaian mereka sangat terpercaya dan menjadi referensi dalam pengumpulan data. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut: pertama, kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif berada pada level yang baik dengan nilai rata-rata 62.75. kedua, nilai rata-rata siswa pada bagian *grammar* adalah 61.80. Pada bagian *vocabulary* adalah 68.80, pada bagian *mechanics* adalah 70.02, pada bagian *organization* adalah 61.80 dan pada bagian *fluency* adalah 52.40. aspek *Fluency* adalah aspek yang paling sulit yang dihadapi oleh siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan siswa – siswi kelas VIII SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru berada pada level yang baik dalam mengarang teks deskriptif. Tetapi dengan skor rata-rat 62.75, mereka perlu lebih berlatih mengarang teks deskriptif.

Kata Kunci*: Penelitian, Kemampuan, Penulisan, Teks *Descriptive*.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the most important means of communication and it is used among people all over the world. However, to be able to communicate with other people around the world, it is necessary to learn English as an international language. A lot of information can be gained through written and spoken forms. Without being able to use English, people will get problems in understanding texts.

Based on 2013 curriculum, students are intended to master the four basic language skills of English, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Based on the curriculum, second year students must acquire oral and written form of language. So, one of the skill that the students need to learns is writing skill.

Writing is one of the language skills that students should master in learning English. In writing, we learn to express our thoughts and ideas in written form by being able to organize it using correct grammar. We also learn how to write words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs. Writing requires us to demonstrate the control of a number of variables simultaneously; they are control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, etc.

Nunan (1989) points out that learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the macro skills for all language users regardless of whether the language in question is first, second, or foreign language. Another opinion comes from Heaton (1989) who explains that the writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements. The ability to write needs a special skill and process in organizing language materials by using learners' own words and ideas.

Writing plays an important role for students who are in the process of learning English. In learning, the students can improve their grammar such as how to use correct tenses, adjectives, articles, noun phrases, etc. They can also arrange a text using good mechanics such as word spelling, punctuation and capitalization. They will know how to write a text with a good content and the students will know how to organize the ideas with relevant supporting sentences.

Based on 2013 curriculum, second year students should focus on three genres; they are: descriptive text, recount text and narrative text. Descriptive text is one kind of text that the students must learn. Winch (2005) states that descriptive text is a text that describes about particular things such as scenes, animals, persons, something that happen in nature. The purpose of descriptive text is to give information to the reader. According to Mulyono (2002) the generic structures of descriptive text consist of identification and description. The function of identification is to identify the phenomenon, in this part the writer explains about a phenomenon to be described such as a thing, a person or a place. Description is used to describe the parts, the qualities and the characteristics of a phenomenon. In this part the writer can describe about habit, behavior, shape or feature of a person, a thing, a place or an animal.

Based on writer's observation during her teaching practice in SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru, the writer observed that the students had problem to produce writing text including in writing descriptive texts. The students' ability in writing varies. Some students are capable and comprehend in writing in form of descriptive texts, but on the contrary some students are not capable in writing including in writing descriptive texts.

There are five aspects of writing that must be involved in writing. They are grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency and organization. The students should organize the texts organization and language features use in descriptive texts in order to create a good descriptive text. This phenomenon makes the writer wants to find out the students' real ability in writing descriptive texts.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in doing a research to find out the students' ability in writing descriptive texts with the paper entitled "A Study on the Ability of the Second Year Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in Writing Descriptive Texts".

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research using one variable. According to Gay (1987) descriptive research involves collecting data to test a hypothesis or to answer question concerning the status of the study. descriptive study is one in which information is collected without changing the environment or giving the treatment to the students. It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. In this case, the writer describes and interprets the data on the students' ability in writing descriptive texts.

To collect the data, the writer asked the students to write by giving them two topics to choose. The students choose only one topic about descriptive texts. The time provided for the test was 60 minutes. The writer used Hughes's formula to convert the score in order to get the real score. In scoring the students writing, the writer asked three raters to score them. The population of this study is SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru. The population is the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru. There are 221 students. The writer used cluster random sampling to take the sample of this research, Fraenkel (2007) As a sample of this research is class VIII-2 which total number is 37 students.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result of the research was analyzed to find out the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in writing descriptive texts. There were 5 components of writing that analyzed from the data, namely Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanic, Organization, and Fluency. The students' writing is scored by using rubric adapted from Hughes (1989) in finding out all writing aspects. The researcher had some steps to know the student's ability in writing recount texts as in the following:
1. Summing the student's scores,
2. Analyzing the students' ability for each writing aspect, and
3. Interpreting the student's scores in writing ability.

The students' scores start from 1 up to 5 for each writing aspect, and score of 1 is the lowest score and the score of 5 is the highest score. The score of 1 is categorized into very poor level, the score of 2 is categorized into poor level, the score of 3 is categorized into mediocre level, the score of 4 is categorized into good level and the

score of 5 is categorized into excellent level, Hughes (1989). The presentation of the students'scores in writing descriptive texts can be seen in the following table.

Table 1
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in writing Descriptive Texts

No	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	81-100	1	2.70%	Excellent
2	61-80	22	59.45%	Good
3	41-60	13	35.13%	Mediocre
4	21-40	1	2.70%	Poor
5	0-20	0	0%	Very Poor
	Total	**37**	**100 %**	

Table 1 shows that one (1) students (2.70%) was in excellent level, twenty two (22) students (62.5%) were in good level, thirteen (13) students (35.13%) belong to mediocre level. And one (1) student belongs to poor level. The mean score of the students in writing recount texts is 62.75. Based on the average score, it can be stated that the students' ability in writing descriptive texts is categorized into good level.

Table 2
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in Terms of Grammar

No	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	0	0%	Excellent
2	4	10.81 %	Good
3	27	72.97 %	Mediocre
4	6	16.21%	Poor
5	0	0%	Very Poor
	37	**100%**	

Table 2 shows that from 37 students who took the test, no student was in excellent level. Four (4) students (10.81%) belong to good level, twenty seven (27) students (72.97%) belong to mediocre level and six (6) students (16.21%) belong to poor level and nobody belongs to very poor level. The students' average score in terms of grammar is 61.80 based on the average score, it can be stated that the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in terms of grammar is in *good* level.

Table 3
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in Terms of Vocabulary

No	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	1	2.70%	Excellent
2	26	70.27 %	Good
3	9	24.3 %	Mediocre
4	1	2.70%	Poor
5	0	0%	Very Poor
	37	**100%**	

Table 3 shows that from 37 students who took the test, one (1) student belongs to *excellent* level, twenty six (26) students (70.27%) belong to *good* level, nine (9) students (24.3%) belong to *mediocre* level and one (1) student (2.70%) belong to poor level and no student belongs to very poor level. The students' average score in terms of vocabulary is 68.80. It can be stated that the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in terms of vocabulary is in *good* level

Table 4
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in Terms of Mechanic

No	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	5	13.51%	Excellent
2	21	56.75 %	Good
3	11	29.72 %	Mediocre
4	0	0%	Poor
5	0	0%	Very Poor
	37	**100%**	

Table 4 shows that from 37 students who took the test, five (5) student (13.51%) belong to excellent level, twenty one (21) students (56.75%) belong to good level, eleven (11) students (29.72%) belong to mediocre level and no student belong to poor level and nobody belongs to very poor level. The students' average score in terms of mechanic is 70.02.

It can be stated that the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in terms of mechanic is in *good* level.

Table 5
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in Terms of Organization

No	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	0	0%	Excellent
2	18	48.64 %	Good
3	15	40.54 %	Mediocre
4	4	10.81%	Poor
5	0	0%	Very Poor
	37	**100%**	

Table 5 shows that from 37 students who took the test, no student (0) belong to excellent level, eighteen (18) students (448.64%) belong to *good* level, fifteen (15) students (40.54%) belong to *mediocre* level and four (4) student (10.81%) belong to *poor* level and nobody belongs to *very poor* level. The students' average score in terms of organization is 61.80. It can be stated that the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in terms of organization is in *good* level.

Table 6
The Percentage of the Students' Ability in Terms of Fluency

No	Frequency	Percentage	Ability
1	0	0%	Excellent
2	4	10.81 %	Good
3	27	72.97 %	Mediocre
4	6	16.21%	Poor
5	0	0%	Very Poor
	37	**100%**	

Table 6 shows that from 37 students who took the test, no student belong to *excellent* level, four (4) students (10.81%) belong to *good* level, twenty seven (27) students (72.97%) belong to *mediocre* level and six (6) belong to *poor* level and there was no student in *very poor* level. The students' average score in terms of fluency is 52.40. It can be stated that the ability of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in terms of fluency is in *mediocre* level.

DISCUSSION

a. **Grammar**

In term of grammar, some students made mistakes in using tenses and subject-verb agreement. They often use incorrect tenses in their sentences. In subject-verb agreement the students often use a singular subject with plural verb and plural subject with singular verb (For examples: *there is a bed, radio, AC, DVD in the living room*). They also often omitted the suffix –s/-es in plural noun (e.g; *I have three brother. My family has four member*).

b. **Vocabulary**

In term of vocabulary aspect, some of the students are lack of vocabulary. It is hard for them to express their ideas because they have limited vocabulary. They often translated Indonesian into English, so it is hard to interpret their ideas (e.g ; *he is hobby singing, she is hair is black. There is some diner-diner table).*

c. **Mechanics**

The students also made some mistakes in mechanics even though it was not as many as mistakes that occurred in other grammar aspect. Sometimes they made mistakes in punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Sometimes they made

errors in formatting. Ideally, the students should write paragraph appropriate to the correct writing style such as punctuation, capitalization, spelling and formatting. Some errors that the students made; *(E.g ; My Brother he is 17 years old. Shes 29 year old).*

d. Organization

Most of the students are good in organization but some others still made some mistakes in the generic structure. Ideally, the generic structure of descriptive text consists of identification and description but there are some students who did not write the identification. They started straight to the description or vice versa.

e. Fluency

In term of fluency, some of the students had not developed ideas completely. They are seldom had concrete and detailed ideas in writing. Communication was often impaired by misused structures or vocabulary items.

CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the study is to find out the ability level of the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Pekanbaru in writing descriptive texts. 37 students took the test in this study. It is found that, one (1) student (2.70%) is in *excellent* level with score 81.33. twenty two (22) students (59.45%) are in *good* level with the scores ranging from 61.33 – 78.67. thirteen (13) students (35.13%) are in *mediocre* level with the scores ranging from 41.67-60.00. one (1 student (2.70%) is in *poor* level with the score 37.33 and no student is in very poor level. Total scores of the students according to the three raters is 2321.67. The average score of the students is 62.75. Because the highest percentage of the students ability in writing descriptive text is in good level with 59.45% which mean more than half of the students are able to write a descriptive text.

In writing aspects, the second year students' average score in term of grammar and organization are 61.80 which falls into *good* level. In term of vocabulary, average score is 68.80. That also falls into *good* level. And the average score of mechanics aspect is 70.02 which categorized into *good* level. In term of fluency aspect, the average score is 52.40 and it falls into *mediocre* level. The average score for all aspect of writing according to the three raters is 63 and it categorized into *good* level.

The highest score that the most students got is in mechanics aspect with the mean score 70.02. They have understood about the punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Most of the students were able in using capital letter, punctuation devices and words spelling well. Meanwhile, the lowest score that the students got is in fluency with the average score is 52.40. The students have difficulty in using transition signal (words and phrases) in their writing especially in writing descriptive text. They also seldom have concrete and details idea in writing, so their writing was lack some details. Third, the average score for each aspect of writing is 63. This falls into good level. It means that majority of the students are able to write a descriptive text. Fourth, the students' average score based on three raters is 62.75. It means that the students ability in writing a descriptive text fall into good level (61-80).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding to the research findings, the researcher gives some suggestions in order to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive texts. First, Students should pay more attention to the generic structure of descriptive text to be able to write a good descriptive text. Second, The teacher should be able to encourage the students to be more active during the writing class in order for the students to be able to express their ideas in writing English text. Third, the students should improve their writing ability in writing English text especially descriptive text. Because even though the students ability in writing descriptive text falls into good level, the average score is need to be higher than what the students have been achieved in order for the students to be able to write a good descriptive text. Fourth, the teacher must be able to make the students interested in English by giving them motivation to improve their ability especially in writing. Fifth, the teacher should emphasize the important aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization and fluency because those are important factors in writing. Last, the finding of the result can be used as the input to conduct further researcher about writing descriptive texts in different kinds of research method, such as classroom action research.

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