

A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 PANGKALAN LESUNG IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *This descriptive research aims to find out the ability level of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts. The population of this research are the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung. The number of sample is 46 students who are chosen by using cluster random sampling technique. The data are collected using a writing test which contains one topic about “my favorite place”. The results of the data analysis showed that the mean score of the students’ ability in writing descriptive text is 61.68. It can be stated that the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is good. Based on the result of the students’ ability in each writing aspect, the lowest score is in organization aspect and the highest score is in vocabulary aspect.*

Keywords: *Study, Writing Ability, Descriptive Text.*

SEBUAH KAJIAN TENTANG KEMAMPUAN SISWA KELAS 1 SMAN 1 PANGKALAN LESUNG DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Penelitian deskriptif ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa kelas 1 SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa tahun pertama SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung. Jumlah sampel penelitian ini adalah 46 siswa yang terpilih dengan menggunakan teknik sampel acak kelompok. Data diperoleh dari tes menulis dengan topik “tempat favoritku”. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif adalah 61.68. Ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan siswa tahun pertama SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung dikategorikan baik. Berdasarkan hasil dari kemampuan siswa dalam setiap aspek menulis, nilai yang paling rendah yaitu struktur teks dan nilai yang paling tinggi yaitu kosa kata.

Kata kunci: Penelitian, Kemampuan Menulis, Teks Deskriptif.

INTRODUCTION

There are four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. One important part of communication is writing skill. According to Harmer (2001) state that writing is a form of communication to deliver thought or to express feeling through written form. It means that writing is productive skills that express feeling through written communication.

Writing is different from other skills; it can be said as the combination of all skills. Heaton (1975) states that writing composition is a task which involves the students in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences, and in linking those sentence 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 influence 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.

From the theory above, writing is very important for students to develop ideas, share information, communicate effectively to the readers, even think creatively and logically. In fact, most students have problems in writing. Richard and Renandya (2002) states that writing is the most difficult skill to master.

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 genres.

There are thirteen genres, they are descriptive, recount, narrative, procedure, explanation, discussion, exposition, news item, report, anecdote, review and spoof. But, the researcher focuses on descriptive texts which describe persons, things, and places. The descriptive text is really different from the other kinds of text. A descriptive is a text in which a writer tries to picture what he is describing. It also consist of generic structure and language features. When the students see the object directly, they will have ideas and explore it into paragraph easily. However, the students must have background knowledge or experience about the object even understand the generic structure and language features.

Based on the researcher's interview with the school teachers, many students have difficulties in writing English. There are some factors that the writer observed from the teacher's explanation. The first problem is that the students have low mastery in organization because they did not know the organization of descriptive text. They also write a text without pay attention the organization of text. 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.

The writer interviewed the English teachers concerning about how many people have done the same research at SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung. The teacher said that no

one has done a research about that topic. The writer also asked about the caused of low score in writing especially writing descriptive text. The teacher explain that they rarely to do writing practice. Therefore, they never know their ability in writing, especially in writing descriptive texts.

Based on self-interest, I have motivations to do this research. My title is already prepared and I most understand with the title which I took. Besides that, the writer gets more knowledge about writing, such as how to get the data, processing the data, and prove that the data is accurate. Although, many researchers whose do the same research, but the results of each student's ability have differences.

Based on the background above, the writer wants to know the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts. The writer is interested in conducting a research entitled "A study on the Ability of the First Year Students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in Writing Descriptive Texts".

METHODOLOGY

The type of the research is descriptive research. Noor (2012) explains that descriptive research describes an event, a phenomenon happening now. It means that descriptive research is related to the condition that occurs at that time, uses one variable or more and investigates the facts. This research was designed to find out the students' ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts.

In collecting the data, the writer administered a writing test to the students. The writing test contains one topic "My Favorite Place" of at least 250 words. The students have 60 minutes to write it. They must write a good paragraph which has appropriate generic structure and language features. The population of this research are the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung. The total number of the first year students are 92 students that are divided into 4 classes.

Table 1 Distribution of the Population

No.	Classes	Sum of Population
1.	X MIPA	24
2.	X IIS 1	23
3.	X IIS 2	23
4.	X IIS 3	22
Total		92 Students

The writer took the sample by using cluster random sampling technique. Gay (2000) points out that cluster random sampling means that the sampling in which groups, not individuals. The reason to choose this sampling technique because it is easier to construct the desired sample and the way to determine the sample by selecting randomly the group's population. The writer took the sample are X IIS 1 and X IIS 2 because they have similar characteristics such as the same age, taught same teacher and material to be studied.

The classification of students' ability by Harris (1974) were used to classify the students' ability in writing descriptive texts.

Table 2 Classification of the Students' Ability

No	Scores	Level of ability
1	81-100	Excellent
2	61-80	Good
3	41-60	Mediocre
4	21-40	Poor
5	0-20	Very Poor

(Harris, 1974)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After getting the score of the students from each rater, the writer classified the students' score based on each rater, as follows:

Table 3 The Students' Ability Level According to Rater One

No	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	2	4.34%
2	61-80	Good	32	69.56%
3	41-60	Mediocre	5	10.86%
4	21-40	Poor	7	15.21%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
Total			46	100%

Table3 shows the students' ability level in writing descriptive texts according to rater one. It can be seen that 2 students (4.34%) are in *excellent* level, 32 students (69.56%) are in *good* level, 5 students (10.86%) are in *mediocre* level, and 7 students (15.21%) are in *poor* level and no student is in *very poor* level.

Table 4 The Students' Ability Level According to Rater Two

No	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	0	0
2	61-80	Good	30	65.21%
3	41-60	Mediocre	9	19.56%
4	21-40	Poor	7	15.21%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
Total			46	100%

Table 4 shows the students' ability level in writing descriptive texts according to rater two. It can be seen that no student is in *excellent* level, 30 students (65.21%) are in *good* level, 9 students (19.56%) are in *mediocre* level, and 7 students (15.21%) are in *poor* level and no student is in *very poor* level.

Table 5 The Students' Ability Level According to Rater Three

No	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	1	2.17%
2	61-80	Good	27	58.69%
3	41-60	Mediocre	13	28.26%
4	21-40	Poor	0	0
5	0-20	Very Poor	1	2.17%
Total			46	100%

Table 5 shows the students' ability level in writing recount texts according to rater three. It can be seen that 1 student (2.17%) is in *excellent* level, 27 students (58.69%) are in *good* level, 13 students (28.26%) are in *mediocre* level, no student is in *poor* level and 1 student is in *very poor* level.

After calculating the data by each rater, the writer presents the classification of the students' ability for each aspect of writing, as follows:

1. Grammar

According to Brown (2003), grammar is the whole structure and system of a language in general. Grammar is a critical component of learning to write. Writer needs to have strong skill in writing to get their message to the readers in a clear and understandable way.

Based on the result in terms of grammar, 2 students (4.34%) are in *excellent* level, 30 students (65.21%) are in *good* level, 9 students (19.56%) are in *mediocre* level, and 4 students are in *poor* level and 1 student is in *very poor* level. It can be stated that based on the mean score of the students in terms of grammar aspect, the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level (64.22).

Most of the students still made mistakes in using tenses. Ideally, descriptive text should be used simple present tense.

2. Vocabulary

According to Hughes (1989), choosing and using appropriate vocabulary are important to express the idea properly. So, it can give clear information about the ideas of writing.

Based on the result in terms of vocabulary, 8 students (17.39%) are in *excellent* level, 27 students (58.69%) are in *good* level, 1 student (2.17%) is in *mediocre* level, and 8 students (17.39) are in *poor* level and 2 students (4.36%) is in *very poor* level. It can be stated that based on the mean score of the students in terms of vocabulary aspect, the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level (65.38).

3. Mechanics

According to Brown (2003), the mechanics of writing is the most obvious part of writing. Mechanics is the term we use to describe the technical aspects of writing. The mechanics of writing are spelling, capitalization, contraction, gerunds, pronoun, and punctuation marks. The use of correct mechanics will avoid confusions and ambiguities of the readers in understanding the story.

Based on the result of the test in terms of mechanics, no student is in *excellent* level, 31 students (67.39%) are in *good* level, 5 students (10.86%) are in *mediocre* level, and 8 students (17.39) are in *poor* level and 2 students (4.36) are in *very poor* level. It can be stated that based on the mean score of the students in terms of mechanics aspect, the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level (61.37).

Most of the students write the recount texts not too much paying attention to the use of punctuation, spelling, capitalization and punctuation marks. They just write the paragraphs without paying attention to this aspect.

4. Fluency

According to Hughes (1989), fluency in writing factor makes the sentences sound natural and easy on the ear when read aloud. A paragraph is said fluent when the choice of structure and vocabulary consistently appropriate.

Based on the result in terms of fluency, 2 students (4.36%) are in *excellent* level, 29 students (63.04%) are in *good* level, and 8 students are in *mediocre* level, 5 students (10.86) are in *poor* level and 2 students (4.36) are in *very poor* level. It can be stated that based on the mean score of the students in terms of fluency aspect, the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level (63.86).

Some of students wrote the story well. It is probably because they are familiar with the topics given by the writer.

5. Organization

According to Kies (1995), organization is important for two reasons. Not only does it help the readers understand the connection between the details of the text but also it can help to write the text in the first place. The organization of recount text consist of orientation (provides the setting and produces participants), events, and re-orientation (optional-closure of events).

Based on the result in terms of organization, no student is in *excellent* level, 16 students (34.78%) are in *good* level, and 25 students (54.34) are in *mediocre* level, 4 students (8.69) are in *poor* level, and 1 student (2.17) is in *very poor* level. It can be stated that based on the mean score of the students in terms of organization aspect, the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *mediocre* level(53.15).\

Some of students are bad at this aspect. They don't know about the organization of descriptive text.

After analyzing the data of each aspect of writing, below is the students' writing ability according to the three raters:

Table 6 The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level based on Three Raters

No	Classification		Frequency	Percentage
	Test Score	Level of ability		
1	81-100	Excellent	0	0
2	61-80	Good	32	69.56%
3	41-60	Mediocre	7	15.21%
4	21-40	Poor	7	15.21%
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
Total			46	100%

Table 6 shows that the ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level (69.56). It was found that no student in *excellent* level with the score range of 81-100. Then, 32 students (69.56) are in *good* level with the score range of 61-80. After that, 7 students (15.21) are in *mediocre* level with the score range of 41-60. Finally, 7 students (15.21) are in *poor* level with the score range 21-40 and no student is in *very poor* level with the score range of 0-20.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the level of ability of the first year students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung in writing descriptive texts is in *good* level. It can be seen from the students' mean score which is 61.68. Moreover, the students' mean score in writing descriptive texts in terms of grammar is 64.22, in terms

of vocabulary is 65.38, in terms of mechanic is 61.37, in terms of fluency is 63.86, and in terms of organization is 53.15.

Based on the students' mean score for each writing aspects, it can be seen that the highest students' mean score is in terms of vocabulary, while the lowest score is in terms of organization. It might be caused by the lack of students' writing practice and they don't know about the organization of descriptive text..

Recommendations

Based on the result obtained and the conclusions in this study, the writer would like to propose some recommendations that might be helpful for the teacher and the students in teaching and learning English, especially in teaching and learning about descriptive texts.

First, for English teacher, the teacher can give more writing practice to the students, especially in organization aspect. Besides, the teacher may apply appropriate methods or strategies in order to improve the students' ability in terms of organization as well as the other aspects: fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic.

Then, for students, the students should pay attention to organization aspect since organization is the lowest score in this research. The possible way to improve the students' ability is probably by doing more practice in writing skill, particularly in writing descriptive text.

Finally, the writer expects that the findings, conclusions and recommendations in this research will be useful for teachers and students of SMAN 1 Pangkalan Lesung and for other readers.

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