

AN STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS OF INTERNATIONAL CLASS OF MAN 2 KOTA PEKANBARU IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE

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Abstract: *The research design of this study was descriptive research that focused on quantitative approach. The objective of this study was to find out the level of students' ability in writing descriptive text at the first-year students of international class of MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru. The students' writing ability was analyzed according to the analytic scoring rubric by Brown (2007). The sample of this study was selected by using the total sampling technique, which 34 students of X MIPA 6, as known as international class. The writer used a written test as the primary data. The collected data were analyzed by the three raters. The findings of this study revealed that the students' ability in writing descriptive text can be categorized as a very good level with the average score of 86.45. Based on the result of the students' ability in each writing aspect, the highest score was in the content aspect (92.4) while the lowest score was in the mechanics aspect (79.41).*

Key Words: *Study, Writing Ability, Descriptive Text*

STUDI KEMAMPUAN SISWA TAHUN PERTAMA KELAS INTERNASIONAL MAN 2 KOTA PEKANBARU DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstrak: Desain penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kemampuan siswa tahun pertama kelas internasional MAN 2 kota pekanbaru dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Kemampuan menulis siswa dianalisis berdasarkan rubrik penilaian analitik yang dikemukakan oleh Brown (2007). Sampel penelitian ini dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik total sampling, yaitu 34 siswa kelas X MIPA 6 yang dikenal dengan kelas internasional. Dalam pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan tes tertulis sebagai data primer. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis oleh tiga rater. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif termasuk dalam kategori sangat baik dengan skor rata-rata 86,45. Berdasarkan hasil kemampuan siswa pada masing-masing aspek menulis, nilai tertinggi pada aspek isi (92,4) sedangkan nilai terendah pada aspek mekanika (79,41).

Kata Kunci: Penelitian, Kemampuan Menulis, Teks Deskriptif

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important parts of communication which is very essential to learn is writing skill. Writing can be said as a combination of all skills and is different from other skills. According to Harmer (2001), writing is a form of communication to deliver thoughts or express feelings through written form. In addition, writing is also a field to explore and develop ideas, perceptions, and values. It means that writing is a productive skill that expresses feelings through written communication. Moreover, Richards J. C & Renandya W. A (2002) stated that writing a text in English as a foreign language is not easy and is the most challenging skill to master. This activity has several abilities that must be mastered by foreign language learners, such as word mastery, grammar, composing ideas, and the most crucial thing is vocabulary. For instance, attention to vocabulary is a matter in writing an English text. If the students lack of vocabulary, they can have some errors in sentences. The students are unable to describe an object specifically in detail. Furthermore, the errors can cause miscomprehension for the readers. Therefore, students must learn English writing to ease communication in written form.

Students are expected to be able to communicate in English both in oral and written forms, based on the Senior High School Competency-Based Curriculum (K13). After understanding the materials, they are required to write correctly, whether it is a sentence, text, essay, or paragraph. Writing skill in senior high school in Indonesia is taught by using the Genre-Based Approach (GBA). In the English language curriculum that applies at senior high school, students are required to learn twelve types of text. In MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru, one of the texts which is taught at the first-year is descriptive text. As Wardiman, et al. (2008) stated that “*descriptive text is a kind of text which describes a particular thing, person, or other.*” This text has the purpose of giving information and consists of introduction and description as its generic structure. In writing descriptive text, the students use the simple present tense and adjective clauses.

There are eleven class programs which are provided by MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru. One of the class programs that is in great demand by the students is the International Class program. This class program is for students that focus on mastering the English language. Later, students will be directed to take part in the English language competitions and had great potential to continue their education abroad when they have graduated. To enter this class, students must pass three types of tests. There are TOEFL, interview, and speaking (speech and storytelling) tests. None of them are writing test. This class program also has a special treatment. Within a week, this class holds intra curricular clubs (speech, storytelling, and debate.) These clubs require students to write. For instance, students who are at the speech club are required to write their speech scripts before they perform their speeches and students at the storytelling club are required to create their stories to perform in front of the audiences. Moreover, students who are at the debate club are required to build their arguments before they start debating. This attracts the writer's attention to conduct a study which proposed to measure students' writing ability

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru, located on Jl. Diponegoro No. 55, Cinta Raja, Sail, Kota Pekanbaru, Riau. The data were collected in July 2022. In this study, the writer uses descriptive research that focuses on the quantitative approach. According to Gay (2000), quantitative research is an activity of collecting and evaluating numerical data to describe, explain, predict or manage phenomena of interest. Then, the result of this study is presented descriptively. The population of this study is the first-year students of International Class of MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru, as known as X MIPA 6. In this study, the writer applied a total sampling technique because the writer used all the populations as a sample. So, the sample in this study is all of the students in X MIPA 6, which consists of 34 students.

This study used the students' descriptive texts to analyze the level of students' writing ability. In this study, the writer took the descriptive text directly in the class. These descriptive texts are the primary data source in this study. The instrument of this study is a written test. The students were asked to write a descriptive text with the theme "Historical Places". In this pandemic situation, the students at MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru continue their study as usual. They attend the class in compliance with the health protocols. That way, the writer took the data and gave the test to the students directly. The writer had prepared the instrument for the test. Then the writer asked the students to do the test: writing a descriptive text with the decided theme. The writer collected the document paper and then analyzed the level of the students' writing ability and the highest and the lowest aspect of writing.

The writer uses quantitative research in this study. After collecting the data from the test, the students' writings are analyzed by three raters. The researcher analyzed and scored every writing aspects by using the analytical rubric by Brown (2007) that contains five aspects of writing; content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and writing. The student's level of writing ability can be classified by using the classification score levels from Reid (1993) cited in Wahyumi (2019).

Table 1. Classification of the Students Score Ability Level

No	Test Scores	Level of Ability
1.	91-100	Excellent
2.	81-90	Very good
3.	71-80	Good
4.	61-70	Fair
5.	51-60	Poor
6.	<50	Very poor

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

RESULTS

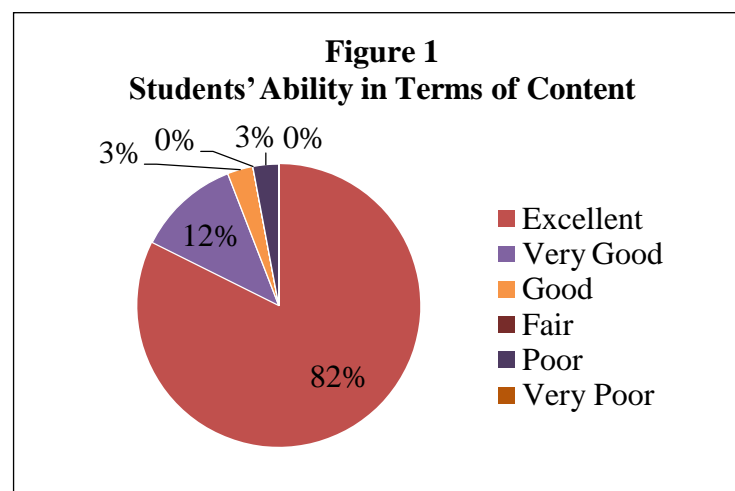
After the data were analyzed by the writer, the result shows that the students' ability in writing descriptive text was at a very good level with the range score of 81-90. The percentage of the students' ability in writing descriptive text can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. The Percentage of the Students' Ability Level in Writing Descriptive Text

Scores	Level of Ability	Frequency	Percentage
91-100	Excellent	6	18%
81-90	Very Good	26	76%
71-80	Good	1	3%
61-70	Fair	0	0%
51-60	Poor	1	3%
<50	Very Poor	0	0%
Total		34	100%

The table displays that from 34 students, 26 students (76%) are at the very good level and 6 students (18%) are at the excellent level for their ability in writing descriptive text. Furthermore, none of the students are in neither fair nor very poor level, but there is only 1 student (3%) who is at the good level and 1 student (3%) at the poor level. Then, the mean score of the students at the very good level is 86.45. From the data above, it can be concluded that in general, the students are able to write descriptive text based on the five components of writing and its generic structure.

Figure 1. The Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability in Terms of Content



The figure presents that most students (82%) are at the excellent level and 4 students (12%) are at the very good level. Furthermore, there is only 1 student (3%) who is in good and 1 student (3%) in poor level and none of the students are in neither fair nor very poor level. In addition, the average score achieved by the students in terms of content is 92.40, which is in the range of 91-100. It means that generally, the students' ability in terms of content is excellent. The highest score in terms of content is 100, while the lowest score is 58.33. In short, the result of the students' ability in the content aspect is better than the other four aspects of writing. The students seem to have a good knowledge about the topic in detail.

Figure 2. The Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability in Terms of Organization

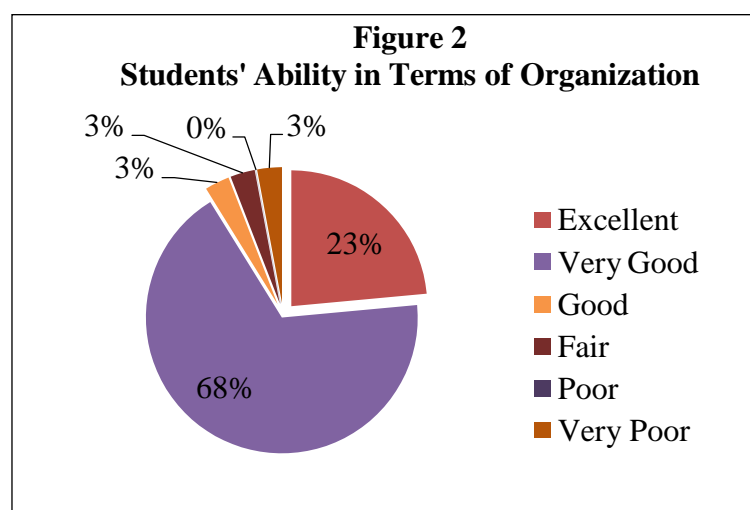
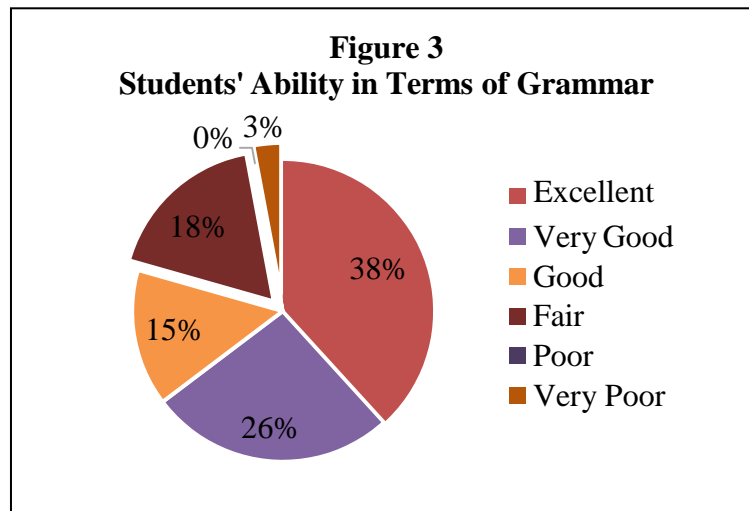


Figure 2 explains that from 34 students, 8 students (24%) are at the excellent level. Furthermore, there is only 1 student (3%) who is at the good level, 1 student (3%) at the fair level, and 1 student (3%) at the very poor level. There is no student in poor level. Therefore, the average score achieved by the students in terms of organization is 83.58 which is in the range of 81-90. It means that generally, the students' ability in the organization aspect is very good. The highest score in terms of content is 91.67, while the lowest score is 50. In short, the students' ability in writing descriptive text in the organization aspect is at the very good level. The result of the students' ability in the organization aspect shows that the students seem to have a good skill in the way they organize their descriptive texts.

Figure 3. The Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability in Terms of Grammar



In figure 3 above, it can be interpreted that students' ability in the grammar aspect is at the excellent level. Excellent level is obtained by 13 students (38%), which is the highest number of capable students in the grammar aspect. About 9 students (26%) are at the very good level, 5 students (15%) are at the good level, and 6 students (18%) are at the fair level. Moreover, there is no student in poor level, but there is only 1 student (3%) who is in very poor level. Furthermore, the overall total students get an average of 82.11, which is in the range of 81-90. From the mean score, it can be concluded that the students' ability in the grammar aspect is excellent. There are 4 students who got 100, which means it is the highest score of the grammar aspect, while there is only 1 student who got 56, which means the lowest score. The students' ability in the grammar aspect is at the very good level. The students seem to have a good knowledge about the use of grammar in writing descriptive text. They write the sentences by using the simple present tense in the correct way.

Figure 4. The Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability in Terms of Vocabulary

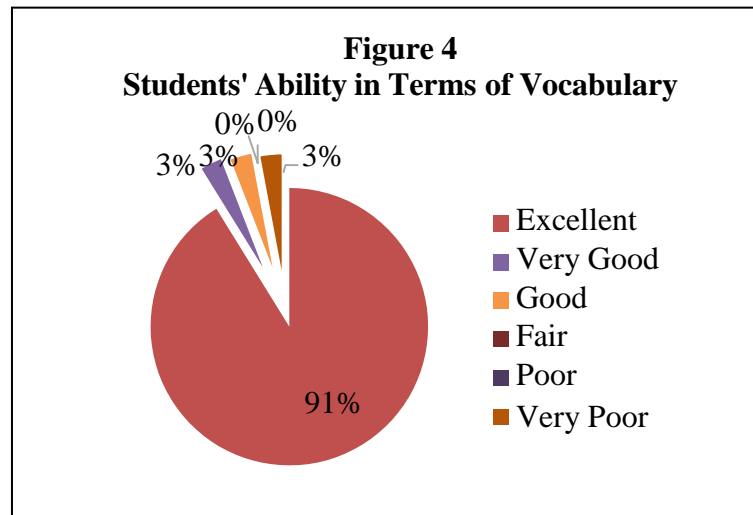


Figure 4 above explains that the students' ability in vocabulary aspect is excellent where the most students get excellent level. From 34 students, 31 students (91%) are at the excellent level. Furthermore, there is only 1 student (3%) who is at the very good level, 1 student (3%) at the good level, and 1 student (3%) at the very poor level. None of the students are in neither fair nor poor level. Moreover, the average score achieved by the students in terms of vocabulary is 91.18, which is in the range of 91-100. It means that generally, the students' ability in the vocabulary aspect is excellent. The highest score is 100, while the lowest score is 75. In short, the students' ability in writing descriptive text in the vocabulary aspect is at the excellent level. The result of the students' ability in terms of vocabulary shows that the students' vocabulary is good.

Figure 5. The Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability in Terms of Mechanics

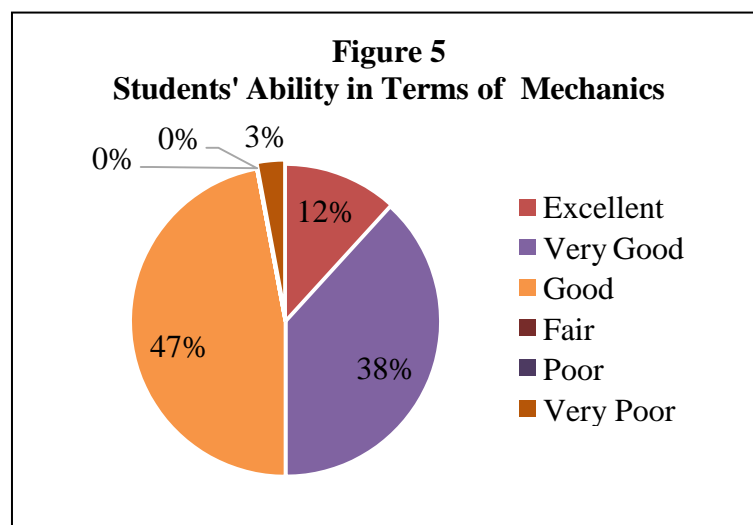


Figure 5 shows that from 34 students, 16 students (47%) are at the good level, 13 students (38%) are at the very good level and 4 students (12%) are at the excellent level. There is only 1 student (3%) at the very poor level and none of the students are in neither fair nor poor level. In addition, the average score achieved by the students in terms of mechanics is 79.41 which is in the range of 71-80. It means that generally, from all aspects of the components of writing, mechanics is at the lowest position. The lowest score in the mechanics aspect is 50 while the highest score is 92. In short, the students' ability in writing descriptive text in the mechanics aspect is at the good level. The result shows that from all aspects, students need to improve their understanding about the mechanics aspect of writing. Probably, most students did not pay attention to the use of punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, but overall students' abilities are at the excellent and very good level.

DISCUSSION

The writer found that the students' ability in writing descriptive text reaches the mean score of 86.45. Therefore, it is categorized into a very good level of ability. It was also found out that the highest aspect achieved by the students is in the content aspect with the mean score of 92.4 and the lowest aspect is in the mechanics aspect with the mean score of 79.41.

This result was similar to the study conducted by Putri (2021). She also measured the level of the students' writing ability in terms of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics aspects. Moreover, content was found as the highest aspect in this study. Meanwhile, Putri found that the lowest aspect was grammar. The level of ability of this study is different. The results of Putri's study showed that the students' ability in writing descriptive text was at average level with an average score of 56 whereas, in this research the students' ability was at very good level.

Furthermore, it agrees with Khoiri's (2020) study. He found that the lowest aspect is the mechanics aspect. Furthermore, the mean scores in all aspects are different. Khoiri found that all aspects in this research were categorized into very poor level with the mean score was 47.27. Moreover, the difference between this current study and his study was the aims of the research. To know the students' ability in writing descriptive text, the writer used all of the components of writing that was categorized into 5 aspects, while Khoiri used only three aspects, they were organization, vocab, and mechanics.

In this study, students were still struggling in each aspect of writing. As it is known that writing is the most difficult skill because it covers many aspects. Writing is the most complex skill for learners among four basic skills. Because applying all of the components of language including organization, mechanics, essay, and paragraphs makes writing become the most difficult skill even when speaking (Azhar, 2015). Most students were still lacking in the mechanics aspect so that their descriptive texts were not well-organized and made the readers difficult to understand the ideas that showed in the writing.

In brief, after analyzing the data, the research problem could be answered. It can be stated that from the findings, the students' ability in writing descriptive text is at the very good level in which content is the highest aspect while mechanics is the lowest one. In other words, the students need to improve their ability in writing descriptive text to create a better descriptive text.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

As already mentioned in the first chapter, the aim of this study is to find out the students' ability in writing descriptive text at the first-year students of MAN 2 Kota Pekanbaru. The writing ability focuses on the five components of writing; they are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics which are analyzed according to the theory proposed by Brown. Based on the research findings, it shows that the students' ability in writing descriptive text is at the very good level with a score of 86.45 out of 34 students.

Furthermore, the results are different for each component in terms of the five components of writing. The mean score that the students obtained in the content aspect is 92.4; which means the highest score among all aspects that are used to assess the students' descriptive text writing ability. Even though some topic errors were still detected in their descriptive writing, the students understood about the topic in detail and complexity of the topic. On the other hand, the lowest score is in the mechanics aspect with a mean score of 79.41. The students were struggling to create a good sentence. It deals with the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization within the paragraphs.

In conclusion, this study reveals that the students were able to write a good descriptive text with a mean score at the very good level in the range of 81-90. It is quite a satisfactory result because descriptive text is important for the students, considering that in senior high school, it is necessary to have a good writing skill in descriptive text writing. Nonetheless, the students need more practice to improve their ability in writing descriptive text especially in the mechanics aspect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the conclusion of the research, the writer would like to provide several recommendations and suggestions related to this research. Firstly, students should be able to do more exercises in order to improve their writing abilities. By writing frequently, students are expected to strengthen their understanding of the components of writing as well as practice their productive skills. Writing descriptive text can be the easiest way in starting to learn writing. For students who are weak in mechanics, they can see good writing through journals, on the website or frequently reading magazines, novels, and story books. Then, they try to pay attention to punctuation and capitalization in the writing, so

that they can improve their knowledge in using capital letters, punctuation devices, and word spelling. It will make them more capable in writing.

Secondly, most students are weak in the mechanics aspect. So, the teachers should be able to give more writing practice to the students. Not only that, the teachers should explain more about capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and others. The other way, in order to make the students feel more interested in learning English writing, particularly mechanics aspect, the teachers can create a small game such as asking the students to take turn going forward in front of the class to correct what the teachers wrote on board and the teachers immediately correct the students if it is wrong and appreciate them if it is correct, so that the students can remember correctly. Besides, in the future, it is necessary to hold a writing test for the selection of the students who will enter the international class program in order to get excellent students, especially in writing skills.

Finally, the writer also recommends for further researchers to use other research designs such as experimental research or classroom action research which may get different achievement and to improve the level of students' writing descriptive text skills, based on students' current abilities at the very good level.

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