STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMA NEGERI 1 TELUK DALAM

Fikah Wahyuni Telaumbanua

High School Teacher of State Senior High School 1 Onolalu (fikah9534@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study dealt with how students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam. The purpose of this study was to describe students' ability in writing descriptive text. This research used qualitative research. The data were taken from 26 descriptive text that made by students. The data source was eleventh students at SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam Academic Year 2023/2024. The researcher used documentation technique to collect the students' writing of descriptive text. The finding shows that students' abilities in writing descriptive text were based on five assessment components in writing. First, the content component with an average score 20.1 or including fair criteria, second, the organization component with an average score 15.8 or including good criteria, third, the vocabulary component with an average score 13.3 or including fair criteria, fourth, the language use component with an average score 15.6 or including fair criteria, and lastly, mechanics component with an average score 4.3 or including good criteria. From the result of the data, only 2 components were classified into good criteria and there are 3 components under the good criteria. This is proven based on the students' level of difficulty in writing descriptive text. Lastly, the result of data analysis of students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam was categorized in fair.

Keywords: *Writing; Ability; Descriptive Text.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif di kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif. Data diambil dari 26 teks deskriptif yang dibuat oleh siswa. Sumber datanya adalah siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam, Tahun pelajaran 2023/2024. Peneliti menggunakan teknik dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan tulisan teks deskriptif siswa. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif didasarkan pada lima komponen penilaian dalam menulis. Pertama,

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komponen isi dengan skor rata-rata 20,1 atau atau termasuk kriteria cukup. Kedua, komponen organisasi dengan skor rata-rata 15,8 atau atau termasuk kriteria baik. Ketiga, komponen kosakata dengan skor rata-rata 13,3 atau atau termasuk kriteria cukup. Keempat, komponen penggunaan bahasa dengan skor rata-rata 15,6 atau atau termasuk kriteria cukup. Dan terakhir, komponen mekaniks dengan skor rata-rata 4,3 atau atau termasuk kriteria baik. Dari hasil data yang diperoleh, hanya 2 komponen yang termasuk dalam kriteria baik dan terdapat 3 komponen yang

termasuk dalam kriteria cukup. Hal ini dibuktikan sesuai dengan tingkat kesulitan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Terakhir, hasil analisis data kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks

Kata kunci: Menulis; kemampuan; teks deskriptif

deskriptif di kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam dikategorikan cukup.

A. Introduction

Language is a communication tool used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information and arguments to others. Language is an integral part of our existence. We need language for a variety of purposes of administration, commerce, education and communication. Shastri (2010:2) stated, "A language has both the spoken and the written medium for communication."

There are so many languages in this world, one of them is English. English holds a place of supreme importance as an international language. It is the most widely used language in the world. As a result, the demand for using English effectively is necessary in every country. Teaching and learning English, except for the native language, is thus crucial for communicative purposes to cope with the growing local, national and international demands for English skills.

As an international language it is very urgent for Indonesia as a developing country to communicate with others countries that use English language and obliges Indonesia to learn it. In Indonesia, English has studied from elementary school up to university. By learning English language, they can follow the development of science and technology for the sake of national development. That is why the English is important and become one of the lessons at school.

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In teaching and learning English subject, students are required to master four English skills, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ability to use language is called language skill. Listening and reading are as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are as productive skills. Each of these is important which have a close relationship such as the fact that listening is the foundation for speaking, reading is a source for listening, listening, and speaking facilitates reading and writing, and vice versa.

Productive skill is an ability of conveying or expression the ideas both spoken and written. These skills are important to obtain the goal of language learning for communication. Speaking and writing are called productive skills because we use the language to produce a message through speech or written text. These two skills can be used as a barometer to check how much the learners have learned in learning a foreign language. Reading and Listening are called receptive skills because when we listen and read something we receive the language, understand it and decode the meaning. In this study the researcher only focus to discuss more about one of productive skills that is Writing.

Writing is a way of communication with others in a written form. Hyland (2003:9) asserted, "Writing is a way of sharing personal meanings and writing courses emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her own views on a topic." It can be defined that writing is an activity of forwading messages using written language. Therefore, writing skill is most important to learn and must be master by the students who learning English as a foreign language. So, in this research the researcher has a pretension to analyze the students' ability in writing especially in descriptive text.

Descriptive text is a kind of text which purpose is to give information. The context of this kind of text is to describe particular person, thing or animal. To describe the particular object, place, animal or thing by portraying its or her/his specific features to help readers to visualize what a person, an animal, a place or a thing is like. The descriptive text is usually in simple present tense. It is necessary for the teacher

to make teaching and learning writing descriptive text more interesting. In daily life we usually use descriptive to describe something. For example when the people want to visit a place and ask other people then the other people explain about the place by mentioning the characteristics of the place in detail so the people can imagine and know the place. It mainly describes a place.

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Writing descriptive text has some parts that should be master by the students before start to write a paragraph in descriptive text. The part of descriptive paragraph was divided in to three parts, they are; 1) Social Function to describe a particular person, place, or thing. Generic Structure consists of identification about the introduction of a person, place, animal or object that will be describe and description contains a description something such as animal, thing, place or person by describing its features, forms, colors, or anything related to what the writer describe. 3) Language Features consists of grammatical aspects of use simple present tense, focus on specific participant, using adjective, using simple present tense, and using action verbs.

Each student has different abilities in learning, especially in learning English in writing skills. In the process of learning English, writing is one of the activities to communicate an idea in text form, but most of the students have not been able to write well even in a simple paragraph.

SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam is one of the schools located in South Nias Regency which has used the freedom to learn curriculum. The implementation of the freedom to learn curriculum is expected to provide freedom for educators to create quality learning that suits students' needs and learning environment. In this research, the researcher chooses one of the class to be used as the research object, namely class XI-IPS Lasara which had learned about descriptive text.

By learning descriptive text in Senior High School, the students are expected to be able to identify meaning, social function, text structure, and linguistic elements in simple oral and written descriptive text about tourist attractions and historical buildings according to usage and explain the contents oral and written description tourism historical about place and buildings attention by paying to communication purposes.

Analyzing students' text is very important to do because it can help English teachers to find out the students' ability and difficulties in writing. To identify the students' abilities in writing skill, especially on the generic structure and language features of descriptive text, the researcher interest to analyze students' ability in writing descriptive text. The researcher proposed a research entitled "Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at the Eleventh Grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam".

Ability is the power or skill needed to do something, or the fact that someone is

able to do something (Cambridge Dictionary). The ability to use language is called language skill. In learning English there are four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are as productive skills.

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According Michael Ε, et to al,(1976:149-150): "Describing a place focuses on explaining a place's physical characteristics and the atmosphere there. In describing a place, there is no pattern for organizing phrases in a descriptive paragraph. It is not required to start with one region before moving on to another. The description must be structured in such a way that the reader can see the situation described".

Based on the background of the problem above, the research question of this research is formulated as "How is students' ability at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam in writing descriptive text?"

B. Research Method

This research used a descriptive qualitative method to reveal and described the object of research based on facts that appear or as they are. Anderson and Arsenault (2005:126) stated, "Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi methods to interpret, understand, explain, and bring meaning to them." In addition, another expert argues that qualitative research is conducted in

various fields, leading to the development of diverse data collection methods. These methods include qualitative interviewing, focus groups, participant observation, discourse and conversation analysis, and analysis of texts and documents (Walliman, 2011:131). Then, it can be concluded briefly that qualitative research is form of research analyze, describing, interpreted, explaining about phenomena in natural setting in order to discover something important to be a new knowledge.

The goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization, in everyday terms, of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals. It can be illustrated, that qualitative research is about research description. In this research, the researcher want to described the first year students at SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam ability in writing descriptive text. This research has one variable that is students' ability in writing descriptive text is made by the first year students at XI-IPS Lasara

In collecting data in this research, technique that researcher used is documentation. Documentation is every written material that is not prepared because of the request of the researcher. The documentation of this research is in the students' worksheet about descriptive text.

According to Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014:31-33), there are 3 activities in analyzing qualitative data: (1) Data Condensation. Refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying abstracting, and/or transforming tha data that appear in

the full corpus (body) of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, document and other empirical material. (2) Data Display. A display is an organized compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action. In this case, researcher displayed the data in a table form to make it easy for researcher in drawing conclusion. (3) Drawing and Verifying Conclusion. At this stage, from the start of data collection, the qualitative analyst interprets what things mean by noting patterns, explanations, causal flows, and propositions.

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C. Research Finding and Discussion

After collecting the data, the researcher reads and learns the descriptive text that made by the students. Then, the researcher analyzed the text based on writing assessment that stated by Reid. Lastly, the researcher scored students' works.

Based on the the results of the data analysis, it was found that the average of students' score is 70.11 and it is categorized into fair. The Minimum Criteria of Mastery Learning descriptive text in SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam at XI-IPS Lasara is 70. By learning descriptive text in Senior High School, the students are expected to be able to identify meaning, social function, text structure, and linguistic elements in simple oral and written descriptive text about tourist attractions and historical buildings by paying attention to communication purposes.

In general, there are some students still could not achieve the learning objectives well. From 26 students there are 15 students could achieve the Minimum Criteria of Mastery Learning and there are 11 students could not achieve it. It means that most of the students understand about how to write descriptive text. If we look in personally, there are 11 students who got 71-80 and it is classed as good, there are 13 students who got 61-70 and it is classed as fair, lastly there are 2 students who got a score of <60 and it is classed as poor.

In order to answer the research question "How is students' ability at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam in writing descriptive text", here the identifying as follow:

a. Content

Based on the results of the data in this study, it was found that from 26 students, there are 14 students who get a value of good to average, while there are 12 students who get a value of fair to poor. It means that more than half students are able to write coherent paragraphs and the details provided are related to the topic and only a few students have difficulty in the content category because they are less able to write coherent paragraphs and students are less able to write specified topic completely and the details provided are less related to the topic. Based on the results of these scores, this indicator is categorized as a "fair" criterion.

b. Organization

In the organizational category, it was found that from 26 students, there are 10

students who get a value of ecxellent to very good, there are 11 students who get a value of good to average and there are 5 students who get a value of fair to poor. It means that, 5 students here were not able to adequately describe the contens of each paragraph about sorake beach. There was incomplete identification and very few description that did not describe part of the sentence. It can be concluded that most of students wrote descriptive text completely with the generic structure (identification and description) but a few of students did not describe the topic more such as telling about it's characteristics, features, or etc.

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Here, the researcher analyzed whether the students wrote generic structure stages completely or not.

1. Identification.

Identification is a section of a descriptive composition that presents or introduces the characters that we want to describe in detail. It refers to the general information or description of the object/ subject that is being described. From 26 students, mostly they understand about identification paragraph in writing descriptive text. There is only 1 student still understand about identification paragraph in the descriptive text. Only one write identification without student introduce about the topic. In identification paragraph, students write "This beach is a hidden paradise by the ocean, decorated with soft white sand and seductive blue sea water" at the tittle "Sorake Beach". In identification paragraph about describing place, the students should begin their sentences by

introducing the location of the object that they want to describe. For example, "Sorake Beach is located in Luahagundre Maniamolo District, South Nias Regency, North Sumatera".

2. Description

Description is a section of descriptive composition that covers the description of the subject or object that we want to describe in detail. In this section, we must write our writing in detail by using adjectives that represent the object/subject that is described. From 26 students, there are 3 students still not understand about description in writing descriptive text. The students did not describe Sorake beach for specific such as telling the characteristic or the features of Sorake Beach. In students' worksheets, it was found that, there were 3 students' sheets without description paragraph. It means that, their text only about identification part. The students write "The beach is beautiful place to visit, one of the beaches in South Nias that is often visited by tourists is Sorake Beach. Sorake beach is a beach adjacent to Lagundri beach. Sorake beach Luahagundre located in Maniamolo Subdistrict, South Nias, North Sumatera". In description paragraph about describing place, the students should describe more about the characteristics of the place like Sorake beach. For example, "In my opinion, Sorake beach has a very beautiful and interesting view. This beach is one of the places where people can surf and this beach also surrounded by accomodation".

c. Vocabulary

The highest level of students' difficulty is in the vocabulary category. From 26 students, it was found that there are 5 students who get a value of good to average and there are 21 students who get a value of fair to poor. The "poor" criteria obtained indicate the level of students' difficulty is quite high compared to other assesment indicators. It is evident from 26 students and this is because students have difficulty in choosing the right words in sentences supported by lack of vocabulary mastery so that they do not know how to choose the right words to make sentences in writing descriptive texts. Based on the results of these scores, this indicator is categorized as a "fair" criterion.

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d. Language use

In the grammar category, many students have difficulty in writing descriptive text. From 26 students, it was found that there are 2 students who get a value of good to average and there are 24 students who get a value of fair to poor. It can be seen that quite a lot of students have difficulties in grammar indicators, this is evidenced by discovery of 24 students getting the lowest score. This is because students have less vocabulary so it makes them felt difficult to arrange the word become a good sentence. Based on the results of these scores, this indicator is categorized as a "fair" criterion.

e. Mechanics

In the mechanical category, it was found that from 26 students, there are 24 students who get a value of excellent to very good and there are 2 students who get a value of fair to poor. It means that, most of students understand about the use of the graphic conventions of the language. The problem here is sometimes students did not master conventions, dominated by spelling errors, punctuation marks and the use of capital letters. Based on the results of these scores, this indicator is categorized as a "good" criterion.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that eleventh grade students at XI-IPS Lasara of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam are able to write descriptive text based on the aspect assessed in writing (content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics). But the students' strengths are in organization mechanics while, category and the weaknesses students' are in content, vocabulary and language use category. It means that, the English teacher should improve the students' comprehension in vocabulary and grammar aspect to improve their writing skill spesifically in writing descriptive text about describing place.

In this section, the researcher describes the discussion of analysis students' ability in writing descriptive text. Based on the theory stated in the background, analyzing students' text is very important to do because it can help English teachers to find out the students' ability and difficulty in writing.

In this research, the researcher asked the students to write descriptive text and collected their worksheets as the instrument in this research. The procedure of this instrument is students write the text with a topic descriptive describing place (Sorake Beach) and the student used this topic as the title. In identification, student only can write one paragraph. Because in general, there is only one identification paragraph and description paragraph, student can write one or more paragraph. It means that, description paragraph can more than one. There are some obstacles that researcher find when analyze students' worksheets. Some of students write the text without write the title first. Another thing is one students write identification without introduce the topic that she/he wants to describe. The other thing is the students only write identification without description part. It means that they did not explain more about the characteristics of the object that they write in their paper. Lastly, some students also still write their text by using simple past tense form.

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D. Conclusion and Suggestion

After the researcher analyzed the data in chapter IV the researcher conclude how is students' ability in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam:

1. The prominent difficulty in writing descriptive text research on students is found in the vocabulary and grammar component. Students tend to find difficult to choose the right words in sentences. Supported by finding inappropriate word choices that change the meaning of a sentence so that it does not form a coherent

paragraph and the lack of vocabulary mastery in students. In the grammar component, more than half students had difficulty in forming the correct sentence structure. It is proven by finding of several tense errors and the placement of sentence structures with the wrong choice of words to form different meanings.

2. The major strengths found in this study are in the organization and mechanics component. This is evidenced by the discovery of students' score are classed as good in terms of organization and mechanics. Many students understand that aspects and they got a good score in their sheets.

Hopefully from this research, the teacher can use some pictures by using infocus as media of learning to teach descriptive text, so the students can build their idea related to the topic in writing descriptive text. Next, the teacher should give motivation to the students to improve their vocabulary knowledge. Teacher should believe that only practice can make students perfect.

The students can use this study as a reflection for self-correct and understand each other's inadequacies and motivate themselve to overcome the difficulties experienced. Researcher hopes that students find a way out of the difficulties they face.

To researchers, researchers can look for the causes of these difficulties that have been disclosed in this study. So the nature of the research is complete.

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