AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT USING SINGLE PICTURE AT SMAN 2 SUNGAI LIMAU

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe the ability of the first grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in writing descriptive text using single picture. The design of this research was descriptive in nature. The population was the first grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau. The researcher used cluster random sampling technique to take the sample. The total number of sample members was 223 students. The instrument was writing test by using single picture. The result of the research showed that the ability of the first grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in writing a Descriptive text was moderate (65.62%). In specific, their ability in expressing the idea was moderate (59.37%), their ability in using organization was moderate (62.5%), their ability in applying language features was moderate (59.37%), their ability in using vocabulary was moderate (71.87%), and their ability in applying mechanics was moderate (100%). Hence, the students are expected to learn much harder in writing. Since the result of the study was moderate, the researcher also suggests the English teachers to give more knowledge, explanation, practice in order to help students to improve their ability to write descriptive text. The students should pay attention to the ideas, organization, using appropriate vocabulary, applying language features, and applying mechanics. They should do a lot of practices and exercises in order to improve their ability in writing descriptive text.

Key words: ability, descriptive text, writing, single picture.

Introduction

English has become a major language in the world. It has become the main language that is used by the people in the most part of the countries. Bannaqeeb (2012:2) says that English has become a basic instrument of survival and serves as bridge in connecting people in different cultures and nation nowadays. It is used for communication among the nations.

Some of the part of the countries have considered English as their second language beside their main language such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, and etc. Moreover, it becomes so important in education in every

country that considers English as foreign language. According to Aayushman (2011: 1), English is dominant that is used in the field of education by schools, universities and also institutes today. In Indonesia for example, English has become a compulsory subject in any levels of education. It is started to be learnt from junior high school, senior high school, and even in university. In short, by learning English, students can master all of the skills that they need.

In learning English, the students must consider the four skills that should be mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and Speaking are categorized as receptive skills, while Reading and Writing are categorized as productive skills.

Writing is one of important skill that should be mastered by students (Yavuz Erkan, 2004:165). This skill is a form of what the students have in their mind. By writing, they can express their ideas, imagination, thoughts, feelings and even their experiences into written form. Writing needs a good skill that involves knowledge, imagination, creativity and also critical thinking. In order to fulfill the good writing, the students must apply the stages and the technical of writing start from the first stage to the last stage. In other words, writing needs complex process when the writer wants to make the product of writing.

Related to the writing skill, the students cannot ignore the written form. Written form is very important especially in learning. For example, all subjects at school are presented in written form. Writing, particularly academic writing is not easy. It takes study and practices to develop this skill. For both native speakers and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process not a product (Oshima & Hogue, 2006: 3). It means that writing has important role in learning English.

In learning English, students should know the kinds of the text. There are thirteen kinds of the text that should be learned by senior high school students. One of them is descriptive text. It is a kind of text that is to describe about person, places and things. In descriptive text, students should describe something that she or he has ever known. Besides, they should know a lot of information about the objects that they want to describe in written form. That is the fact, however, that they still have problem to describe the object in their writing. Based on the researcher's interview with the English teacher of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau, the students still cannot write well. Their writing is still mess up. It can be proved by their low

grades on the exercises given by teacher in writing exercise. Besides, they prefer to find the instant way by searching in the internet rather than they write it by their own words. They still do not know what they are going to write because there is no exact or clear illustration about object that they want to describe.

In order to make students understand about what they are going to write, picture is an appropriate media that is used by the teacher in teaching writing descriptive text. According to Rahmi (2006:21), pictures are appropriate media for increasing students effort in studying English. Pictures are manifestation of real things, also picture is one media that is easy to find. There are many types of picture. In this research, the researcher used single picture because it can help the students to generate their ideas about the object that they want to describe. They can develop and explore what comes from their mind through single picture. Single picture can guide the students to remind the details about person, places, things, and also events. They need a kind of media such as single picture that can help them to develop their ideas in order to write descriptive text well.

Based on the reason above, the researcher was interested in conducting research on the first grade students' ability in writing descriptive text by using single picture at SMAN 2 Sungai Limau.

In general, the purpose of this research is to describe the first grade students' ability in writing descriptive text using single picture at SMAN 2 Sungai Limau. The specific, purposes of this research were as follows:

1. To describe the first grade students' ability of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in expressing the idea in writing descriptive text by using single picture.
2. To describe the first students' ability of SMAN2 Sungai Limau in using organization in writing descriptive text by using single picture.
3. To describe the first grade students' ability of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in using appropriate vocabulary in writing descriptive text by using single picture.
4. To describe the first grade students' ability of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in applying language features of descriptive text by using single picture.
5. To describe the first grade students' ability of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in applying mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) in writing descriptive text by using single picture.

Research Method

The researcher used descriptive design in this research. The aim of using this design was to describe the first grade students' ability in writing descriptive text by using single picture at SMAN 2 Sungai Limau. Gay (1987:189) states that descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

Gay (1987:102) says that population is the group to which the researcher would like the results of a study to be generalized. The population of this research was the first grade students of SMAN 2 Sungai Limau. The distribution of population members was 223 students.

It was not possible to research the whole of students because the total of population was quite large. The researcher took a sample for her research. Gay (1987:101) states that sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they are selected. In order to select the sample, the researcher chose cluster random sampling. Cluster random sampling was used because all of the students were treated similarly in learning English subject. Whereas, they had the same books and materials that were given by their English teacher.

For descriptive research, it is common to sample 10% to 20% of the population (Gay, *et. al*, 2006:110). The researcher took 14.34 % of the population as the sample. The total of the population was 7 classes consisted 223 students. The researcher took 1 class of the population to be a sample of the research. In order to select the sample of the research, the researcher wrote the name of each of the class in a small piece of paper and after that the small piece of paper was rolle up one by one. Then, the rolled up papers of the classses were put into a box. Next, they were mixed up by turns. Finally, X_3 was choosen as the sample of the research.

The instrument used to collect the data in this research was writing test by using single picture. The researcher gave four single pictures to the students and they were asked to choose one of the single pictures given. The researcher asked the students to write descriptive text based on the singles pictures that was chosen by the students and then developed it at least in two paragraphs (identification consisted of at least three sentences and for description consisted of at least five sentences) in 60 minutes.

There were four single pictures provided by the researcher:

1. Gandoria Beach

2. Bukittinggi

3. My School

4. My Classroom

In order to get a good test, a test should be valid and reliable. A good test can be said valid if it measures what is supposed to be measured (Gay, 1987:128). In order to see the test is valid or not, the researcher used content validity. According to Arikunto (2009 :67), in getting a valid test, it must be relevant with the materials taught by the teacher to the students. It means that a test should be constructed based on the curriculum, syllabus and teaching materials.

A test also should have a reliability. Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures (Gay, 1987:135). To find the reliability of the test itself, inter rater technique was used by the researcher in order to avoid the subjectivity that can happen in scoring the test. It meant that the researcher used two scores to analyze the writing test. The

researcher was as the first scorer and the second scorer was Rika Rahmadani. The researcher chose her as the second scorer because she got grade A in writing subject. In order to see the correlation coefficient of the two scores, the researcher used The Pearson Product Moment formula (Arikunto, 2009: 78) as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\}\{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Finally, the researcher used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's idea (2009: 75):

0.80 – 0.1	: Very high
0.60 – 0.80	: High
0.40 – 0.60	: Enough
0.20 – 0.40	: Low
0.00 - 0.20	: Very low

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the coefficient of correlation of the test was .94 (see Appendix 4). It was categorized as high correlation, therefore, this test is reliable and can be used as intstrument for this study.

To find out the first grade students' ability in writing descriptive text using single picture at SMAN 2 Sungai Limau, the researcher collected the data by doing the following steps:

1. The researcher gave the writing test of descriptive text to the students.
2. The researcher copied all of the answer sheets. The original one was for the first scorer and the other one was for the second scorer.
3. The criteria of writing score was given to both scorers.
4. The first and the second scorer read the students's writing one by one.
5. The first and the second scorer gave score that is based on the criteria of scoring writing table that was adapted from Heaton (1990: 146) and the possible the highest score is 100 and the possible the lowest score is 35.

Data of this research were students' scores in writing descriptive text by using single picture. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the following procedures.

1) Presenting the raw scores
2) Calculating Mean (M) and Standar Deviation (SD)
3) Classifying the students' ability into high, moderate, low ability by using the categories (Arikunto, 2001: 264):

4) Calculating the percentage of the students who get high, moderate, and low ability by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \text{X } 100 \text{ \%}$$

5). Finally, the researcher drew the conclusion and suggestion

Findings and Discussions

a. Findings

The result of data showed that the highest score based on the answer sheet of the students was 88.5 and the lowest score was 36.5. Then, the researcher calculated the mean and standard deviation. The researcher got that the mean was 62.97 and standard deviation was 12.23. The result of analysis showed that students' ability to write descriptive text by using single picture was moderate. It can be seen that 6 students (18.75 %) had high ability, 21 students (65.62 %) had moderate ability and 5 students (15.62) had low ability. The result could be seen in the Table below.

TThe Classification of Students' Ability to Write Descriptive Text Using Single Picture

Quality	Number of Students	The Percentage of the Students

		Ability
High	6	18.75 %
Moderate	21	65.62 %
Low	5	15.62%
Total	**32**	**100%**

Discussions

1) **Students' Ability in Expressing The Idea**

Another finding of this research was the ability of most students in expressing the idea was moderate. It was indicated that 59.37 % students were in moderate level. It means that the students still did not understand how to express the idea in writing descriptive by using single picture well. From the example, the students still could not express and develop their ideas in the text. They only wrote little information about the place that was chosen by the students.

2) **Students' Ability in Using Organization**

Based on the finding, the students' ability in using organization was moderate. It was indicated by number of students (62.5 %) whose ability in moderate category. It

means that the students still did not understand how to use organization in writing descriptive well. From the example, the writing of the students still did not have coherence which is they did not develop about the similar ideas or objects. They chose the object about my school but in their writing exercise did not classify the similar ideas or objects.

3) Students' Ability in Applying the Language Features

Based on the finding, the students' ability in applying language features was moderate. It was indicated that 59.37 % number of students were in moderate level. It means that they still did not understand how to apply the language features in writing descriptive text by using single picture. From the example, the students had mistake to use relating verbs between have and has.

4) Students' Ability in Using Vocabulary

In using vocabulary, the students' ability was moderate. It was indicated that 71.87 % number of students were in moderate level. The fact, many students did not understand how to use appropriate vocabulary in writing descriptive text.

From the example, the use of "there" and "cool" in There is so cool. In this sentence, the appropriate words for "there" is changed to "the weather" and the appropriate word for "cool" is " cold".

5) Students' Ability in Applying Mechanics

The Students' ability in applying mechanics was moderate. It was indicated that 100 % number of students were in moderate level. It means that the students still did not understood how to apply mechanics well in writing descriptive text. The students did not understand how to use mechanics correctly. They did not use capital letter in the beginning of the sentence, and the name of the location.

Conclusions

From the finding and discussion, it can be concluded that the ability of the fisrt grade students at SMAN 2 Sungai Limau in writing descriptive text by using single picture was moderate. This conclusion was indicated by the fact that there were 6 students (18.75 %) had high ability, 21 students (65.62 %) had moderate ability and 5 students (15.62) had low ability. In detail the ability as follow:

1. The ability of the first grade students at SMA N 2 Sungai Limau in expressing

the idea was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 19 out of 32 sstudents (59.37 %) had moderate ability.

2. The ability of the first grade students at SMA N 2 Sungai Limau in using organization was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 20 out of 32 students (62.5 %) had moderate ability.

3. The ability of the first grade students at SMA N 2 Sungai Limau in applying language features was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 19 out of 32 students (59.37 %) had moderate ability.

4. The ability of the first grade students at SMA N 2 Sungai Limau in using vocabulary (appropriate word) was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 23 out of 32 students (71.87 %) had moderate ability.

5. The ability of the first grade students at SMA N 2 Sungai Limau in applying mechanic was moderate. It was proved by the fact that 32 out of 32 students (100 %) had moderate ability.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher gives suggestions as follows:

1. For the English teachers, they are suggested to improve the way how their teaching in learning process and give more explanation and more exercises in writing a descriptive text.

2. For the students, they are expected to learn more about descriptive text and do some exercises to improve their ability. They should pay attention about explanation of the teacher about descriptive text.

3. The researcher suggests to the next researcher to use this research as a reference to expand the next research or conduct other research.

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