

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING AN EXPLANATION TEXT AT SMAN 1 PARIAMAN

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe the second grade students' ability in writing an explanation text at SMAN 1 Pariaman. The design of this research was descriptive. The number of population members of this research was 151 students. They were divided into four classes. The size of the sample was 75 students. The researcher used stratified cluster random sampling technique to get representative sample. The instrumentation used to collect the data was writing test. In this test, the researcher gave some topics to be written by students about explanation text. The reliability index of this test was .84. This study found in general that the second grade students' ability of SMAN 1 Pariaman in writing an explanation text was moderate (70.67%). In specific, their ability in writing general statement was moderate (65.33%), their ability in writing a sequenced explanation was moderate (65.33%), their ability in writing closing was moderate (68%), their ability in using the correct form of grammatical structure was moderate (72%), their ability in using appropriate vocabulary was moderate (68%), and their ability in using the correct mechanics was moderate (65.33%). The findings of the research lead the researcher to conclude that the ability of the second grade students at SMAN 1 Pariaman was moderate. Based on the conclusion, the researcher gives suggestion to the teachers and the students. The researcher suggests the teachers to give more explanation and give more exercises in order to help the students to improve their ability in writing an explanation text. She also suggests the students to learn more about explanation text and do more practices in writing an explanation text.

Key words: writing, explanation text.

Introduction

Writing is one of the four language skills that should be mastered by the students. Writing is a skill of expressing the idea through written form. Writing is not an easy skill, especially academic writing. Academic writing is the kind of writing used

in high school and college classes (Oshima, 2007: 3). Academic writing is formal writing. In academic writing, the students should not use contractions, abbreviation, and slang.

According to Heasley and Lyons (2006: 13), there are some stages in writing; prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Choosing a topic and organizing idea of a topic should be done in prewriting. Then, write a rough draft. After that, it is revised the rough draft for content and organization. Then, rewrite the rough draft that has been revised.

Furthermore, writing is also complex activity that requires students to have ability such as mastering vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. According to Raimes in Ahmed and Karunakaran (2013: 104), content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and the writers' process are the components of writing.

In learning English at senior high school, the students learn about writing a text. There are several kinds of texts that should be known by the students, and one of them is explanation text. Explanation text is a text that explains the processes involved in the formation or working natural or socio-cultural phenomenon happen. The social function of explanation text is to explain why and how certain phenomenon are formed or happen. The generic structures of explanation text are general statement, a sequenced explanation and closing. The language features that are used in explanation text are using simple present

tense, action verbs, passive voice, and focusing on generic, non-human participants, or things. Therefore, the students should explain the processes of how and why natural or socio-cultural phenomenon happens that they know. They should have much information about how and why natural or socio-cultural phenomenon happens.

Based on the researcher's interview (informal interview) with some students and the English teacher at SMAN 1 Pariaman, it was found that many students had problems in writing an explanation text well. They did not have motivation in writing an explanation text because they lack of vocabularies, they lack of using the correct mechanics, and they had less reading activity about explanation text.

Writing is a skill of expressing ideas, thought, feeling, and knowledge through written form. The students should convey their ideas in English, write and develop the ideas to produce a good writing.

At senior high school, there are some texts that have been learned such as descriptive, narrative, recount, explanation text, and hortatory exposition. One of them is explanation text that has been learned by the second grade students. Explanation text

is a text that explains the processes involved in the formation or working of natural or socio-cultural phenomenon happen. The generic structures of explanation text are general statement, a sequenced explanation, and closing. It has social function; to explain how and why the processes of natural or socio-cultural phenomenon happen. Natural phenomenon is phenomenon that happens in nature. Meanwhile, socio-cultural phenomenon is phenomenon that has link with human society and environment. The language features of explanation text are focusing on generic, non-human participants, or things, using simple present tense, action verbs and sometimes using of passive voice.

In general, the purpose of this research was to describe the second grade students' ability in writing an explanation text. The specific purposes of this research were as follows:

1. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to write general statement in writing an explanation text.
2. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to write a sequenced explanation in writing an explanation text.

3. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to write closing in writing an explanation text.
4. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to use the correct form of grammatical structure in writing an explanation text.
5. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to use appropriate vocabulary in writing an explanation text.
6. To describe the ability of the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman to use the correct mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) in writing an explanation text.

Research Method

This research was a descriptive research. According to Gay (1987:189), descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This research was designed to describe and analyze the second grade students' ability in writing an explanation text at SMAN 1 Pariaman. Gay (1987:102) states that population is a group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he

would like the result of the study to be generalized. The population of this research was the second grade students of SMAN 1 Pariaman. Total number of population members was 151 students who were divided into two majoring; exact science class and social class. Because the members of population were quite large, the researcher took a sample of students for her research. Sampling is the process of selecting a number of populations for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 1987: 101). Sampling is the process of selecting sample. Sample is a part of the population. She also says that a good sample is representative of the population from which it is selected. She also says that the minimum sample of the descriptive is 10% of the population. It means that more than 10% is better.

In this research, the researcher used stratified cluster random sampling. Gay (1987: 107) states that the stratified cluster random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that identified strata in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportion that they exist in population. The researcher used stratified cluster random sampling because the students were divided into two strata; exact

science and social class. Besides that, the researcher chose stratified cluster random sampling because they had the same syllabus, teaching materials and time allocation.

In selecting the sample, the researcher wrote the name of each class from the exact science and social classes in a small piece of paper and put them into two different boxes. Then the researcher mixed them, she took out one piece of each box and the classes that chosen be the sample of this research. In this study, the chosen classes were XI MIA A and XI IIS C. The number of the sample was 75 students from both classes.

The instrument of this research was writing test. Writing test was used as an instrument to collect data. The researcher asked the students to write explanation text by choosing one of the given topics. The topics of the writing test were: how earthquakes happen, life cycle of butterfly, life cycle of frog, and their own topic. The researcher explained about what the students have to do and asked them whether they have understood or not.

In giving a good test, the test should be valid and reliable. For the validity of a test, the researcher used the content validity.

It is supported by Gay (1987: 129) who says that content validity is the degree to which a test measures an intended content area. To have valid test, the researcher constructed a test based on material of the subjects which is stated in syllabus.

Gay (1987: 135) states that reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures. For the reliability of the test, the researcher used inter-rater technique. In inter-rater technique, there were two scorers to assess the students' writing. In this research, the researcher was the first scorer and the second scorer was Rahmadani, S.Pd. The researcher chose her because she has good ability in writing and had A grade in writing subject. The use of two scorers was needed to minimize the subjectivity.

To find out the reliability index of the test, the researcher calculated coefficient correlation between scores given by the first scorer and the second scorer by using the Pearson Product Moment Formula as suggested by Arikunto (2012: 87) as follows:

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

Then the researcher used the degree of coefficient correlation based on Arikunto's idea (2012: 89):

.81 – 1.00 = very high

.61 – .80 = high

.41 – .60 = moderate

.21 – .40 = low

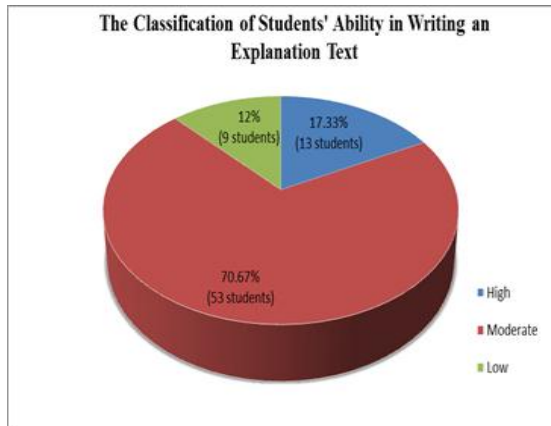
.00 – .20 = very low

Based on the result of analysis data, it was found coefficient correlation of the test was .84. It was categorized as very high correlation; therefore, this test is reliable and can be used as instrument for this study.

Findings

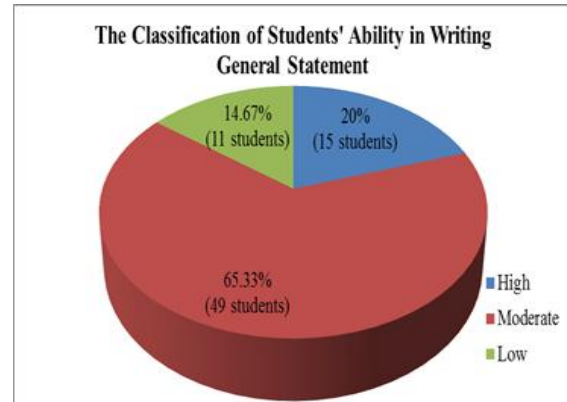
1. Students' Ability in Writing an Explanation Text

The results of data analysis showed that the highest score was 30 and the lowest score was 11. Then, the researcher calculated mean and standard Deviation. The mean of students' score in writing an explanation text was 20.09 and standard deviation was 4.07. The results of data analysis also showed that 13 students (17.33%) had high ability, 53 students (70.67%) had moderate ability, and 9 students (12%) had low ability.



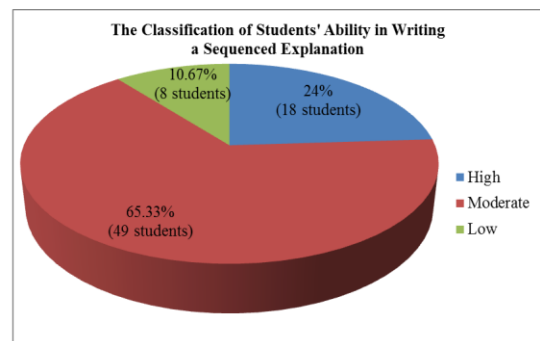
2. Students' Ability in Writing General Statement

In this part, the researcher presents the students' ability in writing general statement of explanation text. The results of data analysis demonstrated that the highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1. After that, the researcher calculated mean and standard deviation. The result of the calculation was that Mean was 3.29 and Standard Deviation was 1.02. The result of the calculation was that Mean was 3.29 and Standard Deviation was 1.02. The results of data analysis showed that 15 students (20%) had high ability, 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability, and 11 students (14.67%) had low ability.



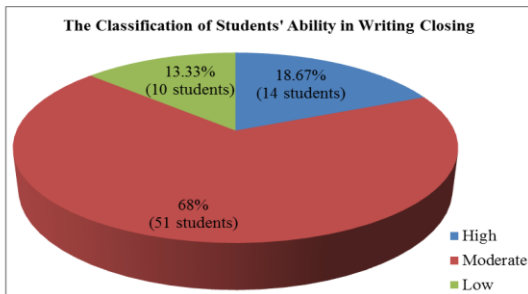
3. Students' Ability in Writing a Sequenced Explanation

The result of data analysis reveals that the highest score was 5 and the lowest was 1. Then, the researcher calculated Mean and Standard Deviation. The result of the calculation demonstrated that Mean was 3.69 and Standard Deviation was 0.95. The researcher found that 18 students (24%) had high ability, 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability, and 8 students (10.67%) had low ability.



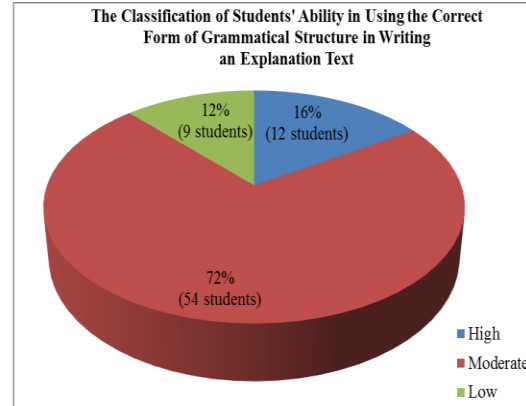
4. Students' Ability in Writing Closing

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that the highest score was 5 and the lowest was 1. It also revealed that Mean was 3.41 and Standard Deviation was 0.88. The result showed that 14 students (18.67%) had high ability, 51 students (68%) had moderate ability, and 10 students (13.33%) had low ability.



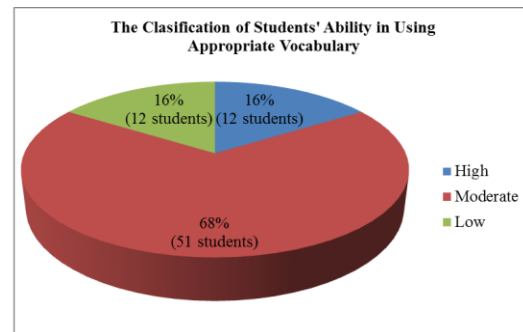
5. Students' Ability in Using the Correct Form of Grammatical Structure in Writing an Explanation Text

The results showed that the highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.5. Then, the researcher calculated Mean and Standard Deviation. The result of Mean was 3.34 and Standard Deviation was 0.79. The result showed that 12 students (16%) had high ability, 54 students (72%) had moderate ability, and 9 students (12%) had low ability.



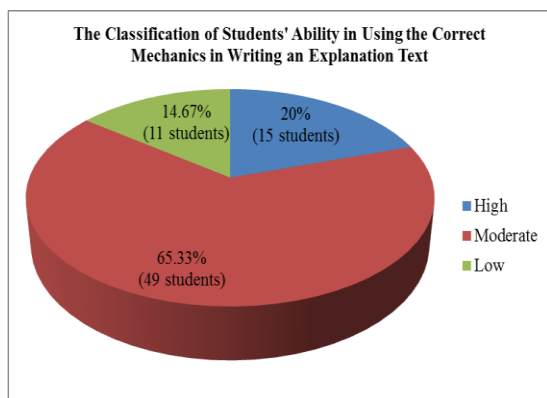
6. Students' Ability in Using Appropriate Vocabulary in Writing an Explanation Text

The results showed that the highest score was 5 and the lowest was 1.5. After that, the researcher calculated Mean and Standard Deviation. The result of Mean was 3.31 and Standard Deviation was 0.92. The result showed that 12 students (16%) had high ability, 51 students (68%) had moderate ability, and 12 students (16%) had low ability.



7. Students' Ability in Using the Correct Mechanics in Writing an Explanation Text

The results showed that the highest score was 5 and the lowest score was 1.5. Then, the researcher calculated Mean and Standard Deviation. The result of Mean was 3.08 and Standard Deviation was 0.73. The result showed that 15 students (20%) had high ability, 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability, and 11 students (14.67%) had low ability.



Discussions

1. Students' Ability in Writing an Explanation Text

As already discussed before, the students' ability in writing an explanation text was moderate (70.67 %). Based on the students' answer sheet about explanation text, most of students could not give clear ideas in writing general statement, a

sequenced explanation, and also closing that should be written briefly. In using grammatical structure, the students made mistakes in using simple present tense, passive voice and conjunction. The students used present continuous tense and simple past tense. Then, they used passive voice without using past participle verb. Past participle verb is a verb form that shows an action in the past. The example is *they are called by frogspawn*. In using appropriate vocabulary, the students lacked of vocabulary and made mistakes in choosing of words. In using the correct mechanics, the students made many errors in punctuation, capitalization and spelling.

2. Students' Ability in Writing General Statement

As already discussed previously, this study found that 65.33 % of students had moderate ability in writing general statement. It was indicated by fact that the students could not give a clear idea in writing general statement. Sometimes, it made the readers confused to comprehend what general statement about.

3. Students' Ability in Writing a Sequenced Explanation

The next finding of this study was that the second grade students' ability in writing a sequenced explanation was moderate (65.33%). As a matter of fact, most of students still got problems in writing a sequenced explanation. This is one of example which the student gave a confused idea in writing a sequenced explanation. *Firstly, a adult frog lays lats of ting eggs. They are called frogs. Spawn frogs spwan is layed in lots of little grops. Frog spawn looks like adear white egg with a black dot in the middle home.*

From the example above, the student wrote a sequenced explanation that make the reader confused. It should be *Firstly, an adult frog lays a lot of tiny eggs. They are called frogspawn. The color of frogspawn is white with a black dot in the middle home. After that, the frogspawn changes to be a tadpole. Then, it becomes tadpole with legs. A couple of weeks, it changes to be young frog. Finally, young frog becomes adult frog that can jump everywhere.*

4. Students' Ability in Writing Closing

Another finding of this research was that the second grade students' ability in writing closing of explanation text was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that

68% of students still got problems in writing closing. A lot of students did not give a clear concluding statement that can tie up the explanation briefly. This is an example of closing of explanation text written by student: *Then a beautiful, flying adult emerges. This adult will continue the cycle.*

From the example above, the student wrote closing briefly, but she did not write closing that can tie up the explanation. It should be *So, the life cycle of butterfly begins from eggs. Then, it changes to be larva. After that, larva becomes a pupa. Finally a pupa becomes a beautiful butterfly.*

5. Students' Ability in Using the Correct Form of Grammatical Structure

Another finding of this study that ability of students in using the correct form of grammatical structure (72%) was moderate. It means that most of the students still had problems in using the correct form of grammatical structure in writing explanation text. In writing explanation text, the students must use simple present tense. Yet, the students still used the other tenses and made mistakes in using passive voice and conjunction.

The followings are some examples of mistakes that students made:

- Before became beautiful butterfly, they having passing a difficult time.

(Became—→ becoming, they —→ it, have passing —→ have passed)

It should be Before becoming a beautiful butterfly, it has passed a difficult time.

- He have a legs and he changes to be is young frog.

(have —→ has, to be is young frog —→ to be young frog)

It should be He has legs and he changes to be young frog.

- After that, the larva will be protect in some place.

(will be protect—→ will be protected)

It should be After that, the larva will be protected in some places.

6. Students' Ability in Using Appropriate Vocabulary

The next finding of this study was that the ability of students in using appropriate vocabulary (68%) was moderate and 16% of the students had low ability. Based on the answer sheet, most students still got problems in using appropriate words. Several examples of inappropriate vocabulary that students write:

- 1) *Every time in the river, ricevield and some place. There a water and for all, so we find some animal.*

(it should be every time in the river, ricefield and some places, we can find frogs).

- 2) *They go though four different life stages.*

(it should be they go through four different life stages in life cycle of butterfly).

7. Students' Ability in Using the Correct Mechanics

As already discussed before, this study also found that most students (65.33%) had moderate ability and 14.67% students had low ability in using the correct mechanics. It was indicated by the fact that many students still made errors in using the correct mechanics. The followings are some examples of mistakes that students did in using the correct mechanics in writing explanation text.

Examples:

- Earthquake is horrible phenomena, earthquake can damage building especially the building from brick stone.

(After the word phenomena, should add the full stop (.) and after the word building, should add comma (,)).

- Earthquekes is one of the most destroying natural disasters.
(the error spelling of *earthquekes*, should be *earthquakes*)
- the common name is caterpillar.
(*the* should be *The*, because *The* is beginning word of sentence).

Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher had some conclusions as the following:

In general, the students' ability in writing an explanation text was moderate. This conclusion was indicated by the fact that there were 53 students (70.67%) who had moderate ability. The students' ability in writing general statement was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability. The students' ability in writing a sequenced explanation was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability. The students' ability in writing closing was moderate. This conclusion was indicated by the fact that 51 students (68%) had moderate ability. The

students' ability in using the correct form of grammatical structure was moderate; this conclusion was indicated by the fact that 54 students (72%) had moderate ability. The students' ability in applying appropriate vocabulary was moderate. It was indicated by the fact that 51 students (68%) had moderate ability. The students' ability in using the correct mechanics was moderate. This conclusion was indicated by the facts that 49 students (65.33%) had moderate ability.

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