



ANALYTIC ASSESSMENT ON STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

(The Case at the Second Semester Students of English Education Department,
Universitas Pancasakti Tegal in the Academic Year 2018/2019)

¹ **Sumartono**

¹ Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,
FKIP - Universitas Pancasakti Tegal

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan mahasiswa bahasa Inggris Universitas Pancasakti Tegal semester kedua tahun akademik 2018/2019, ditinjau dari penilaian analitik dari O'Malley dan Pierce yang meliputi *composing, style, sentence formation, usage, dan mechanics*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif-kualitatif. Data penelitian berasal dari 15 teks deskriptif yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada 33.4% dikategorikan bagus, 40% cukup, dan 26.6% kurang bagus. Dari nilai rata-rata mereka diperoleh nilai 65 dan dikategorikan cukup. Diantara komponen-komponen dalam penilaian, diperoleh hasil sebagai berikut: *composing* 71.6 (bagus), *style* 66.2 (cukup), *sentence formation* 60 (cukup), *usage* 55.7 (cukup), dan *mechanics* 55 (kurang bagus). Dalam mengembangkan teks, mereka sudah menerapkan tahapan yang benar (generic structure) yang meliputi *identification* dan *descriptions*. Dari hasil penelitian, penulis menyarankan tentang pentingnya meningkatkan latihan menulis teks, khususnya *mechanics* yang merupakan komponen terlemah mereka dalam menulis teks deskriptif.

Kata Kunci: *teks deskriptif, penilaian analitik.*

Abstract

This study is aimed at describing students' ability in writing descriptive texts viewed from analytic assessment presented by O'Malley and Pierce, involving composing, style, sentence formation, usage and mechanics. The study was conducted by applying a descriptive quantitative-qualitative method. The data were taken from 15 descriptive texts made by the second semester students of English Department, Pancasakti University Tegal 2018/2019. The result of the study shows that there are 33.4% of the students are "good", 40% of the students are "fair", and 26.6% of the students are "bad". The students mean score is 65 (fair), and the scores of each components are as follows: composing is 71.6, style is 66.2, sentence formation is 60, usage is 55.7, and mechanics is 55. The result also shows that the texts are developed through correct generic structure involving identification and descriptions. The writer suggested that the students need to study harder and practice more frequently to increase their writing ability, specifically in mechanics as their weakness in writing.

Key words : *Descriptive Study, Analytic assessment, composing, style, usage*

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□ Alamat korespondensi:

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP UPS Tegal, Jl. Halmahera Km 1.
Tegal. Kode pos 52121

Smart.onpbi@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

As one of the language skills, the coverage of writing is regarded as the most complex one compared with the other three language skills. Teaching writing in senior high school is aimed at giving training for students in expressing ideas in short functional written text and simple essay in the form of descriptive, narrative, recount, procedure, news items, spoof, report, exposition, explanation and review in daily life context. It concerns with how to make good and correct sentences and construct them into a paragraph. It involves several components, such as: vocabulary items, grammatical rules, the organization of content, etc. Briefly, writing process needs a very complicated skill in combining numbers of elements which are never fully achieved and understood by students, even sometimes in their native language. Perhaps, due to this reason, most English teachers tend to ignore explaining the material profoundly and they do not give sufficient training for their students about how to make a good writing in their teaching and learning process.

As one of the text types that students should master, descriptive text has several characteristics which are different from other types of text. The characteristics involve the social function, generic structure, and lexicogrammatical feature. It is very important for students to understand these characteristics, because without sufficient knowledge about these characteristics, they have problems in identifying the types of text, moreover when they have to make a written text in a certain type of text. Besides, the correct use of grammatical rules is also required in producing a good descriptive text. Most students tend to ignore this component in delivering their ideas, moreover in spoken language. It is probably due to the assumption that the most important thing that people should do in delivering their ideas is that their language is understandable regardless of whether or not their language is grammatically correct. The grammatical mistakes which are frequently made by students, specifically in writing descriptive text are deeply regrettable considering that this language element has already been taught since they were in Junior High School and it is deepened in Senior High School. Ironically the mistakes still frequently appear in university level, although in this level the grammatical rules are intensively taught in separate subjects (Structure 1-4). This kind of language skill seems to be the most complicated one comparing with some other ones, because to produce a good writing, a writer is demanded to consider not only grammatical features but also some other writing components, such as, organization, content, mechanics and style and quality of expression as well. In fact, the students writing proficiency is still far from our expectation.

The condition above also occurs at the early semester of English Education Department Students of Universitas Pancasakti Tegal. According to the academic record of writing, their writing achievement in the first semester (Writing 1) is not good enough. According to the data, in Writing 1, from the whole number of the students, there are only 9% of students who got "A", 26% of students who got "B" and 63% of students who got "C", and the rest 2% got "D", moreover, according to the lecturer who handled the subject, among those who got grade "C", some of them got the grade after getting a further guidance and taking a remedial test given by the lecturer. Meanwhile, those who got "D" are recommended to retake the subject in the following semester, because they still failed although they had gotten a further guidance and taken a remedial test.

It is realized that the condition above is also probably caused by the students' level of intelligence. Most of students in this university are those who failed in an entrance test to some outstanding state universities. Besides, they are not graduates of some favorite Senior High Schools. As the result, the students are still confused and have quite serious problems in producing English writing, especially in writing descriptive text which is good at composing (organization), style, sentence formation, usage and in applying sets of the mechanics of writing. In fact, the five

items above are quite required in producing a piece of writing. These phenomena raise the writers' enthusiasm to do a research entitled "Analytic assessment on Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text. (The Case of the second Year Students of English Education Department, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal In The Academic Year 20018/2019) in order to get a clear vision of answering the problems.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Writing is an activity for communication. It means, we all consider that writing is an instrument to record ideas, or event, because with writing, someone can tell their opinion, behaviour, and feeling to others in written form. In addition, it can be also used to convey information.

A realistic attitude about writing must build on the idea that writing is a skill. It is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking; and, like any skill, it can be learned. In fact, writing is not an automatic process, we will get something for nothing, and we should not expect to. The skill of writing can only be mastered through a serious and untiring hard working in the form of both; learning what we need to know and continuous practice as well. Because writing is a skill, it makes sense that the more we practice writing, the better we will write. One excellent way to get practice in writing, even before we begin composing essays is to keep a daily or almost daily journal. Writing in journal will help us develop the habit of thinking on paper and will show us how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing. A journal can make writing a familiar part of our life and can serve as a continuing source of ideas for papers. The process of writing involves prewriting (freewriting, questioning, making a list, clustering, and preparing a scratch outline), revising, and editing.

The Assessment of Writing

Another important step of teaching and learning process of writing is assessing the students' work to know whether the process is running well or not. It is absolutely needed to judge the students' writing ability that can finally be used as a reference to decide the next steps of teaching and learning process. Besides, Writing assessment can also be used to monitor students' progress and determine if changes in instruction are required to meet students needs. The ongoing assessment of students writing enables review of students growth over time and a determination of the success of instructional approaches. In assessing the students' writing, a clearly defined scoring rubric is an essential first step in developing consistency in scoring among teachers. Without a clearly defined rubric, the remaining steps are not likely to be successful.

There are three major approaches to score the writing performance which are commonly used by the test designers. They are holistic, primary trait, and analytical scoring. Each of these types has a different purpose and focus in instruction and will provide different types of information to teachers and students. In details, they can be described as follows:

Holistic Scoring

This type of scoring uses a variety of criteria to produce a single score. The specific criteria selected depend on local instruction programs and language arts objectives. The rationale for using a holistic scoring system is that the total quality of written text is more than the sum of its components. In this case, writing is viewed as an integrated whole that can not be separated in isolation.

Primary Trait Scoring

A second method of scoring, primary trait focuses on “how well students can write within a narrowly defined range of discourse” (Weigle, 2002:110). This type of scoring emphasizes the task at hand and assigns a score based on the effectiveness of the text’s achieving that one goal. For example, if the purpose of function of an essay is to persuade the reader to do something, the score for the writing would rise or fall on the accomplishment of that function. If a learner is asked to exploit the imaginative function of language by expressing personal feelings, then the response would be evaluated on that feature alone.

Analytic Scoring

Analytic scoring sometimes is also called as analytic assessment in order to capture its closer association with classroom language instruction than with formal testing. Analytic scales separate the features of a composition into components that are each scored separately. The separate components are sometimes given different weights to reflect their importance in instruction. Argued that there are two advantages of this type of rubric; they are in providing feed-back to students on specific aspects of their writing and in giving teachers diagnostic information for planning instruction.

Descriptive Text

Description or descriptive writing reproduces the way things look, smell, or feel or sound; it may also evoke moods, such as happiness, loneliness or fear. It is used to create a visual image to people, places, even of unit of time or season. It may also be used to describe more than the outward appearance of people. It may tell about their truth of character or personality.

Descriptive writing is sometimes called “*showing writing*” because it vividly describes a particular person, place or event or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and feel like they are part of experience. It uses a lot of flowery adjectives and adverbs to describe what is going on or how something appears.

Method of Investigation

The research design that the researcher used in this study was descriptive quantitative-qualitative. It was aimed at describing the students’ ability in writing descriptive text at the second semester of Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, in the Academic Year 2018/2019. “Descriptive method that is also called qualitative research is an explanatory, where the researcher explores the descriptive data in the form of words written and the subjects of this research is based on reliable and factual data. The data were analyzed in terms of how they were able to apply some components required in writing a good descriptive text, involving composing, style, sentence formation, usage and mechanics. From the analysis, the students’ strengths and weaknesses in writing descriptive text were able to be identified.

In this research, the researcher used written data to be analyzed. The data contains the students’ descriptive writing containing at least fifteen sentences. The researcher thought that limiting this minimal number of sentences would enable the researcher to analyze and find out the real description of students’ ability in applying sets of components required in writing descriptive text, such as composing, style, sentence formation, usage and mechanics. The subjects of the research were the second semester students of Pancasakti University Tegal in academic year 2018/2019. The number of the subjects of the research is 15 (fifteen) students representing the five classes who were chosen randomly.

In this research, the writer used writing test. In this case the writer asked the second semester students of Pancasakti University Tegal to write a simple writing text in the form of description at least 15 (fifteen sentences). The time allocation is sixty minutes.

In this research, the written test was used to be analyzed for the purpose of finding out the phenomenon of how the students were able to apply sets of components required in writing a good descriptive text involving *composing, style, sentence formation, usage and mechanics*. In collecting the data of this research, *first*, the researcher took some of the second semester students to be the subjects of the research. In this case, the researcher took five students from each class randomly as the representation of their class. From the three classes (2A, 2B, and 2C) there were fifteen students who were chosen as the sample of the research. *Second*, The researcher gathered all of the subjects chosen into one group to ease the writer in organizing the research. *Third*, The writer gave a short explanation about what a descriptive text is like. *Fourth*, The students assigned the students to write a descriptive text containing at least 15 (fifteen sentences). In this case, the researcher suggested some topics, although they were also recommended to choose their own topic. The time allocated was one hour to write the text. *Finally*, the researcher found fifteen descriptive texts which were ready to be analyzed for the purpose of answering the problems stated in this research.

This study analyzed the phenomenon of how well the students were able to apply sets of requirements to make a good descriptive text. The data of the research that had been collected before were analyzed in terms of several components of analytic scoring rubric of writing presented by O'Malley and Pierce (1996: 145) involving: (1). *Composing*, (2) *Style*, (3). *Sentence formation*, (4). *Usage and* (5). *Mechanics*. In deriving the final score, the components above were given different weight based on the level of importance in producing a piece of descriptive writing. *Composing* as the most important was weighted 3 (three), *style* as the second most important was weighted 2 (two), and the three other remains, each were weighted 1 (one). Besides, the scale of scoring was also classified into several categories; starting from level one as the lowest score, and level four as the highest one.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the writer analyzed and calculated the data of the research, it can be described that the result of the data analysis above shows that the individual performance of writing descriptive text is stated as follows: There are 5 (five) students whose scores are categorized "Good". It means, there are 33.3% of the total number of the research subjects who are involved in this category. There are 6 (six) students whose scores are categorized "Fair". It means that there are 40% of the total number of the research subjects who are involved in this category, and the rest 4 (four) students got scores in the interval score which is categorized as "Bad". For this category there are 26.6%. No one got excellent score. It can be concluded that the scores of the research subjects are mostly categorized as "Fair".

From the calculation and analysis of the research data, the students' average score can also be described by calculating the mean of the whole scores by using the formula stated in the previous chapter. From the calculation, the total students' score is 975. It is divided by the number of the research subjects, that is 15. It is found that the students' average score is 65. This score is categorized "Fair". So, it can be concluded that the students' writing performance is in the category "Fair".

The data description above also states about the students' writing ability in descriptive text viewed from the five components of writing used as the units of analysis in this research, involving: *Composing, Style, Sentence Formation, Usage, and Mechanics*. Based on the

calculation, it can be stated that the students' average score is as the followings: (a). *composing* gets 71.6 (Good), *Style* gets 66.2 (Fair), *Sentence Formation* gets 60 (Fair), *Usage* gets 57.5 (Fair), and *Mechanics* get 55 (Bad).

To deepen the analysis, the writer also completed the analysis with the stages of how the students developed the text in term of generic structure. Based on the analysis, It can be stated that the texts which were produced by the students were developed through the stages required in writing a descriptive text, they are identification by identifying the phenomenon to be described, and description by describing parts, qualities, and characteristics to support the main topic.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Finally, the writer can conclude that generally the ability of the second semester students of English Education department of Universitas Pancasakti Tegal in writing descriptive text is categorized "**Fair**". It is based on their mean score of writing, that is 65, and that score is in the range of category Fair. Among the components that the writer used in the analysis, they are generally good at *composing*, as they got the highest score in this component. The second highest is *style*, and the next rank are successively: *sentence formation*, *usage* and *mechanics* as the lowest score and it is supposed to be their weakness in writing descriptive texts. From the findings, the writer recommends some suggestions, such as: *first*, the students should study harder and more frequently by producing pieces of writing, especially in term of mechanics as their weakness in writing. *Second*, the writing teachers/lecturers should selectively use the techniques, materials, and give more practices and opportunities for students to produce writing. *Third*, as an authorized educational institution, schools or universities need to facilitate the students by providing adequate references of writing, and stimulate the students enthusiasm in writing by: for example conducting some events such as scientific writing contest, etc.

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