Analyzing Students’ Ability in Using the Language Features in Writing Descriptive text

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find out the students’ ability in using the language feature in writing descriptive text. This research was designed as quantitative research and it was conducted at SMPN 4 Banda Aceh is located at Peunayong on April 25th 2019. The number of sample in this research was 20 students which were taken from the seven grade students. In this research, the researcher used writing test as the instrument of the research where the students were asked to write the language features in a descriptive text based on the picture given to them. In this research, the researcher analyzed two components of descriptive text written by the students such as grammar and vocabulary. To measure students’ ability, the researcher showed the result that in the grammar analysis of writing, 20% of the students score 22-25, 60% score 19-21, and 20% score 11-17. In the result vocabulary analysis 75% score 18-20 and 25% score 14-17. The result level categories of vocabulary 75% level excellent. 25% level good. And the result level categories of grammar 20% level excellent, 60% level good the last 20% level fair. From the result it means their ability in using the language features in writing descriptive text can be categorized in the good level.

Keywords: language features, descriptive text, writing

1. INTRODUCTION

English language is studies as a second or foreign language for centuries in various countries around the world. In Indonesia, it is a compulsory subject and is studied from elementary school up to university level. There are four language skills in learning English, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing skill is one of the productive skills, besides speaking, and is often seen as the most complicated skill among the four language skills.

According to Brown (2001), writing is a process in which ideas are transformed into words by giving structure and logical organization to the ideas. Comparably, Horvath (2001) said that writing is a cognitive and learning experience that allows people to discover what they want to say. Fitri (2017, p.112) said “writing is one kind of expression in language which is created by particular set
of symbols, having conventional values for representing the wordings of particular language which is drawn up visually”. It can be summed up that writing is a process in which sentences are arranged into paragraph to state ideas.

There are several genres of written texts that have to be learned by students. The necessity of teaching these texts is stated in Kemdikbud (2013). It is explained in that one of competences in learning English is writing and students are required to master types of texts in English. Each genre is different from the others based on the generic structure and language features. Based on the current curriculum (Curriculum K-2013), students are required to learn all types of text and to be able to recognize each genre. One of those genres is descriptive text. Apart from the purpose of descriptive text and its generic structure, there are also other components in descriptive text called the language features. Language features are the characteristics regarding certain types of grammatical rules and certain types of vocabulary (Emilia & Christie, 2013). Similarly, Knapp and Watkins (2005) said that language features are the elements which make one text type different from the others. It means that language features are the attributes that should exist in a text so that readers can tell what type of text they are reading.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 The Definition of Writing
Writing is a way to communicate with others by conveying the message through the written form. Burroway (2003) said that writing is a process of translating experience or thought into words. Also, Nunan (2003) stated that writing is a process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express ideas into good writing and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly. Writing is a complex process that allows a writer to explore thought and ideas and make it clear and visible.

2.1.1 Aspects of Writing
There are five aspects of writing that can be evaluated (Weigle, 2002, p.114). Those are:
1. Content
   A good writing is when the title represents the content of it. The content of a text should be relevant or equivalent and describe the title in complete.
2. Organization
   It means that how the students organize their idea.
3. Vocabulary
   Vocabulary refers to the selections of word those are suitable with the content.
4. Language Use
   Language Use refers to the use of correct grammatical from the syntactic pattern.
5. Mechanics
   Paragraph is a combination of some sentences which needs good spelling and punctuation.

2.1.2 Types of Writing
There are five types of text based on curriculum 2013 (Depdiknas, 2013) should be learned by junior high school students. Its explain about procedure text, recount text, narrative text, report text, and descriptive text as following:
1. Procedure Text
A Analysis Of Illocutionary Acts In Azzam’s Character In Novel ‘Ketika Cinta Bertasbih by Rina Mulya, Kismullah, and Lismalinda

Procedure Text is a text that is designed to describe how something is achieved through a sequence of actions or steps

2. Recount Text
   Recount Text is a text which retells events or experiences in the past.

3. Narrative Text
   Narrative text as a text which relates a series of logically, and chronologically related events that is caused or experienced by factors.

4. Report Text
   Report Text is a type of document written by someone of group of people to announce the result of an investigation or announce something to the proper authorities.

5. Descriptive Text
   Descriptive Text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

2.2 Definition of Descriptive Text
   Descriptive text is a text that describes the sensory experience, how something looks and sounds (Kane, 2000). Likewise, Pardiyono (2006) said that descriptive text is a text which provides a description of an object (human or nonhuman). Another definition comes from Littell (1999) which said that descriptive text is a genre which describes an object, a place, or a person in a way that allows readers to picture what is being portrayed. To sum up, descriptive text is a type of text which tells about some objects in detail.

2.2.1 Purposes of Descriptive Text
   According to Clouse (2003, p. 102), the purposes of descriptive text are to certain, to express feeling, to relate experiences, to inform a reader unfamiliar with the subject and to persuade the things that describe in detail.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN
   This study used a quantitative method. According to Khotari (2004, p.3) “Quantitative research in based on the measurement of the quantity”. While, Noor (2011, p. 38) states that “Quantitative research is done to try certain theories by researching variables of its research”. The variables measured will produce the data that consist of numbers which can be analyzed by using statistical procedure. A quantitative descriptive was used as a research design. The quantitative method was used in this study because the researcher wanted to describe students’ ability in using the language feature in writing descriptive text, focusing on five grammatical aspects namely simple present, linking verbs, action verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Findings
   The researcher conducted a research at SMP N 4 Banda Aceh on first grade students began April, 20th 2019. There are some language features in descriptive text according to Wardiman et al. (2008), namely; specific participant, adjective, adverb, action verb and simple present. However, the researcher only focused on grammar and vocabulary language feature. The researcher collected the data from class VII-1 students. This VII-1 class consists of 20 students. The data was in from of written descriptive text about their school. The following sub-chapter explains the score for grammar language feature.
The researcher presents the result analysis of the data for students' ability in grammar. The researcher has analyzed students' ability in using the language features by using the result of students' descriptive text worksheet about school. The score of students' grammar ability can be seen in the figure below.

**The Result of Grammatical Analysis**

Based on the Chart 4.1 above, the minimum score obtained by one student is 11 while the maximum score is 22. The Chart above indicates that more than 50% of students have a score ranged between 19-21. It means that the number of students who obtained this ranged score is 12 students. In addition, less than 25% of students, no more than 7 students, obtained score that range between 22 – 25. Only 20% of students obtained the score ranged 11 - 17. However, none of students obtained score that range five to ten. The result of vocabulary analysis can be seen in the following figure.

**The Result of Vocabulary Analysis**

Based on the Chart above, the score of students only obtained two kinds of ranged score, score that range 18 – 20 and 14- 17. Surprisingly, none of students obtained the other two kinds of score, 10 – 13 and 7 - 9. The Chart above indicates that almost 80% of students obtained score ranged between 18 - 20 while less than 30% of the students obtained score that ranges between 14 - 17. The number of students obtaining 18 – 20 range score is 15 students. Meanwhile, the remain 5 students obtained score that range between 14 – 17.
Figure 4.3 The level of grammar student’s ability in writing descriptive text

The figure above shows that more than 50% of participant of this study is at the good level of using grammar language feature in writing descriptive text. This number indicates that approximately 12 out of 20 students at the level of good in using grammar. However, excellent and fair categories are in the same amount of percentage which is 20%. It means 4 students are in an excellent level and the remain students are in fair level. The researcher provides the example of student’s hand writing.

Figure 4.4 The level of vocabulary students’ ability in writing descriptive text

The result of analysis based on Heswell’s (2005) theory shows that participants of this study only have two categories, good and Excellent in using vocabulary. None of participants of this study is at the level of fair, poor, and very poor. The chart above displays that above 70% of students is at the level of excellent in using vocabulary for writing descriptive text. It means that almost 15 students score more than 18 in the vocabulary language feature. The remain 25% students is at the level of good for using vocabulary in writing descriptive text. As it previously written, the researcher also provides the example of students’ writing
skill for vocabulary language feature which is categorized as good and excellent level.

4.2 Discussion

The result of this study shows that most of students stand on good to average category for the use of grammar in writing descriptive text based on Haswell (2005) rubric scoring. The number of students who stand on excellent to very good category is more than 50% of students. However, none of students stands on the level of very poor for grammar. In addition to vocabulary, 75% of students stand on the level of excellent to very good category while the remain 25% is on the level of good to average. In fact, none of students who stand on the remain kind or category for vocabulary.

A lot of previous researches have conducted researches on analyzing vocabulary used in writing descriptive text. In the research conducted by Husna, Zainil, & Rozimela (2013) shows that none of students in their research gets an excellent category for the use of vocabulary (Husna, Zainil, & Rozimela, 2013, p. 10). Most of participants of their study are on the satisfactory level for the use of vocabulary (53.5%). However, the result of this research indicates that most of students get excellent level for the use of vocabulary.

The other study was conducted by Ervindo, Harha, and Tavriyanti in 2014. They analyze about the grammatical errors made by junior high school student in writing descriptive text. The result of their analysis shows that participants of their study make 4 kinds of grammatical errors which are omission, addition, mis-formation, and mis-ordering. According to them, mis-formation is incorrect placement of items while mis-ordering is incorrect place of phrase or word. Similarly, in the researcher’s point of view, some of grammatical errors made by participant of this study is slightly like mis-formation. However, grammatical errors made by participant of this study needs further analysis since this study only finding out the level of two language feature, which are vocabulary and grammar, based on Haswell’s (2005) rubric scoring.

It comes to surprising result that most of participant of this study are on the level of good in the grammar, more than 40%, and are on the excellent level in the vocabulary, nearly 80%. It can be caused by several factors. First of all, their teacher applies appropriate method in teaching writing descriptive text. So that, the students easily understand about kind of language feature used in writing descriptive text. one of the factors that influence students’ writing skill is a good or trained teacher as proposed by Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016, p. 87).

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the result analysis of the research it was found out the students’ ability in using the language features in writing descriptive text most of participants of their study are on the satisfactory level. However, the result of this research indicates that most of students get excellent level for the use of vocabulary. The result shows that 70% of students is at the level of efficient and remain 25% students is at the level of good. The result shows that 50% of the students understand about grammar and also 50% of the students understand about vocabulary. Thus, all students almost understand about the language features in using the language features.
6. REFERENCES


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