



Students' Strategy in Describing a Product: The case of ESP Writing class

Dewi Surani^{1*} Ana Utami Fatoni²

^{1,2}Department of Information Technology Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training,
Universitas Bina Bangsa Banten
Jl. Serang-Raya Jakarta KM 03 No. 1B Pakupatan Serang Banten-Indonesia

Article History:

Received: April 09, 2019
Revised: June 16, 2020
Accepted: June 18, 2019
Published: June 30, 2019

Keywords:

ESP, Ability, Difficulties, Describing product

*Corresponding Author:

suranidewiahead@gmail.com

Abstract: Describing a product is one of discussion that the students should learn to express the words that of selling. This study aims at investigating how the students' abilities and difficulties in describing a product in economics class of Bina Bangsa University. The respondents were students from the third semester and analyzed using descriptive-qualitative study. The result of study depicted that students faced difficulties in both organizing and developing ideas. They were difficult to choose appropriate vocabulary and to manage the words grammatically correct in expressing the language. It suggested students need attention in learning descriptive text structures whether in developing ideas, grammar and vocabulary chosen. They should be provided by example and practice for achieving the ability of describing a product.

INTRODUCTION

English as Specific Purpose (ESP) is defined as teaching and learning of English in second or foreign language where the goal of the learners can use English as particular domain. (Brown, 2016; Starfield, 2013).

The characteristics of ESP consist of specific disciplines, it is (1) designed to meet specific needs of the learners; (2) related to content of particular description, occupation and activities; (3) centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc; (4) restricted to a language skill to be learned (Farida and Asmaa, 2017; Ibrahim, 2016).

Those specification backgrounds define ESP used in academic studies for vocational or professional purposes. ESP support teaching and learning more effective and efficient in specific needs

especially in economics (Arancón, 2013; Flowerdew, 2013; Rahman, 2015). Bina Bangsa University applies ESP in its English lecturing including in economic and bussiness faculty. Regarding to competition era in industrial 4.0, students should be equipped by English skill for their communication practices. Besides applying digital potential in teaching and learning, the students also should improve their language skill to face the upcoming of ASEAN Economic Community.

Teaching and learning English for economics shall be taught by applying language expressions into the discussions. Various discussions focus on the expression for presenting and delivering practices. The discussions that use language expressions consisted of delivering meeting, dealing with a negotiation, introducing company's profile.

One of discussions that need language expression as its learning goal is describing a product. The discussion demands students to express how to describe a product, so that they could attract the customers to see and buy it. This discussion challenged students to deliver some language expressions accordingly related to the topic.

Some studies have investigated about descriptive writing whether in the students abilities and difficulties and also of product description as the discussion chosen as the research focus. Yoandita (2019) mentioned that students are able to write descriptive text but make has less expression in their writing. Her result of study depicted that the students were able to use descriptive writing in some aspects of tense, linking verb, and adjectives. Whereas, when they try to develop idea and organize the idea of the text. Isani, (2013) states that description that described in detail whether in how it touches, how it feels, as the actual product would increase product attraction.

The description expressed in how the students find ideas in their writing. As mentioned by Kheryadi, (2017) writing is an important skill because it is the most effective way to someone's English proficiency both in the abilities and difficulties.

Choosing language expression to be written became a challenge of students on how they express a product because they need to find appropriate expression to describe (Lam, 2013).

The expression of describing product focus on using powerful words that sell and telling the full story of product (Cotton, et al. 2012). Regarding to those aspects, besides developing ideas, organizing ideas, and vocabulary, they also need to be able to apply grammar. The grammar focus was not only on the present tense but also focus on two kinds of English grammatical structure consisted of adjective and passive sentence. Those structures are needed by the learners to make a detail, natural,

expressive, and attractive product description (Huhta, Johnson, & Tulkki, 2013). These aspects were needed since product description or the technical information of product provided obtained the second highest mark after the price (Le Marechal: 2015). It could be seen that writing product description should be appropriate (Sarem, et al.(2013).

This study addresses the students' abilities and difficulties in describing product and how they describe a product before and after they get some English expressions treatment. The grammatical focus on this discussion were divided into two, adjective and passive sentence. Based on the explanation above, the writers focus on "what are students' abilities and difficulties in describing product?" and "how students describe a product using English expressions?"

METHOD

This study was a qualitative descriptive analysis. The participants of this study were consisted of 150 students majoring Management, Bina Bangsa University of the third semester by the reason those classes had product description discussion. This study used students' text analysis as the instrument. The writers focus on their text of describing a product.

The writers used students' text to analyze their descriptive writing regarding to product description. The components of writing that analyzed were consisted of developing ideas, organizing ideas, vocabulary and grammar (Rakhman, 2013). For the grammar the writers focused on adjective and passive sentence that became the most important thing in product description. The writers took four steps in analyzing the data. The first was describing and interpreting on how the students write the descriptive text about product. The second, the data were analyzed in both abilities and difficulties of the writing. Then, the students got explanation on how to write product description. Last, the data was analyzed

based on developing ideas, organization ideas, vocabulary and grammar.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, the result could not attract the other students’ of product interest through peer reading session. They mentioned that the product description could not get the readers full attention, because the way the text express the language missed of the developing ideas, organizing ideas, vocabulary and grammar.

Based on the analysis from the students’ text, the writers found some information on the following:

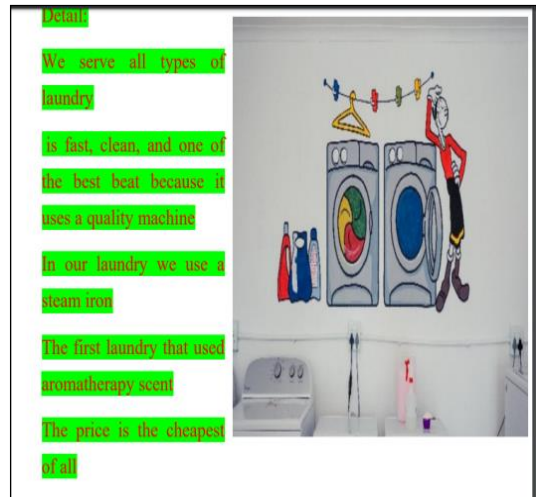
- a) Developing ideas
Most of students were able to develop idea well. It is because they tried expresively on their description.
- b) Organizing ideas
The students did not use powerful words and they also did not tell briefly about the product.
- c) Vocabulary
The writers did not find the trouble of students using vocabulary, most of them use the vocabulary well.
- d) Grammar
Regarding to the grammar, as mentioned by Cotton et al, (2012) the product description besides should be powerful and telling the full story of product, it means that beside present tense, the product should be described using adjective and passive voice.

Table 1. Recapitulation of common adjective used in describing product

No	Adjective	Word Frequency
1	Good/ best/ better	24
2	Beautiful	9
3	Special	5
4	Practical	7
5	Easy	3
6	Simple	6
7	Pure/ original / natural	3
8	Affordable	14

From the table above, Shows that the learners used standard adjective words of “good”, “best” (mentioned more than three times), “beautiful”, “flexible”, “comfort”. They had limited adjectives to Express, which caused they mention the same adjective words in the description.

Figure 1. Students’ describing product brochure



The learners less used gradable adjectives to gain more product attraction there was no variation in the description, e.g.: “it is good for you”, “it is beautiful”, it feels comfort to use”, “it is the best”, it has best quality”.

The analyzes also shown that students also find difficulties in describing product by using passive sentence. Mostly students still use active sentence.

Figure 2. Students’ describing product brochure



The students used active sentences, e.g. “we offer you this cool product to complete your life style”, “we choose the product from the best material”, and this beautiful product is for you “in their description which decrease language neutrality in the product description.

After explaining the aspects of descriptive writing for product description, the students got improvement of their ability applying the aspects of product description. The finding can be seen below:

- a) Developing ideas
- b) Organizing ideas
- c) Vocabulary
- d) Grammar

The varieties of gradable adjectives were also used when they describing product brochure. The recapitulation of adjectives variations can be seen this following table.

Table 2. Recapitulation of adjective variations used in describing product

No	Adjective	Word Frequency
1	Finest	7
2	Brightest	6
3	Newest/latest	9
4	Healthy	8
5	Cheap	6
6	Comfort	10
7	Fast	2
8	Elegant	9
9	Small	2
10	Soft	2
11	Cool	2
12	Attractive	3
13	Stylish	3
14	Suitable	4
15	Light	3
16	Perfect	5

CONCLUSION

Mostly, students were difficult to choose the appropriate vocabulary and to organise the grammatical right interpretation of the words. It suggested

that students should pay attention to learning descriptive text structures, whether it is in the development of ideas, grammar or vocabulary chosen and practice intensely for achieving the ability to describe a product should be provided.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank the editor and reviews for the detailed and helpful comments. We also thank the participants at Bina Bangsa university for their motivation joining the research.

REFERENCES

- Arancón, P. R. (2013). The use of SFL genre theory for the analysis of students' writing skills in ESP. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada*, (1), 245-262.
- Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing needs analysis and English for specific purposes*. Routledge.
- Cotton, D., Grissom, M., Spalding, D., & Want, R. (2012). Standardization barriers in the petroleum industry. *University of Colorado*, 4.
- Farida, D., & Asmaa, B. (2017). The Role of ESP in Economic Sciences and Technology. *International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning*, 4(1), 13–19.
- Flowerdew, L. (2013). 17 Needs Analysis and Curriculum Development in ESP. *The handbook of English for specific purposes*, 325.
- Huhta, M., Vogt, K., Johnson, E., & Tulkki, H. (2013). *Needs analysis for language course design: A holistic approach to ESP*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ibrahim, A. S. E. M. (2016). ESP needs analysis: A case study of PEH students, University of Khartoum. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 13(12), 905-923.
- Isani, S. (2013). Brian Paltridge, Sue Starfield (eds.), *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*. Boston: Wiley-Blackwell,

2013. *ASp. la revue du GERAS*, (64), 192-198.
- Kheryadi, K. (2017). Improving Students' writing Narrative through Writing Games for Acceleration Class. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture*, 2(2), 377-388.
- Lam, R. (2013). Two portfolio systems: EFL students' perceptions of writing ability, text improvement, and feedback. *Assessing Writing*, 18 (2), 132-153.
- Le Marechal, X. (2015). *Look at the role of the product description on purchasing decision for electronic devices on Amazon for the youth 13-35 year old. How to influence the purchasing decision through the product description?* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin Business School).
- Rahman, M. (2015). English for Specific Purposes (ESP): A Holistic Review. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 3(1), 24-31.
- Rakhman, A. N. (2013). An analysis of thematic progression in high school students' exposition texts. *Passage*, 1(1), 65-74.
- Sarem, S. N., Hamidi, H., & Mahmoudie, R. (2013). A critical look at textbook evaluation: A case study of evaluating an ESP course-book: English for international tourism. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, 4(2), 372-380.
- Starfield, S. (2013). 24 Critical Perspectives on ESP. *The handbook of English for specific purposes*, 461.
- Yang, L. (2014). Examining the mediational means in collaborative writing: Case studies of undergraduate ESL students in business courses. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 23, 74-89.
- Yoandita, p. E. (2019). An analysis of students' ability and difficulties in writing descriptive text. *Jurnal joepallt (journal of english Pedagogy, Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching)*, 7(1).