

THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT SMP N 1 CANDUANG

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Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah (1) melihat kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif berdasarkan struktur generik (identifikasi dan deskripsi) dan tata bahasa (*simple present tense*)(2) melihat permasalahan yang dihadapi siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Data penelitian ini menggunakan testulis dan angket. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan teknik *cluster sampling*. Sampel penelitian adalah siswa kelas 2 SMP yang berjumlah 42 orang. Temuan penelitian yaitu kemampuan siswa dalam menulis identifikasi masih rendah, menulis deskripsi masih rendah dan dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* juga rendah

Key words: Ability, writing, descriptive text

A. Introduction

The School- Based Curriculum is now used in the junior high school. The school-Based Curriculum or *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) has a purpose to make the students able to communicate in daily life. Communication is ability in understanding and expressing ideas, feeling and information. The communicating ability in learning language can be divided into four skills; those are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In the level second grade of Junior High school, the School- Based Curriculum requires the students to master various texts in the form of short functional text and short essays. These short essays are descriptive, recount, and narrative (Mendiknas 2006). Through this curriculum the second grade students of

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Junior High school should be able to produce the language into oral and written forms. The students are not only expected to speak but also able to write.

Based on KTSP, the purpose of teaching writing at second grade of Junior High school is to make the students able to express the meaning in a short essay such as a descriptive text by using accurately written language to interact with their environment. In other words, the students must be able to interact by using written text in their environment.

Writing is a tool to produce language in written form. According to Kroll (in Weigle, 2002:19) writing is not only as individual product but also as a social and cultural act. Writing is an act that consists of a context, a particular purpose and audience. Besides, Hyland (2003:9) argues writing as a way of sharing personal meanings and it emphasize on the individual to create his or her views on the topics.

A descriptive text is a kind of text which has purpose to describe a particular person, place or thing in details. Like another genre, through this text the students learn about social function, the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features. Gerot and Wignel (1994) state that a descriptive text has purpose to describe about particular person, place and thing. Through this text the writer can show to the reader about physical appearance of something clearly.

Besides, Kizsner and Stephen (2011: 73) argue that in writing description the writers choose words that draw a figure for the readers. They add that the languages should surface a vivid impression of what you have seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched. The more clearly the writers' explanation, the description will be better. In addition, Langan (2012: 276) explains that, to describe about something the writers should choose "word picture" as vivid and as real as possible. The writers need to know the subject in specific detail that attracts the readers' senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch). He adds that a descriptive needs sharp and colorful details.

Generic structure is general form of genre. Each of genres has its own generic structure. Paltridge (1996) explains that generic structure describes text structure based on its internal patterning of rhetorical organization. In addition, Rukmini (2009) argues generic structure as common element that constructs a text thorough lexicogrammar used. Besides, According to Gerot and Wignell (1994: 208) the generic structures of descriptive text are identification and description.

a. Identification

The aim of identification is to identify the phenomena that to be described. It identifies who or what to be described. The identification usually stated in the first paragraph to introduce reader what to be describe in the next paragraph. It also can be in form of definition. Rosa (2008) explains the identification as one of the generic structure

will give the information about the object or the phenomena that will be described.

b. Description

The function of description is to describe part, qualities, and characteristics. In this part, the writers explain about the subject in detail. It uses to support the identification. According to Rosa (2008) says the object that has been identified is described in description. It can be describes colors, shapes, sizes, weight, height, etc

The last aspect of descriptive text is lexicogrammatical features. Mendiknas (2004) state that lexicogrammatical is things, grammar, vocabulary and connectors that is used. In addition, Mendiknas (2004) argues the lexicogrammatical feature of descriptive text involves focus on specific participant, use attribute identifying process, frequent use of ephitet and classifiers in nominal group and the use of simple present tense.

a. Focus on specific participant

Focus on specific participant for (1) person such as my idol: Agnes Monica, Justin bibber and my father; (2) animal such my favorite pet: dog, cat and rabbit; and place (3) place such as my favorite place: my bedroom, Paris and Bali. It means that the participant of descriptive text should ve specific

b. Using attributive and identifying process. Identifying process is used verb such as wear, use and look. According to Gerot and wignel (1994), attributive and identifying process are relational process. Process is usually defined as verb. Attributive is used to assign a quality to something. On the other hand, identifying process is used to identifying process to identify something thus we often use these verb in a descriptive text.

c. Frequent use of epithets and classifier in nominal group.

Epithet style for explaining a description by using profuse comparison in epithet there is an adjective or adjective phrase to show characteristic of the subject.

d. Using simple present tense.

Simple present is tense that usually used in writing a descriptive text. According to Azar (1992) simple present tense is used to describe daily habit or usual activities. It also expresses the general statement of fact. Similarly, according to Folse (2009: 101), simple present tense is used for habitual or repeated action. The simple present tense takes the form: Verb or Verb + -s. The -s for third person singular. Some verbs irregular in spelling yet even so follow patterns: study → studies (not studys), go goes(not gos), do → does (not dos), and have has (not haves).

Based on the preliminary research, the students still got difficulties in writing a descriptive text. The students' difficulties were related to the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features of a descriptive text. They were not

able to write the generic structure in well order. Besides, they also were not able to use correct lexicogrammatical features of the descriptive text.

First, students' problem in using the generic structure of the descriptive text was when the teacher asked them to write a descriptive text based on the topic given. It could be seen from 24 of the students, 10 of the students' got difficulties in developing their ideas. They did not know what they should write for identification and description of the descriptive text. Most of the students were only copied the model of text. Meanwhile the rest of them wrote what in their opinion and translate it into English. As a result, their ideas were not arranged orderly.

The second problem is the student difficulties in the use of the lexicogrammatical features of a descriptive text. The lexicogrammatical features of a descriptive text are the use of vocabulary and grammar. The vocabulary commonly used in the descriptive text is related to the thing being described, for example for describing animal or person it might be related to appearance. In using vocabulary only 15 of the students could use appropriately. The students common mistake in using vocabulary are most of the students' used incorrect words for example *he is a smart student*, *he is good*, and *he is high*. Those words are misused even though from the structure it can be accepted. The correct words are *he is a clever student*, *he is friendly* and *he is tall*.

The next problem related to the lexicogrammatical features of a descriptive text was the use the grammar. Tense that usually in writing a descriptive text is simple present tense. In the use of the simple present tense, the students got problem in differentiate the use of the Verb 1 for the third person singular. As in the students' writing task, *she wear glasses*, *she look like an angel*, and *she like listening to the music*. Those sentences were wrong because for third person singular sV1 must added by -es/s. The correct sentences are *she wears glasses*, *she looks like an angel* and *she likes listening to the music*. From 24 of the students only 2 of them that could use simple present appropriately.

Based on the phenomena above, the students' ability in writing a descriptive text was still low. This research had purpose to know more the students ability in writing a descriptive text, this research will study more about phenomena that related to the second grade students' ability in a descriptive text at SMPN 1 Canduang.

B. Research Methodology

This research was conducted to analyze the second grade students' ability in using the generic structure and simple present tense and also students' problems in writing a descriptive. The subject of this research was the second grade students of SMPN 1 Canduang on the first semester that was registered in 2012/2013 academic year. They were chosen as the subject of the research because this grade was learning about descriptive text. There were two classes that had been chosen

as subject of the research. There were 42 students that involve on those classes. This research used cluster sampling to get the subject.

The data was collected through the students' writing test. The writing test was taken as the primary source of the data. After the students finish doing writing test, the students' papers were collected. After that the experts scored the students' writing test and the data would be analyzed.

C. Discussion

The students' ability in writing a descriptive text related to the identification, description and simple present tense were:

1. Identification of descriptive text

It was found that the students' ability in writing identification of descriptive text was fair. Findings showed that one of the students got score 3.1 or good. There were 24 of the students got 2.1-3.00 score or fair and 16 of the students got 1.1-2.00 score or poor. There was none of the students got score <1.00 or very poor. There were the examples of the students problems in writing identification.

Example 1

Students number 21 "My Idol"

He has a solo singer, he has handsome, he is young, he is about 22 years old.

From the writing test above it can be seen that the student did not identify who or what would be described. The students also did not mention the subject that refers to *he*. Besides, the example of the identification above seems like description because he/she stated *he has handsome*. This sentence actually should be stated in description because it tells about qualities of the object.

Example 2

Students number 37 "My Favorite Pet"

My favorite is Fernando Torres, he came from Spain, he is player it club FC Chelsea.

The identification above was not appropriate with the topic. The topic was about "My favorite Pet" but the identification was about "My idol". In the identification, the student told about her/his idol that was a football player. The

students' topic should be "My Idol" not "My Favorite Pet". It means that the, the students could not identify what he/she would be described.

2. Description of descriptive text

The students' ability in writing description of descriptive text was poor. There was none student got good score. There were 23 of the students got score 2.1-3 or fair and 18 of the students got score 1-1.2 or poor. There was none student got very good score. The students difficulties in writing identification were:

Example 1

Students number 5 "My Idol"

My mother is 51st years old. She is a house wife. She work, she is cleaner. She lives in Canduang. I'm very love my mother. My mother is stiff wife.

The student number 5 did not describe about parts, qualities and characteristic of her/his mother in description of descriptive text. The student told more about her/his mother age, job and address. It seemed like a bibliography.

Example 2

Student number 16 "My Idol"

Lionel Messi and Ronaldo is short player foot ball he plays at Barcelona and Real Madrid he make many records he is from argentina is messi and Portugal is ronaldo he is player with Mess number 10 and Ronaldo number 7

The student number 16 had difficulties in writing of description. None of the sentence describe about parts, qualities and characteristic of her/ his idol. The student did not know what should be written in description. It was not support the identification. Besides, the language was also not clear. None of the criteria of description was fulfill.

Example 3

Students number 17 "My Idol"

Lionel Messi born in Rosalio, argentina. He first played in Baca Junior. After then, he played for Barcelona. Now he is top scorer with 17 goals in sabin league. He got many appreciation example: Ballon D'or

2009, 2010, 2011, Golden Shoes, etc. I'm very love him, but he is a great player.

From the student writing above, it seemed like a bibliography of Messi. In that paragraph, the student much told about Messi achievement as a football player. There was no statement about the characteristics of Messi. The student should tell about Messy related to his appearances.

3. Tense (Simple Present Tense)

The findings showed that the students' ability in using the simple present tense was poor. There was none students got good score. There was 12 of the students got fair score and 24 of the students got poor score. And 5 of the students got very poor score. The students difficulties related to the simple present tense were:

Example 1

Students number 10 "My Idol"

I have a good faforite actress. Her name is Sin Min ah. She live in south korea. She high is 165cm. she has brown eyes and long hair. She has is light skin. Her nose pointed. She is about 25 years old. She is like listening music. She is singer, actress in South Korea. I'm very love her.

The student number 10 could not use the simple present tense appropriately. The sentence *she live in south korea* was wrong because she was the third person singular and the word for third person singular must be added by *-s*. the next problems was the use of *is* before the phrase *light skin*. The correct sentence was *she has light skin*. The other wrong sentence was *she is like listening music*. The correct one was *she likes listening to the music*.

Example 2

Student number 35 "My Idol"

Nikita Willy actris favorite. She is beautiful. she born Jakarta, 29 juni 1994. She a singer, acting and singing. She young.

She is long hair, light skin, pointed nose and she is short.

The student number 35 could not use the simple present tense. There were some of the sentences missing of to be. The students did not use to be in the

sentence *Nikita Willy actris favorite*. The correct sentence is *Nikita Willy is my favorite actress*.

4.The students' problems in writing descriptive text

The students had problems in writing a descriptive text. The problems related to the concept, the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features of descriptive text. The students' problems viewed from the questionnaires. 32 (76.1%) of the students got difficulties in writing descriptive text based on the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features.

From the questionnaires result, 28 (66.6%) of the students had problems in using generic structure because they did not know the generic structure of descriptive text. Meanwhile, in lexicogrammatical features the students had problems in using the simple present tense, adjective and pronoun

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the students' ability in the using of the generic structure and the simple present tense in writing descriptive text still poor. They had problems in developing of identification, description, and in the use of simple present tense.

The identification as one of the generic structure will give the information about the object or the phenomena that will be described (Rosa: 2008). It identifies who or what to be described. Based on the findings, the students still had low ability in writing identification of descriptive text. It was prove by none of the students get good criteria. Most of the students got fair and poor criteria. They had difficulties in developing identification of a descriptive. They said that they did not know how to construct identification of descriptive text.

Besides, the students also had poor ability in writing description. There was only one of the students get good criteria in writing description. According to Rosa (2008) description is the object that has been identified in description. From the writing test, the students could not tell parts, qualities and characteristic of the object in detail to the readers. Some of the students write description seems like write a bibliography because they not tell about characteristic or qualities of the object but they tell about object achievement. They also could not use appropriate word to describe about an object.

In addition, the simple present tense was the most of the students' problems in writing descriptive text. It was prove by none of the students get good criteria but 3 of the students got very poor criteria. The students' difficulties in the use of the simple present tense were they did not know the form of simple present tense and they could not use to be (is, am, are). The simple present tense take from verb or verb + es/s for third person singular (Folse: 2009). The students had problem about simple present tense because tense is not taught independently anymore, but it has been taught implicitly through a text. It means that, the

students will not learn tense independently. When the students learn a text, they will also learn about tense. Hence, they could not learn about simple present tense deeply.

Furthermore, from the questionnaires also showed that the students had problems in writing descriptive text. They could not write descriptive text based on the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features while others students were could not. Besides, the students also had problems about the concept of descriptive text and in using the generic structure. They did not know the generic structure of descriptive text. In addition, the students problems in the using the lexicogrammatical features of descriptive text were related to the use of simple present tense, adjective and pronoun.

The students had problems in writing descriptive text related to the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features of descriptive text because the teachers also not understand about the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features of a descriptive text so that he/ she could not deliver it students. In addition, the students did not pay attention when the teacher explained it in from of the class. Most of the students talked with their friends even some of them tended go outside of the class.

It can be concluded that there was relationship between writing test and questionnaires. The students writing test showed the students' ability in writing generic structure and the simple present tense was. The questionnaires proved that the students had problems related to generic structure and simple present tense causes by the students its self and the teacher.

D.Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the research find it can be concluded that first, most of the students had problems in writing of identification. They could not write identification as the criteria of good identification. They could not identify subject that would be described. Besides, they also could not tell who or what would be described. Second, in writing description, some of the students were poor in writing description. They could not write description in detail. Besides, they could not describe parts, qualities and characteristic of the object. Their description also did not support their identification even their description seems like a bibliography. Third, there were still some of the students that did not understand about the simple present tense. They could not use the simple present tense in the right form. They also did not know to be that usually use for simple present tense. Last, besides the students' problems about identification, description and tense. The student also had problems in the use of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, vocabulary and written in English forms.

Based on the conclusions, it is suggested that the students need pay attention about the generic structure and the simple present tense that is used in writing a descriptive so that they can write a descriptive in well organized and can be understood. Besides, the teachers have to pay attention about their students'

problems in writing a descriptive text. Therefore, the teacher can prepare the next strategy in order to help the students in solving their problems in writing a descriptive text. Moreover, there are a lot of aspects that not include in this research. For the next researchers are hoped to find another problems in writing a descriptive text. By knowing some problems it will be helpful for teachers to find some strategies to solve it. Besides, for the next researcher, it also suggested to do writing test more than one so that the result will be better.

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