

A Descriptive Study on Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability by Using Realia of the Seventh Grade Students at SMP Negeri 10 Jember

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Abstract

This research was intended to describe the seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year. The area and subjects of this research were chosen purposively by using purposive method. The research design was descriptive study. The data of this research were obtained by doing interview with the English teacher, collecting the documentation, and administering the writing test. Based on the results of the students' writing descriptive paragraph test, generally the seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year was categorized as "fair" since the mean score of students descriptive paragraph writing was 66.7. Based on the results of this research, It can be concluded that the seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year was not yet satisfying.

Key words: Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability, Realia

INTRODUCTION

People use language as a tool for communication to express their ideas, feelings and thoughts to others in daily life. They use their first language and also learn the other languages from different nations. Considering this idea, English is an international language known by people in the world and it is widely used in many fields including in education. English is learnt as a foreign language by the students in Indonesian schools. According to the Curriculum 2013, it is stated that one of the objectives of teaching English is to develop communication competency, both spoken and written form. In learning English as a foreign language, the students have to learn the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition the students need to master the language elements such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. English is taught as a compulsory subject from junior high schools up to university levels.

Writing is one of the important English language skills that must be mastered by the students in teaching-learning process. As stated by Wingersky, et. al. (1999:3), writing well brings excellent achievement in school whether in write essays, do research papers, or take essay examinations. In other words, writing helps the students to share and express their ideas, knowledge, and thoughts to other people in the form of written communication. Hence, writing is one of the main English language skills that must be mastered by the students. On the other side, many students consider that writing is the most difficult and complex skills to master in English lesson. This opinion is

supported by Heaton (1991:135) who states that writing is complex and difficult to teach and to learn. It requires mastery not only on grammatical and rhetorical devices but also on conceptual and critical elements. According to White and Arndt (1991:3), writing is not easy as just transcribing language into written forms. It is also a process of thinking in its own right. It is not easy to generate the ideas. It requires the process to think before put them on a paper. They also add that writing requires conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time. In sum, writing is a kind of activity that needs more concentration, well-prepared concept, and extra time in order to make writing itself become good and understandable by the readers.

This research focused on describing the writing ability of the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Jember. Based on the informal interview with the English teacher of SMP Negeri 10 Jember, the researcher got information about the teaching learning process. The English teacher teaches writing integrated with the other skills such as reading, listening, and speaking. In teaching writing, the teacher gave some examples of text type or paragraph which the students had to write. One of the text types was a descriptive. For descriptive text or paragraph, the English teacher explained the material orally and provided the media, usually realia, to help the students describe the object. Then she assigned the students to write a descriptive paragraph based on the realia.

According to Patel and Jain (2008:57), in process of teaching learning activities, teacher uses something to make his teaching become effective. They also state that

"the teacher should select teaching aids and instructional material based on the objectives decided by the teachers so that skill of reading, understanding, writing, and speaking can be developed in students." Thus providing the suitable teaching media is necessary to make the process of writing in the classroom easier and more workable. One of the teaching media that can be used in teaching writing is realia. As informed by the English teacher, she teaches reading more frequently than writing; and in assessing the students' writing, she never used analytical scoring method. Dealing with the research describing the seventh grade students' descriptive paragraph writing ability, the English teacher said there is no research done in the school. This was the reason to conduct the quantitative descriptive research. In this research, the ability of writing a descriptive paragraph calculated based on five aspects of writing, namely grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organizations.

According to Mumford (2005), realia adds interest and relates language to the real world. As stated by Soames (2010) realia is real items that found in daily life as a media for teaching English. Wardhani (2012) also adds that realia can bring and give the students everyday life experience so they will be easier to master what their teachers teach. In brief, realia means one of instructional media that is useful, interesting, and authentic to help the students in learning writing. Realia here plays as functional media that can raise interest, avoid the students from boredom in English teaching learning activities of writing, and help them understand about the objects they learn to write easier. Considering the explanations above, it was necessary to conduct a research entitled "A Descriptive Study on Descriptive Paragraph Writing Ability by Using Realia of the Seventh Grade Students at SMP Negeri 10 Jember"

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this research was to describe the seventh grade students' writing ability of descriptive paragraph by using realia at SMPN 10 Jember so that the design of this research was a descriptive study. Descriptive study is a study which is functioned to collect the information related to a real phenomenon and it focuses on describing a certain variables, phenomenon, and situation (Arikunto, 2006:309-310). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2012:15) "examples of descriptive studies in education include identifying the achievements of various groups of students; describing the behaviors of teachers, administrators, or counselors; describing the attitudes of parents; and describing the physical capabilities of schools." In brief, it can be concluded that descriptive study is a study that has function to describe about certain condition using statistical measurement.

The research was conducted at SMPN 10 Jember. This area was taken based on the purposive method. As stated by Arikunto (2006:128) purposive method is a method of choosing the area of the research based on certain purpose and reason. The school was chosen based on some reasons.

The respondents of the research were the seventh grade students at SMPN 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year. In this research, the research participants were determined by using proportional random sampling by lottery from 10% of the students from each class. The total number of the seventh grade students in this school was 290 students which were divided into eight classes. Therefore the total number of the research respondents were 32 students.

The data of this research were taken from writing test, interview, and documentation. Writing test was used to collect the primary data dealing with the students' writing scores. Then, the data taken from interview and documentation were used to support the primary data. In this research, a test was about writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia to measure the students' writing ability. The type of test which was used was subjective test because the test required the respondents to provide the answer in the form of written descriptive paragraph based on the aspects of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization. In this research, the researcher used semi-structured interview about the curriculum applied at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in teaching of writing, the teaching of writing at the school, and seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph. In this research, documentation also was used to support the primary data. The documentation were the names of the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year as the respondents and the English teacher's lesson plan.

In addition, Analytic scoring method was used in this research. Analytic scoring method is giving score based on separate score of each writing aspect (Hughes, 2003:100). It means that students' writing was scored based on several aspects that students should consider in writing, they are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This type of scoring typically uses a scoring rubric containing several criteria in each writing aspect.

DISCUSSION

Based on the result of the analysis of 32 students' writing scores in the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Jember, it was found that the mean score of students' writing test was 66.7. there were 17 students (53%) were categorized as "fair". There were also 4 students (12.5%) were categorized as "good". Meanwhile, it can also be seen that there were 7 students (22%) in the category of "poor". Moreover, there were 4 students (12.5%) were categorized as "excellent" but there was no student in the category of "failed". Based on the classification of the score levels, the students' mean score was in the range of 60-69. Therefore, the seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia was categorized as "Fair".

Related to the students' ability in the five writing aspects, the students' ability in the aspect of grammar was categorized as "fair" because the mean score was 68.12.

The students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary was also categorized as "fair" since the mean score was 66.62. Next, the students' ability in the aspect of mechanics was categorized as "poor" since the mean score was 57.8. Meanwhile, the students' ability in the aspect of content was categorized as "fair" because the mean score was 67.3. On the contrary, the students' ability in the aspect of organization was categorized as "good" since the mean score was 75.5. Further, it was found that most students achieved low scores in the aspects of mechanics with the mean score obtained was 57.8. Based on the interpretation of writing score levels, the mean score was in the range of 26-59 in "poor" category. The results of the analysis of the students' writing showed that students created many mistakes in this aspect. Meanwhile, most students got the highest scores in the aspect of organization with the mean score obtained was 75.5. Most students got the scores in the range of 80-100. It meant that among the five aspects of writing, the aspect of mechanics was the most difficult aspect and the aspect of organization was the easiest aspects for the seventh grade students in this research.

The students' difficulties were also found in each aspect of writing which became the indicators in this research. They were grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization. From the data analysis result of the students writing ability in descriptive paragraph by using realia, the highest score and the lowest score of the students' writing ability of descriptive paragraph by using realia were as follows. The highest writing descriptive paragraph by using realia score was 88. It was achieved by the student number 4. On the other side, the lowest writing descriptive paragraph by using realia score was 51. It was achieved by the student number 18.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research results that have been discussed, it can be concluded that the seventh grade students' ability in writing a descriptive paragraph by using realia at SMP Negeri 10 Jember in the 2014/2015 academic year was not yet satisfying.

By considering the results of the research, some suggestions are proposed to the following people:

1. The English teacher

The English teacher of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 10 Jember is suggested to give the students more practices in writing in order to improve the students' writing ability because it was known that the students' ability in writing was still categorized as fair. Further, since this research found that the students' ability in the aspects of mechanics was poor, it is also suggested for the English teacher to give the students more practices to improve their ability in mechanics. For example it can be done by giving the students more exercises in writing. By giving the students more exercises, the students will be able to produce a good writing.

2. The other researchers

The other researchers are hoped that they are able to conduct the other researches relating to the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph in order that the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph can be improved. Further, they are also able to apply a certain teaching technique in order to know the effectiveness of the technique in teaching students writing. in daily life in order to keep their vocabularies in their mind.

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