

ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS AT SMKN 1 KASIHAN BANTUL

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Abstract: This study was conducted to find out:(a) How is the students' performance in writing descriptive texts and (b). What are the factors that affect the students' performance in writing descriptive texts? The researcher used case study; the data employed were classroom observation, interview, the task and documentation. The collected data were analyzed descriptively. The validity and reliability of the data were conducted by applying the protocol analysis. Findings show that students' performance in writing descriptive texts was various. Some students preferred to write the texts spontaneously. Almost all the students said that they did not make the outline and draft before writing. They stated that they made the revision, topic sentence, arrangement of words and some of them did not develop the idea. The factors that affect students' performance were difficulty in vocabulary, grammar and the arrangement of the text in the paragraph and grammatical structure.

Keywords: *Students' Performance, Writing, Descriptive Texts*

Introduction

In this study the researcher chose students' performance as the way to know their way in writing descriptive texts. Many students sometimes find it difficult to write and express their idea when writing because lack of vocabulary, lack of interest and have low motivation in writing.

There are some problems that researcher found at SMK N 1 Kasihan Bantul especially in learning writing. The students' writing skill is still low. They had the difficulties in expressing the ideas and opinions orally when writing because of lack of vocabulary and the other factors. Vocabulary is the best way to ease the students to write the texts, they have to master the

vocabulary as much as possible because it is not only useful for them to write the texts, but it is also useful for them to be able to speak, communicate, and interact with people from all over the world. The problems of this research were formulated as follows:

1. How is the students' performance when writing descriptive texts?
2. What are the factors that affect the students' performance in writing descriptive texts?

Theoretical Review

1. Definition of Writing

According to Heaton (1975: 175), writing is a task which involves the students in manipulating words grammatically in correct sentences. The sentences that is in form of writing which successfully communicates the writer's thought and ideas of certain topics is done by using appropriate language and punctuations which is learned as appropriate on the topic.

2. Definition of Performance

Performance is completion of a task with application of knowledge, skills and abilities. It is also the real world linguistic output. It may accurately reflect competence, but it also may include speech errors. Performance may be flawed because of memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest and errors (random and characteristic) or other psychological factors, it also represents only a small sample of possible utterances. Performance changes over time are not invariable across individuals. There is increasing empirical evidence that individuals differ with respect to patterns of intra-individual change (Hofmann, Jacobs, & Gerras, 1992; Ployhard & Hakel, 1998;

Zickar & Slaughter, 1999). These findings indicate that there is no uniform pattern of performance development over time.

3. Writing Performance

Writing performance is the way to know how the students perform their writing. To set the stage for discussing why outlines and rough drafts might influence writing performance, it begins with definitions of key terms related to the process and product of writing.

4. The factors that affect students' writing performance

All of the research reviews support the hypothesis that student performance depends on different socio-economic, psychological, environmental factors. The research focused on student performance that is affected by different factors such as learning abilities because new paradigm about learning assumes that all students can and must learn at higher levels but it should not be considered as constraint because there are other factors like race, gender, sex that can affect student's performance. (Hansen, Joe B.2000).

The other factor is classroom activities. The variation of the classroom activities could improve the students' writing performance in order to get more practice in the classroom. It means that the classroom activities can influence toward the students' writing performance. Richard (2001) explains that the classroom activities should be parallel to the real world as closely as possible. Since language as a tool of communication, methods, and materials, it should concentrate on the message that would be delivered to the others.

Research Methodology

The researcher gained the data by using some instruments to achieve an objective of the research, there were:

1. Test

The test was given to the students in the classroom. They wrote a text about descriptive texts. Through this test, the researcher analyzed the factors or the other things that affect students' performance when writing descriptive texts.

2. Protocol Analysis

Protocol analysis was a psychological research method that elicited verbal reports from research participants. Protocol analysis was used to study thinking in cognitive psychology (Crutcher, 1994), cognitive science (Simon & Kaplan, 1989), and behavior analysis (Austin & Delaney, 1998).

3. Recording

Recording was one of the ways that gave the accurate data. It gave the detail data during the earlier until the learning process ended. So the researcher could repeat again to get complete data that was needed.

4. Interview guideline

In this research, the researcher gave the questions related to teaching learning writing process. The researcher asked some questions and the students or teacher answered the questions. The researcher recorded when the interview went on.

5. Camera

In this research, the researcher also used camera to take photos when teaching learning process went on. The photos would become a document to support the data of the research.

Research Finding

1. Student 1

Based on the research that has been carried out by the researcher in the school, it was found that he could not develop his ideas to create or arrange the words when he was writing descriptive texts. He stated that he used to write based on the thing that come out spontaneously from his mind but sometimes he could not make it into a good writing. Those were the problems and the factors that hampered him in writing descriptive texts. Student 1 said honestly that the teacher has taught the materials about the grammatical structure or steps in writing but he forgot the steps about what has taught by teacher to them.

2. Student 2

It was found on the interview and the test that has been done by the researcher in the school, it was found that Student 1 found it very difficult in vocabulary, he did not master much vocabulary that made him find it difficult to develop his writing. When he was being asked by the teacher to write something whether it was about descriptive text, narrative text or procedure text, he used to write it spontaneously and he must think it in Bahasa Indonesia and then he translated the words into English. In descriptive text itself, he felt that it was hard for him to describe the things or places that he never visited, because if he ever went to the places or saw the things directly and then it was easy for him to describe it because he experienced it directly.

3. Student 3

It was discovered on the research that has been done in the school, it was found that Student 3 found it difficult to think about the words or ideas that she wanted to write in her writing. She made two paragraphs and she had difficulty in grammar and verb because in English, she could not translate word by word because it had the different meaning.

4. Student 4

Based on the research in the school, Student 4 did her writing very well. She made the identification in the first paragraph and then description in the second paragraph, and then the conclusion in the third paragraph. On the other hand, she stated that she did not know about the history very well about the things or places that she described that made her could not develop the ideas very well. It was the same problem with other students, she used to write spontaneously and directly without making the outline, draft and so on.

5. Student 5

The study showed that Student 5 did not really describe the thing or the place that he wrote in his writing. He could not understand about the generic structure in the writing and he found it difficult in the grammar and to arrange the words.

6. Student 6

In the study that has been done in the school, student 6 was the student whose writing was complete and she made the identification, description and conclusion in her writing. She made the descriptive text about Parangtritis beach. She never thought about the things or the idea before she wanted to write because when she had to think about the

things or the ideas before writing, she forgot it. So, she used to write it directly. In the arrangement of the paragraph, it was a bit problem for her because she could not make sure that it was already correct, and she found it easier to think in Bahasa Indonesia and then translated it into English.

7. Student 7

It was found on the research that Student 7 found difficulty in the grammar, but overall in her writing she could write it very well. She felt comfortable and easier when she wrote the descriptive text directly.

8. Student 8

It could be seen on the research that Student 8 was the student that found difficulty to develop his ideas. He could not develop the sentence in writing. When he was being asked by the researcher about the generic structure, he stated that he liked to write directly because he did not know about the generic structure in the writing. He could not develop or arrange the sentence in the paragraph.

9. Student 9

It was discovered on the research in the school, Student 9 found it difficult in translating the words and he liked to write directly or spontaneously without had to think about the generic structure or another rules in writing.

10. Student 10

The study showed on the research that Student 10 found difficulty in the grammar, arrangement of the paragraph and generic structure in writing. He used to develop the sentence based on the ideas that came out from his mind spontaneously, because it was

hard for him to describe the things or places and also to think about the words that wanted to be used in the sentence.

Discussion

The study discussed that writing descriptive texts was not easy for the students. Some of them could not make good way, but other students could make good way. Overall, some students had interest in English language proficiency, their performance when writing was still below average. In fact, it should be apprehended that to write was important. Therefore, in order to have good performance in writing descriptive texts, students need a lot of deliberate and continual exposures to any kind of spoken texts in the target language because it makes them get easier to think and develop their writing performance.

Unfortunately, what happened in SMKI Yogyakarta was the ignorance of writing subject. No effort and serious response to overcome the problem, which caused inability to conduct proper writing teaching-learning activities. It was the evidence of the ignorance of the teaching of writing in that school.

CONCLUSION

Students' performance in writing descriptive texts depends on each individual; each student has different performance and quality in writing. Some students feel easier to write the texts spontaneously and directly, but other students felt easier to write or describe the things or places if they have ever been visited that place. Almost all the students said that they do not make the outline or draft before started to write and most of them donot know about the terminology in the descriptive texts, but some of them stated that they make the revision or check their writing again after finished writing. Some students cannot develop the idea in the topic sentence in each

paragraph. There were some factors that affect students' performance in writing descriptive text. Those problems are stated as follows: (a) the students found difficulties in developing the idea when writing, (b) the students were lack of vocabularies, (c) the students faced difficulties to translate words by words in English, (d) the students liked to write descriptive text spontaneously, (e) the students found it difficult to describe the things or place indirectly, and (f) the students got bored easily during in the class.

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