

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING SHORT
MESSAGE AT EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 4
TANJUNGPINANG**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to know the eighth grade students' ability in writing short message of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang. Research design that the researcher used is qualitative descriptive with purposive sampling technique to get the research subject. The subject of the study was the class eight three students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang in the Academic Year of 2018/2019, which consisting of 37 students. The researcher got the data by used written test to the students. The researcher used Glass writing assessment to analyze students' writing ability. But, the researcher just focuses in an aspect, which is organization or structure of the text. The result of this study is the students' ability in writing is low, specifically writing short message using present continuous tense. This supported by the fact that among 37 students, there were only seven students got high score, five students got moderate score, and twenty five students got low score. Based into the class average percentage, the students in the class eight three (VIII.3) got 49.05%, means insufficient achievement or poor ability.

Keyword: Ability, Writing, Short Message

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the well-known languages and commonly used by many people in the world. In Indonesia, English is not a new thing, because English becomes one of the main subjects in the education world. This subject is taught from junior high schools to universities. There are four main skills in English subject which are students have to learn, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of an important skill that to be mastered by the students.

According to Nunan (2003), writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to the reader. Writing demands the students to master it well to help them in expressing their thought, feeling, and ideas. Writing enables learners to plan and rethink the communication process. It means that to create good writing, the researchers need to employ all their thought and knowledge (Murcia, 2001).

The Indonesian junior high school students learn about writing in English subject. It starts from the easiness like writing words, sentences, until kinds of text. One of junior high school in Tanjungpinang, namely SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang also learns about writing. Based on their eight grade syllabus, the students are learning about kinds of texts, one of them is short functional text. Short functional text is a text with a specific purpose and meant to help the reader accomplished an everyday task (Humphries, 2005).

Writing is the most difficult thing that students have to learn, especially when in a foreign language. This thing was proved when the researcher found that the students, especially at eighth-grade are stated that English writing is difficult.

One of the most prominent problem that researcher found is they cannot write a text with good structure.

Therefore, according to their school syllabus, the eighth-grade students will learn about the short message. The short message means a text to inform or ask someone to do something (Purwanti, 2013). The content can be a notification, reminders, memos or instructions, and special commands such as a shopping list or task list. Then, the researcher also set the rule to write this text, with using the present continuous tense. According to Azar (1985), present continuous tense or present progressive known are expresses an activity that is in progress (is occurring, is happening) right now. The event is in progress at the time the speaker is saying a sentence. The event began in the past, is in progress now, and will probably continue. Present continuous tense is composed of the verb “be” and affix “ing” (Hanafi, 2011).

Therefore, the researcher conducts a study about to know to know the students’ ability in writing short message, specifically using present continuous tense.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted at SMP NEGERI 4 TANJUNGPINANG where located at Jalan Basuki Rahmat No. 3 Tanjungpinang, beside SMA NEGERI 2 TANJUNGPINANG. The research design was qualitative descriptive. Based on Donal (2002), qualitative research involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. Descriptive research is to

describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened (Nassaji, 2015).

This research used purposive sampling as the sampling technique to get the research subject for the research. A research subject is a person who is the objects of research being investigated (Ruslan, 2003). According to Arikunto (2010), purposive sampling is the process of selecting a sample by taking a subject that is not based on the level of the area, but it is taken based on the specific purpose. In this study, the research subject of this research was class eight three (VIII.3) of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang, which consisted of 37 students.

A research instrument is what researcher used to collect information or data to answer the research question (Eng, 2013). The instrument of this research was a written test. The students need to write on a piece of paper, which has been prepared by the researcher. The researcher gave the students a written test to make a short message. The researcher set the present continuous tense as the rule in making the short message. Two different topics are given by the researcher to the students. The test took approximately thirty minutes.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this research, after the researcher giving a written test to the students, the researcher calculated the students' scores with the several formulas. First of all, the researcher used Glass (2005) writing assessment to assessing students' ability in writing short message text. The table below is a data display that shows the students' raw scores in the organization aspect.

Table 1.

No.	Name	Organization Aspect Score	Information
1.	Student 1	4	Decent
2.	Student 2	4	Decent
3.	Student 3	3	Sufficient
4.	Student 4	2	Deficient
5.	Student 5	2	Deficient
6.	Student 6	3	Sufficient
7.	Student 7	2	Deficient
8.	Student 8	4	Decent
9.	Student 9	1	Inadequate
10.	Student 10	3	Sufficient
11.	Student 11	1	Inadequate
12.	Student 12	2	Deficient
13.	Student 13	2	Deficient
14.	Student 14	4	Decent
15.	Student 15	1	Inadequate
16.	Student 16	3	Sufficient
17.	Student 17	2	Deficient
18.	Student 18	5	Excellent
19.	Student 19	2	Deficient
20.	Student 20	3	Sufficient
21.	Student 21	3	Sufficient
22.	Student 22	1	Inadequate
23.	Student 23	1	Inadequate
24.	Student 24	1	Inadequate
25.	Student 25	1	Inadequate
26.	Student 26	5	Excellent
27.	Student 27	1	Inadequate
28.	Student 28	1	Inadequate
29.	Student 29	1	Inadequate
30.	Student 30	4	Decent
31.	Student 31	2	Deficient
32.	Student 32	1	Inadequate
33.	Student 33	1	Inadequate
34.	Student 34	3	Sufficient
35.	Student 35	2	Deficient
36.	Student 36	1	Inadequate
37.	Student 37	1	Inadequate

The researcher assessed the total of students' writing scores, she calculated them with existing formula by Asrul et al (2014) as the following table:

Table 2.

Students' Highest Score	Students' Lowest Score
$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$	$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100$
$P = \frac{5}{5} \times 100$	$P = \frac{1}{5} \times 100$
$P = 100$	$P = 20$

To get a valid final score, the researcher also took scores from the English teachers. Both would be summed and divided using formulas in Microsoft Excel.

Table 3.

No.	Name	English Teacher Score	Researcher Score	Final Score	Grade
1.	Student 1	70	80	75	A
2.	Student 2	70	80	75	A
3.	Student 3	60	60	60	C
4.	Student 4	50	40	45	D
5.	Student 5	50	40	45	D
6.	Student 6	70	60	65	B
7.	Student 7	50	40	45	D
8.	Student 8	80	80	80	A
9.	Student 9	40	20	30	D
10.	Student 10	50	60	55	D
11.	Student 11	30	20	25	D
12.	Student 12	50	40	45	D
13.	Student 13	50	40	45	D
14.	Student 14	80	80	80	A
15.	Student 15	30	20	25	D
16.	Student 16	70	60	65	B
17.	Student 17	40	40	40	D
18.	Student 18	90	100	95	A
19.	Student 19	40	40	40	D
20.	Student 20	50	60	55	D
21.	Student 21	60	60	60	C
22.	Student 22	30	20	25	D
23.	Student 23	30	20	25	D
24.	Student 24	40	20	30	D

25.	Student 25	40	20	30	D
26.	Student 26	90	100	95	A
27.	Student 27	50	20	35	D
28.	Student 28	40	20	30	D
29.	Student 29	40	20	30	D
30.	Student 30	70	80	75	A
31.	Student 31	60	40	50	D
32.	Student 32	60	20	40	D
33.	Student 33	40	20	30	D
34.	Student 34	70	60	65	B
35.	Student 35	70	40	55	D
36.	Student 36	30	20	25	D
37.	Student 37	30	20	25	D
TOTAL				1815	

After the researcher got a total of the students' scores and grades, she calculated them with existed formula by Hossein (1982) and changed it into a percentage. This percentage is useful to know how many percent students' of class eight three (VIII.3) got in each score of writing short message text. The percentage table would appear below:

Table 4.

No.	Grade	Total of Student	Percentage (%)	Information
1.	A	7	18.91%	A few students
2.	B	3	8.12%	A few students
3.	C	2	5.41%	A few students
4.	D	25	67.56%	More than half of students

And then, the researcher also computed the averages of the students' score with Hadi (1988) formula, to find out whether the class eight three (VIII.3) students have the low ability in writing or not. The data would appear below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Mean Score} &= \frac{\sum x}{N} \\
 &= \frac{1.815}{37} \\
 &= 49.05
 \end{aligned}$$

The mean of the test score is 49.05, and then it would be calculated by using the formula as stated by Hossein (1982) as follow:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Percentage of the students' average} &= \frac{\text{The mean of score}}{\text{The total score on the test}} \times 100\% \\
 &= \frac{49.05}{100} \times 100\% \\
 &= 49.05\%
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the average that the researcher calculated, 49.05% is categorized as insufficient achievement and concluded as grade E or poor. It also proved by table 4. shows that bigger percent of the students writing percentage is in the students who got grade D, with 67.56% or more than half of students in the class. It means that the eight three class student has a low ability in writing, especially writing a short message that using present continuous tense.

DISCUSSIONS

The researcher conducted this research into the class eight three (VIII.3) of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang, which has 37 students in the class. The sources of data, which is to support this research, were gained

from the students' observation while the researcher had teaching practice (PPL) and samples of students' written tests.

Based on their syllabus, students learned writing. According to Nunan (2003), writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to the reader. One kind of writing text that they learned is short functional text, which meant to help the reader accomplished an everyday task (Humphries, 2005). One of the examples is a short message.

In this research, a short message is a focus for the researcher to know the students' ability in writing. According to Purwanti (2013), a short message is a text to inform or ask someone to do something. The purpose of a short message is to send an important message or information to other people, friend or family. There are three generic structures in this text, which are opening segment, the purpose of the message, and a closing segment. Because short message not bound of any tenses, so the researcher set the present continuous tense, as the rule in writing the text.

Students assumed that English as a difficult subject, particularly writing. The researcher found that the students are difficult to make a good structure in a text. Because of that, the researcher just focuses on how the students writing a short message text with good generic structures, because the researcher found that are a prominent problem in students' writing.

Refers to the data description, this research used several formulas and writing assessment from experts, to know whether the students have a low ability or not. With the average percentage that was calculated with Hadi (1988) formula

by the researcher, the students got 49.05%, which is categorized as insufficient achievement and concluded as grade E or poor ability. This statement is support that the students of class eight three (VIII.3) of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang is having the low ability in writing a short message. With the percentage that the researcher got and also from the students' written test result, it shows that they could not write a short message with good structures and sentences. The students' written test shows that many of students who not pay attention to the generic structures of the text. Most of them did not put the opening segment or closing segment. And their purpose of the message is not clear. Each of the sentences did not arrange consistently.

In line with the previous study in one of the researchers related findings by Lalu Hadi Rahmatullah "Students' Ability in Writing Short Functional Text in The Form of Informal Invitation Letter". Related to this research, it is the same to discuss students' ability in writing short functional text. That research has more concern to discuss informal invitation letter, although the researcher is more concern to a short message text. In that research, it more concern in assessing students writing in five aspects, which are content of the message, complimentary closing, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. It is different from the researcher who just focuses on one prominent problem of the students, which is an organization or structure of the text. But, both of these researches are having same resulted, that the students having the low ability in writing.

CONCLUSIONS

From the data, there are 37 students as the participant of this research. The final result of this research is 7 students got grade A or 18.91% students in the class. It means that there are a few students in the class who can write a short message with a good structure. 3 students who got grade B or 8.12%. It means that there are a few students who can write a short message with good structure, but with a little bit mistaken at a few words. 2 students who got grade C or 5.41%. It means that there are a few students who can write a short message, but sometimes missed the structure and the sentences not arranged consistently. And, 25 students who got grade D or 67.56%. It means that there are more than half students who cannot write a short message, both with the generic structure of the text and sentences arrangement. According to the class average percentage, the students also got 49.05%. This percentage is categorized as insufficient achievement and concluded as grade E or poor ability. It means that the class eight three students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang in the Academic Year of 2018/2019 are having the low ability.

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