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Article

The Assessment of Students' English Writing Skill at SMA Yaspem Tugu Ibu Depok

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KEYWORDS

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A B S T R A C T

The aim of this research is to analyze empirically English writing skill of Senior High School students. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. The population of this research is the second grade students from SMA Yaspem Tugu Ibu in Depok. The sample was taken through simple random sampling of which 25 students as samples of this research. For collecting the data, the instruments used in this research were writing test and interview. The writing test was conducted to obtain the writing skill indicators, while the interview was carried out to elicit information of students' problems in writing. The result of this research explained that students' English writing skill was definitely good at SMA Yaspem Tugu Ibu Depok. There were 88% of students with scores more than 50 and only 12 % with scores less than 50. In conclusion, the students' writing skill at SMA Yaspem Tugu Ibu is considered to be high category in English writing skill.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of information technology has driven globalization become very familiar in daily conversation. It also influences the way people communicate each other. As we know, English has played an important role in the daily life of Indonesian people for many years due to its influence on education, society, business, diplomacy, and so on. As a developing country, Indonesia really needs English because the government is trying to improve all aspects which are usually faced by all countries. Due to the significance of English, being competent in English is greatly needed. Having English skills, it could encourage Indonesian people to study English.

One of language skills in English competency is writing skill. Writing has an essential role in language education. Harmer (2007: 134) states some reasons why writing should be taught of the students. The first reason is reinforcement- students will benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. The visual demonstration of the language construction is invaluable for both the understanding of how it all fits together and as an aid to commit the new language to the memory. The second is language development. It is the actual process of writing to help students to learn as they go along. The third reason is learning style – writing is appropriate for learners that need time to produce the language. It can also be a quite reflective activity. The last reason is writing as a skill – writing is one of for skills that must be mastered by

students. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply advertisement, etc.

However, writing is not very easy to do. Writing is considered as the most difficult skill to learn. According to Gibbons (2002:25), writing English as a foreign language is difficult for students. These difficulties according to Harmer (2007:145) cover three common problems. The first problem is the process and organization which cover the choice of sentence structure, the way the sentences are linked together and sequenced together and organization of ideas. Second is the problem of language use which deals with ability to use certain structures or mechanical skills. Third is the problem of content. This problem is about what to say in writing. Because of this problem, the teacher should make careful choices about methods, materials and procedures to use in the writing class.

Moreover, some people consider writing is easy as when they speak, but it is not that simple because writing is not only putting the words into paper but also it needs hard work. According Brown (1987:87) in producing writing students need to focus on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into written text and how to revise text for clearer the meaning, how to edit for appropriate grammar and how to produce the final product.

In fact students' motivation in writing practice in Indonesia is still low. This study shows us that writing is still unfavorable skill within Indonesian learners. Students may consider writing session is boring and undesirable. As a result, students are demotivated in learning writing skill.

For more than six decades now, research and practice in English language teaching identified the four skills, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of important aspects in teaching language, because with writing the students can explore their mind and ideas in the paper and it can be shown to people (Brown, 1987:232). It means that writing is a process of delivering ideas through written text or translating what is on mind through written language. The definition above can be spelled out as: writer (the delivery of message) write a written text (a message) and the written text are read by a reader (the receiver of message). Everyone is bale to have writing skill. We can start to write at any times as long as there is a strong willing to be able to write.

Meanwhile, according to Studova, et. al. (2000:6) writing is an exploratory process and as the piece is being written and assembled the outline can be amended to take account

of additional points or to change emphasis. While, Robert (1990:1) states that writing provides relatively permanent record of information, belief, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories etc. Writing allows us to share our communication not only with our contemporaries, but also with future generations. So writing skill firstly begins by using language expressively and imaginatively like writing diary or letters to friends and then the writer can practice to be more critically in writing until they are able to produce good writings. Reading from many sources, listening, watching television and talking to others can be inspiration to write.

We do not have to worry of not having any talent when we want to start writing because talent is not an absolute condition to become a writer but writing skill starts by interest, creativities, doing many practices, sharp reasoning of social phenomena and developing of reading habit from many books sources. Thus, talent is not the main requirement for being a writer but writing skill with interest, creativity, good intellectual activity to existing social phenomena and reading habit.

Harmer (2007:112) proposes that there is a distinction between writing-for-learning and writing-for-writing. Writing-for-learning is used as an aide-memoire or practice tool to help students practice and work with language they have been studying. Writing activities like this are designed to give reinforcement to students. On the other hand, writing-for-writing is directed at developing the students' skill as writer. In other words, the main purpose for activities of this type is that students should become better at writing, whatever kind of writing that might be.

It can be inferred that writing as a long process means that in writing activity firstly there is an idea and then the idea produce words then those words will be arranged into sentences and become paragraphs and at last it becomes a writing which has message to be delivered.

It can't be denied that writing has become prominent part in people's everyday life. Writing in whatever form it is, proves to be effective way of communication for instance, simple notices at shopping centers, printed media such as newspaper, magazines, etc. Educational and scientific sources like books, journals, and encyclopedias, and literary works such as poem, novel, and short story ; these shows us that writing in any forms serves different but essential function in day to day activities. We can image how hard people carry out their duties without writing.

In addition, writing skill can be a ticket to better college grades and greater academic achievement since good writing skill is really needed in the academic context,

Besides, most jobs nowadays as well as future jobs will require applicants' writing skill; even to apply for a job, good writing skill is demanded. Furthermore, it is commonly known that a good writing skill is a realization of good thinking. When students are trying to write they should automatically think because they develop their ideas and sometimes revise what they have written similarly. Good thinking, if being nurtured, it will help one to produce a good writing.

Writing skill can be implemented in many kinds of type writing. One of them is an essay. Oshima and Hogue (1999:100) state "an essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long instead of just one or two paragraphs. It is written about one topic, just as a paragraph is. However, the topic of an essay is too complex to discuss in one paragraph. Therefore, you must divide the topic into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then you must tie all of the separate paragraphs together by adding an introduction and a conclusion". Furthermore, they explain that an essay has three main parts namely an introductory paragraph, a body and a concluding paragraph. It can be seen that writing an essay is essentially the same as writing a paragraph; an essay is just longer.

The introductory paragraph consists of two parts: a few general statements about your subject to attract your reader's attention and a thesis statement to state the specific subdivisions of your topic. Then, the body consists of one or more paragraphs, so the number of paragraphs in the body will vary with the number of subdivisions of subtopics. Finally, an essay can be closed and summarized by the concluding paragraph. Concluding paragraph is a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research which uses descriptive method, because it wants to give vivid description of what happens. Therefore, descriptive method is suitable for this purpose.

The population of this research is all second grade students of SMA Yaspen Tugu Ibu. Then, 25 students are selected as participants. The data is obtained from second grade students of SMA Yaspen Tugu Ibu. Technique for analyzing the data is to analyze the percentage of indicators of students' writing skill all writing tests.

Such procedures are conducted to collect the data as the followings:

1. Observation

Observation is a method of collecting the information by investigating directly to the current process of learning English writing.

2. Interview

Collecting the data and information by interviewing teachers and students to the research importance.

3. Literature Review

The data and information are collected by reviewing sources or references. In this phase, literature review starts off with the analysis of the previous research from both offline and online sources. The list of books and journals as the references is in the references section.

4. Writing Test

Writing test was given for students to identify their writing skill. In scoring, Hughes (2003) had been used the scoring system is as follows:

Content mastery	: 13-30
Organization mastery	: 7-20
Vocabulary mastery	: 7-20
Grammar mastery	: 5-25
Mechanics mastery	: 2-5
<hr/>	
Total	: 100

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings have shown that students' writing skill of SMA Yaspen Tugu Ibu Depok is still in a high level. Based on the data taken from the students, there is a significant percentage that indicates the high level of students' writing skill. From 25 students, there are 22 students with scores more than 50 and 3 students with scores less than 50. In percentage, it can be said that the students who have high writing skill reach 88%, while the students who have low writing skill reach 12%. It means that the students with high writing skill are more than students with low writing skill.

Table1 Students' English Writing Scores at SMA Yaspen Tugu Ibu Depok

No	Name	TOTAL SCORE
1	Ridwan Prasetya	93
2	Ahmad Zaki	51
3	M. Iqbal Ralhan	45
4	Dhasa Satria Nugraha	71
5	Nazwa Kheira	73
6	Venny Wara	89
7	Saskia Mawar	71
8	Tariza Samaya. Z	75
9	Saniyah Syahla	77
10	Ilham Ibnu Rizki	85
11	Danang Abdilah	45
12	Nauval Apriliyano	79

13	Bella Aiya L	75
14	Arum puspitasari	64
15	Nurul Jannah Athirah	78
16	Nyimas Yori kly	85
17	Rizky Adinda	82
18	Deandri	83
19	Nabitha Ari Pritama	93
20	Putri Mentari	64
21	Fadiya Nursalsabila	72
22	Rofiatu Sania Rahma	70
23	Rama Rahmadani	86
24	Dzakir Fauzan	48
25	Fatimah Z	65

Table 2 Percentage of Students' Scores on English Writing Skill

1. Total Students' responses			
≤ 50	Percentage	≥ 50	Percentage
3	12 %	22	88 %

Based on all of the data collected, there can be found that all of them have the significant score by showing 88% of students' good writing skill. It confirms that writing skill at SMA Yaspen Tugu Ibu is definitely being practiced by the students regularly since the teacher also concerned on the benefit of mastering this skill for students.

Table 3 Students' Score in Writing Components

Students	C	O	V	G	M	SUM
S1	25	16	18	20	4	93
S2	16	10	10	12	3	51
S3	13	8	10	12	2	45
S4	22	15	15	16	3	71
S5	21	16	15	18	3	73
S6	26	19	18	21	5	89
S7	22	15	14	18	2	71
S8	21	15	16	20	3	75
S9	24	16	16	18	3	77
S10	26	17	17	21	4	85
S11	15	8	10	10	2	45
S12	24	16	15	20	4	79
S13	20	15	16	20	4	75
S14	20	12	14	15	3	64
S15	24	16	15	20	3	78
S16	25	18	17	21	4	85
S17	25	18	15	20	4	82
S18	26	17	16	20	4	83
S19	28	19	19	22	5	93
S20	17	14	15	15	3	64
S21	24	15	14	16	3	72
S22	21	15	15	16	3	70
S23	26	16	18	22	4	86
S24	15	10	10	10	3	48
S25	20	12	15	15	3	65

Explanation:

C = Content (the substance of writing, the idea expressed)

O = Organization (the organization of the content)

V = Vocabulary (the choice of words, idioms, lexical items to give a particular tone or flavor to writing)

G = Grammar (the employing grammatical and syntactic forms)

M = Mechanics (the use of graphic convention of the language)

Furthermore, the table above shows the students scores for each component of writing according to Hughes (2003). In every components most students get high score, even some of them nearly reached the highest level of the scoring (e.g students 1, 6, 10, 16, 17, 19, 23). It means that in the descriptive text they've written, students successfully wrote the good and brief content, hence the goal of the text in describing things is achieved, and relevant to the topic. Students seem to master the knowledge of the subject they described. While the organization of the text is clearly built as it is clearly stated, well-organized, and cohesive for we could find it is not hard for the reader to follow and understand the information presented. In addition, the vocabularies used by students are excellently various in ranges, effective in usage and well chosen. While in language use or grammatical aspect, most of students use effective but simple constructions, only minor errors of agreement found but surprisingly none in tenses. As for mechanical items, students seemed to occasionally produce few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, but it does not obscure the meaning.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that the students' writing skill is still high that is caused by some factors and indicators remarked in their ability to write descriptive type of text. Findings also show that almost all students are already maximal to develop their potential and competence in learning process of English writing. In this case, teacher should be much creative in exploring many kind of teaching strategy. Moreover, teacher should also have enough knowledge of current interesting issues in order to be able to inspire students' interest in writing.

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