

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ABILITY TO WRITE PROCEDURE TEXTS AT THE INFORMATICS ENGINEERING STUDENTS OF STATE POLYTECHNIC OF CILACAP

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Abstract: *Mastering writing skill is a better way to communicate. While in practice, some English teachers/lecturers frequently found out that their students' writings were not well-written due to the students' lack of writing ability. There are many text genres learnt by the students. One of them is procedure text. The students' ability to write procedure text is not only measured by their mastery of grammar, but also from its structures and the language features. The data were 23 procedure texts written by the first semester students of Informatics Engineering department at State Polytechnic of Cilacap. This study is a case study in nature by using combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in analysis. The analysis was done according to communicative purpose, generic structure, and linguistic features of a procedure text. The result of the study showed that all Informatics Engineering students (100%) have achieved the communicative purpose of procedure text, almost all students (97.10%) could implement the generic structures of procedure text in their writings, and some of the students (60.87%) could characterize their procedure texts by using the linguistic features of procedure text.*

Keywords: *writing, procedure text, communicative purpose, generic structure, linguistic feature.*

INTRODUCTION

People interact with others through language. To create good communication, people need to have good communication skill. One of the ways to make good communication skill is by learning language. Learning language is regarded quite difficult because some people may find some difficulties in learning it, both in spoken and written languages. There

are four major skills in learning language, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are regarded the perceptive skills, while speaking and writing are regarded the reproductive skills. Some people may find the reproductive skill is more difficult than the receptive skill. This is the reason why many people do not speak or write a lot when they are not talking in their

mother tongue. Indeed, people do not always share the same language. To deal with the problem, government puts more emphasis on the productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing, in the curriculum. Mastering writing skill is a better way to communicate. Writing is also a better way to express someone's idea, although some people think writing is the most difficult skill to master. When it is read by others, communication will occur. In practice, some English teachers/lecturers frequently found out that their students' writings were not well-written due to the students' lack of writing ability. One of the difficulties faced by the students is the lack of cohesion which contributes to lower score in test.

There are many text genres learnt by the students. One of them is procedure text. Hartono (2005: 6) states in his book that "procedure text's function is to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps". The students' ability to write procedure text is not only measured by their mastery of grammar but also from its structures and the language features. The writer thinks the students' ability

to write procedure text is not only influenced by their mastery of grammar, but also by the whole aspects of the procedure text itself, from the social function, the generic structures, and the linguistics features.

This study aims to analyze the students' writing skill of procedure text which focuses on three significant problems: (1) To what extent is the communicative purpose of procedure text achieved by the students; (2) What generic structure is used in procedure text written by the students; and (3) What linguistic features characterize the students' procedure texts.

The objectives of the study are (1) to describe the communicative purpose of procedure texts achieved by the students; (2) to describe the generic structure used in procedure texts written by the students; and (3) to describe the linguistic features that characterize the students' procedure texts.

1. Review of Related Literature

1.1. General Concept of Genre

Hyland (2004: 3) states

genre is a term for grouping text together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations.

For many people, it is an intuitively attractive concept that helps to organize the common-sense labels we use to categorize texts and the situations in which they occur.

The concept of genre is based on the idea members of community, usually who have little difficulty in recognizing similarities in the text they use frequently and are able to draw on their repeated experiences which such text to read, understand, and perhaps write them relatively easily. This is, in part, because writing as a practice based on expectations: the reader's chances of interpreting the writer's purpose are increased if the writer takes the trouble to anticipate what the writer might be expecting based on previous texts he or she has read of the same kind. From the explanation above, the term genre can be concluded as a criterion for a literary composition which represents the writer's language to respond the situation.

1.2. General Concept of Writing

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill to master since people have to express their ideas in form of a written one. They have to write about what they think in their mind and write

it down on a paper by using the correct procedure. Writing is also seen as involving a complex web or relations between writer, reader, and text (Richards, J.C, 2007: 21). Richards (2007: 21) also states "writing can also be stated as a physical and mental process of students to express ideas, feelings, and opinions through words for a particular audience."

Silva and Matsuda (2002: 16) state

writing is viewed as a complex, recursive, and creative process that is very similar in its general outlines for first and second language writers: learning to write requires the development of an efficient and effective composing process.

While in *the Blackwell Encyclopedia of Writings Systems*, Coulmas defines writing systems as

a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system.

From all explanations above, it can be concluded that writing is a process to represent someone's ideas, feelings, and opinions through words between writer, reader, and text.

1.3. Importance of Writing Skill

Undoubtedly, writing has become a prominent part in people's daily life. In almost all aspects of life, writing, in whatever form it is, proves to be an effective way of communication. Writing paragraph is said to be the fourth skill and the most difficult skill in learning a language. A child can write a paragraph only after he has learnt certain grammatical rule of language and considerable mastery of vocabulary.

In *the Writing Systems of the Worlds*, Coulmas describes writing systems as

the most visible items of a language, scripts, and orthographies are "emotionally loaded", indicating as they do group loyalties and identities. Rather than being mere instruments of a practical nature, they are symbolic systems of great social significance, which may, moreover, have profound effect on the social structure of a speech community.

Rackham adds "poor writing skills are rampant even at the university level and beyond." While in *The Importance of Good Writing Skills*, Hansen R. and Hansen K. state

writing skills can be the ticket to better college grades and greater

academic achievement since good writing skill is badly 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.

To be able to take part in today's information culture, people can express themselves through writing; they can communicate their ideas, thought, feelings, and experiences, and at the same time, let it known by others. Writing skill is important because the better writing skill someone has, the better future he will get because the future jobs will require good writing skill of their applicants.

1.4. Components of Writing Skill

The first thing in writing is put on an idea. For readers, an idea is important in order to know the writer's background of his or her writing. Besides that, the beginning ideas to write could be a boundary for the writer to write in order not to veer from the beginning purpose of writing.

Good writing involves more than the ability to write grammatically correct sentences. For writing to be truly accessible, however, it also needs

to be both cohesive and coherent (Harmer, J., 2004: 22). Sentences need to be cohesive and the whole text needs to be coherent (Richard, J. C., 2007: 21).

a. Cohesion

Cohesion is the relation between the sentences in a text. Cohesion refers to the resources within language that provide continuity in a text, over and above that provided by clause structure and clause complexes (Gerot and Wignell, 1995: 170). There are two kinds of cohesion:

1. Lexical cohesion

It is achieved in the article by the use of two main devices, i.e.: repetition of words (a number of content words are repeated throughout the text) and lexical set “chains” (lexical sets which interrelate with each other as the article progresses) (Harmer, J., 2004: 22)

2. Grammatical cohesion

It is achieved by some numbers of devices, i.e.: pronoun and possessive reference, article reference, tense agreement, linkers (words describing text

relationships of “addition”, of “contrast”, of “result”, of “time”, etc.), and substitution and ellipsis (Harmer, J., 2004: 24). It is also affected by conjunctions, punctuations, diction, and textual meaning.

b. Coherence

Coherence is the relation between the text and the surrounding of the text. It is also affected by grammar, generic structure, and linguistic features. Harmer, J. (2004: 25) stated that when the text is coherent, the reader can understand at least two things: the writer’s purpose and the writer’s line of thought. In order to make people write, someone needs learning that happens at two levels; social level and individual level; and models that occur through the scaffolding talk (Richard, J. C., 2007: 11).

Cohesion and coherence are important things in creating a good writing, besides mastery of grammar and vocabulary.

1.5. Sequences of Activities in Writing

Based on Richard, J. C. (2007: 21), learning to write involved imitating

and manipulating models provided by the teacher and was closely linked to learning grammar. The sequence of activities in a writing lesson typically involves (Richard, J. C. 2007: 21):

- a) Familiarization: in familiarization, the students study grammar and vocabulary, usually through text.
- b) Controlled writing: in controlled writing, the students manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables. It seeks to prevent errors and develop correct writing habits.
- c) Guided Writing
- d) Free Writing

In free writing, the students use patterns they have developed to write a letter, paragraph, etc. Basic free writing follows these guidelines: write nonstop for a set period of time (10 – 20 minutes); do not make corrections as you write; keep writing, even if you have to write something like, “I don't know what to write”; write whatever comes into your mind; and do not judge or censor what you are writing.

In learning to write, someone needs some steps to create a good writing, not only by imitating and manipulating, but also by doing familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing.

1.6. Writing Procedure Text

In a written procedure text, we describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. It means that we describe about using something or how to do a particular job. We might want to tell about making recipe we like much. A procedure text is a piece of text that describes how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. (Gerot and Wignell, 1995: 206)

Gerot and Wignell (1995: 206) state the order of procedure texts are: the goal, a first paragraph that tells what tools and materials are necessary needed (called materials); but it is not required for all procedural texts, a series of paragraph that tells the steps; i.e. goal followed by a series of steps oriented to achieving the goal; it takes the reader or user step by step through the sequence of actions necessary to complete something successfully.

Gerot and Wignell (1995: 206) define the linguistic features of procedure text is focused on generalized human agents, use simple present tense; se imperative sentence pattern (e.g. cut, don't mix, etc.), use mainly temporal conjunctive relations (or numbering to indicate sequence) e.g. then, while, etc.; use mainly of material (action) clauses (e.g. turn, put, don't mix, etc.), use of adverbials (to state the detail of time, place, or accurate steps) e.g. for five minutes, 2 centimeters from the top, etc. and details irrelevant to the purpose that should be avoided. Language features in a written procedure texts usually use second or third person pronoun.

In writing a procedure text, someone has to follow the order of the text, i.e. the goal, materials, and steps, and the language features of a procedure text to create a good procedure text.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

3.1. Subject of the Study

The subject consists of 23 students of Informatics Engineering department. All subjects are in the first semester. The writer uses random sampling, in which the writer chooses the subjects randomly, because the

writer assumes that all subjects are in the same level of competence.

3.2. Design of the Study

This study is a case study by using combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in analysis. The quantitative approach is used to measure the communicative purpose, the generic structure and the linguistic features of the procedure texts in percentage. While, the qualitative approach is used to describe the students' procedure texts in terms of their communicative purpose, the generic structure, and the linguistic features.

3.3. Procedures

In collecting the data, the writer did some steps. First, the writer administered the writing test. In this step, all subjects were asked to write a procedure text. The writer did not limit the topic. Then, the writer collected the students' writing. After the data were collected, the writer analyzed them. In analyzing the data, some steps were used. First, the writer analyzed the communicative purpose of students' procedure texts. Then, the writer analyzed the generic structure of students' procedure texts written by the subjects. And the last, the writer

analyzed the linguistic features of students' procedure texts.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The first analysis is the analysis of the communicative purpose, in which the data were analyzed in terms of the achievement of communicative purpose of procedure text, i.e. to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps. The communicative purpose of procedure text would be achieved by the students if they have described a sequence of steps or actions in accomplishing something.

From the analysis of 23 students' procedure writings, all students (100%) met the communicative purpose of the text. It might happen because all students already understood the communicative purpose of a procedure text, i.e. to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of actions or steps.

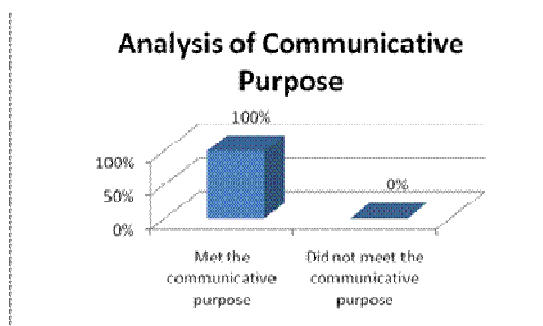


Figure 1. Analysis of Communicative Purpose

The second analysis is the analysis of the generic structure of procedure text. The generic structure of procedure text involves goal, materials needed, and actions or steps. The analysis of the students' procedure texts showed that all students (100%) met the goal of the text, 21 students (91.30%) mentioned the materials of the text, and all students (100%) elaborated the steps of the text. From the analysis, there was error in students' writing, i.e. 2 students (8.70%) did not mention the material needed. It might happen because some students regarded the materials in a procedure text is as an optional step in doing or accomplishing something, so they missed the materials needed in their procedure texts. Indeed, they should mention the materials needed to make the readers clearly know their writings.

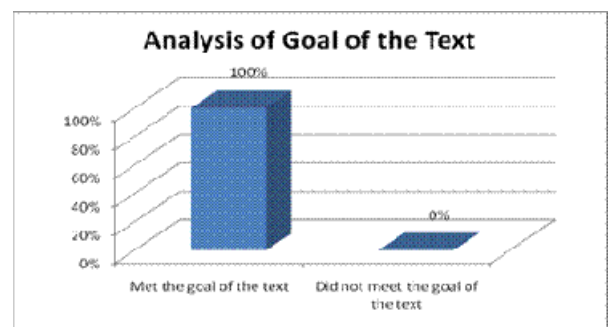


Figure 2. Analysis of Goal of the Text

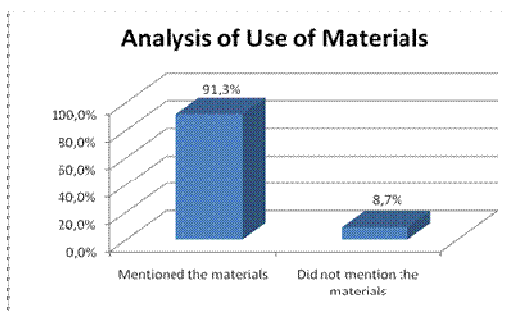


Figure 3. Analysis of Use of Materials

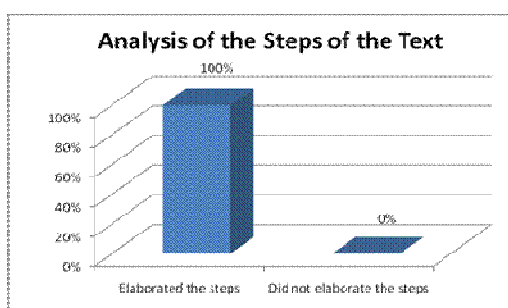


Figure 4. Analysis of the Steps of the Text

The last analysis is the analysis of linguistic features. To ease the analysis, the writer used table to classify each of the linguistic features according to Gerot and Wignell (1995: 204). The linguistic features of procedure text based on Gerot and Wignell are: focus on generalized human agents; use of simple present tense; use of imperative sentence pattern; use of temporal conjunctive relation; use of material process; and use of adverbials.

- a. Focus on generalized human agents. There was only 1

student (4.35%) who focused on generalized human agents. He used the word “you” in his writing. While, the 22 students (95.65%) did not focus on generalized human agents. Instead, they just started their writings with imperative sentence.

- b. Use of simple present tense. All students (100%) already used simple present tense in their writings. It might happen because all students already identified the structure of a procedure text, i.e. by using simple present tense.
- c. Use of imperative sentence pattern. All students (100%) already used imperative sentence pattern. It might happen because they understood one characteristic of a procedure text, i.e. the use of imperative sentence pattern.
- d. Use of temporal conjunctive relation. Only 14 students (60.87%) who used temporal conjunctive relation. It might happen because they knew the way to put the steps of doing/making something

orderly by using temporal conjunctive relation. While, 9 students (39.13%) did not use temporal conjunctive relation. They might not know the way to put the steps of doing/making something orderly.

- e. Use of material process. All students (100%) used material process in their writings. It might happen because they were aware of the importance of material process in their procedure texts.
- f. Use of adverbials. No student (0%) used adverbials in their writings. It might happen because all students regarded the use of adverbials in procedure text as an optional use and meaningless in their writings, so they chose not to use it. It could also be caused by the students' difficulty in telling something accurately by using adverbials.

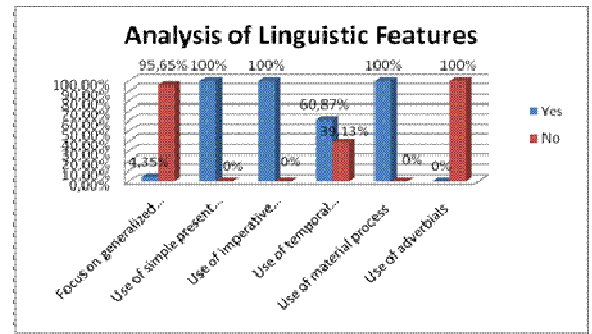


Figure 5. Analysis of Linguistic Features

CONCLUSION

Regarding the result of the study, the writer concludes this study as all Informatics Engineering students (100%) have achieved the communicative purpose of procedure text, almost all students (97.10%) could implement the generic structures of procedure text in their writings, and some of the students (60.87%) could characterize their procedure texts by using the linguistic features of procedure text. It can also be concluded that almost all Informatics Engineering students could write procedure text well, but they still need more practice and support from their peers and teacher to make their writings better.

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