The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Functional Text

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the obstacles that students have when creating functional language, particularly descriptive prose. The research focuses on the writing process, writing skills, and the effectiveness of applying linguistic structures in functional text composition to increase students' writing abilities. Students have difficulty organizing ideas, using proper vocabulary, and making errors in organization, vocabulary, syntax, general structure, and mechanics. Aside from that, students frequently face issues with sentence sequences, a lack of vocabulary, an aware-ness of various sorts of sentences or texts, and mastery of writing components such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. These problems indicate the difficulty of developing functional text-writing abilities and the need for specific techniques to improve students' proficiency in this area. The study continues with suggestions for teachers to assist students in improving their writing skills, such as providing time for practice, organizing thoughts, and using outlines to help students develop their ideas. More research is needed to investigate additional aspects of functional writing and develop techniques to improve students' writing skills in this area.

Keywords: Functional Text; Writing Ability; Writing Difficulty.

INTRODUCTION

English continues to prevail as the predominant language in international education amidst the worldwide trend of globalization. Consequently, English has been a compulsory component of training program at nearly all educational institutions for an extensive period of time. Prior to the 1960s, foreign language writing skills were frequently overlooked. Nevertheless, in the past several decades, it has gained increasing significance and is now considered a crucial communication skill and essential component in the process of language acquisition (Anh, 2019). Writing has gained significance due to English being considered a compulsory subject in the curriculum (Anh, 2019). Since students are exposed to an explosion of information, the teacher has to discover both successful methods of organizing the material being learned and experiences based on each day life, looking at reality in the learning process in Dumitrescu et al., (2015). Writing is a cognitive ability that encompasses the activities of conceptualizing constructing, and refining. Nevertheless, numerous students find writing to be one of the most challenging abilities to acquire. This view might have a substantial impact on their motivation and involvement in the process of learning how to write. The teaching approach for middle school writing also encounters obstacles such as the ineffectiveness of the classroom learning process, insufficient opportunities for practice, and limited time dedicated to writing practice. Engaging in writing activities allows students to articulate their thoughts and ideas through the medium of writ-

ing. However, proficiency in writing cannot be achieved solely through theoretical knowledge. It is essential to engage in practical exercises and regular practice in order to generate high-quality writing (Cameron & Myers, 2013) as stated in Tarigan et al., (2021). Writing skills are interconnected with other language skills, including speaking, reading, grammar, and vocabulary. Writing is widely regarded as the most challenging skill for learners due to various objective and subjective factors, including the need to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Consequently, pupils frequently commit errors when composing different English essays. Insufficient awareness among students on the significance of enhancing their writing abilities will result in a prolonged effort to overcome these challenges. Consequently, students frequently experience a decline in motivation or feelings of discouragement in writing classes, which partially impacts their academic achievements (Anh, 2019). Several students encounter difficulties in formulating, comprehending, and using proper grammar, punctuation, and capitalization while expressing their thoughts in written form. This phenomenon can arise due to a multitude of circumstances, such as insufficient exposure to the English language impeding the acquisition of an extensive vocabulary, as well as the prevalent use of local languages in communication, which can adversely affect their writing proficiency.

Students often struggle to articulate concepts using precise and accurate words. (Tarigan et al., 2021) assert that writing is a language skill that is typically acquired after proficiency in listening, reading, and speaking. The objective of writing is to demonstrate students' acquisition of specific grammar rules, rather than their comprehensive understanding of the topic matter. In addition, accurate spelling, grammar, and overall organization are the most essential measures of skill in a second language. The skill of a pupil to effectively construct and articulate verb tenses is considered indicative of their writing proficiency and overall mastery of the English language.

Inadequate practice and a dearth of originality in composing English texts have been recognized as major factors that contribute to low writing proficiency ratings, as well as the overall educational atmosphere. The educational environment, encompassing teacher support, a culture of student learning, and English language competency among students and parents, exerts a significant impact on the development of writing abilities.

METHOD

The goal of naturalistic inquiry in qualitative research is to fully comprehend social phenomena in their natural environments. It depends on people's own experiences as meaning-makers in their daily lives and concentrates on the "why" of social phenomena rather than the "what" of them. This approach is very helpful in comprehending complicated topics since it simplifies them into significant conclusions that are accessible to all. The hallmark of qualitative research methodologies is the collection of data at the location of participant concerns or study topics. Rarely does this real-time data need the participants to leave their current physical locations in order to gather information.

Research Objectives

The study aims to identify the challenges that students have when creating functional texts, such as writing structure, language, and less creative concepts. The goal is to identify the root causes of these difficulties, which include students' understanding of writing conventions, motivation, and teacher feedback. This study also aims to help students improve their writing skills and fulfill the requirements of their academic programs.

Population and Sampling

Participants included 25 junior high school students from SMPN 3 SILO. When collecting functional texts, researchers can gather a wealth of information on students' experiences, insights, and understanding using qualitative research methodologies. Researchers can gain a better understanding of the context and factors influencing student challenges in general by collecting detailed data. Data analysis is the greatest distinguishing feature of qualitative research compared to quantitative research approaches. It is not a technical exercise, like quantitative techniques, but rather a dynamic, intuitive, and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing (. P.Wong, 2008).

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative data: followed-up interviews will be done with 12 students to learn about their writing processes, issues, and perspectives on functional text writing. The writing test will also include observations on the students' writing processes.

Categorical data analysis approaches in qualitative research entail grouping data into categories related to the research issue, such as:

1. Data from surveys, observations, and interviews are analyzed to identify challenges students have when producing functional texts, including grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.
2. The researcher will analyze errors in each category, including grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.
3. The researcher will assess the results of the category analysis to better understand students' challenges in composing functional texts.

Sampling Strategy

Writing tests examine students' abilities to articulate ideas, employ suitable topic, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, and letter formation. According to the directions, "Please make invitation/greeting cards according to the material and structure taught by the teacher, create a group consisting of 3 people to create your writing in a very interesting way."

Data Collection Tools

1. Test: The researcher will give a test to make invitation and greeting cards by students' own knowledge and creativity, the test will be group consist 3 students. In order to know the grammatical errors which is made by the students.
2. Interview: The researcher will interview the students related to their difficulties in writing functional text, such as grammar, sentence and students' difficulty in learning writing text

Expected Outcomes

The expected results in this research are:

1. Identification of General challenges: The purpose of this research is to identify the general challenges that junior high school students have when writing functional texts such as advertising, brochures, personal letters, announcements, and, in particular, greeting cards and invitation letters.
2. Comprehension Writing Mechanics: This study will look at students' comprehension of writing mechanics, such as grammar, vocabulary, and content, to better understand the challenges they face when composing functional texts.

3. Impact on Writing Quality: This study will investigate how these challenges affect the quality of students' writing, including the general clarity and effectiveness of their functional texts.

4. Fundamental Causes: This study will investigate the root causes of these issues, such as students' lack of knowledge, skills, and methods for composing functional texts.

5. Teaching Strategy: This study will include recommendations for successful teaching strategies to increase students' writing skills in functional texts, such as the use of illustrations, outlines, reading texts, storytelling, real-life experiences, and other techniques.

6. Improving Writing competency: The goal of this research is to help students enhance their writing competency in functional texts, allowing them to compose writings that are clear, concise, and effective for the intended purpose.

7. Improved Understanding of Functional writings: This study will help students comprehend the characteristics, structure, and grammatical qualities of functional writings, allowing them to compose texts that are both socially and linguistically useful.

8. Writing Skills Development: This research will help junior high school students enhance their writing skills, preparing them for future academic and professional writing projects.

By obtaining the intended results, this study will provide significant insight into the challenges that junior high school students encounter when producing functional texts, as well as practical advice for developing their writing skills.

Instrument

1. Writing tests

   To investigate students' skills in expressing ideas, using suitable material, formatting, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling, and letter formation. According to the directions, "Please make invitations /greeting cards according to the material and structure taught by the teacher; create a group consisting of 3 people to create your writing in a very interesting way."

2. Interviews

   Structured interviews were used by the researchers because they can be used to gather detailed information regarding students' experiences, perspectives, and obstacles associated with creating functional texts. This research method is especially beneficial for understanding the specific issues that students have when creating functional texts, including the usage of language elements, grammatical errors, and organization. It can also look into the context in which pupils write, such as the learning environment, resource availability, and academic program requirements. There are some questions for the interview, as:

   1. What challenges do junior high school students face when trying to compose functional texts?

   2. What are some common challenges that junior high school students faced when writing functional texts?

   3. In what ways do junior high school students often find it difficult to maintain their writing texts?

   4. What are the primary problems that junior high school students experience when structuring functional text?

   5. How do junior high school students struggling with vocabulary and language proficiency impact their ability to express concepts clearly in their texts?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Writing is a productive skill that requires thinking, creating, and editing. However, for many pupils, writing is one of the most difficult abilities to master. This view might have a big impact on their desire and interest in mastering the writing process. Middle school writing teachers confront additional obstacles such as inefficiency in the classroom writing learning process, a lack of practice, and a lack of writing practice time. Writing activities allow pupils to convey their thoughts and ideas through writing. However, writing activities cannot be mastered simply through theory; students must actively engage in exercises and practice in order to generate good writing (Cameron & Myers, 2013) in Tarigan et al., (2021). Writing skills are also linked to other language abilities like speaking, reading, grammar, and vocabulary. Writing is widely regarded as the most challenging skill for learners for a variety of objective and subjective reasons. As a result, students frequently make mistakes while producing various English documents. If pupils are not completely aware of the need of strengthening their writing skills, it will take a long time to overcome these challenges. As a result, students frequently lose enthusiasm or become frustrated in writing sessions, compromising their learning results (Anh, 2019).

Some children struggle with composing, digesting, and practicing grammar, punctuation, and capitalization when writing in textual form. This can be attributed to a variety of causes, including little exposure to English, which restricts vocabulary mastering, and a widespread utilization of local languages in communication, which might have an effect on their writing abilities.

This study problem can help to design effective learning strategies for students' writing skills and increase student ability to compose functional texts. In addition, it assists teachers in recognizing renewable teaching approaches and students' learning characteristics in order to increase students' creativity and involvement in learning, particularly in boosting students' writing skills. During the planning stage, students choose what they want to write based on the purpose of the writing, the target people, and the substance and structure of the writing. They record any ideas that come to mind while drafting. They refine their ideas to make better paragraphs or messages. Then, in the final form, they can improve their writing in all aspects until it is good enough to be read. Students struggle to generate ideas when writing.

CONCLUSION

Functional writing is essential in everyday life because it provides specific information and as-sists people in completing a variety of tasks. Functional writing includes an extensive variety of texts, including advertising, recipes, schedules, and more. Each sort of functional text serves a certain purpose and needs readers to interact with the content in different ways depending on the format and intended usage. The researcher hoped that by giving instruction, practice activities, and assessment opportunities centered on functional writing, educators may help children enhance their literacy skills and prepare them to take on academic responsibilities in both practice and reality. Students may struggle with creating functional text, which includes comprehending the work's goal, adjusting to the reader's demands, successfully planning the text, using appropriate technical words, and following grammatical and mechanical structure. This method will be used to study natural occurrences that happen during the life cycle. Naturalistic observation enables researchers to observe behavior as it occurs, without any engaging that could change the nature or logic of the observed situation. The data was collected through an in-depth observation that took a significant amount of time in the field, as well as data processing based on the conditions that transpired during the observation. Qualitative observation is a technique commonly used in qualitative research to comprehend what is going on in the community in a relevant and natural manner. The research dis-cussed in this analysis employs qual-

itative nature observation methodologies. This method aims to understand and interpret behavior, interactions, and phenomena in their natural condition, devoid of external modification or control. Rather than depending on quantitative measuring techniques, the emphasis is on gathering qualitative data that highlights the depth and diversity of observed behavior. This study will be conducted in stages, including natural assessments and interviews with students to investigate their difficulties in learning writing skills within a functional text framework. The purpose is to provide readers and educators with helpful insights for building writing learning tools that target the specific challenges children face. The goal is to produce students who thrive at writing in functional text situations.

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