

# **DEVELOPING WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR EXPLANATION TEXT OF GRADE XI STUDENTS AT SMKN 4 MEDAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Writing is one of skills in English and it's important for students, also it is not an easy skill to master. As stated by Richards and Renandya (2002: 303), writing is the most difficult skill to master for second or foreign language students. Writing skills are placed in the last section after three skills namely listening, speaking, and reading. It can be said that students must apply everything they have in the previous three stages. This study aims to develop a writing assessment rubric for explanation text for eleventh grade, to assess student writing related to the availability of the 2013 Curriculum for English subjects in the school. This research is about how and why, which is the process of explanation text itself and at the same time can improve their writing skills. This research method uses research and development methods (R&D). It is hoped that by using reliable rubrics, teachers can easily assess the writing performance of their students who meet the requirements of the writing aspects. The expert gives some corrections and suggestions on the development writing assessment rubric. Based on the result of the writing assessment rubric, the average was 3,7 and the percentage was 93,7% that categorized in "Very Good" category.

***Keywords:** Assessment Rubric, Students' Explanation Text, Writing*

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Writing as one of the language skills is very important for some reasons. The first reason is that writing is important for senior high school students to communicate or share information and idea such as to write letter or to compose stories. Secondly, writing helps the students to prepare the global competition for their future, for example to get a job in a foreign country. Furthermore, writing can help the students to focus on accurate language use, such as grammar and vocabulary. It may well provoke language development of the students because they think as they write.

One scope of English learning at senior high schools is that students can understand and produce a short functional text and short essays in the form of certain text types. They are procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative, report, news item, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review (Depdiknas, 2006). In this research, the researcher only focused on writing explanation text because it is one of the texts which should be mastered by the eleventh grade students. The researcher also realized that writing an explanation text was not an easy thing to do. Through this research, the students were expected to be able to produce explanation texts appropriately.

Based on the writers' observation at SMK Negeri 4 Medan, students' ability was good enough to input skill during the learning process in the classroom. But there are some aspects to be considered in assessing writing such

as idea, availability of topic sentence, supporting details, vocabulary and grammar. However, the teacher didn't apply them in a rubric. It makes the teachers often give different feedback for the same mistakes on students' writing performances. The researcher found out that instead of implementing one of the techniques provided teaching and learning which can stimulate students' in writing explanation text, the teachers still teach writing by using conventional method. The technique that used was still inappropriate and was lack of the media to support learning process. As a result, when students were taught to write, they still had difficulties in transferring ideas and writing well. Moreover, they even rarely used guide book for English. From the observation' that have been stated above, it can be understood that there are some related problems that occur at SMKN 4 Medan in the way of teaching writing. So, it causes such of problems when the students face the writing lesson in class.

One of the problems of the students is about lacking of grammar. The majority of students think that writing takes time and energy. It is a long process. Besides, some of the mistakes are as the result of their little understanding in grammar. Therefore, they are worried about their writing being judged as right or wrong. That is why, many students waste a valuable time just for getting started. For them, writing is becoming a scary field in their study and they cannot enjoy the learning process in class. As an example in a class, there are 29 students and there are still some of the students failed in passing the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) of 71 in learning English. It showed that, the learning objective could not be reached effectively.

Actually, there are many students who only following what is translated by the digital translator. He was also not able to write in a good order of sentence. It could be showed that the student was still lack of comprehending about the language features used in explanation text.

There are, in fact, no particular rubrics to assess vocational high school students' writing. The rubric already presented by some experts of writing is general in nature. It is not developed according to the recent curriculum of education in Indonesia. Therefore it cannot be applied directly to assess students' writing, in particular students of vocational high schools. And the researcher realized that some students appear to be able to formulate their assignments more accurately with the use of rubrics.

With regard to the above phenomenon on grade eleven students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan, as the observation which the researcher did, the research aims to develop a writing assessment rubric for explanation text for grade eleven, to assess students' writing related to the available of 2013 Curriculum for English subject in this school. Therefore, to solve the problem, the researcher dealt to do the research entitles "Developing Writing Assessment Rubric For Explanation Text Grade XI at SMK N 4 Medan". It is expected that by using a reliable rubric, the teachers can easily assess their students' writing performances which meet the requirements of writing aspects.

## **B. Problem of the Study**

Based on the background of the study above, this researcher formulates the problem as follow, “How is writing assessment rubric for explanation text developed for grade XI at SMK N 4 Medan?”

## **C. Objective of the Study**

Based on the research question, the research will develop a writing assessment rubric for explanation text grade XI of Technical Light Vehicle Program at SMK N 4 Medan, this research is about how something happens, which is the process of explanation text itself and at the same time it could increase their writing skills.

# **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **A. Definition of Writing**

Writing as proposed by Brown (2001: 252) is one activity that is conditioned to attend to the sentence as the basic unit of organization. It is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. The writer should consider the aspects of writing which include cohesion and coherence to control the composition, grammar, sentence structure, diction, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Writing, according to Brown (2001), is not a natural activity because there is a process of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require particular skill. He also adds that students learn the basic rules of writing in their native

language, but very few of them learn how to express their thoughts with logical organization that accomplish an intended purpose. Therefore, to be able to write something good, students must do a lot of practices. It is done to get them used to write anything in well-ordered steps.

## **B. Evaluation**

Evaluation has been defined as the systematic determination of the quality, value, or importance of something (Scriven, 1991). Rubrics are powerful tools for assessing these aspects and help stakeholders draw evaluative conclusions about performance (Bargainnier, 2003). When evaluation criteria and rubrics are established at the start of a project and its evaluation, it is clear to staff and stakeholders what high quality interventions (i.e., their content, design and delivery) and successful outcomes (i.e., how successfully the outcomes were achieved) will look like. Through making values explicit performance can improve due to quality and success being well-defined. This avoids the gap between what the evaluator knows and what stakeholders know.

## **C. Explanation Text**

Anderson and Anderson (1997: 80) state that the explaining text type tells how or why something occurs. It looks at the steps rather than the things. The purpose of an explanation text is to tell each step of the process (the how) and to give reasons (the why). Explanation is a piece of text that deals with the processes involved in understanding and making explicit the how and/ or why of particular phenomena, events, and concepts occur in scientific and technical fields.

Grammatical features in explanation text include passive voice, simple present tense, conjunctions of time and cause, noun groups and complex sentences.

There are three steps for constructing a written explanation according to Anderson and Anderson (1997: 80). The first step is a general statement about the event or thing that will be explained. Then, a series of paragraphs that tell the hows or whys. In this paragraph, the writer tells the sequence of explanation text. The last step is a concluding paragraph as a closing. The writer concludes what he/ she has explained in this paragraph.

#### **D. Assessment**

Assessment is often considered as an important instructional step (Bachman, 1990). The way learners are taught and activities carried out in the classroom are greatly influenced by assessment. The success of a learning program is commonly determined by the result of assessment. Assessment is about learning, it means collecting information about learner's performance order to make judgments about their learning (Spratt et.al, 2005:102). Assessment is component to teaching and learning activities in school and bring to terms the cooperation between teacher and students in the classroom. Assessment can be said as all action that teachers and students commence to get information that can be used to change teaching and learning.

Blaz (2001) defines assessment as any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses. Assessment serves to monitor

students' understanding on a given unit or concept, to give valuable feedback to students on what progress has been made and what still needs to be improved.

## **E. Scoring for Writing Performance**

### **a) Rubric**

Teachers need to use an appropriate tool which helps them in assessing students' writing performance. Rubric is an important tool to be prepared by the teachers to give an objective score. Urquhart & McIver (2005: 31) argue that rubrics are very effective assessment tools because they describe specific levels of performance. Besides, rubrics also explain the students' performance clearly. Research also supports using rubrics because they clearly communicate expectation for both teaching and learning. There are four main types of rubric, those are holistic rubrics, analytic rubrics, primary trait rubrics, and multi-trait rubrics. However, in this study, the researcher only presents one of them; holistic rubrics. Holistic rubric assigns a level of performance by assessing performance across multiple criteria as a whole. The emphasis in holistic rubrics is on what a student does well.

### **b) Developing Rubric**

There are two basic elements to a rubric – the evaluation criteria to be rated and the performance standards (rubrics). The evaluation criteria serve as identifying the dimensions of interest that will be used as the basis for judging how well the programme has performed on particular



interventions or outcomes. The criteria should define a comprehensive set of behaviors that make up the performance (Tierney & Simon, 2004). Evaluation criteria need to go beyond the goals and objectives of a programme to include other possible effects. To start with, the list of criteria must be comprehensive and can be refined to include the most important criteria for the evaluand to focus on. Criteria can also be weighted according to their importance.

**c) Components of Rubric**

There are three components in such of rubric, they are (1) criteria, (2) level, and (3) descriptors.

1) Criteria

Criteria are indicators of good performance of a task which are used to assess students' writing performance. Each aspect of writing has different criteria. The criteria represent the quality of the performance that students should carry out.

2) Level

Levels in a rubric are used as direction or point to measure in what level the quality of students' performance. There are some ways to describe the levels mastery. Some experts use descriptive scales such as "poor", "adequate", "good", and "expert". However, numerical scales such as 1-2-3-4-5 can also be applied. Both descriptive scales and numerical scales aim to describe the students' performance from none to complete mastery. There is no set formula for the number of

levels a rubric scale should have. Most experts prefer to clearly describe the performance in three or even five levels in a rubric. However, Blaz (2001) argues that five levels are enough as the more levels are considered difficult to differentiate and to articulate precisely the quality of students' work.

### 3) Descriptors

Descriptors explain the achievement for each level of performance in each aspect of assessment. The descriptors will make the teachers easier in grading students' work as each level has different descriptor for achievement. In writing the descriptors, according to Blaz (2001), the standard such as "excellent" or "expert" should be written first as it becomes the expected level to be achieved by students. However, defining scale points with unambiguous descriptions is important. Therefore, the researcher should describe how the "excellent", "good", "average" or other descriptions of achievement in the descriptor look like. The clear definitions are expected to limit raters' tendencies to subconsciously bias scores and to enhance reliability of judgment.

## **F. English for Specific Purpose**

In vocational high school, ESP is needed, because they need a material related to their major. There is no classification of standard competences in terms of four language skills such as reading, speaking, writing and listening. Because in the syllabus of vocational high school, the classification of standard competencies is based on the level of ability in communicating. Based on Badan Standar Nasional

Pendidikan (2013), there are three kind of the level ability in communicating, they are communicating a novice level, elementary level, and intermediate level.

According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. They suggest that, the foundation of ESP is the simple question: Why do these learners need to learn a foreign language?" The answer to this question relates to the learners, the language acquired and the learning context, and thus establishes the primacy of need in ESP. Need is defined by the reasons for which the students is learning English. These purposes are the starting points which determine the language to be taught. Thus, needs analysis is the first step in developing the materials. Needs analysis was introduced into language teaching through ESP movement. Need analysis is directed mainly at the goals and content of the course (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p.24). Similarly, Nunan (1999, p.149) defines needs analysis assets of tools, techniques, and procedures for determining the language content and learning process for specified group of learners. It examines what the students know already and what they need to know. Need analysis makes sure that the course will contain relevant and useful things to learn. Good need analysis involves asking the right questions and finding answers in the most effective ways.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by using educational Research and Development (R & D) by Borg and Gall (2003). This study was conducted at SMK Negeri 4 Medan which is located in Jl. Sei Kera No. 105f, Pandau Hilir, Kec. Medan Perjuangan, Medan. The subject of this study is the grade XI students of SMK Negeri 4 Medan. The instruments of data collection were gathered by administering interview and distributing questionnaire. The study conducted interview and questionnaire to the English teacher and distributing questionnaire to 27 respondents to get the students' needs.

This research was conducted by adapting Borg and Gall's research theory (2003) with some modification which proposes 6 steps of R & D cycle. These steps consist of the sequence from the starting point to the end of the steps until a new product is produced.

1. Gathering information and data which was taken from teacher by using questionnaire and interview from English teacher of Technical Light Vehicle in SMK Negeri 4 Medan.
2. Analyzing the existing writing assessment based on the result of questionnaire and the interview of teacher.
3. Designing new writing assessment about explanation text and developing writing assessment rubric.

4. Evaluating and validating new assessment by expert. In this case, the expert is the English teacher of SMK Negeri 4 Medan and English lecturer of state University Of Medan.
5. Revising the writing assessment rubric based on the expert's suggestion.
6. After getting expert's revision it is called writing assessment rubric that will be the final product.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Research findings*

#### **1. Gathering Information and Data**

The first step in developing appropriate writing assessments rubric for Explanation Text of Grade XI Students' at SMKN 4 Medan was gathered information and data. Starting information had been done before starting the research. It was done to get the problem of the study. There was some information gathered, such as the teacher's interview, teacher's and student's questionnaire, and the lesson plan. From the information gathered, there was one problem found. The problem is the writing assessment rubric was not precise for their learning needs.

The detail information was needed to develop the assessment rubric based on students' needs. The interview was administrated to the English teacher and the questionnaires were administrated to both of English teacher and the students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan.

## **2. Need Analysis**

The writing assessment rubric of Grade XI Students' at SMKN 4 Medan should be accompanied by analyzing their needs. Need analysis is demanded before the assessments are created to get some basic information. This information was needed to support the conspiring process of writing assessment rubric of the students. In order to identify the needs of the students of Technical Light Vehicle Program, the researcher assigned the interview to English teacher and questionnaire to both of the English teacher and the students.

By analyzing the data taken both the existing assessments and need analysis including the questionnaire and interview that administrated to the English teacher and students of Technical Light Vehicle Program, the researcher can identify that the existing assessment of writing were not appropriate for assessing the competence of the students. It caused that the teacher cannot assess the writing of students accurately. In other words, it was hard to the students to get the accurate score to know their competence in writing Explanation Text. Thus results of need analysis were used by the researcher as guidance in developing appropriate assessments and make the appropriate writing assessment rubric for Explanation Text in writing skills.

### **3. Developing the Media**

After get the need analysis, then the researcher develop the writing materials first in order to make the writing assessments rubric that are appropriate to the material based on the syllabus and existing assessment. The materials can be presented in print, internet and else.

For the assessment, in the attitude competence of assessment developed should be appropriate to the basic competence 1 and 2, which will be observed by the teacher during the learning process. And then, the knowledge competence of assessment should appropriate to the basic competence 3, which will be used by the teacher to assess the result of writing tasks that has been given by the teacher during the learning process. And the last, skill competence of assessment should appropriate to the basic competence 4, which will be used by the teacher to assess the final writing skill of the students based on the writing skill tasks that has been given by the teacher. The basic competence can be seen in syllabus and the draft writing assessment rubric that developed can be seen.

### **4. Validating to Experts**

The aim of expert's judgment is to get the expert's opinion about the first draft of the assessment rubric. After the first draft of the writing assessment rubric finished, the next step was conducted by using a questionnaire. The questionnaires were source from *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (BSNP) and consisted of five aspects, they are

Construction Feasibility, Feasibility of Language, Feasibility of Presentation, Content Feasibility of Assessment Rubric, and Benefit Aspect.

The score is between one and four that obtained from the materials experts. There were two experts who evaluated the materials; they were Prof. Amrin Saragih, M.A.,Ph.D (AS) as one of the lecturer in English and Literature Department and Novida H. Silitonga, S.S (NS) as an English teacher at SMK Negeri 4 Medan.

**Table 4.4 English Lecturer Validation Score**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>The Number of Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	Construction Feasibility	5	20	18
2	Feasibility of Language	3	12	12
3	Feasibility of Presentation	8	32	30
4	Content Feasibility of Assessment Rubric	9	36	32
5	Benefit Aspect	5	20	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Average = <math>\frac{110}{30} = 3,6</math> ; Percentage = <math>\frac{110}{120} \times 100\% = 91,6\%</math></b>				



**Table 4.14 English Teacher Validation Score**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>The Number of Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	Construction Feasibility	5	20	19
2	Feasibility of Language	3	12	12
3	Feasibility of Presentation	8	32	31
4	Content Feasibility of Assessment Rubric	9	36	34
5	Benefit Aspect	5	20	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Average = <math>\frac{115}{30} = 3,8</math> ; Percentage = <math>\frac{115}{120} \times 100\% = 95,8\%</math></b>				

Based on the result of the writing assessment rubric, the average was 3,7 and the percentage was 93,7% that categorized in “Very Good” category.

### **5. Revising Writing Assessment Rubric**

The first expert Prof. Amrin Saragih, M.A.,Ph.D give some revision about the picture of person, change the picture from animation to real picture and also to put the glossary in behind of the final product.

The second expert Novida H. Silitonga, S.S answered that the development of assessment and the rubric was complete because the categories of the task were organized by student competences, it is

knowledge competence and skill competence and the aspect in the rubric were clear for explanation text writing material. For all, the experts answered that the new writing assessment rubric were relevant to assess student competence.

## **6. Final Product**

After getting suggestion from the experts' judgment, the assessment rubric for writing Explanation Text were revised, and the revised was called as the final draft. Based on the result of the data; the assessment rubric for writing Explanation Text could be said that was well developed. The expert judgment result was categorized "Very Good".

### *Discussion*

Besides, rubrics also explain the students' performance clearly. Research also supports using rubrics because they clearly communicate expectation for both teaching and learning. The aim of this research is to develop writing assessment rubric for Explanation Text of the grade XI students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan. The development of the material based on Borg and Gall phases. There was one English teacher who participated in this research. The researcher was asked about her background knowledge, problems, and the students' needs in learning English for writing Explanation Text. The need analysis was conducted to make the writing assessment rubric more appropriate to the students' need. Doing

interview to the English teacher and using questionnaires was conducted to both of the students and English teacher.

The result of the target needs is to develop the writing assessment rubric for Explanation of Grade XI students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan. The assessment is more appropriate because there is no clearly assessment in that school before.

The assessment format of this research only target at two competences, it is knowledge competence and skill competence, cognitive and psychomotor aspect is the most emphasized in the format of writing assessment rubric.

There are five aspects in questionnaire, such as, construction feasibility, feasibility of language, feasibility of presentation, content feasibility of assessment rubric, and benefit aspect. The expert gives some corrections and suggestions on the development writing assessment rubric. Based on the result of the writing assessment rubric, the average was 3,7 and the percentage was 93,7% that categorized in "Very Good" category. It was calculated by Sanjaya (2013) and categorized from Soeharto (2006: 52-53).

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### *Conclusions*

Based on the results of need analysis from interview and questionnaire, it was conducted that the Grade XI students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan need appropriate writing assessment rubric especially for Explanation Text.

The writing assessment rubric should be developed through six phases; gathering information and data, analyzing data, designing new writing assessment rubric, validating by experts, revising writing assessment rubric, and final product.

The score of validation from the first validator was 3,6 or 91,6% and it was categorized as valid and the score of validation from the second validator was 3,8 or 95,8% and it was categorized as very valid. It means that the assessment rubric was valid and appropriate to use in learning English for Grade XI students at SMK Negeri 4 Medan.

### *Suggestion*

It is suggested that the English teacher of Vocational School should be more responsive with the needs of the students. The teacher should be able and creative to provide the relevant assessment rubric to the students' needs or in other words the students of Technical Light Vehicle Program should be given.

To the other researchers, who have the same interest in this field, could make English writing assessment rubric more appropriate, especially for students of Technical Light Vehicle Program which has problems with the availability of that. There are also expected to find the other characteristics of appropriate writing assessment rubric especially for Explanation Text based on the curriculum.

For the institutions, should monitor the teachers for using appropriate assessment rubric to the student to support teaching and learning process. Institutions also has to distribute the students' assessment rubric especially for Explanation Text to the schools which are relevant to the government syllabus or curriculum 2013 (K-13) so that teacher know that there are the students who achieve the objective of the study in their level or not.

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