

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Assessing reading materials for students who want to understand and master English is an important part of teaching English as a whole. A text, for instance, plays a major role in providing information about science and technology. This type of text is called the descriptive text which contains essential information for the survival of human beings. Scientific facts can be presented in the descriptive text which is one type of reading materials for the Senior High School students in Indonesia.

The descriptive text may be difficult to understand when it is not well composed by its writer. If there is no cohesion or coherence in the structure of the sentences, then, it can be confusing to the students who are asked to get the gist of the composition. The cohesion and coherence of the text can influence the ability of the students to understand the text easily. The way the text is written can be assessed to lead to the good quality text that can serve the purpose of providing information.

One way of assessing the quality of the composition of a descriptive text is to apply a rubric which contains the aspects of the writing to be evaluated. Thus, it is easier for teachers of English to assess the properties of the descriptive text which will be chosen as the reading materials. The reading materials that are available to the students should be well selected so that the students will find it easier to understand the text.

The present researcher is interested in assessing the quality of the descriptive texts because she has received many complaints from her students about the difficulty of the text. There are several questions that appear in her mind such as “Is the descriptive text good or

effective as the reading material?, “What constitutes a descriptive text? and “Can the text be assessed to find out if it serves the purpose to provide the information needed by the students?.

After searching for the answers, she has come to the conclusion that the descriptive texts can be evaluated or assessed by using a rubric based on the nature of the text itself. There are two possibilities in this case. The descriptive texts can be from the students’ composition exercises or the ones that have been printed in their textbooks. Considering the pandemic situation, the researcher decides to choose the given descriptive texts in the students’ textbooks as the data to be analyzed. The researcher finds it difficult to have a direct contact with the students of Senior High School. As a result, this study is directed towards the text analysis which is intended for the teachers who will select the reading materials for their teaching later. In this case, the researcher’s attention is directed to the descriptive text as a product rather than the process of writing.

The rubric to be designed is aimed at assessing the quality of the descriptive texts available. This is a kind of scoring the writing product. Thus, the text will be analyzed to take the conclusion that it is a worthy text to be called as a descriptive text. As a rubric can be used to help the teachers assess the worthiness of the text, the design can be based on the properties or characteristics of the text itself as accepted by text writers and teachers of English as a foreign language.

The purpose of the rubric as a tool of assessment can be extended to know if the dimensions in the rubric proposed are acceptable as the indication of validity. Some teachers of Senior High School will be asked to validate the results of the rubric. Therefore, the design provides the benefit for the assessors and the research process for exploring the nature of descriptive texts used as reading materials.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems to be addressed consist of two questions as follows:

- 1) What aspects of the descriptive text are to be assessed or scored?
- 2) Is the rubric valid according to the Senior High School teachers as interraters?

C. The Objectives of the Study

The objective of the research is to elaborate on the aspects of the rubric and its validity by the inter-raters who are the Senior High School teachers of English at the school.

D. The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the text analysis which is to elaborate or explore the aspects of the given descriptive texts used as reading materials for Senior High School students and the validity of the rubric based on the impression of the teachers who teach writing applying the rubrics.

E. The Significances of the Study

The results in designing the text rubric will be useful for :

- 1) Text writers who will learn more about the mechanism of composing a descriptive text for the purpose of teaching English as a foreign Language.
- 2) English teachers who will find it easy to assess a descriptive text as worthy or valid for reading materials. The text assessment rubric can save their time in validating the text and choosing the one that is effective for the purpose of teaching writing.

- 3) General writers who will understand more about the aspects to be assessed or considered in writing a descriptive text for the purpose of providing more information about science and technology to the public.
- 4) Other researchers who will explore into the text readability and students' difficulties in understanding a text because of the insufficient knowledge about writing and its process.

