AN ANALYSIS ON WRITING TASK IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOK
ENTITLED ENGLISH IN FOCUS FOR THE EIGHT GRADE
OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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This research paper aims at analyzing the writing task provided in the textbook entitled English in Focus meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes, and finding whether the writing task in the textbook meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes.

In this research, the writer employs descriptive research. The descriptive research is the research to clarify or explain phenomenon. This research uses the content analysis. The method of collecting data is comparing method and analyzing document by selecting the writing tasks on the textbook entitled English in Focus for Junior High School Students that meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes.

The results of the research finds of writing tasks provided in the textbook meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes. The criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes, there are controlled of writing, translation, and free writing. To analyze the writing tasks provided in textbook, the criteria as suggested by Raimes has some components; grammar, mechanics, and word choice. By the percentage the result shows 75% of writing tasks provided in English textbook entitled English in Focus. The writing tasks in textbook entitled English in Focus for Junior High School are categorized good task because the writing tasks in the textbook meet the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes.

Keywords: writing task, task analysis, textbook
A. Introduction

In English language teaching there are four language skills that must be taught, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the important aspects in learning a second and foreign language. By writing, the students can express their idea, opinions, knowledge, and experiences. Writing also provides opportunity to convey something about the ideas to people their immediate vicinity, to learn something they do not know and to reach other purposes. According to Heaton (1974:1-2):

The writing of a composition is a task which involves the student in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences and in linking those sentences to form a piece of continuous writing which successfully communicates the writer’s thoughts and ideas on a certain topic. Moreover, since in real-life situations there is generally a specific purpose for any writing.

From the previous paragraph, it can be seen that writing is very crucial to learn. However, teaching this skill to students is not an easy task to do. There are two approaches in writing, namely process and product and the teacher cannot only use a single approach in teaching writing. To write a paragraph, a student can take some steps, such as drafting, writing, revising, proofreading, etc. Hence, the teacher should also teach the steps to students.

To develop the student’s ability in writing skills, the textbook will usually contains a great many tasks of one kind or another. Crookes (1985) in Ellis (2003:4) states that “task is a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research”. Crookes specifically states that a task can be a brief practice exercise or a more complex work plan that requires spontaneous communication of meaning. According to Lee (1985) in Ellis (2003:4):

A task is 1. classroom activity or exercise that has: (a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants, (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange; 2. A language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/ or produce the target language as they perform some set work plans.
Task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with the emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which is chosen so that it is most likely to provide information for learners and teachers which will help them in their own learning. According to Skehan (1998) in Ellis (2003:3):

Drawing on a number of other writers put forwards five characteristic of a task, as follows: 1. Meaning is primary, 2. Learners are not given other people’s meaning to regurgitate, 3. there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-worlds activities, 3. Task completion has some priority, 4. The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome.

In teaching learning, the importance of using textbooks is that the textbooks provide information of materials for the students, and the students can improve their ability using the textbook. The teacher is a reliable source of information, but textbooks can be used to provide more. This is because teachers do not always mention everything, maybe due to the limitation in duration of the lessons.

Realizing the factor affecting the teaching and learning process, it is worth analyzing the tasks in textbooks used by teachers in teaching writing as textbooks should not only be the resource for teaching subject in the classroom, but can also be used by learners to learn independently (Richards, 2001). Hence, if the tasks written facilitate the learners to learn writing, the students should have good writing ability. Otherwise, poor writing ability results.

The writer choose an English textbook entitled *English in Focus*, because the textbook declares in the preface that it is designed on the school-based curriculum, and most schools in Surakarta use of this textbook. It is an integrated English textbook for Junior High School, and the course covers the four skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Knowing this condition, an evaluation of English textbook is really needed. So that the teacher will know appropriate English textbook that are suitable to the learners needs. According to Gronlund (1985:5) “Evaluation is a much more comprehensive and inclusive term than measurement is, and testing is just one type of measurement.”
The condition stated above encourages the writer to do an analysis on the textbook. In this research the writer choose the evaluation in writing tasks. The writer chooses the second year student of Junior High School, because based on the interview with English teachers and students of Junior High School, the students cannot write well. The students give an opinion that the writing is difficult subject. In the research paper, the writer choose an English textbook entitled *English in Focus*. Based on the reason above, the writer is interested in conducting a research entitled *An Analysis on Writing Task in English Textbook Entitled English in Focus for the Eight Grade of Junior High School Students*.

The problem of this research are 1) How is the writing task in English textbook entitled *English in Focus*?, 2) Do the writing tasks in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes?

The objectives of this research are 1) describe the writing task in English textbook entitled *English in Focus*, 2) find whether the writing tasks provided in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* meet the criteria features of writing task as suggested by Raimes.

The limitation of this study are 1) the tasks only focused on the series of writing tasks provided in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* meet the criteria features of task as suggested by Raimes, 2) The English textbook analyzed is *English in Focus* for the eight grade of Junior High School students published Pusat Perbukuan Departement Pendidikan Nasional 2008.

**B. Underlying Theory**

1. **Textbook Analysis**
   a. **Notion of Textbook**

   In general foreign language instruction has five important components such as students, teachers, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation. Allwright (1999) in Fauziati (2010:205) that materials should teach students to learn, that they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction or learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do. Textbooks are too inflexible to be used directly as instructional material.
In many cases teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks, and textbooks determine the components and methods of learning. That is, they control the content, methods, and procedures of learning. Students learn what is presented in the textbook, and the way the textbook presents materials is the way students learn it. The educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning process. Therefore, in many cases, materials or textbooks are the center or instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes in the classroom.

According to Allwright (1999) in Fauziati (2010:200) textbook is a teaching tool (material) which presents the subject matter defined by the curriculum. A university textbook is required to contain the complete overview of the subject, including the theories, as well as to be of a more permanent character.

b. The Advantages Use of Textbook

According to Fauziati in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), there are some disadvantages uses of textbook, as follows:

1) The materials provided in the textbooks do not always match with the real students’ language proficiency levels. There are too many exercises that focus merely on one skill or language aspect. As a result, the students are not exposed to the four skills equally.

2) Due to similar type of activities and exercises that are repeated in different units, the students find it boring and less interesting. Such activities neither promote critical thinking nor problem-solving skills.

c. Textbook Evaluation

Evaluation however can only be done by considering something in relation to its purpose. A book may be ideal in one situation because it matches the needs of that situation perfectly. Cummingsworth (1995) in Curriculum Development in Language Teaching by Richards (1985:5) that textbook evaluation is very important to be done. The purpose of the evaluation is to know whether the textbook is good or not.

Textbook evaluation can have a massive impact on the teaching and learning process as teacher would make references to the textbook. Textbook
evaluation is not based on its intrinsic pedagogical value, but of the perceived prestige of the author and or the publisher. Preference is given to books printed in attractive covers or that teachers would blindly use the best selling textbook which are used in many other places.

2. Writing Skill
   a. Notion of Writing Skill

   As one of the four language skills, writing has always occupied a place in most English language course. One of the reasons in that more and more people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes. English department students especially need to learn to write to prepare themselves for the final academic, assignment, thesis writing. Thus, in terms of students’ need, writing occupies an equal role with the other language skill.

   According to Richards and Renandya (2002) in Fauziati (2010:45) that writing is the most difficult skill to master for foreign language learners. This due not only to the need to generate and organize ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization but also to turn such ideas into a readable text.

   b. Process of Writing Skill

   According to Brown (2000) in Fauziati (2010:50), are as follows:

   1) Prewriting
      Prewriting is the phase of idea gathering.

   2) Drafting
      Drafting is the process of writing a rough outline of what will be addressed.

   3) Revising
      Revising is elaborating on the first draft, takes place at this point.

   4) Editing
      Editing is correcting mechanical errors like spelling or punctuation in the last stage.
3. Analysis of Writing Task

a. Notion of Task

This was an important movement highlighted that students not only need to have knowledge of a language but also need to develop the ability to actually use it to achieve communicative purposes. Thus, students’ learning was no longer to be described only in terms of inventories of language items, but also, and most importantly, in terms of tasks that they would accomplish – that is, what students do. According to Tomlinson (1998:226) “Task is a purpose or underlying real-life justification for doing the task, involving more than simply the display of knowledge or practice of skills”.

According to Richards (1985) in Ellis (2003:4) task is an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language, i.e. as a response. Task-based language teaching, therefore, is predicated on the principle that having learners perform tasks will help them to develop knowledge and skill in the second language in accordance with the way their own language learning mechanism work. Task function as device for creating the conditions required for language acquisition. There is still uncertainty and disagreement, however regarding what these conditions are.

a. Writing Task

Writing task given to the students for a writing test will be referred to variously as the topic, the prompt, the test questions, the writing stimulus, the writing instructions, the assignments, and some of these term will be used interchangeably.

According to Rivers (1968:240) “writing task is the ability to write correctly sentences or paragraphs, such as developing orally for classroom situation and the ability to write a short, simple letters, etc”.

Writing task keep the students more diligent to improve their ability. According to Tomlinson (1998: 226) “A task which does not replicate a real world task but which is designed to facilitate the learning of language or skills which would be useful in a real world task.”
a. Instrument in Assessing of Writing Task

To evaluate the criteria of writing tasks in the textbook as suggested by Raimes, the writer presents the instrument of writing task. According to Raimes’s study writing task can be classified into three criteria, there are controlled writing, translation, and free writing. The instrument it can be seen in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlled of Writing</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Free Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
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<td>Total 2</td>
<td>Total 0</td>
<td>Total 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Research Method

In doing this research, the writer employs descriptive research. The descriptive research is the research to clarify or explain phenomenon (Arikunto, 1992:29). This research uses the content analysis. According to Berg (1998:233) content analysis is a process for systematically analyzing message and used to develop objective inferences about a subject of interest in any type of communication.

The object of this study is limited of the an analysis of writing task in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* for the Eight Grade of Junior High School, and the object of this study focuses on the an analysis of writing task in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* for the Eight Grade of Junior High School.

The writer uses documentation as the method of collecting data in this research, the step is used reading and selecting the materials writing tasks provided in the textbook entitled *English in Focus*. 
After gathering the data, the writer analyzed the textbook by doing some steps, as follows: finding out the writing tasks provided in the textbook, after that coding the data, comparing the writing tasks in the textbook with the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes, and the last giving the percentage total of the writing task in the textbook meet the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes.

D. Research Finding and Discussion

a) Research Finding

1) Writing Tasks in Textbook *English in Focus*

1. Controlled of Writing

In Raimes’s study, for controlled writing tasks provided in textbook need the following criteria of writing task, they are grammar, mechanics, and word choice. Here, the writer provides the example:

a) Question-Answer

- C/ EIF/P. 21

Write a description for each of the following pictures (animal and plant). Use the words given next to the pictures. These guiding questions will help you to make good descriptions.

1. What is the name of the animal or plant?
2. Where does it live?
3. What are the physical features?
   - Its legs and arms
   - Its color
   - Its fur or feathers
4. What is the unique about it?

Based on the writing task above, the task asks to students to write a description for each of the following pictures, then use the words given to the next picture, and using the questions to help the students to make it. Finally, the students have to make the descriptive text about the topic. The criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes meet in writing task above that is using of grammar and word choice. Because the writing task requires students to write the text with uses the most appropriate word to make a good text. So the writing task is suitable with the criteria as suggested by Raimes.
2. Translation

The writing tasks provided in textbook, it is no data about the translation in the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes.

3. Free Writing

a. Writing a Text based on the Topic provided

- C/ EIF/P. 45

Write a postcard to a friend about your holiday.

Based on the writing task above, the writing task is appropriate to the criteria as suggested by Raimes, that is using of grammar and word choice. The writing task requires students to write the text with uses the most appropriate word to make the good text. The writing task asks to students to write a postcard to a friend about their holiday. After doing it, the students can practice and more creative to writing the postcard.

2) The Compatibility of Writing Tasks Provided In Textbook English in Focus with The Criteria of Writing Task as Suggested by Raimes.

After analyzing English textbook Entitled English in Focus, the writer also presents the percentage whether the tasks provided in textbook are the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes. The writer uses Walizer’s formula in giving the percentage, and uses Arikunto’s schema of quality classification. Here, the percentage criteria of writing task as follows:

\[
\frac{3}{4} \times 100\% = 75\%
\]

Based on the schema of quality classification, the score of writing skill in English textbook entitled English in Focus is good, because the score is 75%.

b) Discussion of the Finding

In the research finding, the writer describes the writing tasks provided in textbook entitled English in Focus based on the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes. The writer finds 3 criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes, by
analyzing the tasks provided in the textbook, there are 2 criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes meet the criteria of writing tasks provided in textbook entitled *English in Focus* for the eight grade of Junior High School.

By the percentage that is shown in the research finding, the result of percentage shows 75% of writing tasks provided in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* meet the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes. By using criterion referenced evaluation as proposed by Arikunto (1992:105), it can be concluded that the writing tasks provided in the textbook are categorized as good.

E. Conclusion and Suggestion

1. Conclusion

After analyzing the writing tasks in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* for the eight grade of Junior High School Students, based the criteria of writing task suggested by Raimes. The writer finds that 2 out of 3 the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes meet in the writing tasks provided in textbook entitled *English in Focus*, there are controlled of writing and free writing.

The controlled of writing and free writing has the components that provided in textbook entitled *English in Focus*, there are grammar and word choice. The percentage shows that the result of percentage in controlled of writing tasks provided in textbook shows 66.67%. It can be concluded that the categorized are as good. Then, in free writing of writing tasks provided in textbook the result of percentage shows 66.67%. So it can be concluded are categorized as good.

The result of this study shows that the percentage for the writing tasks developed in *English in Focus* for the eight grade of Junior High School Students based on the percentage, referring to schema of criteria evaluation proposed by Arikunto (1992) is 75%. The writer judges the writing tasks provided in textbook entitled *English in Focus* for the eight grade of Junior High School Students are good tasks, because the writing tasks provided in English textbook entitled *English in Focus* has the criteria of writing task as suggested by Raimes.
2. Suggestion

For the author of the textbook the writer hopes that the English textbook should be provide more writing task and appropriate with the criteria of writing task as suggested by Ellis. In this study, the writer finds that the writing skills of writing tasks materials in textbook *English in Focus* are less. In other words, the author can improve the indicators of writing tasks materials. So it makes the textbook more complete and useful for the students to learn it.

In teaching learning process, the English teacher should be chosen the best English textbook and the tasks it can improve communication practiced by the students and teachers. English teacher should be selective to uses English textbook to teach the students. Because to teach the students, the teacher English should be active and creative to gives the materials for the students. So the students are more motivated to learn English materials.

The next researcher may be able to make research about the tasks on the textbook in good variations and after that the next researcher may be able to make an experiment to the students. So that it can be new finding to improve student’s motivation in learning English by experimental research.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


VIRTUAL REFERENCES
