THE USE OF PASSIVE VOICE IN ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION TEXT WRITTEN BY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT GRADE XI NATURAL SCIENCE CLASS IN SMAN 1 NAN SABARIS

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe the use of passive voice in analytical exposition text. This research was descriptive research and the subjects of this research were students of SMAN 1 Nan Sabaris grade XI Natural Science class. The data were 133 pieces of students writing gathered from a test. The result of this research showed some points. First, the ratio between passive sentences to active sentences in analytical exposition text written by senior high school students was about 1:4. Second, the ratio between incorrect passive sentences to correct passive sentences was about 5:9. Finally, the analysis of taxonomy of incorrect passive sentences showed that 36.25% were error in using past participle form of verb, 28.75% were error in using auxiliary be, and 21.25% were error because the sentences were formed in passive construction, however the sentences should be remain in active form. So, it can be concluded that the analytical exposition text written by senior high school students was not good because the good analytical exposition text should have more passive sentences in correct construction.

Kata kunci : *Passive Voice, Analytical Exposition Text, Passive Sentence, Active Sentence*

A. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a process to express the idea in mind into written form of a text. Writing is also related to other skills such as listening, speaking and reading because they will help to gather the information that will be useful in writing process. Boardman and Frydenberg (2002:11) explain writing as a process of thinking and organizing, rethinking and reorganizing that is done by a writer

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continuously. In Senior High Schools in Indonesia, writing is taught in English subject. This lesson is important for students because they will learn how to write and have ability in composing their ideas into a text.

In school-based curriculum (KTSP) for senior high school students, students will reach the informational phase as the achievement of English subject. It means that the students are expected to be able to access the knowledge by using language skill in order to prepare the students to be college students. KTSP also requires students to have the ability to understand and write many kinds of short functional texts and monologue texts (KTSP 2006).

In learning monolog texts, the students are taught many kinds of text types to enrich their knowledge about different purpose of text types. From these texts, students will know the functions, the generic structures and the lexicogrammatical features that are used in the text. The texts taught in senior high school are narrative, recount, procedure, descriptive, news item, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion and review texts. These types of text have their own function, generic structure and lexicogrammatical features. Each text is different from others so that they can meet the need all of the social needs.

Therefore, before doing writing students need to comprehend these three elements that are involved in the text. The first one is social function. Social function shows the aim or the purpose of the text to the reader. Then, it includes the generic structure of the text. Generic structure is a schematic structure that the stages to construct the text are described. Finally the genre of a text has its lexicogrammatical features. Lexicogrammatical features are used to explain in a general way how the phenomena of real world are presented.

Related to types of text which are taught in senior high school, an exposition text is one of academic writing that is learnt by students. An exposition text contains arguments why a thesis is proposed (Martin, 1987). According to Gerot and Wignell (1994:197) an exposition text can be divided into two; analytical exposition and hortatory exposition texts. These two types of texts have the same lexicogrammatical feature; that is the use of passive voice. In these two types of texts, the passive voice frequently occurs. Based on the curriculum, both of passive voice and analytical exposition texts lesson are taught at the same time in the first semester.

After doing an observation in SMAN 1 Nan Sabaris, it is found that the greatest problem faced by the students is about grammar. Nowadays grammar is taught through the text that is called lexicogrammatical features. The students learn grammar and vocabulary based on the text they learn. Thus, the students get more difficulties in understanding the grammar itself. There are many grammar aspects which are taught to students. One of them is passive voice. Students tend to get difficulties in writing passive voice because of its structure and also rarely to include the passive voice when writing a text.

Passive voice is a grammatical structure which allows the object of the verb to be placed in the subject position. It emphasizes who or what receive action of the verb. It also means that the action affects the subject. A pattern of the sentences in passive voice begin with a subject and have a verb too, but the

subject here is not the agent of the action. In passive voice the subject is the person or thing that receives the action of the verb (Folse, 2009:244).

Klammer et.al. (2000:245) state that passive voice is difficult to understand by students because the sentences constructions are not in their customary position and the focus of sentences are changed. It can be seen from students' result after learning passive voice. Most students get lower grade in creating passive sentences. In fact, they are able to write passive sentences but they tend to miss the component that construct passive sentences such as the use of verb auxiliary, modal auxiliary, past participial form of verb or tenses. Sometimes, when students try to write passive sentences, they write the passive sentence inappropriately because the actor is the main focus to discuss not the action.

Furthermore, students hardly use passive sentences in their writing. They tend to use active sentences in elaborating their paragraph. However, about one third of all verbs in scientific writing occur in passive voice (Master, 2004:51). It is aimed to avoid the writers to use personal pronoun in their writing and to emphasize that what was the action is more important than who did the action. So, to keep the writer writes subjective writing text, using passive voice is a useful way to do.

Since the passive voice is one of the important aspects in analytical exposition text, it is quite necessary to see the use of passive voice in analytical exposition text. This research is conducted to analyze the occurrences and the accuracy of passive voice that is written by students in analytical exposition text they write.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive research. It aimed to describe the use of passive voice in analytical exposition text which was written by senior high school students. According to Gay (2009), a descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study.

The data were gathered from senior high school students' writing. The students were asked to write analytical expository text which contains passive sentences. Total of the data were 133 pieces of students' writing that were taken from all students grade XI Natural Science classes in SMAN 1 Nan Sabaris

The instrument used in this research is a writing test. The writing test is analytical exposition text that content passive sentences. The writing test consists of seven topics and students have to choose one topic for their writing. To ensure the validity of the test, the test was tried out to XI IS 1 class. The students wrote an analytical exposition text from the seven topics given. These topics were specified into five topics. So, these five topics which students choose most were tested to the sample class, all XI IA classes, as the topic in their writing.

In a good test, there are two elements that should be considered: validity and reliability. A test will be valid if it measures accurately what it is supposed to measure (Hughes, 2001:26). The validity of this instrument was determined based on discussion with the advisors. After that, the test was given to the students to be tried out. After getting the topics needed, the test was given to the sample students. Then, this research used inter-rater reliability which means the

instrument is scored by two scorers to avoid the bias in giving score (Brown, 2004: 21). Since this analysis did not give any score for students writing, the scorers helped the researcher in determining and auditing the data. They were given a record of sentences which refer to passive voice (in structure or in meaning). The scorers corrected the sentence to correct passive voice and incorrect passive voice.

The data were analyzed through the following steps. First, the sentences in students' writing were classified into two groups: active and passive sentences. The classification is about how many active and passive sentence that are found in the text. Then, the percentage of each group was counted through the formula from Arikunto (2006) as:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \ x \ 100$$

Second, since the focus of this study is the passive voice, all passive sentences were corrected to determine if they are correct or incorrect. Finally, all the incorrect passive sentences were analyzed by using the theory of passive voice itself. Master (2004) states that the common form of passive voice in the sentence is:

<center>**Subject + be + past participle**</center>

Based on the formula above, this analysis involves the role of subject, auxiliary 'be', and verb form of past participle used in sentence. This aims to see the mistakes made by students when they write passive voice.

C. DISCUSSION

The research result shows some descriptions of how students use passive voice in writing analytical exposition text. First, the result shows the ratio between passive and active voice from these analytical texts is about 1:4. The total of sentences was 1121 where 896 sentences were in active form and 225 were in passive form. The average of percentage active and passive sentence was 79.9% and 20.1%. It can be seen from the following chart

Percentage of Active and Passive Voice in Analytical Exposition Text Written by Senior High School Students

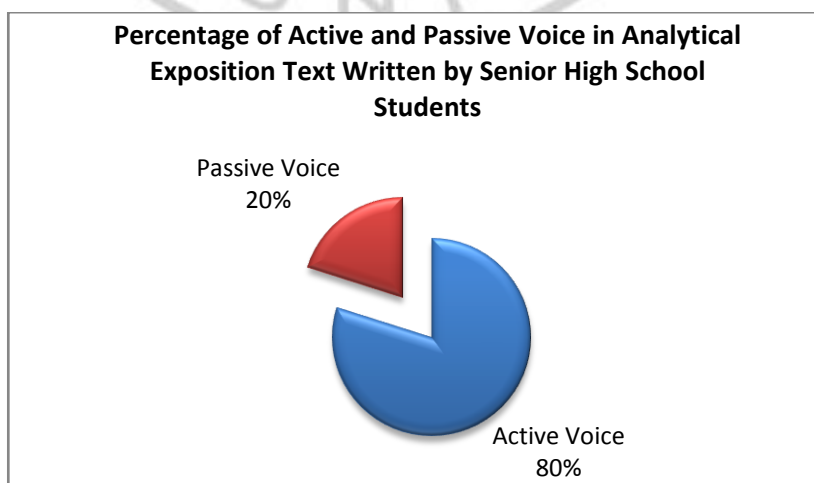Passive Voice 20%

Active Voice 80%

Figure 1. Percentage of Active and Passive Voice in Analytical Exposition Text Written by Senior High School Students

It means the percentage of passive voice in the texts is smaller than active voice. Related to the previous studies, this result is not too much different from the result of the studies conducted by Svartvik and Day (Trammell, 1991). Trammell reported that Svartvik found the range between passive to active sentences in scientific exposition is about 1:3. Furthermore, Day in six years later found the range between passive to active is about 1:7 in 10 essays of scientific writers. These differences can be seen as inequality in using passive voice in exposition text.

However, Porter in her research (2005) found that the percentage of passive voice in nurses' note was fairly high. From 335 clauses she analyzed, 48.96% were in passive voice and 51.04% were in active voice. It means that almost a half of the clauses were written in passive voice. Although the data were taken from the nurses' note, the passive voice which appeared to serve the rhetorical function is as much as which is used in scientific writing.

The differences which were found in the findings' result of each researcher might appear because of the inconsistency in using passive voice itself. There is no guarantee that every writer will write the same number of passive voice in their writing. As the matter of fact, in this research it was also found some students who did not write any passive sentences. This number also influences the calculation of passive sentences itself, so that percentage of the active sentences becomes higher than passive sentences.

As stated by Martin (1987), analytical exposition uses as many passive as possible. The number of passive voice in analytical exposition is a half more than hortatory exposition. Related to the result which the ratio of passive to active is about 1:4, it can be assumed that the analytical exposition text written by senior high school students is not really good. This condition might happen because of the decision in choosing active and passive voice which also depends on the need of cohesion of the text. From the finding research, it shows that students tend to write active voice or active sentences more than passive sentences. Using active voice is more direct to the point and also easier to write down the information. In contrast, passive voice tends to be more difficult to understand. However, passive voice is also necessary, especially when the context of sentence focuses on the action not the doer. Hence, it can be assumed that the students do not really understand when to use active voice or passive voice in their writing, especially in writing academic or scientific writing.

Second, the passive sentences which were found in the texts were analyzed to determine that they were correct or incorrect according to the formula of passive voice. The result shows that the range of incorrect passive sentences into correct passive sentences is about 5:9. Then, this result is also classified into groups. First group which all students write correct passive sentences are calculated as 55 students. Then, group which students write

incorrect passive sentences were calculated as 57 students. Another group is classified as non-passive group because 21 of 133 students do not write passive sentences in their writing. It means from 225 passive sentences found in the text 145 sentences were correct and 80 sentences were incorrect. In other words, 64.4% were correct passive sentences and 35.6% were incorrect passive sentences. It can be seen in the following chart.
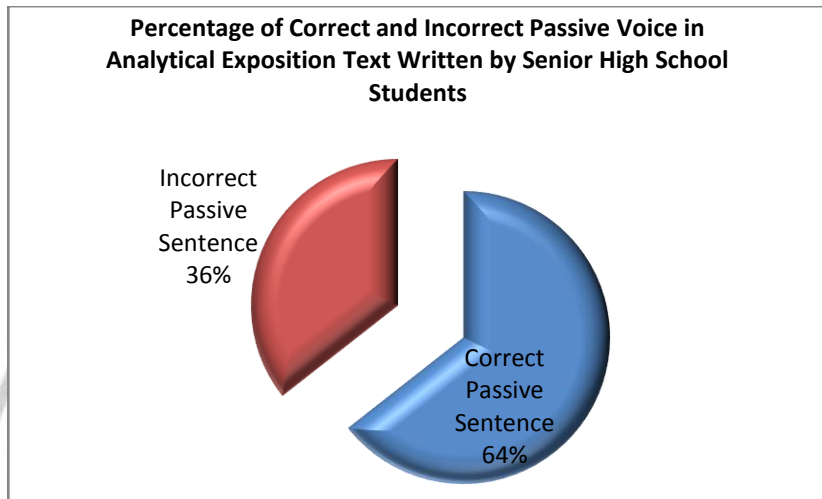

Figure 2. Percentage of Correct and Incorrect Passive Voice in Analytical Exposition Text Written by Senior High School Students

From 80 incorrect passive sentences, the analysis shows that the common mistakes that were found from incorrect passive voice. 23 sentences are incorrect because of the use of auxiliary "be" and 29 sentences are in the past participle form of verb. Students were confused in choosing the correct auxiliary "be" in the sentence, missing the auxiliary "be" and even using two auxiliary in one sentence. Then, students who also get error in using past participle form of verb can be caused the changes of the verb itself. Some verb are categorized as regular verb and usually these verb are indicated by adding "ed" and some others are categorized as irregular verbs which have different construction from the former form. This result was quite the same with the previous study conducted by Setiono (2008). The problem he found was the students made errors in using auxiliary "be" and also tenses in the passive sentences.

Furthermore, 17 sentences are found in passive form but actually they have to be in active form. This condition might happen because the students are influenced with Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, *corruption is not happened*. Some verbs in English have meanings as passive verb, so that they do not need to be changed into past participle form of verb. If the students want to create passive sentences by using these verbs, they can write it in present form of verb. Another reason is because the students were instructed to write passive sentence in their writing. This instruction made them write

passive sentences incorrectly because they have to fulfil the needs of passive sentences in their writing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In short, in analytical exposition text which was written by senior high school students, it was found that the range of ratio between the passive sentences to active sentences is 1:4. Then, the ratio between correct and incorrect passive sentences is calculated as 5:9. It was found that 80 sentences are classified as incorrect passive sentences. Finally, the description of these incorrect passive sentences shows that the common mistakes are in the use of auxiliary "be" and the past participle form of verb, and the sentences that should be remaining as active sentences rather than passive sentences.

Related to finding, hopefully this research gives contribution to: First, The teacher who will prepare the material especially about passive voice. Since there are many mistakes made by students in creating passive voice, the teacher needs to arrange and to teach material well in order to make students understand about passive voice. Then, the curriculum designer who will design the curriculum for school to match the needs of students with the material will be given. After that this research is hopefully use7ful as a reference in English language teaching. The readers who want to get information more about passive voice. Finally, the future researcher who want to analyze about passive voice in other perspectives.

Catatan: artikel ini disusun berdasarkan skripsi penulis dengan pembimbing I Dra. Yenni Rozimela,M.Ed, Ph.D. dan Pembimbing II Yuli Tiarina, M.Pd.+

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