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An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Caption Through Instagram

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to investigate the students' ability in writing caption on Instagram. This research focuses on explaining the result of students' writing caption in five elements of *clarity, conciseness, relevant, context* and *attractiveness* (Grayam, 2010). The data were collected by applying open-ended observation and analyzing the document. The subject of this research were 24 students from class XII-IA 2 whom the researcher followed their Instagram. The data were analyzed by using statistical formula adopted from Rozak (2012). The result of this research showed that the students' writing caption ability was varied. From five elements of caption, the highest mean score is *Attractiveness* element with 4.04, followed by *Clarity* with 3.91, next is *Relevant* with 3.58, then, *Context* with 3.37 mean score, the last is *Conciseness* with 1.5 as the lowest mean score. To conclude, the students' abilities in writing caption on Instagram are fairly good, even though there were elements need to be improved.

Keywords: *Analysis, Writing, Caption, Instagram*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a channel or means of online social interaction in cyberspace (Internet). Users use social media to communicate, to interact, to share, and to build networking. As one means of communication, social media can be utilized not only to share information, but also can be for self-expression and personal branding. Nowadays, social media is already used by many people, from youngsters to adults. Some of the popular social media in Indonesia including: Facebook, Twitter, Path and Instagram. Instagram is a social media that focus on photo uploading and captioning where people share pictures and explain it in written. Writing in social media is an update status that is informative and inspiring.

Writing is a creative process where someone shares his idea to tell, to convince or to entertain the readers. According to Marzuki and Kurniasih (2014, p. 2), writing gives some advantages to both the writer and the reader because they can communicate information without being limited by place and time.

Since English is an international language, many users often write the caption in English. The purposes of the users write the caption in English it can be because of they want their photos captions understood not only by local users, but also by another users around the world. So, they can communicate indirectly with all the social media followers.

It is stated in Curriculum 2013 on Basic Competence 2.3, 4.7 and 4.8, that the third grade of senior high school students are expected to write caption and develop their ideas based on existing images and describe it through the information. A description of caption also known as cutline text that appears below the image (Grayam, 2010).

Researcher has done a preliminary study by following and observing the students' Instagram who studied on the third grade in SMA Inshafuddin Boarding School Banda Aceh. After researchers looked further, they have ever written English captions on the photos uploaded in Instagram. Therefore, it triggered the researcher to further investigate the ability of the students' writing caption through their newest caption uploaded on Instagram in terms of clarity, conciseness, relevance, context and attractiveness.

Based on the background described above, this research focuses on the following research problem: How are the students' ability of SMA Inshafuddin Boarding School Banda Aceh in writing English caption through Instagram?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing

2.1.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is one of skills in English that should be mastered by foreign language students. Nunan (2003, p.88) asserts that writing is a combination of physical and mental actions. Writing is an act of physically do the words and ideas. Therefore, the mental acts are creating ideas, thinking about how to express and organize them into statements and verse. Writing is also known as a combination of processes and products. This means that the writer should imagine, organize, draft, edit, read, and reread. (Darmasanti, 2013, p.1). Therefore, writing is one of the English language skills taught, learned, practiced, and mastered by students.

2.1.2 Kinds of Writing

2.1.2.1 Text Types

According to Nirmala (2013, p. 44), there are four types of writing, namely; descriptive, narrative, expository and argumentative. She defines descriptive as a text that describing objects, people, events, processes, institutions, arguments, etc. There are several types of text that must be mastered by senior high school students based on curriculum 2013 (Depdiknas, 2013): Descriptive text, Recount text, Procedure text, Factual report, Expository text, News text, Short biography text

2.1.2.2 Functional Text

Here, several functional texts that must be mastered by senior high school students based on curriculum 2013 (Depdiknas, 2013): Announcement, Invitation, Personal letter, Information , Application letter, Caption text, Command and prohibition.

2.2 Social Media (Instagram)

Instagram is a fun and quirky way to share our life with friends through a series of pictures. Snap a photo with our mobile phone, then choose a filter to

transform the image into a memory to keep around forever. Instagram also equipped with a special space below the photo to caption write caption. So, users can share their photos as well as information on the corresponding photo.

2.3 Caption Text

2.3.1 Caption Text

A caption, also known as a cut line, is text that appears below the image. Most captions draw attention to something in the image that is not obvious, such as its relevance to the text. According to Grayam (2010), caption is a brief description accompanying an illustration, the part of a legal document that gives the important details of a photograph.

In journalism, the caption is also called as Lead because it has the same criteria. Grayam (2010) mentions several criteria for a good caption: Clearly identifies the subject of the picture, without detailing the obvious. Be as unambiguous as practical in identifying the subject. Concise/ succinctness mean using no superfluous or needless words. It is not the same as brevity, which means using a relatively small number of words. Succinct captions have more power than verbose ones. More than three lines of text in a caption may be distracting. Establishes the picture's relevance to the article. Provides context for the picture. Draws the reader into the article.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

This study was quantitative descriptive study concerned to explain the phenomenon occurs naturally, without trial, using statistical analysis. According to Best and Khan (1993, p. 290), descriptive quantitative research is the systematic scientific investigation of quantitative properties and phenomenon. In other words, descriptive quantitative research is scientific investigation which explains phenomena by using numbers.

In this study, the researcher tried to collect, analyze, and describe the data about the students' ability in writing caption text through Instagram by capturing the photos' captions from students' Instagram.

3.2 Research Location

This study was conducted in SMA Inshafuddin Boarding School Banda Aceh. This school is located at Jln. Taman Sri Ratu Safiatuddin, Lambaro Skep, Kec. Kuta Alam, Banda Aceh. This school has 280 students and 32 teachers, 2 of them are English teachers. There are 24 students per class. The time allocation for English subject for a meeting per week is 90 minutes.

3.3 Research Subjects and Object

The subject of this research is the third grade students of SMA Inshafuddin Boarding School. To limit the research subject, the researcher conducted the research only in class XII-IA 2, the class has 24 students.

The object of this study is the students' ability in writing caption through Instagram in class XII-IA 2.

3.4 Source and Kinds of Data

The sources of data of this research were from the students' Instagram. Document analysis was the main source of data of this study to know the students

score and abilities of their writing caption through Instagram. Before that, researcher has done open ended observation on 24 students' Instagram in the class and observing their captioning on their Instagram photos.

The kind of data of this research was English statements presented by students under the photos uploaded in their Instagram.

3.5 Research Instrument

To facilitate the researcher in collecting the data, observation and document analysis are utilized as explained below.

3.5.1 Open Ended Observation

Open-ended observation is a descendent of the approach of "Illuminative evaluation", a term introduced by Parlett & Hamilton (1992) to denote an observational approach inspired by ethnographic rather than experimental traditions and methods. In this research, the researcher used open-ended observation such as personal observation that focuses on the students' captioning in Instagram, especially English caption.

3.5.2 Document Analysis

In this research, the researcher collected the data from the students' Instagram captured as a document. Then, the result concerned on the students' writing captions through Instagram were analyzed and scored by researcher by using the Likert scale that adopted from Grayam (2010). See appendix 1.

3.6 Technique of Data Collection

3.6.1 Open Ended Observation

In order to collect the data that deal with the ability of students' in writing caption through Instagram, here the researcher explains the procedure of data collection as follows:

The researcher came to the school and met the English teacher who taught in the class XII-IA 2. She asked for the students' attendance list from the teacher and Instagram ID from each student. After she obtained all the students' Instagram ID, the researcher followed and observed their English caption only.

3.6.2 Document Analysis

The second step in gaining the data is by using document analysis, such as students writing caption captured from Instagram as the document. The documents of Instagram caption was captured and collected, then the documents were analyzed and scored by the researcher by using Lickert scale.

3.7 Technique of Data Analysis

After all data were collected, to analyze them, the writer used statistical formula which was adopted from Rozak (2012) to get the mean score. The formula was as follow:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Where:

M = Mean

$\sum x$ = The sum of the score

n = the number of sample

4. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

This chapter consists of the result of the research about students' captions on Instagram. The explanation on the students' ability in writing caption is provided in the following section.

4.1 Result of Students Writing Caption Ability

This research was carried out at XII-IA 2 class of SMA Inshafuddin boarding school in Banda Aceh. The researcher came to the class and met the students then asked for their Instagram IDs. After that, the researcher observed their caption through their social media. There were 24 students selected as the sample in a class. The class was chosen purposively because all of the students in this class were Instagram followers.

In order to calculate the data systematically and easily, the researcher analyzed them by using statistical formula as suggested by Rozak (2012).

The chart below illustrates about the students' total scores and mean score of caption elements. The scores were obtained from the assessments of their caption on Instagram. The researcher presents both of charts bellow. The tabulation of the data is given in appendix 3 (table 4.1).

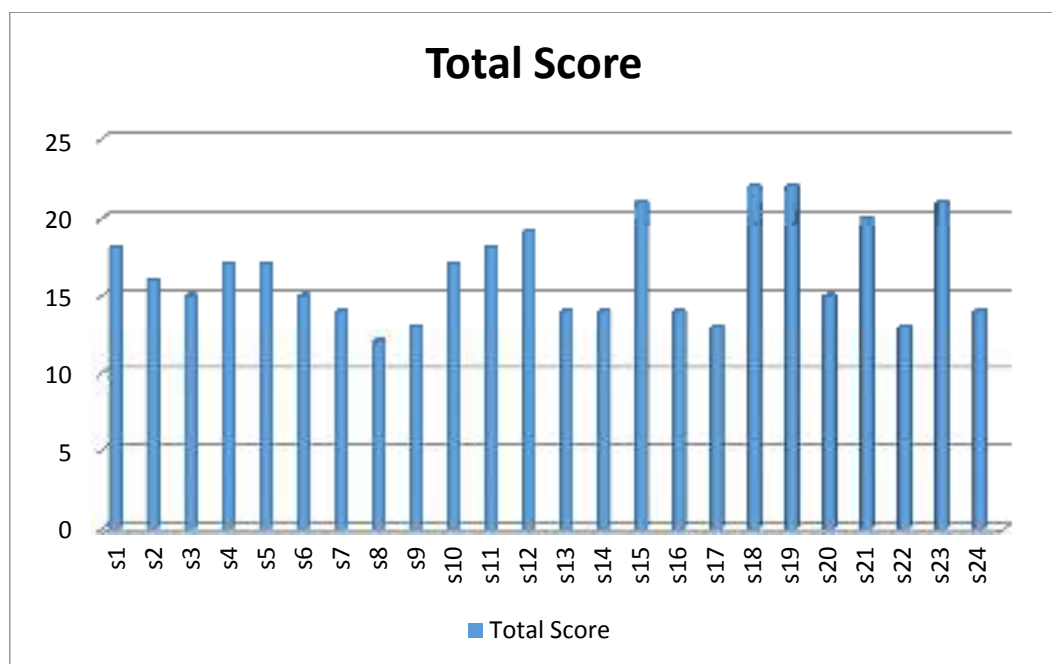


Chart 4.1. The total score of each caption

In the chart, the X axis represents the students, whereas the Y axis represents their scores in writing caption elements. Based on the chart above, it shows that the highest score is 25 and the lowest score is 0. There were 2 students who were able to reach the score of 22, which meant none of them got the highest score and none of them obtained the lowest score. Only 1 student got the lowest score of 12. Most of students received the score of 16.

The chart below gives the information about the mean scores of students in 5 elements of caption: they are clarity, conciseness, relevance, context, and attractiveness.

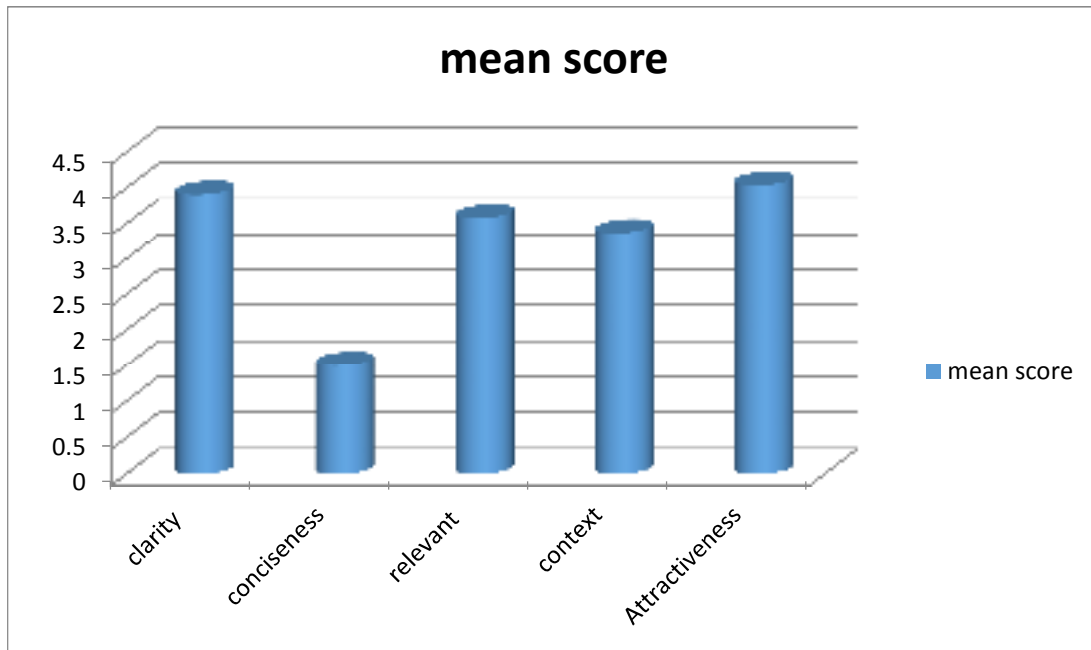


Chart 4.2. The mean score of captions elements

From the charts above, it shows five different mean score of each caption elements category. The highest mean score is *Attractiveness* element with 4.04, followed by *Clarity* with 3.91. The third highest mean score was *Relevant* with 3.58. Then, *Context* was on the fourth rank with 3.37. The last was *Conciseness* with 1.5.

The researcher analyzed the data in each element to find out which element is good and which element is weak. The result has been in form of mean score and for the detail calculation can be seen in appendix 3. The analysis of each element distributed both charts and tables. They showed that the *Conciseness* element in likert scale scoring categorized as the weak element gotten by students in their writing caption. However, the good element is on *Attractiveness* which the students had more scores in this aspect.

4.2 Discussion

There were twenty four students in the class whose the captions on Instagram were analyzed during the year of 2017. Firstly, researcher asked for their accounts on social media, then followed them in order to know their up-to-date caption. In this case, the researcher only focused on captions that were written in English and 1 student would be taken 1 caption that uploaded within the year 2017. Therefore, 24 captions captured from their Instagram. The researcher's consideration in selecting the students' captions was; the researcher did not take the caption that written in mixed language and copied quotation.

From the data analysis, the researcher found various result of their captions which were assessed by using five elements of caption namely clarity, conciseness, relevance, context, and attractiveness. The students obtained the score ranging from 1 to 5 in every aspect. The scores were analyzed according to the central tendency (total and mean) from the five elements. It showed that the ways of students wrote captions were varied since they used their own words to express their idea through Instagram. As we know that instagram is one of social media that becomes booming because it can attract users to upload pictures and also provide

caption space to describe the pictures. It can be used to gain students' knowledge in order to expand their writing skill and as medium of teaching for teacher through writing caption.

From the result, it was found that the students' mean score in writing caption on Instagram was 16.41. Nevertheless, this calculation is the students' score in general writing caption. To see the students' score details of several aspects of writing caption will be described as follow bellow.

Firstly, it is *Clarity* aspect with mean score 3.91, in which the highest score gotten by students is 5 and the lowest score is 3. Clarity is the ways of writer to utter their idea to give explanation of what they deliver to the subject. For instance, a student uploaded a photo with some of her friends. In the photo, they look happy and hugging each other. From the photo, it can be seen some birthday decoration around them, such a birthday greeting post that hanging in the wall behind them and some of snacks and drinks are pun on the table in front of them. The photo is completed with caption "*big thanks for this party ladies*". This sentence was clearly explained that they just celebrate a birthday party before.

Secondly, the *Conciseness* aspect with mean score is 1.5. The mean score of this aspect is 1.5 as categorized the lowest mean scores. Conciseness is concern on the number of words used by students on their caption. In fact, a lot of students wrote short caption that consists of 2 -26 words. That is why; they attained score starting from 1 and 4. Yet, Instagram has a limit of 2200 characters per post or comments which allows more extensive texts. For instance, the students uploaded a photo with her friend in the car by giving the caption "*no comment*" by mean the student only write two words. Even it's only two words, but it represents the meaning of their expression from the picture.

Thirdly, the *Relevance* is slightly different from context which the mean score is 3.58. The score starts from 2 to 5 based on their caption on Instagram. Relevance is suitable context used to describe the subject or it establishes the picture's relevance to the article or it directly answers the question and presented in logical order. For example, a student who sit alone behind a table and took a photo at night, in this way, he said "*fast*". The researcher analyzed that the caption and picture are not suitable and not directly clear.

Fourthly, *Context* in caption is essential to complete the subject used on social media. It gives to explain what is shown in the image/illustration and to help the reader understand the information that may not be in the text (Salsabila, R. 2016). The context is created in error grammar which make the sentence may be different to the context mentioned such as "*maybe one day can be realized my dream*" with the picture of his self. This sentence is a bit confusing. In the context, the grammatical function is quite important in order to understand well even the picture is worth thousand words, but it still needs a contextual caption to catch readers.

Lastly, it is the last aspect that was examined which got the highest mean scores namely *Attractiveness* with 4.04. The aspect of attractiveness is the high scores gotten by students which the mean score is 4.04 which the highest score gotten by students is 5 and the lowest scores are 3. It means that students can attract their followers to read their caption by writing in good caption. A student who took photo with his friend with messy color on his face is also attractive. He said in the caption with "*thank you my silly friend*".

From the students' mean score in each aspect, it could be seen that the students' weakness in writing caption text is in *context* aspect with mean 3.37 that students are unable to apply vocabulary control which expresses accurate and proper meaning in the context of the topic, grammatical accuracy is also low that examines students' ability to follow the rules of the English language concerning syntax, morphology and semantics. It is the key factor in assessing English language proficiency.

From the result, we also can find that the students' strength in writing caption text is in *attractiveness* aspect with mean score 4.04. Attractiveness provides pleasure and delight to the subject shared by the students on social media which most of them can attract followers to like their post. In nutshell, the caption of students on Instagram shows their ability in writing even though the elements are graded that do not give perfection. Overall, students motivated to write caption in English in terms of improving their skill.

5.1 Conclusion

The result showed that the highest mean score gotten by students is 4.04 of *attractiveness*. In this case, the students are able to attract their followers towards their writing on caption. Some of students created the sentences that are suitable to the picture. That is why; most students reached more scores in this element that become their strength in writing skill. Next, followed by *Clarity* with mean score 3.91. The third highest mean score was *Relevant* with 3.58. Then, *Context* was on the fourth rank with 3.37. It is one of the weaknesses that are dealt with by the students in composing the caption that students are still lacking in the knowledge of grammar rule and applying vocabulary so that their writing turns inappropriate in terms of grammatical accuracy. Therefore, when they are trying to explain the picture with captions that contain of grammatical errors and unsuitable vocabulary, it may create confusion for those who read it. The last was *Conciseness* with 1.5. This aspect was categorized as the lowest mean scores. Conciseness is concern on the number of words used by students on their caption. In fact, a lot of students wrote short caption that consists of 2 -26 words. That is why; they attained score starting from 1 and 4. Concise/ succinctness mean using no superfluous or needless words.

5.2 Suggestion

At the end of this study, the researcher would like to give some suggestions to the teacher, students and further researchers as follows.

5.2.1 Suggestion for Teacher

1. English teacher should be focused in teaching the elements of context, such as knowledge of grammar rule and vocabulary, so students' writing turns appropriate in terms of grammatical accuracy.
2. English teacher should motivate students to write more, one of the ways is posting their English caption on Instagram.
3. English teacher should evaluate and give feedback towards the students caption on Instagram so that they can learn from their mistakes and errors.
4. English teacher should choose interesting medium instruction for students in writing skill practice in this technology era such as Instagram or other social media that provide space for writing. They give good impact to the

students in learning English since social media is the global networking that can be used by anyone including students.

5.2.2 *Suggestion for Students*

1. Students should do more practice in practicing their writing.
2. Students should enhance their capabilities in language proficiency particularly in writing by using social media like Instagram.
3. Students should improve their ideas by explaining or describing pictures that they uploaded in more relevant way.

5.2.3 *Suggestion for Further Researcher*

1. Other researchers may conduct further analysis consider this topic with a larger scope of respondents, to examine students' writing on Instagram.
2. Other social media that may improve people in learning new language and provide wide range of linguistic matters are also worth to be investigated.

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