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DEVELOPING PORTFOLIO AS AN ALTERNATIVE TESTING DEVICE IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING

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Abstract

The study on developing portfolio as an alternative testing device in descriptive text writing aims at (1) identifying the problems in using a model of test in descriptive text writing, (2) identifying the suitable model of test in descriptive text writing, (3) describing the model of developing portfolio as an alternative testing device in descriptive text writing, and d) finding out the effectiveness of the use of the model of alternative testing device in descriptive text writing. The research design that used was R&D model adopted from Borg & Gall (1987). There were two instruments used questionnaires and portfolio model in descriptive text writing. The second year students of English study program of Timor University were purposed as the samples with 30 students. The writer used qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze and describe the data. The findings showed that the students still have problems in constructing phrases, constructing sentences, constructing paragraph and writing a descriptive text. They also have problems in the aspects of writing when they are writing. Those problems are how to develop ideas, use good grammar, choose appropriate vocabulary, manage good organization of writing and use good mechanism of writing.

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Introduction

Test has a powerful effect in the language teaching and learning process. It is important for teachers to use a test in order to measure whether the objectives of language teaching and learning have been achieved or not. Hughes (2003:5) defines testing as the way in which information about people's language ability can be gathered. The information about people's ability is very useful and necessary therefore, it needs a test to measure it. Furthermore, Brown (2004:3) defines test as a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain. Based on these definitions, the writer can say that a test is an instrument that used by teacher to measure the students' learning ability. A test is used as the way to know whether the students have achieved the learning objectives or not. It is proved that, at the end of the lesson there must be a test to measure the learning objectives. Classroom tests are conducted for one or more of purposes such as to establish a basis for assigning grades, to determine how well each student has achieved the course objectives, to diagnose student problems for remediation and to determine where instruction needs improvement. The function of test is to help the teachers to know whether the learning objectives have been reached.

Portfolio is one of the alternative tests. Weigle (2009:197) noted that portfolio assessment is seen as an alternative approach to writing assessment that can allow broader inferences about writing ability than are possible with single-shot approaches to evaluating writing, both in individual classroom and on a large class. Brown (2004:256) defines portfolio as a puroposeful collection of students' work that demonstrate their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas. Portfolio assessment is an ongoing process involving the student and teacher in selecting samples of student's work for inclusion in a collection, the main purpose of which is to show the student's progress. The use of this procedure is increasing in the language field, particularly with respect to the writing skill. It makes intuitive sense to involve students in decisions about which pieces of their work to assess and to assure that feedback is provided.

Texts are pieces of written or spoken language created for a particular purpose. A text is created by a speaker or writer. When constructing a piece of text the speaker or writer makes choices about the words used and how these words will be put together. The choice of words will depend on the purpose and context of the text. A good piece of text requires the creator to make the right choices from the language system; choices about words, sentences, processes and features. These choices will reflect our purpose and context. Descriptive text is one of text types in written text. Description text describes a particular person, place or thing. Its purpose is to tell about the subject by describing its features without including personal opinions. Description presents the appearance of things that occupy space, whether they are objects, people, buildings or cities. In this kind of text, the students are required to list the characteristics of something and usually deal with the physical appearance of the described thing. Generic structure of descriptive text divided into two parts, (1) introduction is the part of paragraph that introduces the character and (2) description is the part of paragraph that describes the character. This indicates that a descriptive text has two elements: an element to identify phenomenon (*identification*) and another one (*description*) to portray parts, qualities, or characteristics.

Nowadays, students face many problems with the learning achievement of English writing test, it is fact that at the end of the lesson many of them could not pass the English writing test. There are many problems that cause students do not pass the test such as the mastery of material, low motivation in studying English, teacher's quality, test construction and the items test are difficult for students. However, English teachers or lecturers have been trying to find out the solution but this problem has never been overcome. The writer believes that constructing the test is as the main cause for students' failure. The test construction would not answer the principles or criteria of a good test. The preliminary study at the English Study Program of Timor University showed that the test used by lecturer in writing subject is essay test. In the primary data from class A of the second year students of English Study Program of Timor University in the academic year 2011/2012, the writer found that the result of writing test score in writing II subject that from 30 students 20% got 70-79 (B), 40% got 60-69 (C), and 40% got 30-59 (D). This means that many students are still find problems in the writing test. They did not construct phrases, sentences, paragraph or text in developing writing. Therefore, it is reasonable to develop portfolio test on descriptive text writing.

The writer realized the importance of constructing test in teaching and learning process, therefore he was interested to do the research on the *Developing Portfolio as an Alternative Testing*

Device in Descriptive Text Writing. The purposes of this study were a) identifying the problems in using a model of test in descriptive text writing of the second year students of English Study Program of Timor University, b) identifying the suitable model of test in descriptive text writing c) describing the model of developing portfolio as an alternative testing device in descriptive text writing and d) finding out the effectiveness of the use of the model of an alternative test in descriptive text writing. It is hoped that the result of this study would find the solution to English teachers and lecturers when they construct and apply the good test in descriptive text writing.

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student works that exhibits to the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in a given area. A portfolio is a collection of written texts written for different purposes over a period. Portfolio assessment is used in so many settings, there is wide variation in terms of how portfolios are assembled, evaluated, and used; however, certain common characteristics in these points can be found in many portfolio assessment programs. Moya & O'Malley (1994) define portfolio is a collection of a student's work, experiences, exhibitions, self-ratings (i.e., data), whereas portfolio assessment is the procedure used to plan, collect, and analyze the multiple sources of data maintained in the portfolio.

Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2002) said that the most important components of a portfolio are collection, reflection and selection. A portfolio must include a collection of writing samples, rather than a single piece of writing, since the goal of portfolio assessment is to provide more evidence of a student's ability in writing than a single piece of writing can provide. The collection can vary along a number of parameters it can include finished products only, or earlier drafts of finished products, to reflect the writer's process of writing and revision; it can be assembled under very strict guidelines or be left to the student's discretion; it can contain just a few writing samples or a large number but the essential point is that a portfolio is not a portfolio unless it contains more than one piece of writing.

Hyland (2003:233) stated that portfolios are multiple writing samples, written over time, and purposefully selected from various genres to best represent a student's abilities, progress, and most successful texts in a particular context. Portfolio evaluation reflects the practice of most writing courses where students use readings and other sources of information as a basis for writing, revise and resubmit their assignments after receiving feedback from teachers. He said that the purpose of portfolios is to obtain a more prolonged and accurate picture of students writing in more natural and less stressful contexts.

Moya & O'Malley (1994) proposed portfolio assessment model which includes six interrelated levels of assessment activities: (a) identify the purpose and focus of the portfolio procedure (establish a portfolio committee and a focus for the portfolio); (b) plan portfolio contents (select assessment procedures, specify portfolio contents, and determine the frequency of assessment); (c) design portfolio analysis (set standards and criteria for interpretation of portfolio contents, determine the procedure for integrating portfolio information and schedule staff responsibilities for portfolio analysis); (d) prepare for instructional use (plan instructional use and feedback to students and parents); (e) identify procedures to verify the accuracy of the information (i.e. establish a system to check the reliability of portfolio information and validate instructional decisions) and (f) implement the model.

Method of Investigation

The method of this research is research and development (R&D) adopted from Borg and Gall (1996) consisting of eignt stages: (1) students' and lecturer's needs analysis, (2) develop preliminary form of products, (3) expert and lecturer validation, (4) first main field testing, (5) first product revision, (6) second main field testing, (7) second product revision and (8) producing final product. There were two instruments used namely questionnaires and portfolio model in descriptive text writing. The second year students of English study program of Timor University were purposed as the samples with 30 students.

The writer used qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze and describe the data. In terms of how effective the use of the model of alternative test in descriptive text writing, the writer designed hypothesis and used SPSS program to find the effectiveness of the model.

I. One t-test sample:
   a. Pre test
      H_0 = the students' final score of pre test does not achieve the minimum score
      $H\alpha$ = the students' final score of pre test achieves the minimum score
   b. Post test
      H_0 = the students' final score of post test does not achieve the minimum score
      $H\alpha$ = the students' final score of post test

achieves the minimum score

II. Two t-test sample:

Pre test

H_0 = the students' final score of pre test is similar

Hα = the students' final score of post test is significant than pre test

Note:

H_0 does not achieve if it is significant < α

Hα achieves if it is significant > α

α = 0.05

Findings and Discussion

Based on the students' answers in no. 1, that 15 students answered strongly agree, 15 students answered agree and no student answers disagree and strongly disagree. It means that writing is important for students. Some students commented that, writing could help them to do tasks because most of the tasks are in written form. In no. 2, that 5 students answered strongly agree, 19 students answered agree, 6 students answered disagree and no student answered strongly disagree. It means that writing is difficult for students. In no. 5, that 5 students answered strongly agree, 19 students answered agree, 3 students answered disagree and 1 student answered strongly disagree. In no. 6, that 5 students answered strongly agree, 20 students answered agree, 5 students answered disagree and 1 student answered strongly disagree. In statement no. 7, that 5 students answered strongly agree, 22 students answered agree, 3 students answered disagree and no student answered strongly disagree. It means that the students have problems in constructing phrases, sentences and paragraph. Students' responds on the aspect of writing is difficult for them that 7 students answered content/idea, 14 students answered grammar, 8 students answered vocabulary and 1 student answered others. In other words, students still have difficulties on the aspect of writing. Students' responds on the type of writing test/task/assignment can improve their writing skill, that 24 students answered portfolio (essay, journal and paper), no one answered completion/fill in, 5 students answered multiple choices and 1 student answered others. In other words, portfolio is a good model to improve their writing skill.

Based on the lecturers' answers on questionnaires, in no. 1, that 7 lecturers answered strongly agree. It means that writing is very important for their students. In no. 2, that 2 lecturers answered strongly agree, 4 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and one lecturer answered strongly disagree. It means that writing is difficult for their students. In no. 5, that 2 lecturers answered strongly agree, 4 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and 1 lecturer answered strongly disagree. In no. 6, that 4 lecturers answered strongly agree, 2 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and 1 lecturer answered strongly disagree. In no. 7, that 4 lecturers answered strongly agree, 3 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and strongly disagree. In other words, students still have problems in constructing phrases, sentences and paragraph. The lecturer's responds on the aspect of writing is difficult for students that two lecturers answered content/idea, three lecturers answered grammar, no one answered vocabulary and two lecturers answered others. We can say that students have difficulties in constructing the aspects of writing. The lecturers' responds on portfolio assessment in general is a valid (meaningful) way to evaluate the writing of EFL students that 4 lecturers answered strongly agree, 3 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and strongly disagree. Portfolio assessment in general is a reliable (fair) way to evaluate the writing of EFL students. In no. 14, that 4 lecturers answered strongly agree, 3 lecturers answered agree, no one answered disagree and strongly disagree. The lecturer's responds on the type of writing task that can improve the students' writing skill, that 6 lecturers answered portfolio (essay, journal and paper), 1 lecturer answered others and no one answered completion/fill in and multiple choices. It means that portfolio is a good model to improve the students' writing skill.

In order to identify the students' ability in constructing a descriptive text before the try out, it was important to apply a pre-test for them. The result shows that that four students obtained 1, one student obtained 1.2, three students obtained 1.4, seven students obtained 1.6, eight students obtained 1.8, two students obtained 2, two students obtained 2.2, one student obtained 2.4 and three students obtained 2.6. The average score of content aspect is 1.9 with the SD is 0.7. The average score of grammar aspect is 1.6 with the SD is 0.6. The average score of vocabulary aspect is 1.7 with the SD is 0.7. The average score of organization aspect is 1.8 with the SD is 0.5. The average score of mechanism aspect is 1.8 with the SD is 0.5. While the average score as whole in pre test is 1.7 with the SD is 0.5. They are classified as poor level. It means that it is important to develop a portfolio as an alternative testing device in descriptive text writing.

Portfolio is one of the alternatives assessments. Lexically, a portfolio is a large thin flat

case used for carrying and protecting drawings, photographs or documents (Oxford Learner's Thesaurus). In Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a portfolio is a collection of drawing, documents, etc that represent a person's, especially an artist's work. While in Longman Dictionary, a portfolio is a large flat case used especially for carrying pictures, documents, etc. A portfolio is a set of pictures or other pieces of work that an artist, photographer, etc has done.

In terms of portfolio as an alternative testing evice in descriptive text writing, there are a number of definitions quoted as theoretical views in this study. In general, a portfolio is defined a purposeful collection of students' work that exhibits to the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in a given area. A portfolio is a collection of written texts which written for different purposes over a period. Portfolio assessment is used in so many settings, there is wide variation in terms of how portfolios are assembled, evaluated, and used; however, certain common characteristics in these points can be found in many portfolio assessment programs.

Despite writing for academic purposes is a complex task and frustrating for students, the way to improve their skill in writing is through portfolio. Hyland (2003:233) noted the purpose of portfolios is to obtain a more prolonged and accurate picture of students writing in more natural and less stressful contexts.

The writer can highlight that portfolio is good model to know the student's progressive in learning process. Teacher can easily measure the learning objectives through the collection of work sheets. Student portfolios are collections of student work that are typically used for an alternative assessment grade in the classroom.

In completing the final product of portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing, the writer needed eight stages. They are (1) students' and lecturer's needs analysis, (2) develop preliminary form of products, (3) expert and lecturer validation, (4) first main field testing, (5) first product revision, (6) second main field testing, (7) second product revision, and (8) producing final product.

At stage 1, the students were given questionnaires to students and lecturers to answer. The aim is to obtain the data of their needs analysis in developing portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing. At stage 2, the model of portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing was developed based on the result of students' and lecturer's needs analysis. The format of portfolio model presents the student' identity namely name and student's number on the top left of the work sheet. The next is instruction that consists of 2 affirmative sentences and 3 command sentences. The format of portfolio model consists of 9 columns and 7 rows. The columns present number, date, competences, aspects of writing, total score, average score and teacher's note. The rows present four competences in writing a descriptive text, a space for students to write his/her ideas which covers three parts namely topic, identification and description, and there is a space for teacher to write his/her comments on students' writing. In the identification, students write identities of the person, place or thing to be described and in description students write parts, qualities and characteristics of person, place or thing to be described. The aspects of assessing writing as mentioned in Brown, (2005:56) that there are five aspects namely organization, content, grammar, mechanics and vocabulary. At stage 3, before the real classroom test was conducted the model of portfolio as an alternative test was validated by the experts (lecturers from State University of Semarang and Timor University). The aim is to find out the effectiveness of portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing. All experts were given scoring instrument sheet that contains indicators, score and spaces for additional suggestions. There were two experts from State Unnes and four lecturers from Unimor chosen to validate the portfolio model in descriptive text writing. The results of validation form show that the portfolio model is valid with the average score is 4 which is classified as good level. Therefore, the portfolio model can be used in assessing descriptive text writing. At stage 4, there was the first main field-testing. The students were given portfolio model of test. The students were explained to do the test based on the instruction with the topic My Campus.

The reason for choosing my campus as the topic because it is familiar with the students. The students were asked to do the test based on four competences namely constructing phrases, constructing sentences, constructing paragraph and constructing descriptive text writing. The writer believes that these four competences can help the students to improve their writing ability through portfolio model. At stage 5, the product of portfolio model as an alternative test in descriptive text writing was revised based on the result of first main field-testing. The criteria for validity in sorting out the alternative test development are suitability with the curriculum that covers the level of difficulty, effectiveness and the practicality. At stage 6, there was the second main field-

testing. The students were given portfolio model of test based on the revision. The students were explained to do the test based on the instruction with the topic My Campus.

The students were asked to do the test based on four competences in the format namely constructing phrases, constructing sentences, constructing paragraph and writing a descriptive text. Before the second main field-testing held, there was treatment to students who have low score on each aspect of writing. The students were explained in more detailed to construct good phrases, sentences, and paragraph and develop descriptive text writing. At stage 7, there was the second product revision based on the result of the second main field-testing. The second revise product employed the criteria of validity in sorting the portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing. If it is 80% of the estimate the criteria at least fair, it means that the product was not be revised. The portfolio as an alternative test is classified to be successful if the frequency of the students' score is 3 (at adequate level). At stage 8, there was the final product of portfolio as an alternative test in descriptive text writing to be used at the English study program.

The Tables 1 present one and paired t-test sample in pre test and post test to measure whether the portfolio model in descriptive text is effective.

Table 1 presents one-sample test shows it is significant (2-tailed) = 0,000, and the confidence is 95 % therefore the significant is < 0.05. Therefore, based on the criteria of achievement hypothesis, H_0 is not achieved or it achieves Hα. It means that the students' final score in pretest achieves minimum standard of 3.

Table 2 presents one-sample TEST in post test that it is significant (2-tailed) = 0,000, the confidence is 95 % so the significant is < 0,05. Therefore, based on the criteria of achievement hypothesis H_0 is not achieved and it achieves Hα. It means that the students' final score in posttest achieves minimum standard is 3.

Table 3 presents paired t-test that it is significant (2-tailed) = 0.000 and the continence 95 % so the significant is < 0,05. Based on the criteria of achievement hypothesis H_0 is not achieved and it achieves Hα. This means that the final score of the post test is significant than the pre test.

The result of one-sample test showed H_0 is not achieved or it achieves Ha. It means that the students' final score in pretest achieves minimum standard 3. One t-test sample in posttest showed that H_0 is not achieved and achieves Hα. It means that students' final score in posttest achieves minimum standard is 3. The results of paired t-test showed that H_0 is not achieved and achieves

Table 1. One t-Test Sample in Pre Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	30	1.727	.4623	.0844

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Pretest	-15.085	29	.000	-1.2733	-1.446	-1.101

Table 2. One t-Test Sample in Post Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post test	30	4.053	.2113	.0386

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Post test	27.305	29	.000	1.0533	.974	1.132

Table 3. Paired t-Test Sample

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post test	4.053	30	.2113	.0386
	Pre test	1.727	30	.4623	.0844

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Post test & Pre test	30	.529	.003

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post test - Pretest	2.3267	.3939	.0719	2.1796	2.4737	32.356	29	.000

Hα. This means that the final score of posttest is significant. Therefore, the portfolio model as an alternative testing device in descriptive text is effective.

Conclusion

There are many types of tests used to measure the students' writing skill. It depends on purpose of writing and the characteristics of the topic. Looking at the problems in developing writing skill faced by the second year students of English Study Program of Timor University, the writer believes that portfolio model is a good solution to improve the students writing skill, especially writing a descriptive text. Portfolios are collection of students' work that shows change and progress over time that contain students' products or students' performances. Despite writing for academic purposes is a complex task and frustrating for students, the way to improve their skill in writing is through portfolio. The purpose of portfolios is to obtain a more prolonged and accurate picture of students writing in more natural and less stressful contexts. The writer can conclude that portfolio is good model to know the student' progressive in writing skill. Teacher or lecturer can easily measure the learning objective through the collection of students' work sheets. Student portfolios are collections of student work that are typically used for an alternative assessment grade in the classroom.

The format of portfolio model presents the student' identity namely name and student's number on the top left of the work sheet. The next is instruction that consists of 2 affirmative sentences and 3 command sentences. The format of portfolio model consists of 9 columns and 7 rows. The columns present number, date, competences, aspects of writing, total score, average score and teacher's note. The rows present four competences in writing a descriptive text, a space for students to write his/her ideas which covers three parts namely topic, identification and description, and there is a space for teacher to write his/her comments on students' writing. In the identification, students write identities of the person, place or thing to be described and in description students write parts, qualities and characteristics of person, place or thing to be described. There are five aspects namely organization, content, grammar, mechanics and vocabulary. Before the real classroom test was conducted the model of portfolio as an alternative test was validated by the experts (lecturers Unnes and Unimor). All experts were given scoring instrument sheet that contains indicators, score and spaces for additional suggestions. There were two experts from State University of Semarang and four lecturers from Timor University chosen to validate the portfolio model in descriptive text writing. The results of validation form show that the portfolio model is valid with the average score is 4 which is classified as good level. Therefore, the portfolio model can be used in assessing descriptive text writing.

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