

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Assessment Tasks Used to Assess Writing Skill**

At the beginning of the presentation of findings, the aspect that becomes the focus of the discussion is the type of assessment tasks used by English teachers to assess students' writing skill. This aspect was discovered by the writer through two research data collection techniques, namely observation in class when the teacher was teaching and interviews with the teacher to clarify the notes found during the observation.

In the observation section, there are three categories of writing assessment tasks observed in accordance with the theoretical references used in this study, namely imitative writing, intensive writing, and responsive and extensive writing. All the results of the observation section were collected during the researcher's observation in several classes where the English teacher taught. Therefore, the real situation of the teaching and learning process was clearly captured through the observation checklist and notes made during the observation. Below is a summary of the observations found in Ms. RS's teaching.

**Table 2**

### Observation Result in Ms. RS's Class

No.	Items	Yes	No
<b>Assessment Tasks: Imitative Writing</b>			
1.	Tasks in (hand-)writing letters, words, and punctuation	✓	
2.	Spelling tasks and detecting phoneme-grapheme correspondences	✓	
<b>Assessment Tasks: Intensive Writing</b>			
1.	Dictation and dicto-comp		✓
2.	Grammatical transformation tasks	✓	
3.	Picture-cued tasks		✓
4.	Vocabulary assessment tasks	✓	
5.	Ordering tasks	✓	
6.	Short-answer and sentence-completion tasks		✓
<b>Assessment Tasks: Responsive and Extensive Writing</b>			
1.	Paraphrasing		✓
2.	Guided question and answer		✓
3.	Paragraph construction tasks		✓
4.	Strategic options		✓

During the observation process, it was found that Ms. RS performed two types of writing assessment tasks which fall under the category of imitative writing, namely tasks in hand-writing letters, words, and punctuation and spelling tasks and detecting phoneme-grapheme correspondences. In the first type, she accustomed students to writing by hand so they got used to neat writing with the correct choice of words and punctuation. In the second type, she also familiarized students with handwriting so that they were trained with proper spelling.

In the intensive writing category, not all types of assessment tasks were carried out by Ms. RS. Several types of assessment tasks such as grammatical transformation tasks, vocabulary assessment tasks, and ordering tasks were carried out in the learning process, while several other types such as dictation and dicto-comp, picture-cued tasks, and short-answer and sentence-completion

tasks were included in the types of assessment tasks not performed. Notes obtained during the observation process indicated that differences in the use of types of assessment tasks in the intensive writing category were caused by subject matter topics that were not in accordance with certain types of assessment tasks, so they were irrelevant when used to assess student learning outcomes.

During the interview process, Ms. RS stated that the textbook was the only source in determining the type of assessment task to be used as an instrument for assessing student learning outcomes. She said:

*“Saya hanya mengadopsi tugas dari buku paket karena faktor keterbatasan kemampuan bahasa siswa, sehingga mereka hanya ditugaskan menjawab soal yang ada di buku tersebut di setiap pertemuannya. Jenis soalnya pun tidak terlalu bervariasi karena hanya mengikuti apa yang tertulis di buku.”* (I only adopted assignments from the textbook due to the limited language abilities of the students, so they were only assigned to answer the questions in the book at each meeting. The types of questions were not too varied because they only followed what was written in the book.)

By using the types of questions or assessment tasks that were not too varied as explained by Ms. RS above, students could complete their assignments well. There were only a few obstacles still experienced by students. Ms. RS explained:

*“Siswa masih menghadapi beberapa kendala dalam mengerjakan tugas yang diberikan, seperti minimnya pengetahuan kosa kata, keterbatasan buku paket yang hanya difotocopy secukupnya, dan tidak banyaknya siswa yang memiliki kamus. Dengan begitu, mereka masih membutuhkan banyak bantuan dalam mempelajari Bahasa Inggris, tapi mereka berusaha cukup baik untuk menggapai nilai maksimal dalam setiap tugas dan rapot mereka.”* (Students still faced several obstacles in carrying out the assignments given, such as a lack of vocabulary knowledge, limited textbooks which were only photocopied sufficiently, and not many students have dictionaries. That way, they

still need a lot of help in learning English, but they were trying well enough to achieve maximum scores in each of their assignments and report cards.)

Besides Ms. RS, there was also Mr. RH who also taught in class VIII but in a different class order. There were slight differences in the results of observations and interviews between the two teachers. The following is a summary of the observations conducted in Mr. RH's teaching.

**Table 3**  
**Observation Result in Mr. RH's Class**

No.	Items	Yes	No
<b>Assessment Tasks: Imitative Writing</b>			
1.	Tasks in (hand-)writing letters, words, and punctuation	✓	
2.	Spelling tasks and detecting phoneme-grapheme correspondences	✓	
<b>Assessment Tasks: Intensive Writing</b>			
1.	Dictation and dicto-comp		✓
2.	Grammatical transformation tasks	✓	
3.	Picture-cued tasks	✓	
4.	Vocabulary assessment tasks	✓	
5.	Ordering tasks	✓	
6.	Short-answer and sentence-completion tasks	✓	
<b>Assessment Tasks: Responsive and Extensive Writing</b>			
1.	Paraphrasing		✓
2.	Guided question and answer		✓
3.	Paragraph construction tasks		✓
4.	Strategic options		✓

Just as did Ms. RS, the two types of assessment tasks in the imitative writing category were also used by Mr. RH, namely tasks in hand-writing letters, words, and punctuation and spelling tasks and detecting phoneme-grapheme correspondences. However, significant differences were seen in the intensive writing category. Almost all types of assessment tasks in this category were used by Mr. RH, such as grammatical transformation tasks, picture-cued tasks, vocabulary assessment tasks, ordering tasks, and short-answer and

sentence-completion tasks. Only dictation and dicto-comp were not used in the process of assessing student learning outcomes.

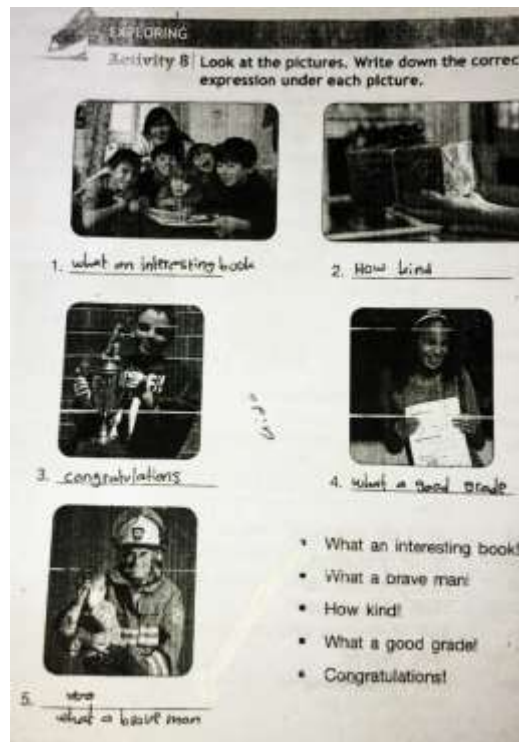
In the interview session, Mr. RH stated that although the textbook is the main guide in delivering material and assessment, he also adopted materials and assessment instruments from various sources so that they can be adapted to students' abilities. He said:

*“Untuk soal writing atau speaking, saya sering mengadopsi beberapa tugas dari internet seperti menulis beberapa kalimat greeting, opinion, pengenalan benda di sekitar mereka, dan lain-lain. Tapi juga ada sebagian yang saya revisi dari internet untuk membuat tugas dengan versi saya sendiri, terkhusus untuk pengenalan grammar.”* (For writing or speaking questions, I often adopted a number of assignments from the internet such as writing a few greeting sentences, opinions, identifying objects around them, and so on. But there were also some that I revised from the internet to make assignments with my own version, especially for introducing grammar.)

The difference between using questions from textbooks and questions adapted from other sources was clearly visible in the students' ability to solve them. Mr. RH explained:

*“Dulu soalnya agak sulit bagi siswa karena selalu terpaku dengan pelajaran di buku paket saja, sehingga hanya sekitar 70-75% siswa yang bisa menyelesaikannya dengan baik. Setelah saya mencari referensi lain, akhirnya mereka lebih merasa bisa mengerjakan tugas-tugas menulis yang saya berikan.”* (In the past, the questions were a bit difficult for students because they were always fixated on the lessons provided in textbooks, so only about 70-75% of students could finish them well. After I looked for other references, in the end they felt more able to do the writing assignments I gave them.)

To provide clear description of the assessment tasks used by the teachers from the textbook, the followings are some figures to analyze.



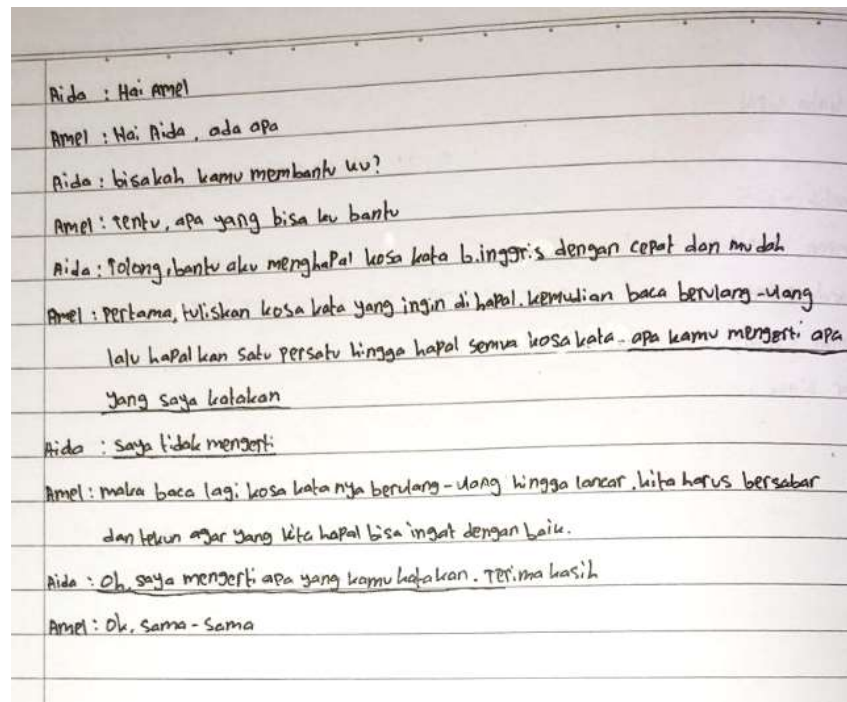
**Figure 1. Picture-Cued Tasks**

Figure 1 above explains about the picture-cued tasks used by the teachers to assess students' writing skill in the intensive writing category. Students were asked to describe the picture using one of several phrase options provided.

1. Ella tells Anna that today ....	a. attention from the students
2. Ella got the information ...	b. they are going to have a math test
3. Daniel feels upset because ...	c. cotton T-shirt or shirt
4. Ella tells Anna and Daniel that ...	d. an itinerary for each student
5. Daniel and Ella feel ....	e. the clothes they should wear
6. Mr Campbell asks for ....	f. to pay attention to the time
7. Mr Campbell gives ....	g. from Andre
8. Mr Campbell asks the students ....	h. he didn't study last night
9. Daniel asks about ....	i. relieved at the end of the conversation
10. Mr Campbell suggests ....	j. they may open the book during the test

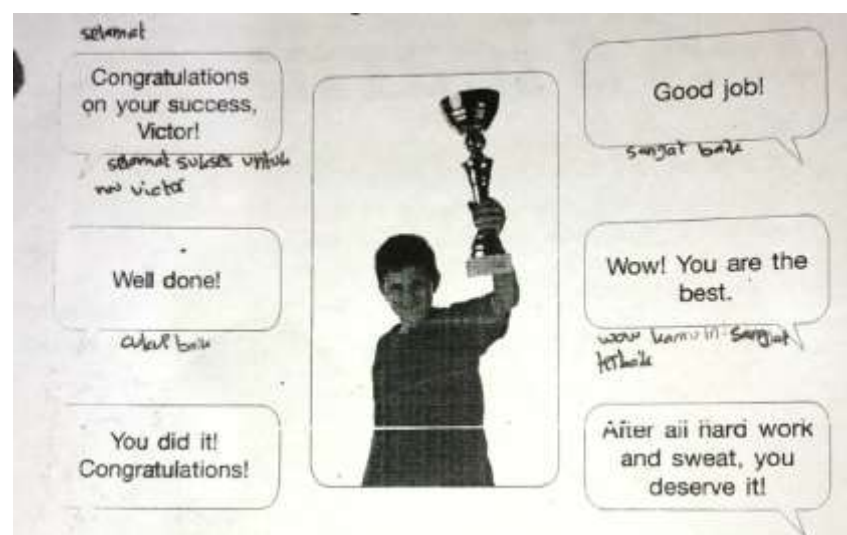
**Figure 2. Sentence-Completion Tasks**

The figure above explains about the sentence-completion tasks used by the teachers to assess students' writing skill in the intensive writing category. Students were asked to complete the sentences using one of several sentence options provided.



**Figure 3. Tasks in Hand-Writing Letters**

It is known from the figure above that students were asked to do certain tasks by hand as indicated by the tasks in the imitative writing category. Thus, they could learn about writing letters, words, sentences, and particular punctuations correctly.



**Figure 4. Vocabulary Assessment Tasks**



From the figure above, it can be seen that students were asked to translate some expressions written on the textbook to increase their vocabularies. Thus, they could use those vocabularies included in the expressions for their daily conversation.

### **B. Students' Perception about the Assessment Tasks for Writing Skill**

In using certain types of assessment tasks to assess students' writing skills, there are various considerations that must be considered by the teacher as explained in the observation and interview results section of the teachers above. Among many considerations, student is one very important aspect, especially in terms of their ability and understanding of the subject matter.

In general, several students who were involved in the interview session mentioned that their English teachers were able to make writing assignments and practice well. However, what they noted was that the teacher must be able to explain the material well before giving assignments. Student MRM, FLN, FSR, and FAM agreed that the assignments given by the teacher were good and easy to understand because they were in accordance with the textbook. However, Student FNY, MGR, and FNS emphasized that their understanding of the task was largely determined by the way the teacher explained it. Student FNY said:

*“Ada tugas yang susah dipahami kalo gurunya tidak menjelaskan dengan baik.”* (There were assignments that were difficult to understand if the teacher didn't explain them well.)

Student MGR and FNS also added the same point:

*“Kalau gurunya menjelaskan dengan baik, saya akan mudah memahami tugas itu,”* (If the teacher explains well, I will easily understand the task.)

Regarding whether the tasks given were in accordance with the material being studied, all students involved in the interview said yes. That is, there were no assignments not related to the material they learn in class. Regarding the type of assignment given, there were several different answers given by students, including making dialogues, writing vocabulary, making utterances, and answering questions in textbooks. Student FAM explained:

*“Biasanya kami disuruh menjawab soal-soal di buku paket, kemudian mengartikan kosakatanya pakai kamus. Terus bisa juga kami disuruh membuat ucapan atau menulis dialog atau pendapat. Intinya menyesuaikan dengan pelajaran hari itu.”* (Usually, we were asked to answer questions in the textbook, then interpret the vocabulary using a dictionary. Then we could also be asked to make a speech or write a dialogue or opinion. The point is to adjust to the lesson that day.)

In the learning process, all students involved in the interviews also revealed that writing practice was always present at every meeting, so they felt helped when doing the practice and assisted by their teacher. Student MRM, FLN, FMR, MFK, and MGR said:

*“Saya selalu terbantu kalo ibu atau bapak menjelaskan bagaimana mengerjakan tugasnya dengan baik.”* (It always helps me if the teacher explains how to do the tasks properly.)

Even so, there were some students who were dissatisfied with the writing practice format provided by the teacher because it was too frequent and not varied. Student FNS explained:

*“Saya sering dapat tugas menulis dan mengartikan kosakata saja. Coba kalo diberi pelajaran lain pasti lebih asyik dan bisa serius belajar Bahasa Inggris.”* (I often got writing assignments and just interpreted

vocabularies. If we were given another lesson, it will be more fun and we can study English more seriously.)

Regarding the format of the multiple-choice questions, almost all students involved in the interviews mentioned that the questions were still very difficult for them, so they often only guessed the answers because there were choices available. Student FSR said:

*“Kalau kurang banyak hafal kosakata waktu ulangan tu, susah menjawabnya. Ujung-ujungnya bisa nebak atau minta jawaban teman.”* (If we don't memorize a lot of vocabularies on the test, it's hard to answer. In the end, we can guess or ask friends for answers.)

Student FLN, FNY, FNS, and FSI had similar answers. They often relied on guesswork when they didn't know how to answer. Student FNS said:

*“Kadang bisa menebak-nebak jawabannya kalo memang tidak tahu harus menjawab apa.”* (Sometimes we can guess the answer if we really don't know what to answer.)

Even though there were still many difficulties in understanding English tasks related to writing skills, all students involved in the interviews mentioned that these tasks still help them improve their English skills, especially writing skills.

## **C. Discussion**

### **1. Assessment Tasks Used to Assess Writing Skill**

From the research findings that have been described previously, it is known that the two English teachers only used two categories of assessment tasks to assess students' writing abilities, namely imitative writing and intensive writing. As written in the literature review section, imitative writing is a category of basic tasks that must be completed by

students, such as writing letters, words, punctuation marks, and short sentences, while intensive writing is slightly more difficult than imitative writing because the language produced must demonstrate the ability to use grammar, vocabulary, or sentence formation (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). These two categories of assessment tasks are included in the low and medium difficulty levels, so they are still suitable for junior high school students.

Still reflecting on the educational level of the students involved in this study, it is very rational that teachers did not use assessment tasks in the responsive and extensive writing category to assess their writing abilities. This is clear because the responsive writing category requires students to demonstrate their writing skills at a limited discourse level, and the extensive writing category already leads to the process and strategy of writing a work for all purposes in the form of a structured report (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). The demands of the tasks given through this category have a high level of difficulty that cannot be applied to junior high school students, such as paraphrasing, guided questions and answers, paragraph construction tasks, and strategic options.

In the intensive writing category, there was little difference in the use of the types of assessment tasks between the two English teachers. From the results of observations and interviews with them, the factor causing the emergence of these differences lies in the level of creativity of the teacher in preparing teaching instruments, including the assessment

task used to measure the level of students success in understanding the subject matter. When the teacher only relies on the material available in the textbook, his creativity is very limited to the ideas of the author of the book. Conversely, the pattern of adaptation and integration of several sources that can be used to design materials and assessment tasks greatly supports the growth of teacher creativity (Richards, 2014; Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung, & Chung-Chieh, 2011). That way, all options that allow variations in learning instruments, especially assessment tasks, must be utilized optimally.

From the observation results of two teachers, both of them did not use dictation as a type of intensive writing category. This finding is contrary to previous studies which have identified that dictation is one of the most common assessment methods to assess the writing skill of young adult learners (Ketabi, 2015). However, the difference might come from any factors such as the difference of education culture and system.

## **2. Students' Perception about the Assessment Tasks for Writing Skill**

From the point of view of students as people who are required to complete assessment tasks made by the teacher, their perceptions are formed based on the bottom-up theory popularized by Gibson (1966) because the factors that cause the emergence of these perceptions are external factors, namely the assessment tasks made by the teacher for them. In contrast to the top-down theory popularized by Gregory (1970), perceptions in this theory arise due to internal factors, namely experience

and prior knowledge. However, it can be assumed that grade VIII junior high school students have not had enough prior knowledge and experience to become a factor that guides their perception of something.

Regarding the assessment tasks given by the teacher to assess students' writing abilities, it was found through the results of interviews with several student representatives that in general the quality of the assessment tasks given by the teachers was very good. However, the important point that was emphasized several times was the teacher's active role in explaining how to complete the assessment task. This is because there are many student errors in answering assignments not because they do not understand the subject matter, but because they do not understand the intent of the questions given, so the answers given are wrong. Therefore, it is important to have well-designed assessment tasks, but it is more important that students could understand what the tasks mean so they could finish the tasks correctly.