



Analysis of Students Ability on Countable and Uncountable Nouns in Writing Descriptive Text of MTsN 13 Agam

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ABSTRACT

This research was due to the problems that were found in MTsN 13 AGAM. The first some of students did not know how to differentiate the countable and uncountable nouns. The second, some of students felt reluctant to write in English. The third, some of students had limited vocabulary. Furthermore, this research is aimed to find out how was the student's ability on countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive text of MTsN 13 Agam. The researcher used quantitative research. The population in this research was MTsN 13 Agam. There were four classes for the ninth grade students in MTsN 13 Agam. the total population was 105 students from class nine of MTSN 13 Agam. The researcher used cluster random sampling in choosing the sample. The total sample of this study was 24 students. The instrument that use for this research was written test. The researcher gave the students 45 minutes time, and the researcher ordered the students to write a descriptive text. In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the students' ability in using countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive texts. The findings showed that the students have a relatively good proficiency in this aspect. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of the students have good to excellent ability in using countable nouns where 23 students can use at least 3 countable nouns in their writing and only one of them that cannot use any countable noun. However, the same cannot be said for uncountable nouns as there are more students who scored poorly in this area where the total of 13 students got the score between 0-40 which categorized as poor. This could be due to various reasons such as lack of exposure to English as a language, limited.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received
05 August 2024
Revised
20 August 2024
Accepted
24 October 2024

Key Word

Writing, Countable Nouns, Uncountable Noun.

How to cite

<https://pusdikra-publishing.com/index.php/jsr>



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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a skill in expressing ideas, feelings, and thoughts that are arranged in words, sentences, and paragraphs by using the eyes, knowledge, and hand. Nunan said that writing is a process where someone invents an idea, expresses the idea, and organizes the idea into a statement or paragraph clearly (David Nunan, 2003). On the

other hand, in writing, students have to master the structure of good writing, such as the content and the grammatical. Furthermore, the information will be acceptable without any misunderstanding in receiving the information. It can be conclude that writing is an activity that the students do in written form to express their idea with a good grammatical structure to create good writing.

Descriptive text is one of the genres in writing and it is taught by an English teacher of MTsN 13 Agam grade IX to make students know how to describe a person, place, or thing. Descriptive text is a text that tells about describing the qualities, conditions, and characteristics of a person, an event a place, or an object (Susiana Pancawati and Nina Dwiastuty, 2021). A descriptive text is a piece of writing in which the writer tries to do a description process.

Based on the syllabus, several topics in writing descriptive text are about describing people, places, and things. To describe about it, the students should be aware with one of the language features in descriptive text. It is using nouns. Nouns are one of the most important parts of English. According to Altenberg and Vago, nouns are commonly defined as words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea (Susiana Pancawati and Nina Dwiastuty, 2021). It means that a noun is a word as a subject or object that refers to a person, place and thing, or idea. Nouns can be classified into several kinds, among of them countable and uncountable nouns that have a correlation with people, places, and things. There are some types of noun, they are: concrete nouns, abstract nouns, countable nouns, and uncountable nouns (Hariyono, Rudy & Mc. Carthy, Andrew, 2008). Countable noun is a noun that can be counted, whereas an uncountable noun is a noun that cannot be counted. The distinction between countable and uncountable is based on whether or not we can count what the noun are described.

Understanding the concept of countability is crucial for proper language acquisition and grammar accuracy. It involves mastering the usage of articles, quantifiers, and subject-verb agreement, which are essential components of sentence construction. Correctly identifying whether a noun is countable or uncountable is key in determining the appropriate grammatical rules to follow. This understanding is particularly relevant for L2 English learners, as it allows them to interpret language from a native speaker's perspective and improve their overall language proficiency. Therefore, studying the differences between countable and uncountable nouns can greatly benefit L2 English teaching and learning, aiding non-native speakers in their journey to fluency (Jian Huang, 2003). In short, knowledge of countability is essential for learning proper grammar and sentence construction. It involves understanding the usage of articles, quantifiers, and subject-verb agreement, especially for L2 English learners. This understanding helps them interpret language from a native speaker's perspective and improve their overall proficiency. Studying the differences between countable and uncountable nouns can greatly benefit L2 English teaching and learning.

However, several students may not understand its form. They cannot apply the right rules in forming countable and uncountable nouns. In English, there are several rules for using countable and uncountable nouns. For example, have a singular and plural form, using some expressions of quantity like, some, any, a lot of, much, many, a few, and a little.

Besides that, sometimes most students have problems in using the expression of quantity, for example, a few are only used before plural countable nouns but many students use a few in plural uncountable nouns. In English, there are several rules in using countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The researcher has found most of the students have some troubles with the rules in using countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

Based on preliminary research at MTsN 13 Agam that the researcher did on August 14th, 2023 by interview and doing an observation at the students' assignments that related with writing task about describing text. From the interview with five students, the students said that they knew about countable and uncountable nouns but when they want to apply them in writing form, they did not understand how to use it in writing form. Meanwhile from the interview with the teacher, the teacher said that the students still confused about the function of a countable and uncountable noun, such as how to add 's/es' or transforming irregular noun from singular to plural such as mouse to mice, and students look confused of how to differentiate countable and uncountable nouns in English. For example, the students wrote " She has three dog", meanwhile it should be " She has three dogs". In another case, the students wrote, " Susan need some milks", meanwhile it should write, " Susan needs some milk". It seems that the students are not able to understand the use of countable and uncountable nouns

The next problem, some of students felt reluctant to write in English. It is caused the students fear of making mistakes and feeling like writing has to be perfect the first time around. Another cause for some students reluctance to write in English, because simply lack of ideas or lack of being able and knowing how to get ideas.

Furthermore, some of students had limited vocabulary. This problem could make the students not use the right word in writing. So it will be difficult for the reader to know the meaning and in learning process the students ask the teacher to tell a meaning of a word in English. The students have to choose the appropriate vocabularies to arrange word, to make sentences and to develop them into paragraphs by using correct grammar, and punctuation. It means that they did know what the meaning of the words. It shows how the students lack of vocabulary in writing

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to conduct research about analyzing of students ability problems, to know the students' ability on countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive text. Therefore the researcher entitled the

research "Analysis of Students Ability on Countable and Uncountable Nouns In Writing Descriptive Text of MTsN 13 Agam.

RESEARCH METHODE

In this research, a quantitative descriptive methodology was employed to investigate various educational problems, specifically focusing on students' abilities in using countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive texts at MTsN 13 Agam. Descriptive research is vital as it not only gathers data that elucidates events but also organizes and interprets this data effectively. According to Gay, descriptive research involves the collection of data to inform hypotheses or answer research questions. This approach necessitates the accumulation of detailed information that reflects the factual circumstances surrounding the subjects under study. Furthermore, Porte emphasizes that descriptive quantitative research allows researchers to present data concerning the frequency of occurrences, typical values, and the distribution of such values throughout the dataset. This type of research ultimately seeks to provide insight into the specific conditions and outcomes related to the students' writing abilities, as highlighted in the research's goals (L.Gay, 2006).

The population for this study consisted of the ninth-grade students at MTsN 13 Agam, which totaled 105 students across four classes, as detailed in the administrative data provided. To select a sample representative of this population, the researcher utilized cluster random sampling, a method advocated by Cohen et al. that involves selecting specific groups for study. According to Arikunto, if the population is less than 100, all members should be included as the sample; however, for populations exceeding this number, a sample ranging from 10% to 25% is appropriate. For this study, the researcher conducted a lottery to determine the sample classes, resulting in the selection of 24 students. By implementing this rigorous sampling technique, the research aimed to ensure that the findings were both reliable and generalizable. Data collection was carried out through a structured writing test, which required students to incorporate countable and uncountable nouns in their descriptive texts. This method not only assessed students' grammatical skills but also provided a clear framework for evaluating their writing proficiency, which was subsequently analyzed to derive meaningful conclusions about their academic capabilities (Graeme K.Porte, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents an analysis of the data collected from a test designed to evaluate students' understanding of countable and uncountable nouns. The findings indicate a significant range in performance among the students, highlighting both strengths and areas needing improvement. The test results showed that the scores

varied considerably, with a minimum score of 0 and a maximum of 83.67, leading to a mean score of 40.3. This distribution suggests that while some students demonstrated a solid grasp of the concepts, others struggled significantly. Specifically, the data reveals that 23 out of 24 students excelled in using countable nouns, achieving perfect scores, while one student failed to incorporate any countable nouns, receiving a score of zero. This discrepancy points to the need for targeted instruction to bridge the knowledge gap.

The analysis begins with the students' ability to utilize countable nouns, where the overwhelming majority of students demonstrated proficiency. Most students scored a perfect 100, indicating their capability to incorporate at least three countable nouns into their writing effectively. However, there was a notable outlier, as one student scored 0, reflecting a lack of understanding or application of countable nouns. The overall categorization of mastery levels revealed that 23 students achieved an "excellent" rating, showcasing their solid understanding of the material. This success could be attributed to effective teaching methods or prior knowledge of the subject matter. Nevertheless, it's essential to explore the reasons behind the singular low performance to ensure comprehensive learning outcomes for all students.

Conversely, when assessing students' ability to use uncountable nouns, the results were less favorable. Only four students scored in the "excellent" range, with a significant number—13 students—falling into the "poor" category. The average score for this section was 44.44, indicating a substantial gap in knowledge regarding uncountable nouns compared to their performance with countable nouns. Many students struggled to apply uncountable nouns in their writing, with some failing to provide any examples. This discrepancy emphasizes a critical need for more instructional focus on uncountable nouns to enhance students' overall linguistic competence. The stark contrast in performance between countable and uncountable nouns suggests that students may benefit from differentiated instruction that caters to their specific learning needs.

The analysis of errors made by students revealed common pitfalls in using articles with countable and uncountable nouns. The most frequent mistakes involved missing articles like "a" or "the," leading to grammatically incorrect phrases such as "beach" without an article or "my mother is teacher." These errors indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of the rules governing articles in English. Moreover, some students misapplied articles, using them incorrectly before generic nouns or in possessive phrases. Such consistent errors highlight a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between countable and uncountable nouns and their associated articles. It is essential to address these misconceptions through explicit instruction and practice, enabling students to grasp the significance of articles in sentence construction.

In addition to errors in article usage, students exhibited mistakes in applying singular and plural forms of countable nouns. The analysis categorized these errors into three types: missing "s" for plural nouns, unnecessary "s" for singular nouns, and inconsistencies in quantity. For instance, students incorrectly wrote "several large rock" instead of "several large rocks" and "the large window" instead of "the large windows." Such errors stem from confusion about noun forms and subject-verb agreement. Teachers should prioritize teaching these grammatical rules through engaging activities that reinforce the correct usage of nouns. By providing students with ample opportunities to practice, educators can help them develop a clearer understanding of singular and plural forms, ultimately leading to improved writing skills.

In conclusion, the data gathered from the test illustrates a compelling narrative about the students' understanding of countable and uncountable nouns. While students displayed remarkable proficiency with countable nouns, their performance with uncountable nouns highlighted a significant area for improvement. The prevalent errors in article usage and noun forms further emphasize the need for targeted instructional strategies. It is crucial for educators to implement differentiated teaching methods that address the unique challenges faced by each student. Incorporating targeted exercises, providing constructive feedback, and engaging students in discussions about grammatical rules can foster a deeper understanding of countable and uncountable nouns. With consistent support and instruction, students can enhance their linguistic skills and achieve greater success in their writing endeavors.

Discussion

The findings of this research showed that the students' ability in using countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive texts is relatively good. This is in line with the previous research conducted by Muhammad Junaidin (2018) and Tesalonika Br Karo (2021), who also found that the students' proficiency in using countable and uncountable nouns was at a satisfactory level.

However, there are still some discrepancies in the results, as shown in Fajri Hasan's research (2019), where a significant number of students exhibited low ability in using plural and uncountable nouns. This suggests that there might be certain aspects of countable and uncountable nouns that the students struggle with, thus affecting their overall proficiency in using these types of nouns.

The results also showed that the students' ability in using countable nouns was better than their ability in using uncountable nouns. This may be due to the fact that countable nouns are more common and easier to understand compared to uncountable nouns, which can be more abstract. Hence, teachers should provide more practice and explanations on the usage of uncountable nouns to improve students' proficiency in this aspect.

Furthermore, the researcher has examined the errors made by students in using countable and uncountable nouns. It is evident that many students struggle with understanding the rules and distinctions between these types of nouns, leading to common errors such as missing or using incorrect articles, incorrect pluralization, and lack of agreement between subject and verb.

These errors can greatly impact the clarity and accuracy of students' written and spoken English, and it is crucial for educators to address them early on in language learning. By providing clear explanations and ample practice opportunities, students can improve their skills in using singular and plural forms accurately and understanding the importance of subject-verb agreement.

Furthermore, this research highlights the need for educators to consistently review and reinforce these concepts to ensure a solid understanding among students. By incorporating these topics into classroom discussions and assignments, students can practice and apply their knowledge in real-world situations.

In conclusion, understanding countable and uncountable nouns and their proper usage is essential for effective communication in English. By identifying and addressing these errors, educators can help students improve their language skills and become more confident and accurate in their use of countable and uncountable nouns.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the students' ability in using countable and uncountable nouns in writing descriptive texts. The findings showed that the students have a relatively good proficiency in this aspect. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of the students have good to excellent ability in using countable nouns where 23 students can use at least 3 countable nouns in their writing and only one of them that cannot use any countable noun. However, the same cannot be said for uncountable nouns as there are more students who scored poorly in this area where the total of 13 students got the score between 0-40 which categorized as poor. This could be due to various reasons such as lack of exposure to English as a language, limited vocabulary, or difficulty in understanding the concept of uncountable nouns.

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