

**AN ANALYSIS ON LIFESTYLE COMPONENTS FOUND  
IN *THE GREAT GATSBY* NOVEL AND ITS APPLICATION IN TEACHING  
WRITING OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

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**Abstract:** Based on a research on Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, this writing tries to present some physical aspects of the lifestyle of the characters in the novel. Those are: the style of housing, dressing, fashions of eating, party, and uses time and space, and technology. The research uses descriptive qualitative method. This analysis hopefully will facilitate the English learners to be able to write descriptive text since it can be the inspiration in describing their objects by applying the appropriate rich vocabularies in the interesting language style and ideas organization. Here, the writer also tries to show the possibility of this finding to be an alternative medium supporting a more alive writing class.

**Keywords:** analysis, lifestyle, novel, writing, descriptive text

**Abstrak:** Berdasarkan penelitian terhadap novel karya Fitzgerald yang berjudul *The Great Gatsby*, penulis berusaha menyajikan beberapa aspek gaya hidup para tokoh yang ditemukan dalam novel tersebut. Aspek – aspek yang dimaksud antara lain: tata rumah, gaya berpakaian, gaya makan, tata pesta, penggunaan waktu dan kesempatan, dan teknologi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Analisis ini diharapkan mampu membantu siswa bahasa Inggris agar mampu menulis teks deskripsi karena analisis ini dapat menjadi inspirasi dalam menggambarkan suatu objek dengan menerapkan kosa kata yang kaya dan tepat dalam gaya bahasa dan alur ide yang menarik. Dalam kajian ini, penulis juga berusaha menunjukkan kemungkinan bahwa temuan ini bisa menjadi sebuah media alternatif pembelajaran yang mendukung terciptanya kelas menulis yang menyenangkan.

**Kata kunci :** analisis, gaya hidup, novel, menulis, teks deskripsi

## **INTRODUCTION**

English, as foreign language, is taught in almost all degrees of education in Indonesia. In learning English, the students are expected to master the four integrated language skills namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Anggraini, 2019) in

Siregar 2020. For the learners, especially those whose environment does not support for studying English since they do not have partners to communicate in English usually face many problems in learning it.

Writing is one of the productive skills besides speaking. Meanwhile, reading and listening are the receptive ones. They stand on their own function in communication but in the process of learning they are integrated skills since they give influence to one another in the progress of mastery. As a productive skill, writing brings its challenge to the students and teachers in learning and teaching. For the students, it is a good support for the other skills and also the activity that can be usefully be prepared for by work (Hastuti, 2020). ). In teaching writing, the teacher should utilize the students with the ability of using decent spelling, grammar, vocabulary, as well as the other aspects of writing. So the teaching learning process needs good elaboration of exercising the students with those aspects of writing application. It will be a great chore for the teachers in deciding the appropriate teaching techniques, materials, as well as media. Hopefully, the writing class will be alive that give the students good atmosphere and motivation in learning writing. Finally, it can optimize the effectiveness of reaching the goal of the teaching learning process.

One of genres the learners should learn is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a text which is concerned with describing a particular person, place or thing. The schematic structure of Descriptive text is divided into two: Identification and Description. The Linguistic features of this text are: use specific participant, written in present tense, use linking verbs, use adjectives, use relational and material processes (Derewianka, 1990; Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Nafisah & Kurniawan, 2007; Butt, et al, 2000; and also Emilia, 2010) in Siahaan (2013). In writing a descriptive text, the students also need to understand the grammatical rules, punctuation, and spelling as well as to be able to develop and organize the ideas.

According to Potradinata ( 2018), descriptive text is known as a simple kind of text, however, in the reality, teachers still face the problems related to teaching writing of this text, such as the use of the appropriate technique in delivering

writing text section, the lack time allocation, and the teaching grammar as well as teaching vocabulary. Turnip (2019) adds that in general, difficulties experienced by students when they want to write descriptive text because they are not able to write using the generic structure correctly, to organize ideas so that the contents of the writing are very confusing when reading. Rass (2001) in Turnip (2019) argues that writing is a difficult skill for native and non- native speakers because in writing it will create content and make the main idea.

To solve the problems, the teachers should try to apply the techniques and media of teaching that suitable with their students' condition and necessities. Concerning with the concept of descriptive text, a literary works can be an alternative of appropriate medium for teaching writing of descriptive text. Hatoco (1992: 23) in Mukarramah (2015) says that literary work is writing value as work of art like fiction, poetry, drama, novel and criticism that are recognizing as having important and permanent artistic value. In this writing, the writer chooses a novel as the alternative medium of teaching writing of descriptive text.

According to Mc. Donnel (1982: 713) in Mukarramah (2015), a novel is defined as a lengthy work of fiction in the form of dealing with characters and situations that mimic real-life setting. In a novel, the students may find and learn the physical and non-physical description of characters as well as the setting in detail as conveyed by the characters and also the narrator. It also provides the students with the description of the characters' lifestyle like housing, dressing, fashions of eating, party, uses time and space, and technology. Those will inspire the students in describing their own objects in writing descriptive text. In this case, Siregar (2020) said descriptive text is specifically used to describe person, animal, or other things by exploring their physical characteristics. Writing descriptive or description used in writing whose aim is to describe physical items or objects of which features are concrete or touchable, and it may be attained through using the sensory language or five senses consisting of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

## **METHOD**

This research uses descriptive qualitative method in which the main instrument is the researcher herself. The data source is the dialogues made by the characters and illustration conveyed by the narrator found in *The Great Gatsby* novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The unit of analysis is the utterances and sentences concerning with the information of the characters' lifestyle of housing, dressing, fashions of eating, party, uses time and space, and technology.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In this part, the writer is going to present the result of the analysis on the characters' lifestyle namely housing, dressing, fashions of eating, party, and uses time and space, and technology.

### **1. Housing**

The dwelling of people at the period in the novel was in the form of private houses besides many of them lived in apartment houses, especially those who lived in city. An apartment usually just consisted of the main rooms, they were a living room, a bedroom, a dining room, a kitchen, and a bathroom that all were small. Between one floor to the other one was connected by an elevator, with an elevator boy there. The real description was on the following illustrations.

At 158<sup>th</sup> Street the cab stopped at one slice in a long white cake of apartment-houses. Throwing a regal homecoming glance around the neighborhood , Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases, and went haughtily in. "I am going to have the McKees come up ," she announced as we rose in the elevator. "And, of course, I got to call up my sister, too." The apartment was on the top floor – a small living-room, a small dining-room, a small bedroom, and a bath".

(Fitzgerald 1953:29)

"Keep your hands off the lever, "snapped the elevator boy.

(Fitzgerald 1953:38)

Generally, the private houses had more than one floor. The first floor consisted of living room, hall, dining room, and a kitchen. The more private rooms like bedroom and bathroom were upstairs. Nick's house was the illustration.

With his hands still in his coat pockets he stalked by me into the hall, turned sharply as if he were on a wire, and disappeared into the living room.

(Fitzgerald 1953 :87)

"I went in-after making every possible noise in the kitchen, short of pushing over the stove – but I don't believe they heard a sound".

(Fitzgerald 1953:90)

Daisy went up-stairs to wash her face-too late I thought with humiliation of my towels – while Gatsby and I waited on the lawn.

(Fitzgerald 1953:90)

Fitzgerald also largely conveyed the style of the rich people's houses that were very enormous. Gatsby's and Daisy's houses were the examples of them that looked like palaces. For getting a peace, enjoying the beautiful sight of the nature, and even for enjoying their life, they built them near the beach that close with the nature itself.

Gatsby 's mansion :

The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard – it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more that forty acres of lawn and garden.

(Fitzgerald 1953:5)

Daisy's mansion:

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water.....

(Fitzgerald 1953:5)

To learn the arrangement of the luxurious houses in detail, we could turn to Gatsby's mansion. It was started with a gate, large lawn, marble steps to front door and veranda. The kind of rooms at the first floor was almost similar with the house

generally, the difference, it completed with music-room where the owner used to play music instrument (piano, for example), restoration salons and library. While bedrooms, dressing – rooms, poolrooms, bathrooms, and exercise room were placed upstairs. The owner also had his own apartment upstairs that consisted of a bedroom, a bath, and a study. To make the house more comfortable, it was completed with large beautiful garden and a marble swimming pool.

She couldn't find him from the top of the steps, and he wasn't on the veranda.  
(Fitzgerald 1953:45)

It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out of the door,...

And inside, as we wandered through Marie Antoinette music-rooms and Restoration salons, ..... As Gatsby closed the door of "the Merton College Library" I could have sworn I heard the owl – eyed man break into ghostly laughter. We went upstairs, through period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers, through dressing-rooms and poolrooms, and, and bathrooms, with sunken baths – intruding into one chamber here a disheveled man in pajamas was doing liver exercises on the floor.....

Finally we came to Gatsby's own apartment, a bedroom and a bath and an Adam study, where we sat down and drank a glass ...he took from a cupboard in the wall".  
(Fitzgerald 1953:92)

Talking about style, the ornaments at their houses had been modified with the style of the other countries like French and Britain.

The front was broken by a line of French windows,...

(Fitzgerald 1953:7)

On a chance we tried an important-looking door, and walked into a high Gothic library, paneled with carved English oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas".

(Fitzgerald 1953:45)

In a certain case, there were also people who should live at rented houses. For instance, the people who took education or work in a city that far from their own city.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities ...".

(Fitzgerald 1953:4)

## **2. Dressing**

The way of dressing in the novel at the period emphasized conformity and beauty. For males, the basic style of clothes that usually they wore was suit, the combination of shirt and trousers. They used to combine the suit with coat, or sometimes with vest and coat. Tie was the accessory used for special events, in meeting special guests, for example. As the illustration, Gatsby's was in his coat for inviting Daisy to tea, for attending luncheon at Daisy's house, and for traveling. While at Gatsby's funeral, his father combined his vest with coat. For daily outdoor performance, the males liked to wear hats.

An hour later the front opened nervously, and Gatsby, in a white flannel suit, silver shirt, and gold-colored tie, hurried in.

(Fitzgerald 1953:84)

Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes.

(Fitzgerald 1953:86)

She walked close to Gatsby, touching his coat with her hand

(Fitzgerald 1953:121)

I helped him to a bedroom upstairs, while took of his coat and vest I told him that all arrangements had been different until he came.

(Fitzgerald 1953:169)

He set down the receiver and came toward us, glistening slightly, to take our stiff straw hats.

(Fitzgerald 1953:115)

At that time, the males like wearing the shirt of flannel, linen, and silk. While the import clothes like from England usually were possessed by the rich people like Gatsby.

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel,...

(Fitzgerald 1953:93)

I've got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall.

(Fitzgerald 1953:169)

Riding horses was one of their hobbies in spending their spare time. Here, they wore riding clothes of coat and modified with boots especially for man. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body – he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat.

(Fitzgerald 1953:7)

Talking about the way of female dressing, generally the females wore long dresses. As the illustration, Daisy and Jordan were in white long dresses when they had dinner at Daisy's house.

They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house.

(Fitzgerald 1953:8)

At Gatsby's parties, the female guests were in evening dresses of various models. One of them was Jordan wearing an evening dress like sport cloth. As she was a sports girl, all of her dresses were in style of sport clothes.

I noticed that she wore her evening-dress, all her dresses, like sport clothes.

(Fitzgerald 1953:51)

Especially in relaxation or traveling, it was common for the females to wear shirtwaist. Sometimes, their performance was also completed with coat or cape. A hat was functioned as accessory besides it protected them from the sunshine. The straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion; the woman next to me perspired delicately for a while into her white shirtwaist,...

(Fitzgerald 1953:114)

I remember the fur coats of the girls returning from Miss This-or-That's...

(Fitzgerald 1953:176)

Tom come out of the house ..., followed by Daisy and Jordan wearing small tight hats of metallic cloth and carrying light capes over their arms.

(Fitzgerald 1953:121)

### **3. Fashions of Eating**

Although not much, each season influences the fashion of eating. Through this novel, we could learn the fashion of eating, especially that of in summer.



They had four times of meals, they were breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper. For example, the meal for lunch was the combination of the sausage, mashed potatoes, and coffee or other beverages. The examples of supper meal were fried chicken with beverage, and sandwiches with beverage. About breakfast and dinner, Fitzgerald did not mention the exact meal.

I know the other clerks and young bond-salesmen by their first names, and luncheon with them in dark, crowded restaurants ... and mashed potatoes and coffee.

(Fitzgerald 1953:56)

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table, with a plate of cold fried chicken between them, ... .

(Fitzgerald 1953:146)

Tom rang for the janitor and sent him for some celebrated sandwiches, which were a complete supper in themselves.

(Fitzgerald 1953:36)

The above illustration tells us that characters were eating not always at dining-room, kitchen and even porch could be the comfortable place for eating. One evening, Buchanans had their dinner at porch, open toward the sunset, with romantic candles.

....., the two young women preceded us out onto a rosy-colored porch, open toward the sunset, where four candles flickered on the table in the diminished wind.

(Fitzgerald 1953:12)

Sometimes, among families or friends invited each other to have eating together. It could be at their houses, restaurants, or the other places.

“Good morning, old sport. You’re having lunch with me today and I thought we’d ride up together.”

(Fitzgerald 1953:64)

In relaxation, whether it was at house or at the other places the people usually provided something to eat like cakes served with tea.

A mid the welcome confusion of cups and cakes a certain physical decency established itself.

(Fitzgerald 1953:88)

#### **4. Party**

Fitzgerald clearly conveyed that Gatsby was as a very famous man in his society because of his wealth and his big parties. The parties took place at his large decorated garden in which the guests could enjoy various delicious serving and music created by the fantastic orchestra. Italian song and jazz music brightened the parties through the nights. While the guests danced through the romantic music.

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden; ... and a great number of single girls dancing, in individually or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz, ... .

(Fitzgerald 1953:46)

About the meal and their way of dressing in the party have been discussed at the previous sub-topics. In the parties, some other activities such as business transaction could be found among the guests.

I was sure that they were selling something: ... or insurance or automobile.

(Fitzgerald 1953:42)

In fact, the people liked large parties, in which privacy created a comfort interaction among the guests that could not be found at small parties.

And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy.

(Fitzgerald 1953:50)

#### **5. Uses Time and Space**

For the characters in the novel, time is money. So, they used to spend their time as efficient as possible and worked so hard. Fitzgerald clearly described it through Gatsby who had spent his youth for working so hard in order to get his inspiration. He became a successful officer after working with Don Cody at his yacht for years. Then he was also success in his business. However, as a great businessman, he used to be consistent toward his business schedule. He left whatever

occasion he had whenever the business asked him to call on or answer his business partners; or to go to somewhere else.

Suddenly he looked at his watch, jumped up, and hurried from the room, leaving me with Mr. Wolfsheim at the table.

“He has to telephone,’ said Mr. Wolfsheim , following him with his eyes. “Fine fellow, isn’t he? Handsome to look at and a perfect gentleman.”

(Fitzgerald 1953:72)

“Nobody’s coming to tea. It’s too late!” He looked at his watch as if there was some pressing demand on his time elsewhere. “I can’t wait all day.”

“Don’t be silly, it’s just two minutes to four.”

(Fitzgerald 1953:85)

However, among their activities, the characters also considered their need of recreation. Riding horses was one of attractive recreations for them. On riding clothes, they were riding their horses at their own lawn or went down to city.

Suddenly Mr. Sloane and the lady walked down the steps and mounted their horses.

(Fitzgerald 1953:104)

For relaxation, sometimes they also had eating together with friends or families, or made a traveling to the city or even went abroad. As description, Gatsby, Nick, Tom, Daisy and Jordan went on to New York, plaza hotel to be exact, for relaxation after having lunch together.

And we all took the less explicable step of engaging the parlor of a suite in the Plaza Hotel.

(Fitzgerald 1953:126)

At another day, Tom and Nick also went to New York and had a party with Myrtle and her sister. Moreover, to spend their spare time, Catherine went to Europe, while Tom and Daisy traveled to France.

“ Oh, do you like Europe?” she exclaimed surprisingly.

“ I just got back from Monte Carlo.”

“ Really.”

“Just last year. . . . .

“Stay long?”

“No, we just went to Monte Carlo and back.....”

(Fitzgerald 1953:34)

They have spent a year in France for no particular reason,.....

(Fitzgerald 1953:6)

The other ways of getting refreshment that usually taken at that time were enjoying sports (such as swimming, football, polo, and golf), reading, holding party, enjoying music, and even enjoying insight by driving hydroplane or motor-boats.

The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing up-stairs;...

(Fitzgerald 1953:40)

They had spent a year in France for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. . . . ., but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.

(Fitzgerald 1953:6)

She was dressed to play golf,....

(Fitzgerald 1953:178)

“Klipspringer plays the piano, “said Gatsby, cutting him off. “Don’t you, Ewing, old sport?”

(Fitzgerald 1953:104)

Evidently he lived in this vicinity, for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane, and was going to buy it out in the morning.

(Fitzgerald 1953:47)

.... While his two motor – boats slit the waters of the sound...

(Fitzgerald 1953:39)

## **6. Technology**

The lifestyle that was described by Fitzgerald through this novel showed that at the period they had applied modern technology. In this case, the electricity held

great role for daily life, from the house lighting, household equipment, media of communication, to the electric public transportation. In the household life, they got efficiency and convenience from the using of such modern equipment. To serve oranges juice, for example, they just pressed the button of the automatic juice machine. The using of fans had been also familiar.

There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

(Fitzgerald 1953:39)

Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols weighing down their own dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.

(Fitzgerald 1953:115)

Device of communication mentioned in this novel was telephone.

Then the butler, behind his shoulder:

“Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir.”

(Fitzgerald 1953:53)

By the way, the main public transportations were electric train and taxi.

All the lights were going on in West Egg now; the electric trains, men-carrying, were plunging home through the rain from New York.

(Fitzgerald 1953:96)

“I'll telephone for a taxi to take you home,....”

He opened the door. “Come in”.

(Fitzgerald 1953:143)

While the private transportation they used, were carriage especially for funeral procession, motorcycle, and car. Coupe and large open car were the kinds of car spread at the period.

A dead man passed us in a hearse heaped with blooms, followed by two carriages with drawn, blinds, and by more cheerful carriages for friends.

(Fitzgerald 1953:69)

..... I heard the familiar “jug-jug-spat!” of a motorcycle, and a frantic policeman rode alongside.

(Fitzgerald 1953:68)

It was seven o'clock when we got into the coupe with him and started for Long Island.

(Fitzgerald 1953:136)

Under the dripping bare lilac-trees a large open car was coming up the drive.

(Fitzgerald 1953:86)

There were also the kind of water transportation special used for recreation such as motor boats and hydroplane.

..... I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the sounds,.....

(Fitzgerald 1953:39)

Evidently he lived in this vicinity, for he told me that he had just bought a hydroplane, and was going to try it out in the morning.

(Fitzgerald 1953:47)

Based on the result analysis above, in class of writing descriptive text, the learners can learn the real picture of the lifestyle of the characters as well as the setting of place and situation found in the novel that really will enrich their vocabulary mastery as well the ability of organizing ideas. Besides, they may learn the language component of grammar. Since the media used is a very popular and interesting novel, it will increase the class motivation in learning. To enhance the effectiveness of the process of teaching, the teacher may take the following important steps of teaching writing of descriptive text under his/her guidance:

1. Explains the theory of descriptive text including the social purpose, the generic structure, and the language features.
2. Arrange the students into groups of discussion.

3. Retell the summary of the novel especially concerning the parts of the lifestyle of the characters as well as the setting of place and situation.
4. Give each group a topic of writing descriptive text taken from the novel especially about the style of housing, dressing, eating, party, use time and space, and technology.
5. Ask the groups to identify the parts of novel according to their topic.
6. Ask the groups to make list of information on their topics found in the novel.
7. Arrange the information into organization of descriptive text.
8. Develop it into a good descriptive text with their sentences.
9. Ask each group to present the descriptive text in front of the class to get teacher's feedback.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Descriptive text is included as a simple text, however in the reality, the teachers and students still face problems in teaching learning of writing this text. For teachers, the problems are among others deciding the suitable teaching technique and media. For the students, those are the lack of vocabulary, the ability of organizing the ideas, and learning motivation. Here, teaching writing using novel may answer all those problems of the teaching and learning since it provides the real picture of setting of place and situation that of course very interesting to discuss in the class. In the novel of *The Great Gatsby*, the teachers may train the students writing descriptive text in some interesting topics of the lifestyle of the characters like the style of housing, dressing, eating, party, use of time and space, and technology. So the teachers should serve and elaborate it well in every step of teaching and learning process of writing descriptive text.

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