

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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Abstract

In classroom practice, most students think that writing is difficult. It is because in writing there are some important components such as vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The objectives of this research to know the ability and the difficulties of students in writing descriptive text. The research designed this study with quantitative method with the data from students' writing test. The findings show that: the students' ability in writing descriptive, the total mean score of the students was 12.5. It means that the students' ability in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. The mean score of the students writing ability in content categories was 2,63. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in organization was 2,09. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in vocabulary was 2.93. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in grammar was 1,75. It was classified very poor. And the mean score of the students in mechanic was 12,5. It was classified very poor. The students' difficulties in writing descriptive text consist of describing object in detail and grammar mastery such as simple present tense.

Keywords: Descriptive Text, Students' Difficulties, Writing

Abstrak

Dalam praktik di kelas, sebagian besar siswa menganggap menulis itu sulit. Karena dalam menulis ada beberapa komponen penting seperti kosakata, ejaan, tanda baca, dan tata bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kemampuan dan kesulitan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini merancang penelitian ini dengan metode kuantitatif dengan data dari tes menulis siswa. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa: kemampuan siswa dalam menulis deskriptif, nilai rata-rata total siswa adalah 12,5. Artinya, kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif tergolong sangat rendah. Nilai rata-rata kemampuan menulis siswa dalam kategori isi adalah 2,63. Itu diklasifikasikan sangat buruk. Nilai rata-rata siswa dalam organisasi adalah 2,09. Itu diklasifikasikan sangat buruk. Nilai rata-rata siswa dalam kosa kata adalah 2,93. Itu diklasifikasikan sangat buruk. Nilai rata-rata siswa dalam tata bahasa adalah 1,75. Itu diklasifikasikan sangat buruk. Dan nilai rata-rata siswa di bidang mekanik adalah 12,5. Itu diklasifikasikan sangat buruk. Kesulitan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif terdiri dari mendeskripsikan objek secara mendetail dan penguasaan tata bahasa seperti simple present tense.

Kata Kunci: Teks Deskriptif, Kesulitan Siswa, Menulis

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is used by most people in the world, including our country Indonesia. Goodwyn & Branson (2005:1) states English is vitally important and typically described as the most important of all school subjects, principally because reading, writing, speaking, and listening are needed to a greater or lesser degree in every other school subject and life. Most people know about the English language, it has an important part in Indonesian education. English has been taught from elementary school until university. If someone is understanding well about English, they will be able to understand a lot of information and knowledge Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text.

Understanding English as a foreign language is begun with English learning activities through learning the skills properly. Students need to master English in all skills, such as listening speaking, reading, and writing. In this case, the researcher is going to focus on writing. Writing is one of the English skills that must be mastered by English language learners.

According to Nation (2009:113) Writing is an activity that can usefully be prepared for work in the other skills of listening, speaking, and reading. This preparation can make it possible for words that have been used receptively to come into productive use. Writing is also considered the indicator of the student's success in learning English. Since writing is a productive skill, it also helps the students to develop their ability in expressing what they feel and think. Writing, speaking, and listening are communication skills that are important in all subject areas in the curriculum. This is because the students should be able to

communicate in the target language in spoken and written language.

To make good writing, it needs to follow some steps. According to Harmer (2004:4), the process of writing has four steps, they are 1) planning; 2) drafting; 3) editing; 4) final version. In planning, before starting to write, the writer will try and decide what it is they are going to write. For some writers, this may involve making detailed notes. When planning, writers have to think about three main issues. In the first place, they have to consider the purpose of their writing. The Second is experienced writers think of the audience for what they are writing for. The last, the writers have to consider the content and the structure. In drafting, the writers write down on paper the ideas that they get from their minds. The writers can refer to the first version of a piece of writing as a draft. As the writing process proceeds into editing, several drafts may be produced on the way to the final version.

In classroom practice, most students think that writing is difficult. It is because in writing there are some important components such as vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Writing text is a challenge for students, especially for tenth-grade students of senior high school, who are learning about various kinds of text, and writing descriptive text is one of them. The students need to pay more attention to the detailed object that is described with the correct grammar. Descriptive text is a general text where it can be included in another text. According to Husna (2013), descriptive text is a kind of writing that consists of descriptions characteristics, and definitions of an object or something. While, Gerot and Wignel (in Mardiyah, 2013) state that descriptive text has the purpose to describe a particular thing, person, or place which shows the reader about the physical

appearance of something clearly. Based on the definition of descriptive text above, it can be concluded that descriptive text is a text which describes people, places, and things physically by their appearance.

Mastering descriptive text helps the students to make other kinds of text such as narrative text, recount text, and report text. For example in a narrative text when the students want to make the readers interested in it they must be able to make the text with good detail, it demands the students to explain something in detail. According to Gerot and Wignel (in Mardiyah, 2013), the generic structure of the descriptive text is identification and description. In identification, it identifies the subject to be described. The identification is usually stated in the first paragraph to introduce the reader what the topic to be described in the next paragraph. In the description, the writer explains the subject in detail. It uses to support identification.

There are still many students who are not able to write descriptive text. Muhammed (in Nasser, 2018) states that students may face many writing difficulties and problems at different stages of their learning. According to Novita (2017) in her research, she states that the students showed that they have some difficulties in writing descriptive text. They are: 1) generic structure; 2) grammar; 3) spelling. The difficulties in the generic structure of descriptive text consist of describing the object in detail. The students have to organize their ideas into good paragraphs, the students have to make their writing readable. To write a descriptive text, the students can organize their ideas by identifying the topic and giving the descriptions about the topic (Husna, 2013).

In another case that the researcher found while doing a teaching practice program, Senior High School students

especially in the tenth grade, the students did not understand well what they should write and describe. The students can't describe things, places, and a person in detail because they do not have any ideas when they are asked to describe them. Students are not interested in learning writing. They are lazy and bored if the teacher asks them to write something even if it just writes a descriptive text.

Some of the students can't make descriptive text. Some of them open their smartphone to search the example of descriptive text. Without reading it first, the students just copy it so, some of them do not understand the purpose and content of the text. They can't make descriptive text in their writing, so they copy and paste it from the internet. The students also can't express their idea, so the students just copy them from the internet. The students also show some gestures that reflect that they were having difficulties in writing descriptive text and there are some students, who just walk around to see another student's duty.

The student's difficulties can be caused by some factor, according to Graham & Harris (in Glynn, 2006:98) writing difficulties may in large part, be the result of three factors, they are Lack of proficiency in the text production skills that are frequent errors in spelling, the use of upper and lower case, and punctuation. The amount of attention that has to be expended on lower-level skills is thought to interfere with higher-order skills of planning and the generation of content (MacArthur and Graham in Wearmouth, 2006:252).

Lack of knowledge relating to the subject content of the script to be written, Wray (in Wearmouth, 2003:252) suggests that the actual task is important and that the writer reflects on the different genres, and the structure and accessibility of the writing for the reader and how the reader may be guided through the writing.

Knowledge of the process is also important for metacognition and reflection. Lack of effective strategies in planning or revising text, Graham, and Harris (in Glynn, 2006:98) adopt a cognitive approach to supporting students experiencing writing difficulties because this approach emphasizes the component processes of writing products which can then be focused upon individually.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a research study to investigate the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text and the cause of the student's difficulties in writing descriptive text. furthermore, this research is conducted with the purpose to know the difficulties that students have and knowing the factor that causes the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

METHOD

The research instrument was a facility tool used by researchers in collecting data to make the work easier and the result better, in a more through, complete, and systematic so that more easily processed. The instrument that the researcher used in this study was writing test. The test in this study was a material related to descriptive text. The researcher asked the students to write descriptive text in two paragraphs in 60 minutes.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding cited below were the analysis of students writing descriptive text. As mentioned before in previous chapter, the researcher conducted, the researcher used one instruments, that was writing test. the researcher used writing test to saw the students ability and difficulties in writing descriptive text. The sample that researchers have determined as many as 30 students. The analysis of ability and difficulties in writing descriptive text of the student to classify the level of the student writing text, the writer used excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, very poor.

1. Students' ability in writing descriptive text

a. Content

The result of the test was processed into the table, can be seen clearly in the following table:

Table 1. Students' Ability in Content Categories in Writing Descriptive Text

Categories	Mean Score	Criteria
Content	2.63	Very Poor

The data on the table 1 shows that the result of students ability in content categories in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. In content categories, the students mean score was 2.63 or classified as very poor. They were not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, or no enough to evaluate.

b. Organization

The result of the test was processed into the table, can be seen clearly in the following table;

Table 2. Students Ability in Organization Categories in Writing Descriptive Text

Categories	Mean Score	Criteria
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Organization	2.09	Very Poor
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The data on the table 2 shows that the result of students ability in organization categories in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. In content categories, the students mean score was 2.09 or classified as very poor. They were not communicate, no organization, or not enough to evaluate and they still confused to manage or put their idea into organization.

c. Vocabulary

The result of the test was processed into the table, can be seen clearly in the following table:

Table 3. Students Ability in Vocabulary Categories in Writing Descriptive Text

Categories	Mean Score	Criteria
Vocabulary	2.93	Very Poor

The data on the table 3 shows that the result of students ability in vocabulary categories in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. In content categories, the students mean score was 2.93 or classified as very poor. It happens because most of the students had less vocabulary, so they did not know to make a sentence in writing descriptive text. It means that the students should be memorized more vocabulary to make their ability in writing increased especially for writing descriptive text.

d. Grammar

The result of the test was processed into the table, can be seen clearly in the following table:

Table 4. Students Ability in Grammar Categories in Writing Descriptive Text

Categories	Mean Score	Criteria
Grammar	1.75	Very Poor

Grammar	1.75	Very Poor
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The data on the table 4 shows that the result of students ability in grammar categories in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. In content categories, the students mean score was 1.75 or classified as very poor. The students was classified poor because most of the students made grammatical error in writing descriptive text. It happens because they did not mastery grammar. Most of the students still confused with using subject and verb. They still used present tense incorrectly.

e. Mechanic

The result of the test was processed into the table, can be seen clearly in the following table:

Table 5. Students Ability in Mechanic Categories in Writing Descriptive Text

Categories	Mean Score	Criteria
Mehanic	2.33	Very Poor

The data on the table 5 shows that the result of students ability in mechanic categories in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. In content categories, the students mean score was 2,33 or classified as very poor. The students had classified poor because most of students were not mastery of conventions, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization especially using capital letter

2. Students Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text

Based on the data analysis, it was found that most of students got difficulties in writing descriptive text. It shows by the result of students writing test that most of the students in each categories was classified as very poor. It

was proven by the data of mechanic categories, the students mean score was 2.33 as classified very poor. It has dominated by errors of spelling, function and capitalization. And also the difficulties faced by students in writing descriptive text was using grammar. It was proven by the data was 1,75 that means the students had a very poor ability in using grammar (frequent grammatical for agreement inaccuracies). Because of lack of grammar, students were not able to write their descriptive text in a good form. Their lack understanding about grammar made their writing became mess and their writing was difficult to be understood by reader.

CONCLUSION

As already mentioned in the first chapter, the aim of this study are to analyzed students' ability in writing descriptive text and their difficulties in writing descriptive text at SMP Budi Murni 1 Medan.

1. Based on the analysis of the students' ability in writing descriptive, the total mean score of the students was 12.5. It means that the students' ability in writing descriptive text was classified as very poor. The mean score of the students writing ability in content categories was 2,63. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in organization was 2,09. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in vocabulary was 2.93. It was classified very poor. The mean score of the students in grammar was 1,75. It was classified very poor. And the mean score of the students in mechanic was 12,5. It was classified very poor.
2. The result of the students' test showed that all of the students got difficulties in writing descriptive text. The students' difficulties in writing descriptive text consist of describing object in detail and grammar mastery such as simple present tense. In

addition, majority of the students are difficult to create the sentences and write correct spelling words. Moreover, lack of vocabulary makes them write a lot of repetition word in their writing.

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