

STUDENTS' PROBLEM IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE SEVENTH GRADE OF SMP SWASTA KRISTEN BNKP TELUK DALAM

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Abstract

This research aimed at finding out the students' problem in writing descriptive text at the seventh grade. This research was designed by using qualitative research with descriptive approach. The data of this research were obtained from the students' worksheets about writing descriptive text and interview result. The data obtained were analyzing by using Miles and Huberman (1984) theory, there are: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The result of this research showed that most students have problem in developing their idea to create content, low mastery of text organization, students did not know the grammar correctly, and students still did not understand the mechanic in writing paragraph especially in the spelling, capitalization and punctuation, and have difficulties in vocabulary. The factors which caused students problem in writing descriptive text were lack of knowledge, lack of grammar understanding and lack of vocabulary. It is suggested to the English teacher to teach students intensively about how to use organization, content, grammar, mechanic and vocabulary in writing descriptive text. For the learners the researcher suggested to be more in diligent studying and practice producing descriptive texts as a means to enhance their writing skills.

Key Words: *Students' problem; writing; descriptive text*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui masalah siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif di kelas tujuh. Penelitian ini dirancang dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data penelitian ini diperoleh dari lembar kerja siswa tentang menulis teks deskriptif dan hasil wawancara. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis melalui beberapa tahap dengan menggunakan teori Miles dan Huberman (1984) yaitu: reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa mengalami masalah dalam mengembangkan ide untuk membuat konten, rendahnya penguasaan pengorganisasian teks, siswa belum mengetahui tata bahasa dengan benar, dan siswa masih belum memahami mekanisme penulisan paragraf khususnya pada ejaan, penggunaan huruf kapital, dan tanda baca, serta kesulitan dalam kosa kata. Faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan masalah siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif adalah kurangnya pengetahuan, kurangnya pemahaman tata bahasa dan kurangnya kosa kata. Disarankan kepada guru bahasa Inggris untuk mengajar siswa secara intensif tentang bagaimana menggunakan organisasi, konten, tata bahasa, mekanik dan kosa kata dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Bagi peserta didik peneliti menyarankan untuk lebih rajin belajar dan berlatih memproduksi teks deskriptif sebagai sarana untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Masalah siswa; menulis; teks deskriptif*

A. Introduction

English language is important to be learned by people to be able share ideas or get information from other people around the world. It has become the international language that is widely used in writing and speaking all over the world. Furthermore, the government of Indonesia has been putting English as an essential subject to be learnt from elementary school until university. On the contrary, it is imperative for students to acquire proficiency in four essential abilities while studying the English language. The individuals engage in the activities of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. The acquisition and mastery of these abilities are interrelated and crucial for students' learning.

Writing is considered to be one of the four essential language abilities that have significant importance in the process of language acquisition. According to Brown (2016:336), writing may be seen as a cognitive process that involves the transformation of thoughts into written words, so providing structure and coherence to one's ideas. Learning to write

may be particularly challenging for children, particularly those in junior high school, since it is a productive skill that requires the ability to generate ideas and effectively communicate them in written form. Richards and Renandya (2002:303) assert that the mastery of writing is undoubtedly the most challenging ability for second language (L2) learners. The challenge is not alone in the generation and organisation of ideas, but also in the process of transforming these ideas into coherent and comprehensible written compositions. Hence, it is plausible that students encounter several challenges while acquiring proficiency in second language writing.

To enhance the quality and engagement of written content, it is essential to include creative ideas into the writing process. Furthermore, it is important to allocate additional focus towards grammatical accuracy, punctuation proficiency, and sentence structure refinement. In addition to precise spelling, the acquisition of vocabulary is also crucial.

In Indonesian schools, students are mandated to acquire proficiency in many text genres via both learning and writing activities. Seventh-grade students should acquire knowledge of several textual genres, including recount, narrative, procedural, news items, and descriptive text. In this particular instance, the researcher will be concentrating on a specific kind of writing known as descriptive text.

The teaching of descriptive literature is included in the curriculum for seventh-grade pupils, as outlined in the 2013 curriculum. In the descriptive text, students acquire the skills necessary to effectively articulate and construct written compositions by expressing their ideas and using information derived from the subject matter. In relation to the stated purpose of studying descriptive text, students are anticipated to proficiently generate and construct concise and straightforward oral and written descriptive texts that accurately pertain to people, animals, and things. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007:61), descriptive writing is characterised by its ability to engage the senses, providing detailed accounts of how

something appears, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. Descriptive writing often has an introductory section followed by a detailed description. The introduction is a crucial component of a paragraph as it serves to acquaint the reader with the character being discussed. On the other hand, the description is an integral section of the paragraph that provides a detailed portrayal of the character's attributes and qualities. In writing descriptive prose, students have the ability to use the simple present tense, employ noun phrases, and include adjective clauses.

Regrettably, a considerable number of pupils exhibit insufficient proficiency in composing descriptive texts, as shown by the preliminary investigation conducted by a researcher at SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam among seventh-grade students. The researcher obtained descriptive text worksheets from the English instructor at SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam, specifically from seventh-grade pupils. The findings of the students' worksheet indicate that there are areas of difficulty among the students when it comes to composing descriptive texts. Initially, a notable challenge arises in

the process of formulating and refining concepts. Occasionally, it is also observed that certain paragraphs consist of a single phrase. The conceptual clarity of the paragraph remained elusive. Furthermore, a significant challenge lies in the process of structuring and organising thoughts for the purpose of composing a descriptive prose. In order to compose a descriptive paragraph, the students have difficulties in effectively structuring their thoughts, as they struggle to clearly define the central theme and provide corresponding descriptions pertaining to that issue. Furthermore, the kids had challenges with regards to grammar. The presence of grammatical issues may have an impact on certain syntactic patterns used to construct grammatically accurate phrases. The kids also exhibit a deficiency in vocabulary, resulting in the frequent selection of inappropriate terms while composing written texts. Moreover, the students' deficiency in comprehending the intricacies of composing descriptive text and their limited engagement in writing classes might be attributed to their aversion towards English courses. Consequently, these factors contribute to

the challenges encountered by students when attempting to produce descriptive text. Based on the analysis of the students' worksheet, the researcher has reached the conclusion that around 70% of the students exhibit difficulties in composing descriptive language.

Based on the background above, the problem of this research are formulated as follow:

1. What are the students' problem in writing a descriptive text at the seventh grade of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam?
2. What are the factors cause the students' problem in writing a descriptive text at the seventh grade of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam?

B. Research Method

The study was done using a descriptive qualitative research approach. Gay et al. (2012:7) define qualitative research as the process of gathering, analysing, and interpreting narrative and visual data that is complete in nature, and does not rely on numerical values. The purpose of this approach is to get a deeper understanding of a specific phenomena of interest. Furthermore, Seliger and

Shohamy (1989:117) provided a definition for qualitative descriptive research as "an investigative approach that relies on pre-existing data." The primary focus of this study is on the challenges encountered by students while composing descriptive texts, as well as the underlying factors contributing to these difficulties. The research specifically targets seventh-grade students attending SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam. The issue faced by the students pertains to the composition of descriptive text, as derived from their worksheet on the subject matter of descriptive language. The identification of the factors contributing to difficulties in composing descriptive text will be accomplished via conducting interviews with the students and English teacher. In this study, the researcher employs the methods of documentation and interview. To analyzing the data in this research is using Miles and Huberman (1984) theory as cited in Sugiyono (2008:245) there are: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

1. Students' Problem in Writing Descriptive Text

In this study, the researcher categorised the findings into many key themes that include the challenges faced by students in composing descriptive texts. The study data consists of the students' worksheets on descriptive text, which were collected from the English instructor. The researcher examined the students' worksheets to identify the kinds of problems encountered by students, as outlined in Brown's theory, which are essential for students to address while generating a written piece.

a. Text Organization

The term "organisation" pertains to the effective structuring and organisation of descriptive prose. According to Brown and Abeywikrama (2019:251), "The concept of organisation pertains to the manner in which students structure their ideas, specifically in terms of the coherence and logical arrangement of paragraphs." This section encompasses the standard framework of a descriptive text, which includes the elements of identification and description. The process of identification has significant importance in the composition of descriptive texts. The purpose of this practise is to refrain from

making broad or sweeping statements inside the paragraph. During the process of identification, the learner is responsible for introducing or identifying the topic matter at hand. The second component is the description, which encompasses a comprehensive and elaborate explanation of the topic being described. Based on the data obtained, it was observed that a significant number of seventh-grade students at SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam have difficulties in organising paragraphs..

Example: (Student 1 assignment)

My father

*my father is good. my father is framer.
my father is outbid. my father is hobby footbal.
my father is diligent. my father is clean. my
father is fafforit chicken.*

It can be seen from this student's worksheet that the students have problems in make paragraph organization. The students cannot follow the generic structure of descriptive text, where the students only put the description. The sentence "*my father is framer*" must be changed to "*My father is a farmer*". Then, the sentence "*my father is hobby footbal*"

must be changed to "*My father's hobby is football*".

b. Content

Descriptive text refers to a kind of written discourse in the English language that aims to provide a clear and comprehensive depiction of the inherent characteristics and attributes associated with a certain subject. The entities included by this category may include people, animals, plants, or geographical locations. Content refers to the subject matter that is used by the writer while composing descriptive text. In this particular scenario, the author need to choose an appropriate subject matter while composing the content. The inclusion of specific details is crucial while composing a descriptive paragraph. Based on the data collected, the researcher observed that a subset of students had difficulties in effectively generating information that is comprehensive, well-elaborated, and relevant to the given subject.

Example: (student 2 assignment)

my mother

*I have a mother good. My names is
mother Putri. I has a Brader. He has hair black.*

He to have nose. I has a Broder good. I has a brader Diligent. I has a brader clean. I has a brader smart. My father is a tidy. My father is a teacer. My father is a good. He have egeis small.

It can be seen that the content in this paragraph was not related with the topic. The topic in this paragraph is “my mother” but the students not only describe his mother but all of his family.

c. Grammar

The descriptive text places emphasis on using linguistic qualities while discussing grammatical aspects. Additionally, the sentences used in the descriptive text exhibit the utilisation of simple present tense, adjective agreement, action verbs, and noun phrases. Based on the data collected, it is evident that a majority of students have difficulties when it comes to using the linguistic elements associated with descriptive writing.

1. Simple Present Tense

Simple present tense is one of the language features of descriptive text. The researcher found that some of students have problem in using simple present tense.

Example: (Student 3 assignment)

her name is Lestti Kejora. my favorite artist is Lestti Kejora. I likes artist it because beautiful. i likes artist it because very good voice. I likes artist it because lafty. I likes artist it because very good. I likes artist it because slim and medium. I likes artist it because their shoes are nice. I likes artist it because hair they have a long and short. I likes artist it so pretty hair they.

The researcher found grammatical error in this worksheet. The sentence “ *I likes artist it because beautiful*” must be changed to “ *I like it because she is beautiful*”. Then, the sentence “*I likes artist it because very good voice*” must be changed to “*I like it because she has good voice*”. The sentence “*I likes artist it because hair they have long and short*” must be changed to “*I like it because she has long hair*”.

2. Noun Phrase

Noun phrase is one of the language features of descriptive text. Noun phrase is a group of words, usually a noun in addition to a modifier, such as an adjective, adverb, or article that functions just as a noun would. Based on the data collection, the resercher found that most of students have problem in using noun phrase.

Example: (students 4 assigment)

Describing Father

My father is name h. Dakhi. my father is a good man. he have hair black. he is a calm. he have eye small. he have eye black. he have hobby are: volly ball, football, tenis meja, and badminton. my father is a farmer.

It can be seen that the students . The sentence "he have hair black" must be changed to "He has black hair". Furthermore, the sentence "he have eye small" must be changed to " He has small eyes" and this sentence also "he have eye black" must be changed to " He has black eyes".

d. Mechanic

Mechanic paragraph is combination which need good spelling, capitalization and punctuation. If the use of punctuation is not appropriate, the paragraph will be unreadable and can be change the meaning of the sentence and lead to misconception. Based on the data collection, the resercher found that most of students have problem in using spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in write descriptive text.

Example: (student 5 assignment)

Description

The dog likes to eat bones are bad and some the good dog like to chase people the dog's

hair is very long the dog likes to play a little ball Dongs can help each other too the dog has a long tongue the dog has big eyes the dog has sharp teeth the dog has a little long ears the dong's hair color is blonde the dog's hair is smooth the dog has a long tail the dog has four legs the dog has a nose and a mouth.

It can be seen that the students write descriptive text without paying attention to use of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the sentence. The sentence "the dong's hair color is blonde" must be changed to "The dog's hair color is blonde".

e. Vocabulary

According to Brown and Abeywikrama (2019:251), "A comprehensive lexicon is a fundamental component in crafting descriptive written discourse." In this instance, the author has the ability to facilitate the reader's comprehension and grasp the central message of the text via the use of descriptive language. Learners possess the ability to communicate their thoughts and emotions to readers by effectively expressing their ideas via coherent phrases, hence facilitating reader comprehension. Based on the data collected, it was determined that a significant number of

pupils are experiencing difficulties with vocabulary acquisition.

Example: (Assignment of Student 6)

Describe about artist idolaku my name midalai amazihono. I like artist anis gea. I like artist tall. I like artist pretty. I like artist diligent. I like artist funny. I like artist good. I like artist clean.

In this paper, the students cannot organize their idea in the some of paragraph because they still lack of vocabulary. The students only used it based on the what they know.

1. The Factor Causes of Students Problem in Writing Descriptive Text

Based on the data analysis conducted on the students' worksheets, it has been observed that a significant number of seventh-grade students at SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Teluk Dalam have challenges when it comes to producing descriptive texts. Upon recognising the difficulties encountered by students in composing descriptive texts, the researcher conducted interviews with both English teachers and students in order to get insights on the underlying factors contributing to the students challenges in

this particular writing genre. The aforementioned criteria include:

1. Lack of knowledge

One contributing reason to the difficulties students have in creating descriptive texts is a deficiency of topic material knowledge pertaining to the script being produced. Several students said that this particular component was the source of their trouble. The data obtained from the interviews is shown that most of the students who did mistakes in writing descriptive text conveyed that they don't understand what descriptive text is, this is supported by students' statement which is *"I don't know the structure of descriptive text miss because I forget it"*, besides, another student revealed the same way as the statement that has been shown in this point.

The aforementioned data suggest that the main factor contributing to the students' challenges is their limited understanding of the topic presented in descriptive text. The students who shown a deficiency in understanding and an inability to remember the information presented in the descriptive text.

2. Lack of Grammar Understanding

One of the contributing elements to the difficulties faced by pupils in producing descriptive texts is a limited comprehension of grammar. Several students have attributed their difficulties on a lack of grasp of grammar. The outcome of the interview is delineated in the subsequent response. As one of the students said in interview *"Writing in English is difficult miss, because I cannot difference between adjective and noun"*. Moreover, the other students also gave the same statement which stated that they have a lack of grammar understanding. Besides that, the English teacher also conveyed that one of the factor causes students problem in writing descriptive text is lack of grammar understanding where the students cannot arranged the sentence correctly and sometimes they also write in Indonesia language.

Based on the aforementioned assertion, it has been observed that students have difficulties in composing descriptive texts due to a lack of comprehension about grammatical rules and the proper structuring of sentences. In English, sentences are constructed similarly to sentences in Indonesian. A strong

command of grammar is crucial since it enables pupils to effectively construct descriptive texts.

3. Lack of Vocabulary

The acquisition of vocabulary plays a crucial role in the acquisition and mastery of the English language. The deficiency of vocabulary is identified as a contributing element to the challenges encountered by pupils in composing descriptive texts. There exists a subset of students that possess identical responses to those of their peers situated above them. The English teacher conveyed in interview that *"the students low mastery of vocabulary so that the students cannot developing their idea"*. In addition, students also revealed the same way as the statement that they lack of vocabulary so that they cannot make a sentence correctly and also difficulty in translating into English.

Based on the aforementioned facts, the researcher has determined that the primary element contributing to the pupils' difficulties is a deficiency of vocabulary. The majority of the pupils expressed a lack of extensive vocabulary and encountered challenges in the process of translation.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the study findings, it can be inferred that students encounter challenges while composing descriptive texts. Firstly, the students are unable to effectively develop their ideas in a manner that encompasses comprehensive details and aligns with the issue at hand. Furthermore, the students unable to produce a descriptive paragraph that adheres to the appropriate general framework. In addition, the challenges faced by students in comprehending and using language elements including the simple present tense and noun phrases. Moreover, the students have difficulties in using proper spelling, capitalization, and punctuation inside a paragraph. Lastly, the pupils possess a limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to choose appropriate terms for their compositions. The students have difficulties in creating descriptive text due to their limited knowledge of the subject matter, inadequate grasp of grammar, and insufficient vocabulary.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher provides some suggestions as follow:

1. The researcher encourage students to engage in diligent studying and

practise producing descriptive texts as a mean to enhance their writing skills. Writing is considered one of the four essential skills that students must acquire proficiency in while learning English.

2. The researcher aims the outcome of this thesis to serve as a valuable resource for teachers, offering insights and recommendations for enhancing students' proficiency in descriptive writing.

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