

DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FACED BY THE ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 PALU

***Neliyanti¹⁾, Rofiqoh²⁾, Ma'ula³⁾, Anjar Kusuma Dewi⁴⁾**

^{1,2,3,4)}English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty
Tadulako University, Palu

[*neliyantineli07@gmail.com](mailto:neliyantineli07@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out the difficulties in writing descriptive text faced by the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Palu. The researchers applied descriptive quantitative design. There were 10 students involved. The instrument of data collection was a writing text. The data were collected by asking the students to write a descriptive text. The findings show that the most difficulty of writing in each aspect was mechanics 77.16% of students, grammar 21.1% of students, vocabulary 1.23% of students and content and organization 0% of students.

Key words: Difficulties; Writing Descriptive Text

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of learning English is that students can communicate well either orally or written forms. Harmer (2007) states that writing is as one of four skills. Writing is also one of the language skills in English that has huge contribution in humans' daily life. Can see the important role of writing in people's daily activity such as personal letter, curriculum vitae, business activities and also office activities.

There are some types of texts which are stated in syllabus for senior high school students. One of those text types is descriptive text. According to syllabus of K13 that the students are expected to write descriptive text about people and place in a simple way, where they should be able to produce the descriptive text that has complete and harmonious structure text of descriptive text, use the correct grammatical, vocabulary, mechanics and form of the descriptive text.

Writing is not always easy. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. This skill is not only putting letters, symbols, and numbers, but also involves some language components, such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation. In this research, the researchersss wants to know what is students' most difficulty in writing descriptive, so that the most appropriate solution can be found later. Based on the explanation before, the researchersss is interested in conducting research on students' difficulty in writing descriptive text.

The first researchersss is carried out by Fani Yosep Situmorang (2019) the title is "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text". The researchersss focused on the difficulties in writing descriptive text carried out by students at Kisaran in Academic Year of 2019/2020. The objective of the researchersss is to find out the difficulties of students faced by the eleventh grade students in writing descriptive text. The result of the research shows that there were verb 8.77% of 10 students, verb agreement 12.28% of 14 students, article 12.28% of 14 students, pronoun 6.14% of 7 students, add a word 4.38% of 5 students, omit a word 6.94% of 10 students, spelling 14.03% of 16 students, punctuation 4.16% of 6 students, capitalization 10.41% of 15 students, preposition 17.54% of 20 students and word choice and diction 2.77% of 4 students. So clearly, the students need to learn more about the rules in writing descriptive text.

The second is Ismayanti (2020) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text". The research aimed to describe the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text and to find out the causes of students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The result of the research show that the students of X MIPA 6 have difficulty in writing descriptive text, the difficulties are difficulties in generic structure, difficulties in grammar, and difficulties in spelling.

The third is Hasan Marzuki (2017) "An Anslysis of Student's Ability in Writing". The research aimed to ascertain the students' ability in using grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

These three researchersss which are mentioned above have similar purpose. However, this research is not only focused on the difficulties in writing descriptive text, but also the dominant

problem faced by the students. This research used quantitative descriptive study as the method and the descriptive analysis as the data collection technique as the two previous researches.

Writing is one of the language skills which is important in our life. Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, infuriate, and tell what we feel. However, we know that writing or learning to write especially in a second language is not simply a matter of “writing things down”. It is one of the four basic skills that are very complex and difficult to learn.

Word reference cited in Harmenita (2010), writing is one of the ways to give an idea or message which is form in writing on a piece of paper or the other area. It is an act of making marks on certain surface. Specifically, writing is one kind of expression in language which is created by particular set of symbol, having conventional values for representing the wordings of particular language which is drawn up visually.

Jim in Hongqin (2014) states that writing skill in second language, explains that writing skill is complex and difficult to learn. Requiring mastery is not only grammatical patterns but also the rule of writing such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter.

Therefore the researchers concludes that writing is making a hand writing where the one who write gives a form for everything what he or she thinks and whatever he or she feels. The researchers has to be able in using written language to give an idea or message.

According to Brown (2001), writing is thinking process, because writing is a process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thought into words and give them structure and coherent organization. Hugley et al (1983) explain that writing is a communicative act. It depends upon the awareness of the social expectation. This means as communicative act, writing can develop social relationship and social expectation because writing is one of the tools in communication.

Writing becomes the most difficult skill when it is learned by the foreign language learners. Rass (2001) states writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non-native speakers; because writers must be able write it in multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabularies and mechanics such as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

Writing skills are complex and difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgment elements. Some definitions of writing have been formulated by some prominent linguists. Meyers (2005) states that writing is an action, a process of discovering and organizing your ideas, putting them on the paper and reshaping and revising them. Writing is a complex skill, it involves a complex process done step by step to pass on knowledge or messages in our mind in written form, in which we have to use certain grammatical rules and choose the right words in our sentences.

Difficulties in writing can be devastating to a student's education. Heaton (1975) states that writing skill is complex and sometimes it is difficult to teach. As students' progress, they are increasingly expected to express what they know about many different subjects through writing. If a student fails to develop certain basic skills, he will be unable to write with the speed and fluency

required to excel as these demands increase. Indeed, for a student's struggling with a writing problem, the writing problem, the writing process itself interferes with learning. Students faced with such difficult odds have trouble staying motivated. According to Jordan (1997), writing is often confusing with the process of putting words down on paper in the same structure as an outline prepared with appropriate style and vocabulary the major ideas arranged in some often on the correction of mechanical and grammatical errors.

Brian (1988) divided the problems that make writing difficult into three. The first is Linguistic Difficulty. Linguistics aspect like grammar, vocabulary, language use and choice of sentence in writing must have fully monitoring. The second is Physiology Difficulty, which more focuses on the writer's difficulty because there are not direct interaction and feedback from the reader when they are writing. This difficulty more focuses on difficulty in develop written material or content of composition. The third is cognitive difficulty. Writing has to be thought through formal instruction like spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraph.

Alamargot (2001) defines that writing is a complex task that needs a coordinated implementation of a large set of mental activities. Research have to clearly delimitate the nature, the goal, and the communicative function of the text. Harley (2014) states that unlike writing and listening, reading and writing are clearly not easy tasks to learn, as manifested by large numbers of people who find them difficult. Oshima and Hogue (2007) state that writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act. So it means that when we write something, we have already been thinking about what to say and how to say it. After we have finished writing, we read over what we have written and make correction. We write and revise until we are satisfied that our writing expresses exactly what we want to say.

Writing involves some elements in language that should be mastered by the students before he or she writes down what they want to express (Elbow, 2000). They are content, text organization, vocabulary, language use or grammar, and mechanics.

The component of writing should be clear to readers so that the readers can understand the messages conveyed and gain information form it. In order to have a good content of writing, its content should be well unified and completed. The term is usually known as unity and completeness which become the characteristic of good writing. Sometimes many people do not have any attention in writing about what they write.

Content refers to the ideas which are related to the topic, the development of the ideas through personal experiences, illustration, facts, and opinions. The information written should not only be presented in detail but also has a close relation to the text type. According to Jacobs (1981), content refers to substance of writing, the experience of the main idea (unity), i.e., groups of related statements that a writer presents as unit in developing a subject. Content paragraph is the work of conveying ideas rather than fulfilling special function of transition, restatement, and emphasis.

According to Brown (2001), writing is thinking process, because writing is a process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thought into words and give them structure and coherent organization. Hugley et al (1983) explain that writing is a communicative act. It depends upon the

awareness of the social expectation. This means as communicative act, writing can develop social relationship and social expectation because writing is one of the tools in communication.

Writing becomes the most difficult skill when it is learned by the foreign language learners. Rass (2001) states writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non-native speakers; because writers must be able write it in multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabularies and mechanics such as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

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METHOD

This researchers used a descriptive quantitative research design. The researchers collected the data then made an analysis, and finally made a conclusion. Sugiyono (2010) defines quantitative research as kind of category of study that is used to analyze the natural event. Then, the final research of the study is described in written word. In this study, the researchers analyzed the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text then describing the result in written word.

In this research, there are 456 students as the population and the researchers chose randomly one class as subjects of the researchers. MIA 7 class was the subjects of the research which contains 34 students.

Accordance with the aims of the study which focused on the difficulties of students' writing descriptive text, this study used a writing test as the instrument. There is only one technique and variable use to gather data of this research, which is: The writing test when students have to make a descriptive text about place. In this research, the writing descriptive test used to know the students difficulties in writing descriptive text.

To collect the data of this research, the researchers used a test as an instrument. The test was writing a descriptive text about place. The test consists of proper vocabulary, correct mechanics, and complete organization.

$$\text{Score} = \frac{10}{40} \times 100$$

After collecting all of data from test, researchers analyzed the data. In analyzing the data the researchers used descriptive manner. The procedures that used to analyze the data are: identification of data and tabulation

Firstly, the researchers analyzed the result of the test to determine the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text, researchers used an analysis method to find out the difficulties itself. The researchers distinguished the students' difficulties from the mistake they do in making descriptive text.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

In this research, the writing test was used by the researchers to know the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The test was given by the researchers to the students on 14 November 2022. In the test, the students were asked to make a descriptive text about place. The students worked on the test under the supervision of the researchers and the English teacher. To know the difficulties of students in writing descriptive text, researchers analyzed the value obtained by students from each point of indicators used to assess the ability of students. The data about students' difficulties in writing descriptive text from the test can be seen on the table below:

Table 1 - Students' Score in Writing Descriptive Text Test

No	Initial Name	Mechanics							Total Errors
		Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Grammatical	Punctuation	Spelling	Capitalization	
1	GG	-	-	1	4	2	1	9	17
2	ZA	-	-	-	2	1	-	6	9
3	S	-	-	-	1	-	2	4	7
4	SS	-	-	-	4	2	4	7	17
5	VC	-	-	-	6	1	3	8	18
6	AF	-	-	-	3	-	5	5	13
7	AK	-	-	1	12	3	5	10	31
8	SY	-	-	-	-	4	-	19	23
9	DV	-	-	-	2	1	8	11	22
10	HW	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	5
Total		-		2	35	14	28	83	162

The table above showed the highest score mistakes is 83, the lowest mistakes is 2. There are 10 students who can not write descriptive text correctly. The table also showed all the point assessment considered to be the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. According to the rubric of scoring, students have five difficulties in writing descriptive text, they are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. The result of the test showed their difficulties in each point of assessment aspects, the percentage of students' difficulties in vocabulary mastery can be seen in the table below:

Table 2- Percentage of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text

NO	INDICATORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Content	-	-
2	Organization	-	-
3	Vocabulary	2	1.23%
4	Grammar	35	21.60%
5	Mechanics	125	77.16%
	Total	162	100%

Based on the table above, the study found that the highest difficulties aspect that occurred in the students' descriptive text is the mechanics aspect. In contrast, the lowest error aspect is the vocabulary aspect. The errors found in the students' work are considered as students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

So, the difficulties in vocabulary mastery faced by the ninth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Palu are mechanics, vocabulary, organization, grammar and content. This result also shows that the dominant difficulty is mechanics, vocabulary, organization, grammar and content.

DISCUSSION

The research aims to know the difficulties in writing descriptive text faced by students. Based on the result, the research found many difficulties in writing descriptive text. It happens because writing descriptive text have five aspects.

First, the research are found to make the most second difficulties in grammar aspects, which include aspects of subject verb-agreement, article, verb, pronoun, add a word, omit a word, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, preposition, and word choice and diction are the highest errors experienced by students. The result of this study are different to the finding of Situmorang (2020), who found that the students' greatest difficulty in writing descriptive text is grammar. Second, Ismayanti (2020) also find that many students had difficulties in writing descriptive text, such as generic structure, difficulties in grammar, and difficulties in spelling. Based on the difficulties, the research concludes that grammar and mechanics has a very important role in students' writing. It is because poor grammar and mechanics is the main thing that causes the grammatical difficulties by students.

Punctuation, spelling, and capitalization errors related to the mechanic difficulty are the first most common errors found in students' work. Similarly, (Hasan & Marzuki, 2017) find that mechanic difficulties found by the students are punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. finds that students are found to have a problem in using punctuation like commas because they use commas in places that are not needed, even they are found using commas in the position of the dot. Based on this result, punctuation is a writing rule that they do not understand well. Using punctuation is also not something

they usually do when writing. They feel that using punctuation is unnecessary because they feel that their writing is correct without punctuation. Therefore, the errors in using punctuation are often not realized by them. And then, that students have problems using capitalization where students are found to use lowercase letters after the period and use capital letters in words that should not be. Students' views on the problems of using capitalization are not too different from the use of punctuation. They are not aware of using capitalization in their writing. Based on these difficulties, it can be concluded that students' unfamiliarity with using punctuation or capitalization can lead to errors that lead to difficulties for them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data presentation and analysis in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the ninth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Palu have difficulties in five aspects. The highest error aspect that occurred in the students' descriptive text is the mechanics aspect. In contrast, the lowest error aspect is the vocabulary aspect. The errors found in the students' work are considered as students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

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