

An Analysis of Student's
Skills in Writing
Descriptive Text for Tenth
Grade in SMA Negeri 1
Banjar

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan keterampilan siswa dan kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa dalam menulis Teks Deskriptif untuk siswa kelas X di SMA Negeri 1 Banjar. Desain yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa X MIPA 1 SMAN 1 Banjar yang mengalami kesulitan dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Data penelitian ini adalah hasil tes siswa dan jawaban siswa dalam angket terbuka. Instrumen penelitian berupa tes dan angket terbuka. Reduksi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan menulis siswa X MIPA 1 relatif rendah dengan skor 60 yang lebih rendah dari target skor (KKM) ≤ 70 dan siswa X MIPA 1 mengalami kesulitan dalam menulis teks deskriptif, kesulitannya adalah kesulitan dalam isi, kesulitan dalam tata bahasa, dan kesulitan dalam kosakata, kesulitan dalam organisasi dan ejaan.

Kata Kunci: keterampilan menulis, kesulitan dalam menulis, teks deskriptif

Abstract

The present study aims to describe Students' Skills and the difficulty faced by students in Writing Descriptive Text for Tenth Grade Students in SMA Negeri 1 Banjar. The design applied was qualitative research. The research subjects are X MIPA 1 Students of SMAN 1 Banjar who had difficulties when writing descriptive text. The data of this research are the result of students' test results and the students' answers in the open-ended questionnaire. The research instruments were a test and an open-ended questionnaire. Data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions were used to analyse the data. The result of this research shows that the students of X MIPA 1 writing skills are relatively low with a score of 60 which is lower than the target score of ≤ 70 and the students of X MIPA 1 have difficulty in writing descriptive text, the difficulties are difficulties in content, difficulties in grammar, and difficulties in vocabulary, difficulties in organization and spelling.

Keywords: writing skills, difficulties in writing, descriptive text

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skills that have to be mastered by students. Although writing is very important for students, in fact, the teaching and learning process of writing in class does not run smoothly (Fitri et al., 2017). As a result, students still cannot master how to write as expected. Learning from this fact, teaching writing to students is now a necessity. However, many teachers ignore writing skills in teaching. This happens because writing is considered the most difficult skill to teach in English. And this happens for many reasons. For example, because teachers do not have good skills in teaching writing, teachers are less creative, students lack motivation, and many other aspects are involved in this situation such as teachers tend to use lecture techniques with blackboards and textbooks without any modification. It makes activities monotonous, boring, there are no varied media in teaching and limited by online learning during Covid-19 pandemic.

In writing courses, writing is a complex skill that cannot be learned independently. For the most part, students need a comprehensive understanding of writing theories and practical guidance from lecturers during writing practice. They need direction, feedback, and even improvement during their writing process. Distance learning from home has not been optimal in helping them improve their writing skills. This happens because of limited time during virtual learning with lecturers, inaccuracies in the presentation of material, and limited feedback on student writing (Handayani & Handayani, 2020).

Based on Weigle (2002), there are several errors in it. Their writing shows that students also experience difficulties in some aspects of writing. These difficulties are related to content, organization, mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary

(Weigle, 2002). Students have difficulty expressing their ideas when asked to write a text, especially to think about what they should write as the first sentence in their paragraphs. As a result, students' writing is very short. Unfortunately, some of them also prefer to copy a friend's work and leave it to the teacher. In other words, students have difficulty generating ideas in writing. Another difficulty is related to an organization. Students still make mistakes in sorting their ideas into coherent paragraphs. So, some of the students' writings were not well organized. Some of their writings also confuse their readers.

According to Handayani & Handayani (2020) for EFL learners, facing this online learning during their course also presents them with challenges. In writing courses, for example, writing is a complex skill that cannot be learned independently. For the most part, students need a comprehensive understanding of writing theory and practical guidance from lecturers during their writing practice. They need direction, feedback, and even improvement during their writing process. Distance learning from home has not been optimal in helping them improve their writing skills. This happened because of the limited time during virtual learning with lecturers, inaccuracies in presenting the material, and limited feedback on student writing. Meanwhile, online learning also makes students feel less connected to their peers, and discouraged from the expectations of online study technology (Zhang & Perris, 2004). So that in the pandemic situation, the students may face more problems rather than before the pandemic COVID-19 (Handayani & Handayani, 2020). Before further writing academic essay or paper, Indonesia students are prescribed to easier form of texts. In Indonesian curriculum, teaching to write descriptive text is one of

the fundamental materials to be taught (Maru et al., 2020).

Descriptive text is a text that describes something. According to Wyrick (1987) which is cited in Lailatul et al. (2019) states, "Descriptive writers draw pictures of people, places, objects, and emotions using

a careful selection of details to impress readers. Meanwhile based on Oshima & Hogue (2007) said that descriptive text is a kind of text that contains a picture with a word and describes something. There are five elements of descriptive text mainly: describing a process, event, object, person, and place.

METHODS

A. Method of Data Collection

The researcher was used test and questionnaire on study as methods to collect data, as follows:

1) Test

According to Brown (2001) a test is described as a set of techniques, procedures, and items that make up an instrument of some sort that needs the test taker to execute or engage in some activity. Brown (2001) also stated that a test of a person's skill and competency was also incorporated. As a result, a test was conducted to assess the students' descriptive writing skills.

2) Questionnaires

According to Roopa & Rani (2012) the questionnaire contains a number of written questions that are used to obtain information from respondents. This questionnaire consists of question items that are distributed to respondents and used to obtain

information related to the student's skills and what they are faced during writing and others. This method will be used to obtain data from respondents personally. The questionnaire contains a number of questions that are given to students by choosing answers that are in accordance with their real circumstances. The advantages of the questionnaire are as follows.

- 1) Doesn't require the presence of researcher.
- 2) Can be distributed simultaneously too many respondents.
- 3) Can be answered by respondents according to their respective speeds.
- 4) Respondents' confidentiality is maintained, so that they are free and not shy to answer.
- 5) The use of time is relatively flexible according to the time given by the researcher.

Table 1. Methods and Instruments of Data Collection

No.	Research Question	Method	Instrument
1.	How are the students' writing skills in writing Descriptive text in SMA Negeri 1 Banjar?	Test	Teaching-learning Document (The students' English writing score)
2.	What difficulties are faced by students especially in content, organization, grammar,	Questionnaire	Open-ended Questionnaire

	vocabulary, and mechanic in writing descriptive text in SMA Negeri 1 Banjar during COVID-19 pandemic?		
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B. Instrument of Data Collection

In accordance to obtain the data, there are several instruments that were used those are:

1. The Students' English Writing Score

During the study, the researcher took teaching-learning process documents such as the students' English writing score. The students' writing score was used to describe the students' writing skill in writing descriptive text.

2. Open-ended questionnaires

Open-ended questions are survey questions that allow respondents to respond in open text format, allowing them to express their full

knowledge, feeling, and comprehension. Open-ended questionnaires were needed in order to know the students' difficulty in writing descriptive text.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Criteria Used to Measure Students' Writing Skill

The criteria used for determining the students' writing skill was taken from (Brown, 2007). The criteria were as follows:

Table 2. Rubric Assessment for Writing Descriptive Text

ASPECTS	Score	Criteria	Weight
CONTENT (C) 30% Topic Detail	4	The topic is complete, clear and equipped with details related to the topic.	3x
	3	The topic is complete and clear but almost all the details are related to the topic.	
	2	The topic is complete and clear but the details are not related to the topic	
	1	Unclear topics and details	
ORGANIZATION (O) 20% Identification Description	4	Complete identification and description in all appropriate conjunctions.	2x
	3	Almost complete identification and description arranged with almost entirely correct conjunctions.	

	2	Incomplete identification and description arranged with some appropriate conjunctions.	
	1	Incomplete identification and description made with inappropriate conjunctions.	
GRAMMAR (G) 20%	4	Use of grammar with very few inaccuracies.	2x
	3	Use of grammar with few inaccuracies.	
	2	The use of grammar with many inaccuracies.	
	1	The use of grammar with frequent inaccuracies.	
VOCABULARY (V) 15%	4	The entire content of the essay uses the right and effective choice of words forms	1,5x
	3	Almost all the contents of the essay use the right choice of words forms.	
	2	Some of the contents of the essay use the right choice of words forms.	
	1	A small part of the content of the essay uses the right choice of words forms.	
MECHANIC (M) 15% Spelling Punctuation Capitalization	4	The entire content of the essay uses proper spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	1,5x
	3	Most of the content of the essay uses proper spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	
	2	Some of the contents of the essay use proper spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	
	1	A small part of the content of the essay uses proper spelling, punctuation and capitalization.	
Final score = (3C+2O+2G+1.5O+1,5M) X100 / 40			

Adopted from Brown (2007)

Those components are used to decide the criteria of students' writing. The

criteria of the students' level mastery use in this study was adopted from KKM SMA

Negeri 1 Banjar, the category of the students' score can be formatted as follow:

Table 3. Score and Criteria of Students' writing

No	Score	Criteria
1	95-100	Excellent
2	85-94	Very good
3	80-84	Good
4	70-79	Sufficient
5	Less than 70	Insufficient

Adopted from KKM SMA Negeri 1 Banjar

The table above means:

1. Excellent: the level of students that gain score from 95 to 100
2. Very good: the level of students that gain score from 85 to 94
3. Good: the level of students that gain score from 80-84
4. Sufficient: the level of students that gain score from 70-79
5. Insufficient: the level of students that gain score <70

To know the students' writing skill in writing descriptive text, the researcher conducted Test on Monday, 13th December 2021. The students were asked to write a descriptive text about "Tourist Attraction in Indonesia" in Google Meet. They were given 60 minutes to finish their text. The result of the test was processed into table 4 that can be seen clearly in the following table:

The Result of Test

Table 4. Students' Writing Score from lowest to highest

No	Nama	Aspects					Score %
		Content (C) (4,3,2,1)	Organization (O) (4,3,2,1)	Grammar (G) (4,3,2,1)	Vocabulary (V) (4,3,2,1)	Mechanic (M) (4,3,2,1)	
1.	S10	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	36.25
2.	S13	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(2)	37.5
3.	S20	(1)	(1)	(3)	(3)	(3)	50
4.	S14	(3)	(1)	(2)	(2)	(2)	52.5
5.	S12	(2)	(2)	(2)	(3)	(2)	53.75
6.	S2	(2)	(2)	(3)	(2)	(2)	55
7.	S15	(3)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(2)	57.5
8.	S16	(3)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	57.5
9.	S24	(2)	(3)	(2)	(2)	(3)	58.75
10.	S4	(3)	(2)	(2)	(3)	(2)	61.25
11.	S5	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	66.25
12.	S9	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	68.75
13.	S27	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	S3	(3)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	70
15.	S6	(3)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	70
16.	S21	(3)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	70
17.	S1	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(3)	71.25

18.	S19	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	71.25
19.	S26	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(3)	71.25
20.	S17	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	75
21.	S22	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	75
22.	S25	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	75
23.	S7	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
24.	S8	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
25.	S11	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
26.	S18	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
27.	S28	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
28.	S29	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	82.5
29.	S23	(4)	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	87.5
Mean Score		2.82	2.44	2.48	2.55	2.51	60

According to Brown (2007) classifies the elements of writing into 5 categories namely organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary.

1. Content
The title should represent the content. The content of a text should be relevant and describe the title completely.
2. Organization
The organization of text is depending on how the students organize their ideas.
3. Vocabulary
Vocabulary means that the word choices used by students that are suitable with the content of the text.
4. Grammar
Language Use refers to the use correct grammatical pattern.
5. Mechanic
It refers to the part of speech and how it combines into form a sentence. It includes such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

The data on table 3,4,5,6 show that the score gained by students included score in Content, Organization, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Mechanic. The researcher used Brown (2007) theory to measure students' writing skill based on score that

they got. Secondly, the table consist of the percentage of the students score from the maximum score which means the score from 0-100%. Then, it also contained the mean scores of students' writing which include the students' mean score in Content, Organization, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Mechanic. Lastly, the percentage of the students' mean score from the maximum score which include the percentage of students' mean score in Content, Organization, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Mechanic. Based on the data above, the students' writing skill can be categorized as insufficient, sufficient, good, very good and excellent from the score they got from their own writing descriptive text. There are 13 students who got the score higher than KKM, 13 students who got the score lower than KKM, and 3 students got the score equals to KKM. It could be explained that the total sum of the subject are 29 students and 1 student cannot attend the test. The result of the test shows that the students' mean score in writing descriptive text was insufficient (60%) and did not achieve the target score (KKM) which was $\geq 70\%$ of the maximum score. Specifically, they obtained mean score 2.82 (70.5%) for content, 2.44 (61%) for organization, 2.48 (62%) for grammar, 2.55 (63.75%) for vocabulary, and 2.51 (62.75%) for mechanic.

The Result of Questionnaires

Questionnaire was administrated to students after doing the test. It was purposed to know the students' response towards writing activity and the difficulty that they faced in writing. There were 5 items used Bahasa Indonesia that must to be answered by students in the questionnaire.

1. The Students' Difficulty in Developing Idea of Writing and Supporting Sentences

According to Sarwoso (2006) stated that simple random sampling is a technique is to give a different number to each member of the population, then choose a sample using random numbers.

There were 1 representative student said that have difficulties in developing idea of writing and supporting sentences. The data from open-ended questionnaire were shown below:

The S7 said *"In developing the topic of writing, at first, I felt a little difficult when starting to develop the topic of writing to fit and fill in whatever things in the text that I was going to make. But to overcome this, usually I will outline the main idea of each paragraph first, then look for as much information as possible about the related topic, so that the main idea that has been made can be developed again, making it easier in the writing process. In this case, I think I still need to learn more"*

Meanwhile 1 representative student who did not face a difficulty in developing an idea and supporting sentences, namely:

The S17 said *"No, I didn't have any difficulties because before developing the main idea in the descriptive text, I first understood the main idea. What needs to be done to develop the main idea is to read extensively. Extensive*

reading means reading with a wide range. After that we will know the sentences supporting the main idea so that it can be developed again into sentences."

2. The Students' Difficulty in Organizing Idea into a Good Paragraph

The second item was about the frequency of difficulty faced by the students in organizing idea into a good paragraph.

There are 1 representative student' opinion who did not face a difficulty with organizing idea into a good paragraph, namely:

The S17 said *"No, I don't have any difficulties because before compiling a coherent sentence we can use the steps to compose it, namely choosing a theme or topic to be discussed in the paragraph. make a main sentence that contains the main idea or problem to be discussed in the paragraph. put the main sentence at the beginning, at the end of the paragraph the location of the main sentence depends on what type of paragraph you want to make, it can be deductive, inductive, or deductive-inductive, make several explanatory sentences that explain the main sentence. Connect sentences with conjunctions. Read the entire paragraph that has been compiled. And correcting if there are sentences that are not yet coherent with other sentences"*

Meanwhile there are 1 representative student' opinion who face a difficulty with organizing idea into a good paragraph, namely:

The S28 said *"I have difficulties because the preparation of paragraphs in a coherent manner must really pay attention to the placement of words and sentences so that the results of the*

paragraphs are clear and logical, while I still have difficulty placing sentences in English in a coherent paragraph”

3. The Students’ Difficulty in Using an Appropriate Word

The third item was about the frequency of difficulty faced by the students in using an appropriate word in writing (vocabulary matter).

Most of students have a difficulty with vocabulary. Only six of the students did not have a problem with vocabulary. There is 1 representative student who stated that have a difficulty with vocabulary, namely:

The S8 said *“Yes, I’m having trouble, because in choosing the right word I’m still a bit confused because one word in English can mean many things, so I have to really choose the word that fits the context of the sentence being discussed”*

Meanwhile there are 1 representative of students who did not face a problem with it such as:

The S23 said *“No, because I used the words that were in my mind when I immediately saw the place, I automatically made up the words in my mind to write the descriptive text.”*

4. The Students’ Difficulty in Using a Correct Grammar

The fourth item was about the frequency of difficulty faced by the students in using a correct grammatical pattern in writing.

After collected the data by using questionnaire, the researcher found there are 22 students said that they have a problem with grammar in English, in

which 5 students said that they did not face any problem with it

There are 1 representative student that have a difficulty in grammar, namely:

The S7 said *“In writing descriptive texts by paying attention to the correct grammar, I think sometimes I still doubt whether the grammar that I use in the sentences I make is appropriate, and I still need to learn more about it.”*

Meanwhile there are 1 representative student that did not have a difficulty in grammar, namely:

The S8 said *“No, I don’t have any difficulties because I think this has been taught and I often practice to get used to using correct grammar so that the sentences in English that I use become correct.”*

5. The Students’ Difficulty in Mechanic of Writing

The fifth item was about the frequency of difficulty faced by students in mechanic of writing (spelling, capitalization, punctuation).

The researcher found that only 8 students have a problem with this part and 20 of the students did not.

There are 1 representative student who faced a difficulty related to mechanic of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization), mainly:

S29 said *“A little, sometimes I forget to add capital letters and use the wrong spelling”*

There are 1 representative student who did not face a difficulty related to mechanic of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization), mainly:

S17 said *“No, I have no trouble using punctuation marks such as periods, commas, capital letters, and spelling.”*

Because almost every day I find punctuation marks such as semicolons and others in textbooks, and also I have been taught how to use these punctuation marks.”

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this study, there are two conclusion that can be present which is based on the research questions:

1. The students' skills in writing descriptive text were categorized as insufficient. The students' writing skill was measured by using (Brown, 2007) rubric assessment. The mean score of students was 60 which was lower than the target score (KKM) where the target score was 70.
2. The students still faced problems in writing descriptive text especially in content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Based on findings, there are 15 of the students have a problem in content aspect in which 12 of the students said that they did not face any problem with it, there are 13 of the students said that they are faced difficulty in organizing idea into a good paragraph, and 14 of the students said that they did not, there are only six of the students did not have a problem with vocabulary, there are 22 students said that they have a problem with grammar in English, in which 5 students said that they did not face any problem with it, only 8 students have a problem with this part and 20 of the students did not, and 2 students did not write a text based on instruction given (out of topic).

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