Students' Problems on Writing Descriptive Text

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords; *Descriptive Text,* *Writing,* *Writing Problems*	The objectives of this researcher was to know the students' problems in writing descriptive text at first grade of MAN 2 Batam in academic year 2022/2023. This research was descriptive qualitative method. In collecting the data, the researcher did some steps. Researchers preparing the research instrument and giving the test to the students. The data was collected on July at first grade of MAN 2 Batam in academic year 2022/2023. As the subject the researcher took of 33 students. To collect the data, the instrument of this research is test. In analyzing data of the result, the researcher used descriptive analysis. The result of this this research showed the percentage of students' problems in aspect of organization (18%), content (17%), grammar (18%), mechanics (24%), and vocabulary (23%). Based on the result of the research, it is suggested that the first-grade students of MAN 2 Batam should be given more explanation and exercise in writing descriptive text.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of communication. There are several forms of communication; the forms are spoken language and written language. Communicating is the act of sending a message from a writer or speaker to a reader that they cannot survive without interacting with other people. Therefore, people began interact, which led to the emergence of language. English has become one the most important languages in the world. Any development that involves English, such as science, technology, or culture, cannot be separated. Internationally, people use English as the language of communication, sharing, taking, and giving information and knowledge as agents of development. It is therefore important that every nation equips its citizens with the ability to use English so that they can track those development effectively.

There are four basic skills in English: Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading. In accordance with Harmer (2006:79-80), writing is the basic skill of English that is emphasized and become the important skill which be taught to the students of foreign language. Moreover, writing requires the complex thinking. In writing process, the writer has to involve their thinking and creative skill. According to Brown (2001:336), writing is the written products of thinking, drafting, and revising that require specialized skill on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions coherently into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning and how to edit text for appropriate grammar and how to produce final products. In the process of writing a text, the content of the text is important to the author. Using proper grammar and clear meaning is also necessary for the writing itself to be successful. Writing is not only about expressing ideas in writing, but also about writing with correct grammar so that readers can understand what you are writing. Writing and grammar are integrated so grammar is also required to support writing. We see that students write that grammar is necessary to construct sentence.

Writing and grammar are taught from high school through college. In high school, students learn basic English grammar such as tenses, passives, and gerunds. You will also learn how to write narrative, expository, and procedural sentences. Based on the Indonesian curriculum 2013 asks to teach the skill in English separately about listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Thus, students are expected to be able to communicate in English in both oral and written form. In senior high school, the skills of writing are taught by using genre-based approach. According to Kane (2006:6), writing is divided into four categories, they are exposition, description, narration, and persuasion. Descriptive is one of the texts that have been studied by the first grade. Descriptive text is text that authors use to visualize what they are writing. It was used to represent a specific thing/object, place, or person. To write good descriptive texts with correct grammar, we need to apply the linguistic properties of descriptive texts. based on a researcher preliminary survey of MAN 2 Batam English teachers, she said some students still struggled to write descriptive texts. how to actually combine ideas and put them into paragraphs. In addition, supported by researcher experiences in hands-on classes, researcher found many problems that students still face.

The first problem is developing an idea. Some students wrote many main ideas in one paragraph. After that, the paragraph is still ambiguous. Also note that they wrote several paragraphs in his one sentence. So, the idea of the paragraph was still unclear. Second, the problem

of organizing ideas for writing a description. Paragraphs need more than consistent points. Requires judicious composition and ordering. Students need to organize their thoughts into good paragraphs, and students need to be able to read their writing. When writing descriptive text, students can organize their thoughts by identifying the topic and giving a description of the topic. Third, the difficulty of grammar. Grammar problems affect specific patterns of how words are put together to form correct sentences. As a result, ideas develop well. Fourth, it is due to the students' lack of vocabulary, which makes it difficult to develop ideas on the topic. Some students still had doubts about the correct choice of words when writing the expository text. due to the lack of vocabulary, students were confused in developing their ideas. In this case, the students must select the correct word required. The fifth concerns spelling, punctuation, and capitalization based on the phenomenon. We can conclude that the students mechanically made some mistakes. Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization issues can affect the meaning of sentences, even paragraphs confusing readers about the coherent meaning of sentences.

Writing is one of the four skills of the English language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and requires hard thinking to simultaneously create words, sentences and paragraphs, so it is difficult to master in English. Very necessary and difficult. Writing is also the most difficult skill to be mastered by foreign language learners because it is not only generating and organizing ideas of our mind, but also exchanging their ideas from mother tongue into readable text in English, (Renandya (2002:303). Writing is not easy for them, so students often make mistakes when writing. One of the more difficult skills for students to learn is writing. Students can express their feelings, ideas and emotions when writing something. According to Nunan (2003:88), writing is the mental act of inventing ideas, figuring out how to express them, and organizing them into clear statements or paragraphs for the reader. Writing is a creative act. The act of writing is creative because is requires the interpretation and understanding of something, be it an experience, a text, and event. Students should know its components in writing. Therefore, they can understand words well.

There are many definitions of writing. Writing is never a one-step action, according to Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue (2007:15). It is an ongoing creative act. Furthermore, according to Stork (1972:258), writing is the process or result of recording language on a surface in the form of conventionalized visible marks or graphic symbols. From this we can conclude that writing is an activity in which words and ideas become sentences and paragraphs, which in turn become

sentences used to communicate with others. Writing allows the reader to convey and understand the author's message without speaking. There are several definitions descriptive text. according to Koswara (2018:52), descriptive text focuses attention on the characteristics of a particular thing, person, place, or animal, but descriptive text can be viewed as independent text. a description or setting of a character in a story or biography. Although not always considered a district text type, the ability to describe someone or something in detail is considered an important skill that can contribute to a wide variety of text types. Furthermore, Zemach & Rumisck (2003) state that descriptive text describes what something looks or feels like. In addition, Gerot & Wignell (1994) state that descriptive text is text that contains descriptions given by the author to the reader of a particular matter, such as a person, difference, animal, or event. Kurniawan (2017:71) explained that descriptive text is a type of text use to describe something or someone. Shows what a person or thing is like. Based on the description above, researcher can conclude that a descriptive text is a text that provides the reader with a detailed description of an object.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research. Researcher attempt to analyze the problems of writing descriptive text, where the students often struggle to understand Wnglish texts, especially descriptive texts. creswell (2009:2) stated thay qualitative research is an approach for investigating and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups attach to social or human issues. The study is called qualitative because it attempts to objectively analyze the problems students have in writing descriptive texts. the purpose of this study is to analyze students problems when writing descriptive texts in MAN 2 Batam. This research was conducted at MAN 2 Batam. This research actually was conducted on 25 July 2022. This research used one class as the subject of this research. It was at first grade of MAN 2 Batam. As the subject the researcher took of 33 students. The technique of collecting data of this research was test. Arikunto (2013:203) stated that a research instrument is a tool or equipment that researcher use to collect data and facilitate their work to obtain good result. Researcher use test as research tools. Researcher tools are the means by which researcher facilitate their work and collect data in order to make their result better, more complete and more systemic making them easier to process. The purpose of this test is to assess the students' ability to write descriptive texts. This test is used to discover students' ideas and organized ideas. The test in this study is material related to descriptive text. the researcher asks the

students to write a descriptive text 60 minutes. The steps of collection data; Students are asked to choose one of the given topics to write a descriptive text about public figure; Asks students to write descriptive text based on the chosen topic; Read the students' descriptive text carefully; Identify what sentence problems that made by students in writing descriptive text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that students encountered various problems in writing descriptive texts. The total number of errors made by students was classified into five categories: organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. The results are presented in the following table:

Table.1. The Classification of Error

No.	Problem	Total	Percentage
1	Organization	155	18%
2	Content	147	17%
3	Grammar	153	18%
4	Mechanics	207	24%
5	Vocabulary	196	23%
	Total	858	100%

From the table, it is evident that the most common issue among students was in mechanics, with a total of 207 errors, making up 24% of all errors. The second highest problem was vocabulary, which accounted for 196 errors or 23%. Problems in organization and grammar were both significant, each contributing to 18% of the total errors. Finally, content-related issues were the least frequent, making up 17% of the total errors. The results of this study indicate that students face significant difficulties in writing descriptive texts, especially in mechanics and vocabulary, which together account for almost half (47%) of all errors found in student writing. This suggests that students struggle with basic writing conventions and word choice, which are crucial for effective communication. Each error category is discussed in detail below:

Mechanics Issues. Mechanical errors were the most frequent problems in students' writing, indicating a lack of understanding of basic writing rules such as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Many students struggled with the correct placement of commas, periods, and apostrophes. For example, some students wrote sentences without punctuation, making it difficult to understand where one idea ended and another began. Others used incorrect capitalization, such as writing "i"

instead of "I" or failing to capitalize proper nouns like "London" or "Mr. Smith." Spelling mistakes were also a major issue. Some students wrote words as they sound phonetically, leading to errors such as "becouse" instead of "because" or "diferent" instead of "different." This suggests that students might benefit from more exposure to correct spelling through reading and targeted spelling exercises. Furthermore, automated spell-checkers can be useful tools, but students should also learn to proofread their work manually to avoid mistakes that spell-checkers might not detect, such as homophones (e.g., "there" vs. "their").

Vocabulary Issues. The second most common problem was vocabulary, which accounted for 23% of the errors. Many students had difficulty selecting the correct words to express their ideas clearly and effectively. This was particularly evident in their descriptions, where students often used vague or incorrect words. For instance, some students wrote "The house is big and very good," instead of providing more vivid and precise descriptions such as "The house is spacious, with beautifully painted walls and a cozy living room." Additionally, some students struggled with word formation, using incorrect suffixes or prefixes, such as "unhappyful" instead of "unhappy." Others misused synonyms, leading to awkward or incorrect expressions. These errors suggest that students may not have a strong grasp of the nuances of different words, highlighting the need for vocabulary-building exercises, including synonym differentiation and contextual word usage.

Organization Issues. Organizational problems were another significant challenge for students, comprising 18% of the total errors. Many students had difficulty structuring their descriptive texts in a logical and coherent manner. Some common issues included: Lack of clear paragraphing: Some students wrote their entire descriptive text as a single block of text, making it difficult for readers to follow their ideas, weak topic sentences: Many paragraphs lacked a strong opening sentence that clearly introduced the subject being described and disorganized ideas: Some students jumped from one idea to another without clear transitions, making their writing difficult to follow. For example, in a description of a beach, one student wrote: "The beach is beautiful. The waves are big. The sand is white. There are many people playing games. The sun is very hot." While each sentence provides some information, there is no logical flow or connection between them. A more organized version could be: "The beach is a wonderful place to relax. The soft, white sand stretches along the shore, while the waves crash rhythmically against the coastline. Many visitors enjoy playing games on the sand or swimming in the clear blue water under the bright

sun." These findings suggest that students need more instruction on paragraph structure and coherence, including how to use transition words to connect ideas smoothly.

Grammar Issues. Grammar problems also accounted for 18% of the total errors, showing that many students struggled with fundamental grammatical rules. The most common grammatical mistakes included: Verb tense errors: Students frequently switched tenses within a paragraph, making their writing inconsistent. For example, "Yesterday, I go to the park and see many birds" instead of "Yesterday, I went to the park and saw many birds.", Subject-verb agreement mistakes: Some students wrote sentences like "She have a cat" instead of "She has a cat." Incorrect sentence structures: Some sentences were incomplete or awkwardly phrased, such as "The book which I like it very much" instead of "The book that I like very much." To address these issues, students need more practice in constructing grammatically correct sentences, possibly through targeted grammar exercises, peer editing, and writing workshops.

Content Issues. Content problems were the least frequent (17%), but they were still significant. Many students struggled with generating detailed and engaging descriptions. Some common issues included: Lack of sensory details: Instead of using vivid language, some students wrote generic sentences that did not paint a clear picture for the reader. Underdeveloped ideas: Some students provided minimal information, making their descriptions dull and unengaging. Repetitive content: Some students repeated the same information multiple times rather than expanding on their ideas. For instance, one student wrote: "The park is nice. There are many trees. The grass is green. The air is fresh." While this description is grammatically correct, it lacks depth and detail. A more developed version could be: "The park is a peaceful retreat with towering oak trees that provide shade on hot summer days. The grass is a vibrant green, dotted with colorful flowers, and the air carries the refreshing scent of blooming jasmine." To improve content development, students need to practice using sensory details, figurative language, and varied sentence structures to make their descriptions more vivid and engaging.

Implications and Recommendations. The findings of this study highlight several areas that need improvement in students' writing. To help students overcome these challenges, educators can consider the following strategies: Mechanics: Implement spelling and punctuation exercises, along with proofreading practice. Vocabulary: Encourage students to read more and engage in vocabulary-building activities. Organization: Teach paragraph structuring techniques and provide model texts. Grammar: Provide grammar-focused lessons and targeted exercises. Content

Development: Encourage students to use sensory details and expand their ideas through guided writing activities. By addressing these issues, students can significantly improve their ability to write clear, well-structured, and engaging descriptive texts.

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