

## AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE AT EIGHT GRADE AT SMP N 4 MUARA BUNGO

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper reported on an investigation towards the eight grader's difficulties in writing descriptive text in SMPN 4 Muara Bungo. The subjects of the research are twenty five students of second grade at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo. This research is aimed to find out student's difficulties in writing of descriptive text and the causes. The test and questionnaire were used as the instruments of this research. The findings showed that the students find difficulties in all point of scoring. The score was indicated that the students have weak ability in understanding grammar. Then, the finding also showed the students have a lack of vocabulary. Meanwhile, the score of developing the term of content was weak. In term of organizing, the student's writing ability also indicated weak ability. Furthermore, in term of mechanism, the student's ability was very poor. The second finding of this research was the causes of student's difficulties in writing descriptive text. There were some causes that made students got difficulties in writing descriptive text. Based on data analysis, the first cause was student's background. The second cause was teaching technique and the last cause student's difficulties in writing descriptive text was learner's environment. Based on the data finding in this research, some suggestions are given to English teachers that the teacher can emphasize to solve the students' constraint and also they should learn better to apply the techniques of teaching writing skill.*

**Keywords : Difficulties, Writing, Descriptive Text**

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a difficult skill compared to other skills such as speaking, reading, and listening. Writing is difficult because most students do not have a lot of vocabulary and hesitate in developing the idea to write because of doubt that most students are not able to write well, even though just describing the text sometimes students forget the generic structure in the description of the text even to not know what grammar used to write the description of the text because in junior high school students have a lot to learn text examples narrative text, descriptive text and recount text. Writing becomes the most difficult skill when it is learned by the foreign language learners. According to Rass (2001:30) said, "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", it is because there are some aspects that the students should learn to make a good writing. Those aspects are grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. They must understand those criteria well in order to produce a good writing. In teaching and learning process of writing, the teacher has an important role. 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."

Furthermore, the students found difficulties in grammar. Grammar difficulties will influence certain patterns of how words are put together to form the correct sentences. It will make the ideas do develop well. Fourth, when students' process writing something, many problems could be found. Some students are lack of vocabulary and they also have difficulties in developing their ideas related to their topic. Some students were still in doubt with choosing the correct words while composing descriptive text. Lack of vocabularies made the students confused in developing their ideas. In this case the students have to choose correct words that they need. The last difficulty was related with spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

The problem is organizing the ideas related to the topic to write descriptive text, in grammar students cant organizing the correct sentence and some student are lack of the vocabulary so the researcher interest research about descriptive text because the students very difficult in write a paragraph in the topic and the students still less understand descriptive text The English learning in SMP N 4 Muara bungo is still not effective based on the pre observation at the on july the researcher found that the student difficulties in writing especially descriptive text

still low because the student have problem learning at second grade most of student is about writing descriptive text problem face student found difficulties write it down. Teaching Writing is one of the skills that must be learn by the students. In junior high school level, there are three text genres that they must study that are narrative, descriptive and news item. In narrative, the writing usually discusses about the story in the past event. Then, descriptive writing discusses the way how to describe a certain object. News items explain about the news that happens around the students. They should able to know the rhetoric steps of every genre in everyday life.

In the curriculum at junior high school was use K-13 It could be understood the most are still difficult to achieve the minimal level criterion or kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) for English subject, with will determine by school that 70( seventy). Furthermore, according to curriculum 2013, writing skill have standar kompetensi(SK) and Kompetensi dasar (KD). There are many genres that are taught to Junior High School students. Those are narrative, procedure, recount descriptive, and so on that we can write. The researcher focused on descriptive text which is taught in the second year of Junior High School. As stated above, the descriptive text is taught by introducing the students to the model text, hopefully they will be able to write the genre well.

In descriptive text, the students should organize their thinking logically and they can communicate to the other people in detail when they want to describe people, place, or things. This is why the researcher chooses descriptive text. The second year students in Junior High School also had learned reading descriptive text in the first year, especially in the second semester. Hence, the researcher assumes that they already know well about descriptive text. The problem is organizing the ideas related to the topic to write descriptive text, in grammar students cant organizing the correct sentence and some student are lack of the vocabulary so the researcher interest research about descriptive text because the students very difficult in write a paragraph in the topic and the students still less understand descriptive text The English learning in SMP N 4 Muara bungo is still not effective based on the pre observation at the on july the researcher found that the student difficulties in writing especially descriptive text still low because the student have problem learning at second grade most of student is about writing descriptive text problem face student the found difficulties write it down.

Teaching Writing is one of the skills that must be learned by the students. In junior high school level, there are three text genres that they must study that are narrative, descriptive and news

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Writing is an important skill to be mastered in learning English as a foreign language. Bello (1997) states that writing enhances language acquisition as learners experiment with words, sentences, and other elements of writing to communicate their idea effectively, and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class. It means that writing is not only a means of communication where students can share their views and thoughts, it is actually a pre requisit to master other language skills. Writing process, further, incorporates some stages structurally. Harmer (2007: 326) states that the stages on writing are planning, drafting, revising, and final drafting. Writing process as a classroom activity that incorporates those four basic stages is seen as a recursive process. It has cycle which integrates among stages. It can be seen as a process wheel in which it clearly shows the directions that the writers may take during their process in writing.

Writing is a complex cognitive activity in which the

writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level those include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts. Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) state that the skills involved in writing are highly complex. L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level of skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on.

In addition, Ghaith (2002) states that writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning when students view writing as a process. Teachers need to understand that writing is a recursive process, and that every writer uses the process in a different way, so that students experience less pressure and more willing to experiment, explore, revise, and edit. According to Rumisek and Zemach (2005: 3), writing process goes through several steps to produce a good written product. There are some sub- activities to be taken in producing the text. It is more than just putting words together to make sentences. The writer should undergo several steps to make sure that

what has been written follows the right development of writing process. There is a similar view from Nation (2009:114) which states that one way of focusing on different aspects of writing is to look at writing as a process. It means that writing process contains several sub-processes which are imperatively united as an outline for students to begin and finish their writing.

According to Oshima and Hogue (1991), there are three criterias of good writing which consist of content, organization and writing style. Content includes purpose of text, topic and explanation about the topic. Organization of writing consists of introduction, body paragraph and conclusion. In the introduction, the topic and thesis statement are mentioned clearly. Meanwhile, body paragraph will elaborate all of topic in detail. In conclusion part, the author restates what the topic and concludes all of explanation obviously. It aims to make the reader savvy what has been written.

The last criteria is writing style which is useful for the readers to understand the people. Writing style includes capitalization, punctuation, word choice, sentence smooth, spelling and coherence. Wrong spelling will make the reader confused. Meanwhile, word choice and sentence smooth make it readable.

Futhermore, a paragraph should be coherence. Oshima and Hogue (1991, p.40) stated that coherence is conformity between one paragraph and the others. There are four ways to achieve coherence; first, involving repeating key nouns; second, using pronouns that refer back to key nouns; third, using transition signals to show how one sentence and other is related; fourth, arranging the sentences in logical order (Oshima and Hogue, 1991, :40-41).

Based on the curriculum 2013 of English for SMP/MTs: Writing is one of the skills that must be learnt by the students. In junior high school level, there are three text genres that they must study that are narrative, descriptive and news item. In narrative, the writing usually discusses about the story in the past event. Then, descriptive writing discusses the way how to describe a certain object. News items explain about the news that happens around the students. They should able to know the rhetoric steps of every genre in everyday life. This research focuses the study on the "Difficulties of the eighth students" descriptive text. The purpose of studying the descriptive writing is that the students are able to produce a short descriptive text. They may describe a certain object, such as place or building, animal or person. When the students describe a certain place, they should know the name,

location and every feature in that place. They may use literal or figurative meaning to describe the place.

According to Mukarto (2007:140) there are two main parts in descriptive text such as identification and description. Identification part describes about general of the topic and introduction of the thing, place or people. Identification usually stated in the first paragraph to inform the reader what to be described in the next paragraph. Rosa (2008) said that identification is one of the generic structure of descriptive text which will give the information about the object that will be described. Meanwhile, in the description part, the writer explains the object in detail which is used to support identification part. Kane in English indo (2016) stated description is sensory experience that the reader can feel, tastes, looks and hears the writing well. Thus, Description is a part which describes about something in detail, for example about physical appearance, characteristic, quality and general behavior of thing, people or place. Physical appearance such as person's style, hair, body and all of thing which is looked with naked eyes at someone. Characteristic is "typical of something". Behavior is the way people or animal act. Quality is "the standart of something when it is compared with other things" (Oxford Dictionary, : 1233).

Cause is the reason why something happen, especially something bad, and difficulty is something that controls what you do by keeping you within particular limits. Based on the definition the cause of students difficulty that is some factors make the students cannot writing descriptive text. The cause of the difficulty can from many factors. It can be from the student, teacher or environment. From the student can be their motivation, interest, Learners' prior knowledge, Learners' Environment, Home condition and their education background, and from the teacher can be their technique or anything else (Peter Westwood, 2006).

## METHODS

This research, descriptive quantitative method is used by researcher. This term, descriptive quantitative is a single instance of some bound system, which can range from one individual to class, a school, or an entire community. Where researcher present the data in numerical and descriptive form. Researcher choose this research because the data is obtained by the researcher based on quantitative data, then the researcher explains the results of the data into descriptive form. The descriptive design is appropriated with this research since describes the second

grade difficulties in writing descriptive text at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo, and the factors that cause the difficulties. The populations of this study all of students at SMPN4 Muara Bungo. The writer choosed population finite type for this study. The researcher took the first year students of SMPN 4 Muara bungo. There were 25 students of VIII 2 as research sample. The sampling technique applied by researcher is purposive sampling. The instruments in this research are: Writing test and Questionnaire. In analyzing the data the researcher used descriptive manner. After got the test, researcher took the score of the students, the difficulties showed the score of mistakes in writing descriptive text. The researcher described the data and also the percentage of data. It is to make the result of the research clear and readable. Finally, the researcher concluded the result of this research and researcher presented it in the form of narrative.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### *Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text*

The researcher continued to analyze after conducted the writing. The writing test obtained from students writing in descriptive text, which consist of 25 students. The researcher found findings after conducting the research and analyzing the

data. The findings of this research are relevant to research question "What are the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at the eighth grade of SMPN 4 Muara Bungo". The researcher analyzed the data based on five indicators of descriptive text. There was developing idea, organizing idea, grammar, vocabulary, mechanism. According to the rubric of scoring, students have five difficulties in writing descriptive text. they are, content, organizing, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. And result of the test showed their difficulties in each point of assessment, if their score under 3 in point of assessment, researcher concluded they have difficulties in the point of assessment. The result showed the highest percentage is 87 % of students have difficulty in grammar, the second percentage are 88% of students have difficulty in content and 80% of students have difficulty in vocabulary, the third percentage is 68% of students have difficulty in organizing, and the last percentage is 68% of students have difficulty in mechanism.

### *Factors of Causing the Students' Difficulties*

According Westwood (2006), the cause of the difficulty can from many factors. It can be from the student, teacher or enviroment.

From the student can be their motivation, their education background, and from the teacher can be their technique or anything else. Therefore, the researcher used those three factors as indicator to make the questions in questionnaire Based on the above theory, researcher divided the factors that cause the difficulties facing students into three categories. They are students' background, teaching techniques, and student environment. Questions 1 through 9 ask whether the background of learners is causing their difficulties or not. Questions 10 to 13 ask about whether teacher teaching techniques causing their difficulties. Question numbers 14 through 17 ask about whether the environment of learners is causing their difficulties.

Based on the results of data analysis conducted by researcher, found that most dominant causes 81% of student difficulties associated with the learners' background. Such as lack of interest in learning writing, no desire to write English text, lazy to write English text, afraid to write the English text, lack of motivation to learn writing, learning writing is boring, Students are lack of knowledge about grammar. This is because most students are less interested in learning to write, they are lazy and afraid to write English text. Another cause is the lack of motivation to learn to write. They say that writing is boring; they must write text

without doing any other activity. Another factor that causes difficulty is that students lack background knowledge about writing. The results showed that most students lack background knowledge about English text; they did not know about the generic structure of descriptive text, and the specific characteristics of descriptive text. Finally, they lack grammatical knowledge, lacking an English vocabulary.

The researcher found that causes (71%) of second grade difficulties in writing descriptive text were related with the teaching technique. Such as uninteresting technique of teaching, unclear instruction, no media use in teaching, boring activities in learning. The highest percentage of this category is 88% of students said no media in teaching that made cause of difficulty for them in writing descriptive text.

The last factor causing the second grade difficulties in writing descriptive text is because their environment. Such as lack of facilities of the school, lack of English writing materials, no motivation from parents, no help from parents to learn writing. There was 78% of student gave respond to that. The results of the questionnaire indicate that students lack facilities in their schools. Their school does not provide enough writing materials for them, so they cannot learn to write well. In addition to the students are



also problematic in their homes. Not from those who do not get motivation from parents to learn English. Based on the discussion about factors causing the difficulties in writing descriptive text. The second is the teaching technique 71% and the last factor is learners' environment 78%.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this current study, it showed us that the students' writing ability in descriptive text at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of SMPN 4 Muara Bungo is low. It is based on analysis of all indicators in this research, concerning with the content and organizing of descriptive text. Then, the low of students' ability in writing descriptive text is because some difficulties faced by students. It is proven by the data of students' writing descriptive texts. It was found that students did many mistakes in term of grammar, developing the term of content, organizing and mechanism. The last students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts are lack of vocabulary. Based on students' writing, it was found that students used some inappropriate vocabulary to show their ideas. In addition, based on the analysis of students' writing, it was found some causes that made students did some mistakes in writing descriptive texts. *Based on data analysis, the first cause was student's background. The second cause was teaching technique and the last cause*

*student's difficulties in writing descriptive text was learner's environment.*

Based on the conclusions stated above, there are some implications that can be drawn.

First, it can be implied that the eight grade students of SMPN 4 Muara Bungo have low ability in English especially in writing skill. Second, it can be implied that the teaching and learning process was not successful yet. The writing process got less attention from the teachers. It also can be implied that students less of practice especially in writing. Based on the findings and conclusion of this research, the researcher would like to give some suggestion as follows: it is suggested that teachers can emphasize the materials which relate to the use of language features in contexts. It is hoped that teachers may give several exercises which focus not only on arranging the components of language but also how to use it appropriately in the texts in order to decrease the students' difficulties writing texts. It is also suggested that teachers are able to search and apply techniques in teaching writing. The technique in teaching writing should be able to promote the students' ability in arranging and relating the ideas, choosing the words, and using the tenses.

Sharing more exercise to the students is quite important to control the students' progress in writing ability, especially in developing the generic structure and language features. As well,

teachers may offer feedback for the students' writing in order to improve the writing ability. Through this research, it is also hoped that teachers can distribute the result of the research to the students, thus students will know their weaknesses.

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