

An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Texts in the Tenth Grade of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya

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Abstract: Most students had problems writing a descriptive text when they were assigned their text. Many students were not able to describe themselves or they had difficulties in writing descriptive text. Some students think that writing is the most difficult skill in English. Some students also could not finish their writing at the end of the time set due to limited ideas and vocabulary. This research aimed to describe the students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts and find out the causes underlining those frequent difficulties. This research uses the qualitative descriptive method. The research subjects were X MIPA students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya who had difficulties when writing descriptive text. This research involved 17 students as the research subjects. The data of this research were the results of students' worksheets and the student's answers to the given questionnaires. The researcher employed a writing test and questionnaires to gain descriptive data. As a result, the factors that cause the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text were students' lack of vocabulary, difficulties to translate, and lack of competence in understanding English tenses.

Keywords: analysis, descriptive texts, students' difficulties

INTRODUCTION

Learning English, writing is a complicated skill to learn because practically it involves some aspects, such as organization, vocabulary, and structure. The language learners get difficulties in the writing process is a real fact. According to Rass cited in (Ismail, 2018), writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non-native speakers; because writers must be able to write it on multiple issues, such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, and mechanics as well as punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

Writing is a very important activity for everybody, especially for students. Furthermore, the students are the next generation who will give contributions to the future through their knowledge and experience. According to Weigle cited in (Lestari, 2018), the ability to write is very important for academic context, business, and personal relations in the global community. This is the reason why students should master writing skills. Therefore, writing is one way of providing variety in classroom procedures.

According to the 2013 curriculum known as the school-based curriculum, in the standard of content, the students are required to have the competence or ability to communicate and create texts both in spoken and written English by the end of the study. Both firms face different problems for language learners. Writing can be said as a complicated skill that should be mastered as it requires some knowledge related to the purpose of the text, generic structure, and language features as well as the skills to organize the ideas and information

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logically by keeping the unity and coherence of the text, so the piece of writing will be easily understood by the readers (Akbar & Yulitriana, 2022). Several types of text should be learned by tenth grade in English subject, they are recount, narrative, procedural, news item, and descriptive. Many kinds of text should be mastered by the students; one of them is descriptive text. In this research, the text type will focus on descriptive text.

Writing is a complicated skill that should be mastered by students as it requires some knowledge related to the purpose of the text, generic structure, and language features as well as the skills to organize the ideas and information logically by keeping the unity and coherence of the text, so the piece of writing will be easily understood by the readers. Descriptive text is drawing everything in written form. Descriptive text is the clear description of people, places, objects, or events using appropriate details. An effective description will contain sufficient and varied elaboration of details to communicate a sense of the subject being described. Pardyono (2013) states that narrative text is a meaningful series and events written in words. The narrative text is a kind of text that exactly tells the activities or events in the past, that show problematic experiences and resolution means to amuse oftentimes meant to give a moral lesson to the readers. Details used are usually sensory and selected to describe what the writer see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. Accordingly, descriptive text is a kind of writing that consists of description characteristics and a definition of an object or something (Husna, 2013); (Hambali, 2020); (Sudana et al., 2021).

Based on the interview result with the teacher at SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The researcher found some difficulties faced by students in writing descriptive text, such as generic structure and language features because the most of students did not understand the generic structure and language feature of the text. This is in line with the statement of Kabigting (2020), that the students often feel confused to introduce their thoughts at the beginning of the paragraph. They do not know how to connect the ideas from one sentence to the others. In addition, they used tenses incorrectly, lacked vocabulary, missed capital letters, etc. The researcher is interested to analyze and focus on students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The ability in writing descriptive text is one of the objectives in teaching-learning English that has to be achieved by the 10th MIPA grade students.

METHOD

The kind of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. According to Toendan (2018:151), the research involving the collection of data to describe existing conditions is called descriptive research. The descriptive method can be used to collect the status of existing indication which is the indication according to the real situation at the time of the research. It means that the descriptive method is about describing how reality is and should be. There was no administration or control of treatment as found experimental study, instead, it aided to describe what exists and the real situation.

In this research, the researcher used two instruments, namely a written test as the main test to collect the data, and a questionnaire as supporting data. To collect the data to be analyzed, the researcher used a writing test and the test is designed as an instrument to

evaluate the students' difficulties by using the time allocation to make simple descriptive text is 90 minutes and observed and guided by the researcher. There are the following steps to collect the data: First, the researcher came to the place where the research was conducted: SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. Then, the researcher explained what to do to accomplish the test. After that, the researcher gave 90 minutes to the students to write the descriptive text. The last, the researcher collected the data from students' worksheets and students' answer sheets.

The organization of the data analysis is based on the objective of the research which is to find out about the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The data were analyzed as follows: The descriptive texts made by the students of X MIPA SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The researcher collected the data from the students' worksheets. The researcher gave a score based on the scoring rubric containing generic structure and language features in the student's worksheet based on the scoring system of writing. The researcher tabulated them based on how to describe the data from the student's worksheets and questionnaires. After the researcher checks the students writing based on the scoring rubrics. After the score is obtained, the researcher converted the total score from each aspect of students in percentage. For the students who got scores of 1 and 2 in each aspect, the researcher assumed that the students had difficulties in that aspect. The researcher put the sentences from students writing descriptive text worksheets that contain difficulties in it. In addition to writing tests, researchers also analyze the data obtained from giving questionnaires to students. Finally, the researcher summarized the study in the conclusion and recommended suggestions to find out a better way to improve the ability of the students in writing descriptive text.

RESULTS

The data was taken by using two instruments. The first was a writing test and the second test was a questionnaire. The students were given only two topics. The topic for the first test is about "person" and the topic for the second test is about "place" in writing descriptive text. The population of the research is the tenth grades students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The total of students in the tenth grade was 17 students.

The following was a description of the student's scores in writing descriptive text were scored by the researcher. The students' score is accumulated from two criteria of judgment as follows.

Table 1. Table of Students' Score

<i>Students' Code</i>	<i>First Test</i>		<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Second Test</i>		<i>Total Score</i>
	<i>GS</i>	<i>LS</i>		<i>GS</i>	<i>LF</i>	
C1	1	1	25	2	2	50
C2	2	2	50	2	2	50
C3	2	2	50	3	3	75

C4	2	2	50	4	3	87.5
C5	1	1	25	-	-	-
C6	1	1	25	3	2	62.5
C7	1	1	25	2	2	50
C8	1	1	25	3	2	62.5
C9	1	1	25	-	-	-
C10	1	1	25	-	-	-
C11	1	1	25	2	2	50
C12	2	1	37.5	3	3	75
C13	2	2	50	3	3	75
C14	2	2	50	4	3	87.5
C15	2	2	50	3	2	62.5
C16	2	2	50	2	2	50
C17	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total of Students		16			13	

GS : Generic Structure

LS : Language Feature

After the score is obtained, the researcher converted the total score from each aspect of students in percentage as follows:

Table 2. The Percentage and Total Score for Each Aspect

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Score</i>							
	<i>Test 1</i>				<i>Test 2</i>			
	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
Generic Structure (Identification and Description)	-	-	50%	50%	15.38%	38.46%	38.46%	-
Language Feature (Grammar)	-	-	43.75%	56.25%	-	38.46%	61.53%	-

For the students who get scores of 1 and 2 in each aspect, the researcher assumes that the students had difficulties in that aspect. To support the data, the researcher also employed a questionnaire as an instrument of research. In this case, the researcher gives a questionnaire to some students who get the lowest score in writing test descriptive text to know the ability, problems, and cause in writing descriptive text. There was the fifth question. The first question was about the ability of students in writing descriptive text, and the second and last were about the difficulties and caused students that they faced in writing descriptive text. As can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. The Result of the Questionnaire

No.1 Do you have difficulty understanding English language material at school?		
Answer: Yes	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons: depending on the teacher's explanation	10	62.5 %
Answer: No	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons:	6	37.5 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not really, because the explanation is easy to understand and also a bit difficult to understand. - I studied English when I was a kid. 		
No. 2 Do you face any difficulties when writing a Descriptive Text?		
Answer: Yes	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons: only when searching for a topic	8	50%
Answer: No	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons :	8	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not really, because I understand enough but I don't fully understand it yet. - Because I understand what to write 		
No. 3 Do you face any difficulties in the generic structure of the descriptive text?		
Answer: Yes	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons :	12	75%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - yes, because I can't string words together for descriptive text. - Just only match the sentence with the simple present tense. 		
Answer: No	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons: because I understand the structure of the descriptive text	4	25%

No. 4 What are the causes that affect you when writing Descriptive Text?

Answer: Yes	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons : - slow thinking - to describe another person.	6	37.5 %
Answer: No	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons: Difficulty in using the simple present tense, stringing words while remembering an object	10	62.5 %

No. 5 Do you face difficulties to use Simple Present Tense?

Answer: Yes	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons : - because I can't understand - because I don't understand what the simple present tense is.	7	43.75 %
Answer: No	Number of students	Percentage
Reasons: I have been studying it.	9	56.25 %

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher aimed to find out the students' difficulties and causes in writing descriptive text produced by participants of tenth-grade students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The researcher employed a writing test and questionnaire of the research. Then, the student was 17 students.

Indriyani (2013) studied "A Genre of the Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text by the Students of Class VIII SMPN 2 Karatasura in 2012/2013 Academic Year". The students' difficulties resulted in generic structure and language features. In the generic structure; identification did not find difficulties (0%), and description, one student did not write (100%). In the language features above, the writer can find total the difficulties of the students in writing descriptive text is 98.75%. The results of difficulties in language features include; nouns, the students can write nouns clearly (0%), tenses (simple present tense) is 5 students (9.8%), relational processes is 10 students (19.6%), figurative language, the students did not write the figurative language, composing sentences is 2 students (3.9%), the grammatical structural sentence is 6 students (11.7%), spelling is 9 students (17.6%), deleting words is 10 students (19.6%), editing sentence is 9 students (17.6%). So, the students got difficulties in arranging language features.

The results of this research have similarities according to the researchers above, namely the difficulties of students in writing descriptive texts, especially in identification and description and also in language features (grammar). The result of this research uses two instruments, the first is a writing test, and the second is a questionnaire. The objectives of

this research are to find out the difficulties faced by the students in writing descriptive text at SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. Based on the data, it was found that 100% (16 students) in the first test and 38.46% (5 students) in the second test students got the problem in a generic structure. Based on the results of the study, when students write descriptive texts, they have difficulty with the generic structure, the first problem is there is no identity and description. Incomplete identification and description prepared with few misuse of conjunctions. The second problem, students did not make a complete identification or description. Incomplete identification and description prepared with few misuse of conjunctions.

Based on the problem in language features, it was found that 100% (16 students) in the first test and 61.53% (8 students) in the second test students got the problem when they wrote the descriptive text. There were problems found in language features. The first problem, there is an error in the tenses, it should use the simple present instead of using the simple past. Second, there is an error in using the pronoun, a female name should use the pronoun she instead he. The third, the fault lies with the person who wants to describe it. It should be, if you want to describe brothers, from the identification paragraph to the description only explain about brothers, not about sisters.

The result of the questionnaire of the students showed that student's ability to write descriptive text is still low. The question of the questionnaire was made according to the theory which is stated in the previous chapter, they were generic structure and language features. The questionnaire was given to knowability, difficulties, and causes of students in writing descriptive text. Based on the result of the questionnaire some students have many problems it was found that 50% had difficulties in writing a descriptive text. From the results of the students' questionnaire, there are several causes of the existed problems they are as follows: The factor that caused the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at tenth-grade students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya are: 1) Lack of proficiency in the text production skills. It is mean the student is lack proficiency in grammar and lack of proficiency in how to arrange correct words and sentences. 2) Lack of knowledge relating to the subject content of the script to be written. It is mean that the students did not understand well about the material of the descriptive text. 3) Lack of interest in learning English. It is mean that the students are not interested in learning English at school.

To conclude, the students' difficulties in generic structure caused the students not to understand what generic structure is. Because of that, the students have difficulty with generic structure in descriptive text. After that, the students' difficulties in language features were caused by the students' lack of vocabulary, difficulties translating and did not understand tense. The students did not pay attention to sentence patterns in their writing and the grammatical use of descriptive text that they wrote was still not appropriate. The results of this study had some similarities and differences in students' difficulties in writing descriptive text in previous studies. The difficulties similarity is that students had problems with grammar, vocabulary, and simple present tense.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the data analysis stated in Chapter IV, the writer concluded that there were student problems and causes in writing descriptive text faced by eight grade students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya. The students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at tenth-grade students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya are: 1) the difficulties in generic structure. It means that the student can't make a description with the correct generic structure, and 2) The difficulties in grammar. It means that the students cannot arrange the word correctly and cannot arrange simple present tense sentences correctly.

After analyzing the data, the researcher has found that the tenth-grade students of SMA Kristen Palangka Raya in the academic year 2021/2022 had problems in writing descriptive text from three components that are generic structure and language features. From each component students still had an average value below 70% the dominant difficulties in writing descriptive text were generic structure for which the percentage results there were 100% in the first test and 38.46% and language features for which the percentage results there were 100% in the first test and 61.53% in the second test. The result of the questionnaire showed that the causes of students' problems in language features in writing descriptive text were grammatical weakness, lack of vocabulary, do not understand tense, difficulties translating, less knowledge, and less practice.

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