

STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT MTs. AL-MUJAHIDI TEMBOKREJO, JEMBER IN 2019 / 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR

Abstract

This research is based on mixed methods used to analyze students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The data obtained in the research in 8th grade MTs. Al - Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Jember with 20 students and 1 English teacher as data information about students. In this research, the problem is “what are students’ difficulties in writing descriptive text eighth grade in MTs. Al – Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember ?” and the objective of this research is to analyze the students’ difficulties in writing descriptive text. Based on the research problem and the relevant theory of this research is described as follows : Data reduction, data display and conclusion to analyze students’ difficulties in writing descriptive text at MTs. Al – Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember in 2019 – 2020 academic year. The design of this research is qualitative research. The data are collected using questionnaire and worksheet. In order to analyze the data students’ difficulties in writing descriptive text. Based on the research result, it can be concluded that students’ difficulties in writing descriptive text based on questionnaires and document analysis data, the difficulty of students writing descriptive texts is that students not sure of writing descriptive texts. And based on language features dominant difficulties is use simple present tense. It’s mean that the students difficulties in grammar. Students can’t arrange the word correctly and can’t arrange simple present tense sentence correctly.

Keywords : Students’ Difficulties ; Writing Descriptive Text

Writing is a process which is included some steps that must be considered by the students as writer such as planning, organizing, drafting, revising and editing, in order to make their writing product can be understood by the readers. (Mandel, 2011, p. 03)

Regarding the importance of this subject especially in language learning, the government has arranged it in the curriculum. It is stated that the students are expected to be able to express their ideas in written form in various kinds of text. Furthermore, based on curriculum, it is stated that the second year students

of junior high school level are expected to be able to express their ideas in written form in some kinds of text. One of them is descriptive text. Descriptive text refers to a text which focuses on describing particular things. Items or individuals and it specifies some their characteristics (Emilia and Christie, 2013, p. 36).

Based on the previous explanation about research that had been done, this proves that this research has differences and similarities with the previous research. The thing that make this research difference from previous

researcher is that the research of Muhammad Hanafi (2018) focus on students' difficulties in writing descriptive text for the eleventh grade. But in this research, the researcher focus on students' difficulties in writing descriptive text for eight grade. As for the similarities of this research with the previous research that the researcher both focus on the students' writing, especially in descriptive text.

Students' Difficulties

The students difficulty is the students can't describe things, places, and a person in detail because they do not have any ideas when they are asked to describe. Students are not interested in learning writing. (Novita, 2017).

Difficulty are a problem and the fact of not being easy to do or understand. For example : we finished the job, but only with great difficulty. (Cambridge Dictionary).

Difficulty are a thing or situation that causes problems and the effort that something involves. For example : They discussed the difficulty of studying abroad. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is give an account of how something works or reasons for some phenomenon. In other words descriptive text is a text which tell and describe people or a think a like. (Kasini and Pusparaini, 2019). Langan (2012, p. 276) explains descriptive text that, to describe about something. Langan (2011, p. 189), the main purpose of a descriptive text is to make readers see or hear, taste, smell, or feel what the author wrote.

Kemendikbud (2013) stated that descriptive text is included in the English curriculum in Indonesia's

education system. It is essential for teachers to know the way to compose the text ideally since the teacher is responsible for delivering the subject in the classroom and students are demanded to master it.

Example of descriptive text :

My Cat

I have a cat in my house, the cat is male. I like call him "Papay". He is an adorable cat. My cat is cute. His body is fat. He has black and white fur.

I really love to cuddle him because his fur feels soft. Every morning my mother gives a fish, sometime he usually scratches out my arm when I play with him. He is an active animal. He likes to run around the house. He likes to chase everyone in my house.

"Papay" often goes out to find for food at night. And sometimes he brings a mouse on his mouth. Then he eats the mouse in the back of my house for himself.

(www.sekolahbahasainggris.com)

Language Features

According to Sudarti and Grace, 2014 there are several language future use in descriptive text, they are : using simple present, simple present tense is the activity happen in daily life, and the habitual activity. However, sometimes it uses past tense if the thing to be described doesn't exist anymore. Use linking verb, use

adjective and compound adjectives. And use of degree comparison.

And

1. Simple Present Tense

Based on Sylvia Chalker (2014, p. 02), simple present tense is identical to the base of verb (except in the case of “be”) and add –s for the third person singular (also called present (tense) simply. If the subject is a third person singular such as he, she, and it. It must add –s or –es. For example : she speaks three languages.

The Pattern of Simple Present Tense

Simple present tense uses the simple verb and is added by –s or –es if the subject the third singular person.

The pattern of affirmative statement of this tense is

S (He/She/It) + V –s or – es

And

S (I, You, They, We) + V + O

For Example :

1. He / She plays badminton every morning.
2. Your sister teaches English in school every Saturday.

The pattern of affirmative statement with be, use this formula

S + be (am, is, are) + adjective/ adverb of place/noun

The pattern of negative statement of this tense is :

S (I, You, They, We) + do not + V + O

S (He, She, It) + does not + V + O

For example :

1. He doesn't teach English very well.
2. They don't know about you.

2. Compound Adjectives

A compound adjective is an adjective that contains two or more words. In general we put a hyphen between two or more words (before a noun) when we want them to act as a single idea (adjective) that describes something.

This compound adjective itself has a pattern in its use in sentences called compound adjective patterns. Below are some common patterns in their use in sentences.

Number	+	(singular)
Five-minute, three-hour,		
Adjective	+	Noun
Last-minute, full-length,		
Adjective	+	Present
Good-looking, long-lasting,		
Noun	+	Present
Mouth-watering, record-		
Noun	+	Adjective
World-famous, ice-cold		

3. Degree Comparison

According to Kardimin (2011, p. 143) there are 3 kinds of Comparison Degrees. They are Positive, Comparative, and Superlative.

1. Positive Degrees

Positive degree is used to compare two things or person that has same shape, same character, etc.

Example :

- a. This book is as good as that book
- b. Susan is as beautiful as Jane

2. Comparative Degrees

Comparative degree is used to compare two things or person are different.

Example :

- a. I am older than you
- b. Cahyo is cleverer than Bella

3. Superlative Degrees

Superlative degree is used to compare three things or more.

Example :

- a. Cahyo is the cleverest boy in the class
- b. This is the oldest cinema in Jember

Students Difficulties in Writing

Descriptive Text

There are still many students who are not able to write a descriptive text. Muhammed (in Nasser, 2018) state that the studets may face many writing difficulties and problems at different stages of their learning.

In writing a descriptive text, the eighth grade students in MTs. Al-Mujahidi Tembokrejo sometimes found some difficulties although they have been guided by their teacher to write it. There were some difficulties that students face during writing the descriptive paragraph. First problems is in developing the ideas. Some students wrote many main ideas in one paragraph, the idea of the paragraph was still ambiguous. Sometimes, it is also

found that some paragraphs were written in one sentence only. The idea of the paragprah was still not clear.

Second, the problem in organizing the ideas to write a descriptive text. A paragraph needs more than a unified point. It needs a reasonable organization or sequence. The students have to organize their ideas into good paragraphs, the students have to make their writing readable. To write a descriptive paragraph, the students can organize their ideas by identifying the topic and give the descriptions about the topic.

Third, the students found difficulties grammar. Grammar difficulties will influence certain patterns of how words are put together to form the correct sentences. It will make the ideas to develop well. Fourth, when students proceed writing something, many problems could be found. Some students are lack of vocabularies 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 Fifth difficulty was students' related with spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Based on this phenomenon, it can be concluded that students made some mistakes in mechanic aspect. Spelling, punctuation and capitalization difficulties can also affect the meaning of the sentences in a paragraph; they made the reader confused on the contiguity meaning of the sentences even of the paragraph.

To sum up, there are many difficulties in writing descriptive text, but this

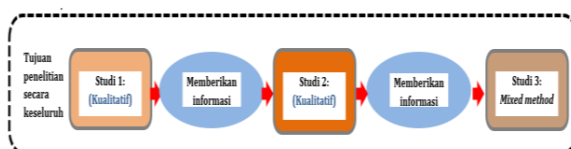
research focus on the use of language feature such as simple present tense, adjective, and linking verbs.

METHOD

In this thesis, kind of research use is Mixed Method. Mixed-methods research (MMR) is a research methodology that incorporates multiple methods to address research questions in an appropriate and principled manner (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), which involves collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting both qualitative and quantitative data. As stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), a mixed-methods research design is a research design that has its own philosophical assumptions and methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it includes philosophical assumptions to provide directions for the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources in a single study. A mixed-methods design can integrate and synergize multiple data sources which can assist to study complex problems (Poth & Munce, 2020).

This research is mixed methods design, because incorporates techniques from qualitative and quantitative methods to answer research question. The design of mixed method research is illustrated in the following figure 3.2.

Figure 1. Multiphase Design (Creswell, 2012)



Depending on the source, this research can classify as primary data or secondary data. First is primary data.

These are the data that are *collected for the first time* by an investigator for a specific purpose. Primary data are 'pure' in the sense that no statistical operations have been performed on them and they are original. The primary data in this research were student questionnaires and information provided by English teachers at MTs Al-Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. English teachers provide information about students' abilities at school. And the questionnaire given to students aims to determine students' general knowledge about descriptive texts and students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts. Second is secondary data. The data that are sourced from someplace that has originally collected it. This means that this kind of data has already been collected by some researchers or investigators in the past and is available either in published or unpublished form. This information is impure as statistical operations may have been performed on them already. Secondary data in this study are school profiles, results of interviews with English teachers and student worksheets. Interviews conducted on English teachers aimed to help researchers make tests on student worksheets. The teacher provides information about the student learning process, the books used by students and the English material that has been conveyed to students during learning. After conducting interviews with the English teacher, the researcher made a test that would be given to students to find out what difficulties students experienced in writing descriptive text.

The test was conducted at MTs. Al-Mujahidi, Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. The total respondents of the students of grade eight was 20 students. They were asked to write descriptive text in a piece of paper. The researcher

explained about the rules of writing a descriptive text and also suggests them notice the language feature used in writing descriptive text. However, the researcher only focuses on 3 language features, namely simple present tense, compound adjectives and linking verbs.

INSTRUMENT OF THE RESEARCH

The instruments of the research are questionnaire, interview and students worksheet. First is questionnaires. Questionnaires are doubtless one of the primary sources of obtaining data in any research endeavor. However, the critical point is that when designing a questionnaire, the researcher should ensure that it is “valid, reliable and unambiguous” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 438). In this research, the researcher use a closed questionnaire, which is a questionnaire that is presented in such a way that the respondent only needs to put a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column or place. The target who will be given a questionnaire is eighth grade students at MTs. Al – Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. This questionnaire technique is to find out students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. Second is interview. Type of data to be collected in the mixed method design is the interview. Flick (2006, p. 160) state the purpose of interview “is to reveal existing knowledge in a way that can be expressed in the form of answers and so become accessible to interpretation.”

In this research, interviews were used to make student worksheets about students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. Interviews were conducted with the 8th grade English teacher. The last is students worksheet. Students worksheet are used to determine students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. Students worksheet are

taken from 8th grade students of MTs. Al-Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis is the process of finding and systematically organize data obtained from the results of interviews, field notes, and documentation by organizing data to in category, describe into units, synthesizing, compiling into the pattern, choose which one important and to be studied, and make conclusions so easy understood by oneself and the others (Sugiyono, 2011).

The process of data analysis fill into three major phases following the framework of qualitative analysis develops by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) : data reduction, data display and conclusion. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written - up field notes or transcriptions.

Data reduction, after questionnaire and students' worksheet is collected. The researcher chooses questionnaire and students' worksheet that show the students have difficulties in writing descriptive text, then it is analysed by the researcher. Then the researcher chooses some students that have difficulties in writing descriptive text, to find out the factors that cause the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

Data display, in this step researcher analysed the students' worksheet about descriptive text, to find out what are the difficulties that students have. The researcher analysed data based on the language feature use in writing descriptive text. Conclusion drawing or verification, the researcher concludes the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

FINDING OF THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Data collecting activity was conducted on 24th, July 2020. The sample of this research is 8th grade students of MTs. Al-Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Jember. There are 20 students in the class and they are divided into 2 classes, namely class A and class B. The questionnaire and student worksheets are given through the 8th grade English teacher and after that the teacher gives it directly to the class leader to be given to their classmates. Collecting data from questionnaire, an interview with an 8th grade English teacher and student worksheets.

1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires in this research were used to determine students' general knowledge about descriptive texts and students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts. The questionnaire used a closed type of questionnaire, students only give a mark (✓) in the column provided. Questionnaires were given to 8th grade MTs students. Al-Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. Which consists of 10 questions about general knowledge of descriptive text and difficulties in writing descriptive text.

The Questionnaire Result

No	Question	Choices of Answer	Number of Answer
1.	Lack of interest in learning English ?	Yes	15
		No	05

2.	Lack of vocabulary in writing descriptive text	Yes	12
		No	08
3.	Difficulty to compose sentences in writing descriptive text	Yes	12
		No	08
4.	Lack of practice to write descriptive text	Yes	15
		No	05
5.	Students are lack of background knowledge about descriptive text	Yes	10
		No	10
6.	Students do not know about generic structure of descriptive text	Yes	10
		No	10
7.	Not sure to write descriptive text	Yes	18
		No	02
8.	Difficulty in determining ideas when writing descriptive text	Yes	13
		No	07
9.	Difficulty combining words when writing descriptive text	Yes	11
		No	09

10. Lack of support from the surrounding environment to learn English	Yes	13
	No	07

From the data above, the results of giving questionnaires from 20 students, there are 18 students who are less sure of writing descriptive text. Another difficulty experienced by students in writing descriptive texts.

1. The difficulty in determining ideas when writing descriptive texts.
2. The difficulty of compose sentences in writing descriptive text.
3. The third is the lack of vocabulary in writing descriptive text.
4. Combines words when writing descriptive text. The difficulty of students based on the results of the questionnaire was caused by several factors, namely the first lack of interest in students learning English. The second lack of practice to write descriptive text. The last, the lack of support from the surrounding environment to learn English. The general knowledge of students about descriptive text and generic structure has the same number in the results of the questionnaire. Which means, students know about descriptive text but students have some difficulties that have been explained previously.

2. Interview

The interview with the 8th grade English teacher was conducted on July 20th, 2020. The interview

was conducted before making student worksheets. Several questions were given to the teacher regarding the students' abilities at school, the student's learning process, the media used during learning and the level of students' difficulty in learning English. (attached to the appendix).

3. Students' Worksheet

Student worksheets are used to analyze students' difficulties when writing descriptive texts based on language features. With the theme "see anything around you", students are given the freedom to describe something that is around them. To make a descriptive text, students are given some instructions. That are, choosing an object that interests them and students create a descriptive text with a minimum of 100 words. (See appendix V).

The results of the analysis are based on student worksheets, students describe easily according to the given theme. Some students describe tourist attractions such as Payangan beach, pets and some describe their parents (father or mother). From the student worksheets, students' difficulties based on language features such as the use of simple present tense, compound adjectives and linking verbs are mostly in the use of simple present tense. It can be seen from the results of the description of students who cannot arrange words and simple present tense correctly.

After analyzing the data, there were some difficulties of students in writing descriptive text. Difficulty of 8th grade students of MTs. Al - Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember can be seen from the

questionnaires and student worksheets given. Researchers used mixed methods in analyzing the research. Mixed method is a method of combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

Whereas, there are thesis that researcher used as review of related findings. This research was to describe by Hidayatul Pitri with the title "The Difficulties of Writing Descriptive Paragraph Faced By The Eight Grade Students at SMPN 14 Kota Jambi". She concluded that the students of SMPN 14 Kota Jambi still have many difficulties in writing descriptive paragraph. The second, this research related to Dwi Supatmi with the title "Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text at The Second Year of SMPN 2 Kartasura in 2012 / 2013 Academic Year". He concluded that difficulties of SMPN 2 Kartasura in 2012 / 2013 Academic Year in writing recount text is still difficult in spelling.

Based on the instruments of research are questionnaires, an interview with an 8th grade English teacher and students worksheet.

1. Questionnaire

Based on the questionnaire, there were some difficulties of students in writing descriptive text. First was the difficulty in determining ideas when writing descriptive texts. The difficulty of students determining ideas, researchers provide themes and instructions when writing descriptive texts. Aims to make it easier for students to write descriptive text. Second, the difficulty of compose sentences in writing descriptive text. The third is the lack of vocabulary in writing descriptive text. And the last one combines words when writing

descriptive text. The difficulty of students based on the results of the questionnaire was caused by several factors, namely the first lack of interest in students learning English. The second lack of practice to write descriptive text. The last, the lack of support from the surrounding environment to learn English. The general knowledge of students about descriptive text and generic structure has the same number in the results of the questionnaire. Which means, students know about descriptive text but students have some difficulties that have been explained previously.

2. Interview

The interview conducted by the researcher was an interview with an English teacher in eighth grade. Aims to get information about students and help the process of making student worksheets. In writing descriptive text, the teacher realizes that there are usual obstacles faced by students. Student still find it difficult to express ideas have in the form of words or compose into sentences. The teacher feels difficulty opening students' minds to pour existing ideas in the minds of students into the form word or sentence. This causes the lack of words arranged into an descriptive tex. The results of the interviews, the first is that student learning is still using the online system. And students use thematic books. where there are only practice questions and instructions.

3. Students' Worksheet

Based on the language features in writing descriptive text, students' difficulties that often occur are when using the simple present tense, compound adjective, and linking verbs.

1. Simple Present Tense

Simple present tense is used to state fact, activity or repetitive activities. In a way, this tense is the easiest one if it compared to other tense. Positive sentence in simple present tense is using verb 1 or to be (is/am/are). If the subject is a single third person (he, she, and it), verb 1 must be added by suffix *-s / -es*.

Some common errors made by the students in using simple present tense can be seen below :

1. "Rama like eat a plate of noodle and drink a cup of tea".
2. "He like play game, usually my brother play game with me".
3. "My mother like a plate of fried rice".

The correct sentence should be as follow ;

1. "Rama likes eating a plate of noodle and drink a cup of tea".
2. "He likes to play games, usually my brother plays game with me".
3. "My mother likes a plate of fried rice".

From the data above, researcher found that the students had difficulties use simple present tense. The students did not add *-s* or *-es* after verb 1 as in the formula. The formula is *S + Verb 1 (+s/es) + Object / Adverb. .*

2. Compound Adjective

A compound adjective is a combination of two or more words that functions to describe a noun as a single adjective. In compound adjective students difficult to combine the right words and forget to write the hyphen in the word combination. Some common errors made by the students in using compound adjective can be seen below :

1. "My mother has to work **part time**. My mother does the housework and also helps me to study". From one example, students describe the work of his mother. And the researcher found that the students forgot to hyphen the word combination "**part-time**".
2. "After a vacation with my family I **returned** home". From the example, the researcher found that students had difficulty combining the right word with the previous word. so, from the correct example is to use the word comeback does not return. So, from the correct example is to use the word "**comeback**" does not "**return**".

3. Linking Verb

Linking verb link the subject with the rest of the sentence. Linking verb do not have object. The most common linking verbs are be, become, look, feel, seem, smell, sound, and taste. Hogue, Ann. (2008).

1. "I fel happy playing football with my friends". From the data, students want to say he feel happy playing football with his friends. And the researchers found the writing of the word fel was wrong. The word feel is one of the most commonly used linking verbs
2. "Mochi look confuse when my mother give new food". From the data, the researcher found that students had difficulty using formulas. The correct sentence is "Mochi looks confused when my mother give new food".
3. "He a hero in family". From the data, the researcher found that

the students had difficulty in using formulas from linking verbs. The formula of the data is “be + a noun”. The correct sentence is “He is a hero in family”.

CONCLUSION

As already mentioned in the first chapter, the aim of this research is to analyze students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at MTs. Al – Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. Based on the questionnaires, interviews and students worksheet, it can be concluded that the students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts are:

1. Students are not sure about writing descriptive text
2. Students are less interested in learning English
3. Lack of vocabulary makes it difficult for students to compose descriptive texts
4. By using a theme, it makes it easier for students to write descriptive text
5. Language Features : In general, most of students do not know the basic structure of simple present tense itself. So, it affects error structure of sentences which is written by students. In specifically, most of them have omission of be, wrong use of singular and plural be, omission of suffix –s/-es and wrong use of verb. Furthermore, the students often use ordinary verb “have” to third singular subject because they do not know how to differentiate between singular and plural subjects in writing a sentence. After that, many students also often make mistakes in using V1

and V1+s/es. Finally, they often put adjective after noun / object in writing sentence

SUGGESTION

According the result of the research, the researcher recommended some suggestions :

1. For the 8th grade English teacher at MTs. Al - Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. First, the English teachers are suggested to explain the language features of descriptive text more deeply and clearly in order to get good results for the students. Second, the English teachers are suggested to give more practices to the students in writing especially when they are writing descriptive text by using interesting strategy related to the students' ability in developing their ideas. Like giving a theme to make it easier for students to write descriptive text.
2. For 8th graders in MTs. Al - Mujahidi Tembokrejo, Gumukmas, Jember. First, students must be confident in their writing skills, especially writing descriptive text. Second, it takes a lot of writing practice to develop ideas. Third, if students lack vocabulary, they should read more English books or memorize 1 day 5 vocabulary words.
3. For the next researcher. The result of this research can be used as additional reference for the research. They are able to conduct other research relating to the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

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