

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several aspects, including the background of the research, the problem of the research, the objectives of the research, the operational definition, the significance of the research, and the scope of the research.

1.1 Background of The Research

Writing proficiency represents one of the four fundamental language skills essential for effective communication and academic achievement in English language learning. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, writing is consistently identified as the most challenging skill for students to master, particularly among vocational high school students who typically receive practice-oriented education with limited exposure to formal English writing instruction (Putri et al., 2022). The complexity of writing stems from its requirement to simultaneously manage multiple linguistic components including vocabulary selection, grammatical accuracy, coherent organization, and appropriate register usage.

Among various text genres taught in EFL curricula, descriptive writing is frequently introduced at the tenth-grade level, serving as a foundational skill for students to develop their ability to describe people, objects, or places using appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. Descriptive texts play a crucial role in developing students' observational skills and their capacity to

translate visual or conceptual information into coherent written form. However, mastering descriptive writing requires students to demonstrate proficiency in specific linguistic features, including the use of present tense, adjectives, adverbs, and sensory details to create vivid and accurate descriptions.

Despite its fundamental importance in language learning curricula, substantial research indicates that EFL students encounter significant difficulties when composing descriptive texts. These challenges manifest in multiple forms, including persistent grammatical errors, inconsistent sentence structures, limited vocabulary usage, and poor textual cohesion (Chairunnisa, 2021; Siregar et al., 2022). Students frequently resort to direct translation from their native language, resulting in unnatural phrasing and recurring linguistic mistakes that impede both clarity and academic development (Barus et al., 2024). Such difficulties not only affect the quality of their written output but also influence their overall confidence and motivation in English language learning.

Current research demonstrates that vocational students face unique challenges in articulating their thoughts in English due to varying levels of language exposure and educational backgrounds. Unlike academic-track students who typically receive more extensive English instruction, vocational students often have limited contact with formal English writing, making descriptive text composition particularly challenging (Jimenez, 2024). The perception of writing as an intimidating task further compounds these difficulties, consequently diminishing students' motivation and confidence in their writing abilities (Putri et al., 2022).

Several factors contribute to these writing difficulties. First, inadequate vocabulary mastery serves as a primary obstacle, where students struggle to select appropriate words to convey their intended meanings effectively (Kusuma, 2018). This limitation particularly affects descriptive writing, which requires a rich repertoire of adjectives, adverbs, and sensory language to create compelling descriptions. Second, insufficient understanding of descriptive text structure and effective sentence construction techniques compounds these difficulties (Firdaus, 2020). Students often lack awareness of the generic structure of descriptive texts, including identification and description phases, leading to poorly organized and incoherent writing.

Third, the learning environment significantly influences student writing performance. Many students lack adequate writing practice opportunities and receive insufficient pedagogical support, leading to insecurity in expressing ideas through writing and subsequent avoidance of writing tasks (Sari & Pratama, 2019; Andayani, 2021). The absence of constructive feedback from educators further exacerbates these issues, creating a cycle of poor writing performance where students fail to identify and correct their recurring mistakes.

Understanding the specific difficulties faced by students in writing descriptive texts is vital for educators to develop targeted interventions that enhance writing skills. By identifying common error patterns and their underlying causes, teachers can design more effective instructional strategies and provide appropriate scaffolding to support student learning. Furthermore, this understanding can inform curriculum development and resource allocation

decisions to better address the specific needs of vocational students in EFL contexts.

The context of Indonesian vocational education presents additional considerations. Vocational high schools in Indonesia typically emphasize practical skills development, often resulting in reduced emphasis on language arts instruction. Students in these settings may have diverse educational backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency, making it crucial to understand their specific challenges in academic writing tasks. SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari, as a vocational institution, represents a typical context where students face these multifaceted challenges in developing their English writing skills.

Given these considerations, systematic investigation into the types of errors made by vocational students in descriptive writing is essential. Such research can provide empirical evidence to support evidence-based pedagogical approaches and contribute to the broader understanding of EFL writing development in vocational education contexts. This investigation focuses on tenth-grade students at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari, examining their writing difficulties in descriptive texts to identify common error patterns and underlying causes that can inform future instructional improvements.

1.2 Problem of the Research

Based on the background of the research, the problems of the research are as follow: What are the types of errors made by students in writing descriptive texts of tenth grade of SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the problem statement above, the objectives of this study are as follows: To identify and analyze the common errors made by tenth-grade students of SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari in writing descriptive texts and to determine the underlying causes of these errors.

1.4 Operational Definition

1) Error

An error in general is a mistake. Specifically in this study, errors in writing activities refer to things that are written to be inaccurate so as not to produce meaning in line with what is expected. Indicators of errors in writing include Spelling Errors, Grammar Errors, Incorrect Use of Punctuation, Sentence Structure Errors.

2) Writing

Writing is an activity of expressing ideas and information in written form by organizing sentences in a structured way.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is important because writing is a productive skill that is essential for academic achievement, yet it is often the most difficult skill for students to master particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) context such as in Indonesian vocational high schools. Many students are required to write descriptive texts, but they often do so with frequent and persistent errors that affect both the clarity and effectiveness of their communication.

By identifying the types and causes of these errors, this research offers valuable insights into the specific linguistic challenges students face. These insights are significant for several reasons:

1) The teacher

The study's findings can be used as a reference for future English teaching strategies, particularly in the composition of descriptive texts.

2) The students

Students can discover errors they have made from the results of study, which might drive them to improve their writing skills, especially in descriptive language.

3) Another researcher

The results of this study can be used as a reference to undertake various research designs or methodologies.

1.6 The Scope of The Research

This research was conducted at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari, which chose tenth-grade students as research objects to analyze what common mistakes they often made in writing descriptive text. Based on the problem identification, this study will focus on finding common generic structure errors that students usually make when writing descriptive texts. The researcher also wants to know the causes of generic structure errors made by students.