



**EXPLORING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN
WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

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JULY, 2021



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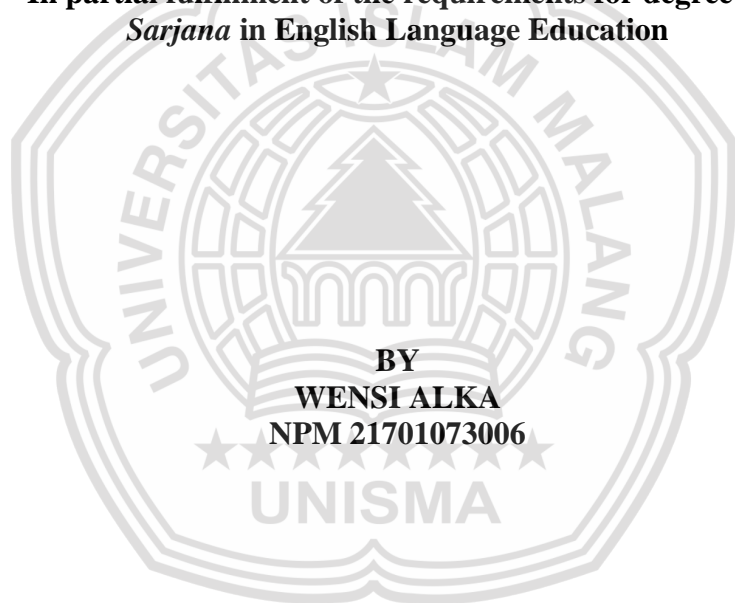
SKRIPSI

Presented to

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education

University of Islam Malang

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of
Sarjana in English Language Education**



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ABSTRACT

Alka, Wensi. 2021. Exploring Undergraduate Students' Difficulties in Writing a Descriptive Text. Skripsi, English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Islam Malang. Advisor I: Eko Suhartoyo, S.Pd., M.Pd; Advisor II: Atik Umamah, S.Pd., M.Pd.

Key words: students' difficulties, descriptive text, cause

Writing is an ability to compose or communicate intended implications, ideas, and purposes to the reader by using a clear, coherent, and well-organized paper through the process of thinking, studying, developing organizing, producing, revising, and editing the product. One of the types of writing is descriptive text. Then, students frequently faced difficulties in writing a descriptive text. Therefore, this research aimed to know the students' best and worse aspect, the students' difficulties in writing a descriptive text and the factors that caused the difficulties.

This research applied descriptive qualitative research design. The participants were 26 English students of class IIC of the English Education Department. However, only five students represented the participants to be interviewed. The instrument were students' writing product and interview. Researcher analyzed students' writing product. After that, students were interviewed with seven interview questions. Then, the results of interview were interpreted.

The results showed that students performed better in organization aspect. Then, mechanic aspect was the worse aspect that students had based on the result of analyzing students text. Students did not found big difficulties in content and organization aspect. Most students encountered difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics aspects. Whereas, the causes of students' difficulties were students' background and teaching technique. Students were lack of motivation, were less interested, and did not understand the descriptive text well. Then, students revealed that the teaching and learning process was boring since the teacher did not provide the material creatively.

In conclusion, undergraduate students still had the difficulties and it was caused by some factors. Some suggestions were provided for students to improve their knowledge and motivation in learning, especially in writing descriptive text. For teachers, they should create more interactive media for learning. Furthermore, for the next researchers, they should analyze the strategies to overcome the students' difficulties in writing a descriptive text, and then they should conduct the research with a larger number of participants.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented some topics; the background of the study, the formulation of research problems, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Study

Writing is not only about skill, but it is more than how the writer can drive and develop their thinking and ideas, and motivate themselves to communicate with other people through writing (Kane, 2002). Moreover, Harmer (2007) also stated that writing makes our thoughts visible, changing our thinking into print, and allowing us to evolve and boost our ideas. Writing is one of the essential skills in learning English for learners of foreign languages. Weigle (2002) also mentioned that writing skill is extremely important for the global community's academic background, business, and personal relationships. Writing can be an appropriate aspect for the growth of academic language skills in the future, as learners have to explore advanced lexical or syntactic expressions in their written work.

In the language learning process, writing is the most difficult skill that needs to be mastered. It is like what Al Fadda (2012) found out that differentiating between written and spoken words and phrases, reviewing grammar including subject-verb agreement, and joining sentences together to make a coherent paragraph are the main challenges English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students encountered. According to

Ruhama and Purwaningsih (2018), it cannot be denied that writing is a complex skill because the students need to comprehend spelling, grammar, sentence, vocabulary, and structure as the units in writing. Not only that, but students also need to know about the English writing structure and the choice of words used in writing. The writing organization must be clear and requires many aspects, such as content, organization, vocabulary usage, grammar use, and mechanical consideration, such as spelling and punctuation (Wahyuni, 2017).

Students need to understand the process of writing. It is because to create good writing, students must master the process of writing. Besides, Nuraeni and Fadhy (2016) said that writing requires a creative process, students should be imaginative to get the various ideas, be able to generate the ideas, understand the ways to create perfect final writing. The processes are planning, drafting, editing, and final version (Harmer, 2004).

According to the Higher Education Curriculum that is applied in the University of Islam Malang, there are several types of texts that are learned in writing courses such as narrative text, descriptive text, report text, contrast and comparison text, argumentative essay, and opinion essay. However, in this research, the researcher focused on recognizing the students' difficulties in a descriptive text.

Students frequently have many difficulties in writing. According to Byrne (1988), difficulties in writing are divided into three aspects. The first is a linguistic difficulty which included grammar, language use and choice of sentences, and also vocabulary. The second was a psychological difficulty, which focuses on the writer's difficulties because they did not interact and get feedback from the proofreader when

they were writing. The last is a cognitive difficulty where students got difficulty in composing ideas.

Regarding the difficulties in writing descriptive text, some studies have been carried out. Firstly, Wardani (2018) conducted research that involved tenth-grade students of SMK N 1 Surakarta. She found that some of the students still did not understand the generic structure of the descriptive text. The teacher might have to explain the generic structure of a text in detail before asking them to write a text. Then, the students did not have a lot of vocabulary even though the teacher let them use a dictionary; they still made a mistake in writing the right spelling. Lastly, the researcher also found that the language features were the difficulties that are as crucial as spelling. The teacher might give an additional lesson about the language features so that the students would not feel confused about it.

Another research also was conducted by Afifuddin (2016). This study was carried out with 25 college students as participants. The result showed that the errors the students' made most were influenced by their mother tongue, and this was the interlanguage transfer. This led to students' ignorance in mastering the rules of the structure of English for the reason. They failed in using the correct tenses, the correct forms of verbs, the correct word order and the use of articles, and they were confused in creating good sentences in English.

Ratnaningsih and Azizah (2019) also carried out research focused on students' errors in writing descriptive text. Thirty students of vocational high school became the participants. The research found that the eleventh-grade students' of SMKN 10 Jakarta did the highest errors in capitalization with 60 errors (14.67%) and the lowest

typical error was run-on sentences (0.73%). The highest typical error happened because the students did not have great concern in using capitalization in the correct usage of writing English text.

Based on some previous studies above, most students have linguistic difficulty since they have limited vocabulary, make errors in spelling and capitalization, and cannot use the tenses, forms of verbs, and articles correctly. The first previous study above did not explain the cause of the students' difficulties, and then the second and third studies involved high school students as the participants. Therefore, this study is intended to find out the difficulties of students writing descriptive text by examining undergraduate students' text since some previous studies do not carry out the research with undergraduate students as the participants. Not only that, but this research also discussed the factors that caused students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher was interested to carry out this study to know the difficulties in writing descriptive text faced by undergraduate students and the factors which might be the causes of the difficulties.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the discussion above, the problems of this study are formulated as follows.

1. Which aspect of writing do English students perform better or worse in writing a descriptive text?
2. What are the difficulties faced by English students of the University of Islam Malang in writing a descriptive text?

3. What factors caused the difficulties faced by English students of the University of Islam Malang in writing a descriptive text?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study has some purposes as follows.

1. To know the better or worse aspect of writing that students perform in writing a descriptive text
2. To describe the difficulties faced by English students of the University of Islam Malang in writing a descriptive text
3. To know the factors that caused the difficulties faced by English students of the University of Islam Malang in writing a descriptive text

1.4 Significance of the Study

The researcher expected the result of this study would give beneficial for students, teacher, and the next researchers. Thus, the researcher is detailing the significance of the study below:

- a. The students

In writing a descriptive text, students can know their difficulties in writing descriptive text specifically. Then, by knowing the causes of students' difficulties in writing descriptive text, they will have the possibility to write better.

- b. The teacher

The teacher can understand students' difficulties when they are writing descriptive text and the causes of it, so teachers can help the students and find ways to solve the difficulties they face.

c. The future researchers

This research can be used as an additional reference for future research with similar focus studies. Besides, they can carry out the next research to find the appropriate way of solving students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are several kinds of writing text, such as narrative text, recount text, procedure text, etc. The scope of this research explains the difficulties of students writing a descriptive text relating to some aspects. The aspects were content, organization, grammar, vocabulary usage, and mechanics. In this study, the limitation was that this study did not explore the way to overcome the difficulties of students writing descriptive text. Moreover, this research only discussed the students' difficulties and the causes of students' difficulties.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding and certainly to the readers, the researcher defines the definition of terms of this study as follows:

1.6.1 Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of the materials taught in the writing II course at the University of Islam Malang. Students are taught how to create a descriptive text. At the first meeting, students will be provided with the material about descriptive text and its structure. After that, they are supposed to write a descriptive text with some topics that are provided by the lecture. In the next meeting, the students were required

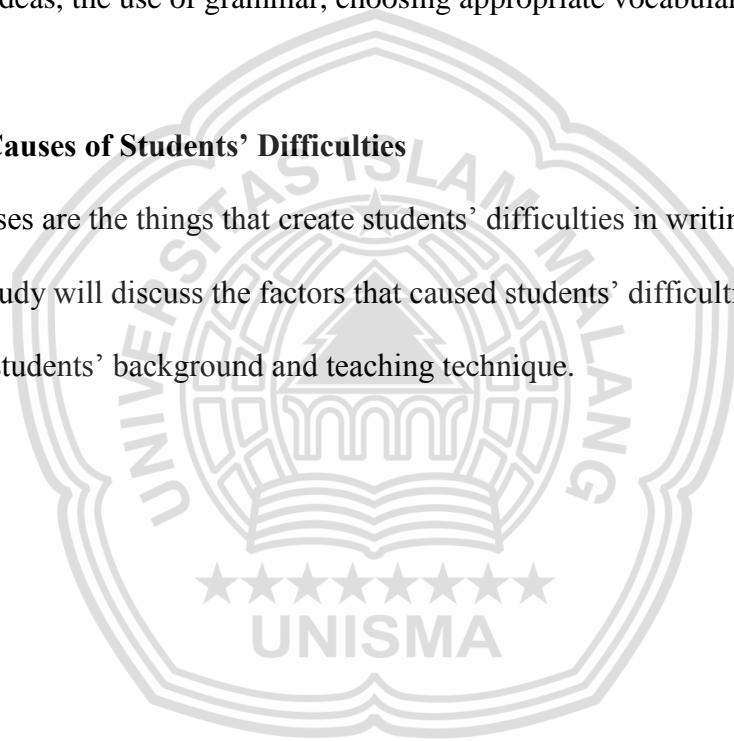
to consult their writing. Moreover, if there were mistakes in their writing, they would revise it until it was better. Lastly, students should submit their writing.

1.6.2 Students' Difficulties in Writing a Descriptive Text

In this study, students' difficulties are the challenges faced by the students in writing descriptive text at the English department of Universities Islam Malang who are taking a writing II course. Students frequently get difficulties in reaching and generating ideas, the use of grammar, choosing appropriate vocabulary, and the use of mechanic.

1.6.3 The Causes of Students' Difficulties

Causes are the things that create students' difficulties in writing a descriptive text. This study will discuss the factors that caused students' difficulties. Those factors are students' background and teaching technique.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter discussed about conclusion and suggestion based on the findings and the discussion in the previous chapter.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the research at class IIC English Education Department of UNISMA, it can be concluded that students' best aspect of writing was organization aspect, and their worse aspect was mechanics. Then, most of them did not find any big difficulties in content and organization aspects, but they frequently faced the difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic aspects. Lastly, students difficulties in writing a descriptive text were caused by their background and teaching technique.

5.2 Suggestions

The following suggestions are recommended for students, teacher, and the next researchers.

5.2.1 For Students

There are several suggestions for students. Firstly, students should learn more about writing, especially the steps of writing. Then, students have to improve their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The third is students are highly recommended to read more so that they will have more ideas to be written. Lastly,

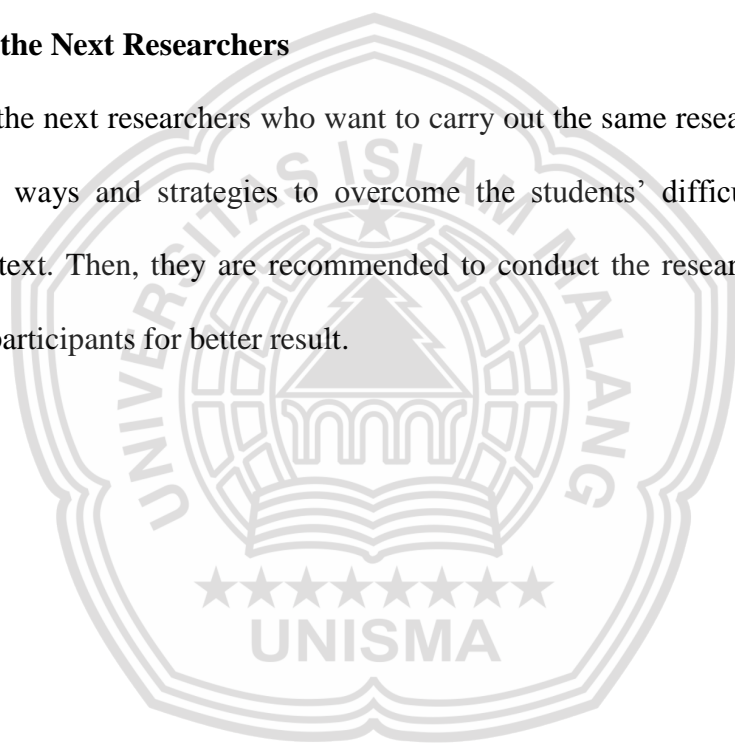
students should focus and pay more attention when the teaching and learning process is ongoing.

5.2.2 For Teacher

The teacher should be more creative in learning to attract students' interest in learning, and then the teacher has to provide the appropriate media to help the students in understanding the material.

5.2.3 For the Next Researchers

For the next researchers who want to carry out the same research, they should analyze the ways and strategies to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. Then, they are recommended to conduct the research with a larger number of participants for better result.



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