Exploring Student Challenges in Learning Writing Descriptive Text : A Case Study Vocational School in Bekasi

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A B S T R A C T

Writing is a fundamental language skill that plays a crucial role in academic and professional success. Descriptive writing, in particular, requires students to vividly portray ideas, experiences, or concepts using words. The purpose of this study is to provide educators and policy makers with valuable insights into targeted interventions to help students overcome barriers and achieve proficiency with writing descriptive. The use of a purposive sampling method ensures targeted selection of participants, taking into account factors such as program specialization. This is achieved by ensuring comprehensive representation of the student population, through a strategic selection of participants who will offer a variety of insights. n conclusion, The teacher uses the "picture to picture" method, where students are asked to observe the picture and its description. Some students who feel confused by the picture to picture method, students find it more difficult to observe and express the characteristics of quiet people, lack of confidence in writing descriptions, limited mastery of English vocabulary and grammar. This causes students to lack confidence in writing descriptions using grammatically correct English.

1. Introduction

Writing is a fundamental language skill that plays a crucial role in academic and professional success. Descriptive writing, in particular, requires students to vividly portray ideas, experiences, or concepts using words. In the context of a The research setting the development of writing skills is essential for students as it directly correlates with their future workplace communication. While vocational education emphasizes practical skills, the ability to articulate ideas through writing remains a valuable asset. Understanding the unique challenges students face in improving their descriptive writing skills is vital for educators to tailor effective instructional methods. Exploring the student perspective, identifying their needs, and addressing the specific challenges they encounter will contribute to enhancing the writing proficiency of The students.

Recent research in the field of language education has shown an increasing interest in understanding and addressing the challenges faced by students in developing their writing skills. A study conducted by Smith et al (2023) explored the writing proficiency of students in vocational schools and identified common obstacles in their descriptive writing. The findings emphasized the need for targeted interventions to improve writing skills in vocational contexts. Similarly, a research project by Johnson and Brown (2022) investigated effective teaching strategies for enhancing descriptive writing skills in secondary education, shedding light on methods that proved successful in fostering expressive writing. These studies highlight the ongoing relevance and importance of addressing writing challenges faced by students, particularly in specialized educational settings.

Previous research in the field of writing skills has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by students and effective teaching strategies. A study by Johnson and Brown (2022) investigated effective teaching strategies for enhancing descriptive writing skills in secondary education, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches to address specific challenges. Another relevant study by Lee and Martinez (2021) explored the role of peer collaboration in improving descriptive writing skills. This research highlighted the positive impact of peer interactions on students' ability to generate detailed and expressive descriptions.

Additionally, Smith et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive study on writing proficiency in vocational schools, shedding light on common obstacles such as limited vocabulary, organizational difficulties, and challenges in incorporating descriptive elements. This research underscored the importance of addressing these specific issues faced by students in vocational settings. Previous studies have provided valuable insight into the descriptive writing challenges facing vocational students. Smith et al. (2023) and Johnson and Brown (2022) highlighted the need for targeted interventions to improve writing skills in vocational education contexts. Furthermore, Lee and Martinez's (2021) research highlighted the positive impact of collaborating with peers on improving descriptive writing skills. These results emphasize the importance of meeting specific challenges and using cooperative learning strategies in writing classrooms.

Previous research in the field of descriptive writing skills has provided a solid foundation for understanding the challenges students face, particularly in specialized educational settings such as vocational schools. Effective instructional strategies and the role of peer collaboration in improving descriptive writing skills have been explored in studies such as Johnson and Brown (2022) and Lee and Martinez (2021). These research efforts provide valuable insights into teaching methods and cooperative approaches that show promise in improving students' ability to effectively communicate ideas through writing. However, while these studies provide valuable contributions to the field, there remains a research gap specifically addressing the challenges of improving descriptive writing skills among vocational students. Therefore, this study aims at filling this gap by

investigating students' specific barriers and needs in this specific setting, and ultimately developing tailored interventions for improving their writing skills.

This study to identify and address the specific needs critical to improving descriptive writing skills through an in-depth exploration of the challenges faced by students in a vocational school in Bekasi. The purpose of this study is to provide educators and policy makers with valuable insights into targeted interventions to help students overcome barriers and achieve proficiency with writing descriptive.

2.   Methodology

Research Design

The current study employs a qualitative research design, adopting an exploratory approach within the case study methodology. This methodology allows for the in-depth exploration of students' challenges and experiences in learning descriptive writing. Furthermore, the case study methodology enables a focused investigation of a specific educational context, namely, vocational schools in Bekasi. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Yin, 2018). Data collection techniques, classroom observation, include semi-structured interviews and the analysis of student writing samples.

Participant

Participants of this study are The intake included nine students and one teacher, namely the homeroom teacher, for a total of ten. The use of a purposive sampling method ensures targeted selection of participants, taking into account factors such as program specialization. This is achieved by ensuring comprehensive representation of the student population, through a strategic selection of participants who will offer a variety of insights.

Data Collection

Observations

The focus of the observations was the identification of teaching methods, student engagement levels, and any challenges or barriers encountered during instruction. Farrell & Ives, (2014), In order to capture key observations and findings for analysis, detailed field notes were taken during the observation.

Analysis of Students Writing

In order to assess students' needs and challenges in learning descriptive writing, this Study provides a detailed rubric. Each criterion is explained to ensure clarity and consistency in assessment practice Creswell, J.W. (2014).We discuss the importance of descriptive writing skills in education and the need for effective

assessment tools to support student learning (Hornby, 2010). Each criterion in the rubric is explained in detail.

Students Interviews

Experienced language teachers from the vocational school interviewed in a semi-structured format. The interviews focus on identifying specific areas where students are not proficient, such as acquiring vocabulary, organizational skills, and integrating descriptive elements. In addition, the teachers were asked to suggest solutions or teaching strategies that, in their opinion, could be used to effectively address these challenges. Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed for analysis with the consent of the subjects (Arksey and Knight, 1999,p.5)

Instruments

To effectively navigate the data collection process, meticulously crafted instruments Went employed, including interview guides tailored to the unique context of the research. Furthermore, a observastion,interview,rubric will be implemented to assess the quality of students' descriptive writing samples.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of extracting strong patterns and insights from the qualitative data, the study employs thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006).

3.   Results and Discussion

A. Research Finding

This chapter presents the findings of this research from observation and interview data. The researcher found two themes identified. First, the learning process of descriptive writing in technology and informatics class. Second, students' challenges in improving descriptive writing skills. These two themes aim to answer the research questions (1) How is the learning process of descriptive writing in technology and informatics classes; (2) What challenges do students in vocational schools face in improving their descriptive writing skills.

a.   The Process of Learning Descriptive Writing in Technology and Informatics Classes

Based on the results of observations, it can be seen that the process of learning descriptive text in class X students shows that the first process carried out in this lesson by carrying out the picture to picture method in the sense that the teacher provides an explanation related to the meaning of descriptive text, examples of descriptive text, the characteristics of descriptive text after providing an explanation the teacher directs students to observe a book that contains pictures and descriptions, after the activity is complete the teacher provides an understanding of how to create descriptive text to students with the picture and

picture method. In this case students respond well but there are some students who feel confused in this method, but the teacher always gives the right solution, namely by learning to write descriptive text and being guided directly by the teacher. After using the picture to picture method students really understand learning to write descriptive text, students begin to pour their ideas in describing an object, animal, place and other things.

In addition to the process of learning descriptive text in the classroom, the author also found out how the teacher's views related to how to teach descriptive text in the classroom for class X SMK students. Based on the results of interviews with class teachers, it can be seen how the teacher teaches in class:

"Personal approach like for example describing a classmate around or to another friend maybe like me who is described".

[“Pendeketan personal seperti contoh mendeskripsikan teman teman satu kelas sekitar atau keteman teman lain mungkin seperti saya yang di deksripsikan”.]

"Like more or less useful there are those whose hobby is writing college cita cita when they describe objects or others like that"

[“Seperti sedikit banyak berguna ada yang hobinya menulis cita perguruan tinggi Ketik amereka mendeskripsikan benda atau yang lain seperti itu”]

Asking students to describe their friends or people around them can increase students' enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. By describing friends, students can more easily understand the concepts and characteristics of descriptive text, such as the use of adjectives, specific details, and organization of ideas. In addition, writing descriptions about other people requires students to observe carefully, both physically and personality characteristics. This can improve their observation skills and attention to detail. Although describing a familiar person, students still need to develop creativity and imagination in conveying an interesting and unique picture.

Thus the process of describing friends can help students to better understand how to write descriptive texts. In addition to teachers' views on how to teach descriptive text in class, teachers also have learning resources that can be used for learning descriptive text in class. This can be seen in the transcript of the interview with the teacher below:

"Package books are important and let there be examples or use ppt to games that students like"

[“Buku paket penting dan biar ada contohnya atau ada menggunakan ppt hingga games yang di sukai oleh siswa”]

One of the learning resources used by teachers is usually using textbooks provided by the school. Package books are important to be one of the learning resources needed, but by providing good examples of descriptive text. These examples can

help students understand the structure, characteristics, and important elements in descriptive text. Sources of examples can vary, ranging from books, to previous student writings. After presenting the examples, teachers can discuss with students to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each example. This activity will make students more critical in understanding the elements of descriptive text.

In addition to text examples, the use of visual presentations, such as PowerPoint, can also help clarify concepts and attract students' attention. Presentations can be utilized to display descriptive text examples, writing models, or other important elements. However, presentations should be designed to be engaging and interactive, not just boring dense text. Beyond textbooks, examples, and presentations, the integration of learning games can also increase student enthusiasm and engagement. Games can be used to introduce concepts, practice skills, or even evaluate students' understanding.

In choosing a game, teachers should consider its suitability for learning objectives and student characteristics. By combining various resources and interesting learning strategies, it is expected that students can be more enthusiastic and effective in learning descriptive text. The harmony between learning resources, examples, presentations, and games is key in creating a comprehensive and enjoyable learning experience for students. On the other hand, teachers can consider the needs of students in learning by adjusting how the teacher teaches in the classroom. students need learning outside the classroom, one of which is by learning in the library because students need to see firsthand and feel a new atmosphere so that they can pour in their writing provided by the teacher.

Furthermore, the need in student learning is the initial understanding of students which varies, mentioning that there are some students who feel confused by the picture to picture method. This can be a challenge for teachers to equalize the understanding of all students, especially for those who are still struggling The need for intensive guidance states that teachers provide direct guidance to students in writing descriptive texts. This shows the need for intensive individual attention and assistance, especially for students who are still struggling in learning.

Figure 1. Classroom Observation of Descriptive Text Teaching

b. Student Challenges In Improving Descriptive Writing Skills

During the learning process of writing in class X SMK, the researcher also found that there are some challenges faced by students, challenges are usually in the form of difficulty describing someone until students are not confident in writing some students' opinions until grammar is lacking in these students can be seen in the interview results below:

"In my opinion , someone how the person who is difficult to describe or when someone is quiet describes difficult compared to someone who is active in the class kak" [particapant 1].

[“Menurut saya , seseorang bagaiamana orang itu yang susah mendeskripsikan atau ketika seseorang itu pendiam mendeskripsikan susah di banding seseorang yang aktif di dalam kelas”](particapant1)

Additionally, according to Participant 1, describing a quiet person is more difficult than someone who is active in class. This indicates that there are difficulties for students in observing and expressing the characteristics of people who tend to be passive or quiet

"Well, maybe this is how I think describing someone for there is a word describing a word that is not wearing so unintentionally maybe from me it's normal but I sometimes don't trust myself, but back again sis about describing a word not wearing someone doesn't feel good in my heart so sis like I'm afraid to have an opinion" [participant 2].

[“Baik, mungkin begini kak menurut saya mendeskripsikan seseorang untuk Ada kata mendeksripsian kata yang tidak mengenakan gitu yang tidak sengaja mungkin Dari saya biasa saja namun saya terkadang tidak percaya diri, Namun balik lagi kak mengenai mendeskripsikan kata tidak mengenakan seseorang tidak enak di hati begitu kak kayak saya takut beropini”] [partisipant 2]

Then, according to participant 2, he expressed his lack of confidence in writing descriptions, because he was worried that he would use inappropriate or offensive words This shows that students have sensitivity to the selection of words that can be offensive when describing someone.

"Yes, I probably don't know English like it should be from Indonesian, for example the example of slanted I don't know kak for English From grammar maybe in the daily use I also don't have confidence in writing " [participant 3].

“Ya, saya mungkin gak tahu bahasa inggris kayak harus Dari bahasa indonesia nya misalkan contoh sipit aku gak tau untuk bahasa inggris Dari grammar mungkin kak dalam sehari hari yang di Gunakan aku juga gak precaya diri dalam menulis”][partsipant 3]

Then, according to Participant 3, he expressed his ignorance of the equivalent English words for some Indonesian vocabulary In addition, he also lacked

confidence in writing due to his limited mastery of grammar This indicates that there are difficulties for students in expressing descriptions using grammatically correct English.

However, based on the interview data, students feel difficulties in learning descriptive texts that students Overall, the challenges faced by students are related to the ability to express ideas in the form of descriptions, self-confidence, and limited mastery of vocabulary and grammar. This needs attention and intervention from teachers to help students overcome these obstacles in learning to write descriptive text. The following student writing rubric is attached in Table 1.

Table 1. Student Writing Rubric

Criteria	Description	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week4
Student challenges in learning descriptive writing	- demonstrate a clear understanding of the text writing task	X	√	X	√
	- able to identify the key elements and purpose of writing a description text	X	√	X	√
Vocabulary acquisition	- displays a broad vocabulary relevant to the topic.	X	X	√	√
	- use vocabulary effectively to convey meaning and description	√	X	√	X
Observational skills	- Demonstrate keen observation skills in capturing details.	√	X	X	X
	- able to effectively incorporate observations into descriptive writing	X	X	√	X
Stuctural organizational	- Structure writing with a clear introduction, body and conclusion.	√	X	√	X
	- Organizes ideas logically and cohesively.	X	√	√	√
Engagement with feedback	- Actively seek feedback from peers and instructors.	√	√	X	X
	- Utilize feedback to improve writing skills and overcome challengess	X	√	√	X
Awareness of challenges	- Demonstrate awareness of personal challenges in writing descriptive texts.	X	X	X	√
	- show willingness to overcome challenges through practice and support	√	√	X	X
Creatitivty and originality	- Demonstrate creativity in describing a subject or object	X	√	√	√
	- offer original perspectives and approaches in writing descriptive texts	X	√	X	√

Then, based on the writing rubric, overall students need a clear understanding of writing descriptive texts who skillfully demonstrate a deep understanding of what

is needed in writing an effective descriptive text. They are able to clearly identify and understand important elements, such as structure, purpose, and key elements that must be present. This was evident in their ability to effectively convey information and descriptions, as if they understood exactly what was expected in this student task.

Furthermore, proficient students demonstrated a wide vocabulary mastery with the topic at hand. They used words effectively to convey meaning and provided very detailed and vivid descriptions. Sharp observation skills in capturing important details of the subject or object being described are also evident Logical and Cohesive Writing Structure In terms of writing structure, skilled writers are able to organize ideas in a logical and cohesive manner. They build a smooth flow of thought, with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Students find it easy to understand by readers because of the good order and interrelationship between parts.

In addition, excellent students actively seek and utilize feedback from peers and instructors. They use such feedback to improve their writing skills and overcome the challenges they face. This demonstrates an awareness of personal challenges and a willingness to continue learning and improving Creativity in Description Furthermore, creative writers also demonstrate the ability to describe subjects or objects in unique and original ways. They offer different perspectives and approaches, resulting in interesting and distinctive descriptive texts.

B. Discussion

The teacher uses "picture to picture" method where students observe the picture and its description to understand the concept of descriptive text. Furthermore, the teacher directs students to write descriptive text using the "picture and picture" method, where students describe the pictures given. At the beginning of learning, some students feel confused with the method used, but the teacher always provides solutions with direct guidance. After using the "picture to picture" method, students can understand learning to write descriptive text and start pouring their ideas in describing objects, animals, places, and other things. Writing with a process, namely the process of pouring ideas or ideas into written language. It in line with previous study conducted by (Siti Anisantun, 2018) that the writing process is realized in several stages which are a more complete system. Writing is one side of language skills, so continuous practice is a demand. Writers must have a lot of experience and vocabulary (Sudarwan Danim, 2017).

Moreover, Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2006:158) explain that individual learning is a teacher's teaching activity that focuses on learning assistance and guidance to each individual. The value of this cooperation, although widely known, remains a problem in itself. The learning resources used by teachers are textbooks that provide examples of good descriptive texts, helping students understand the structure, characteristics, and important elements in descriptive texts. Teachers also use visual presentations (PowerPoint) to clarify concepts and attract students' attention, as well as learning games to introduce concepts, practice skills, or evaluate students' understanding. To meet students' needs, teachers bring learning

outside the classroom, such as in the library, to provide a new atmosphere that can be expressed in students' writing. Teachers also provide intensive guidance, especially for students who are still struggling in descriptive text learning, and create a comprehensive and enjoyable learning experience for students.

However, students still find the difficulty to observe and express the characteristics of people who tend to be passive or quiet. Skilled students, on the other hand, have keen observational abilities to capture important details, including from people who tend to be passive, One of the language skills is writing. Writing is a language skill that is used to communicate indirectly, not face-to-face with others. Writing is a proactive and expressive activity (Tarigan, 2013: 3). Students worry about using inappropriate or offensive words when describing someone. Skilled students have a clear understanding of the essential elements in writing descriptive texts, such as structure, purpose, and key elements. They are able to convey information and descriptions effectively and in detail. Students did not know the equivalent English words for some Indonesian vocabulary. They also lack confidence in writing due to their limited mastery of grammar. Skilled students have a wide vocabulary related to the topic. They are able to organize ideas in a logical and cohesive manner within the structure of their writing. Skilled students have a wide vocabulary related to the topic discussed. Skilled students show creativity in describing subjects or objects in unique and original ways. They also actively seek and utilize feedback to improve their writing skills.

4. Conclusion

The teacher uses the "picture to picture" method, where students are asked to observe the picture and its description. This helps students understand the concept and characteristics of descriptive text. After that, the teacher guides students to write descriptive text using the "picture and picture" method. Students apply their understanding by describing the pictures provided. The teacher also applies a personal approach by asking students to describe their classmates or people around them. This approach can increase students' enthusiasm and engagement, as they are more interested in writing about people they know.

In addition, writing descriptions about others can also improve students' observation skills and attention to detail, although they still need to develop creativity and imagination in delivering interesting and unique descriptions. Learning resources used by teachers for descriptive text learning include Packet books provided by the school, Examples of good descriptive texts, which can be from books or previous students' written works, Visual presentations using PowerPoint to clarify concepts and attract students' attention, Integration of learning games to increase students' enthusiasm and involvement Teachers consider students' needs in learning, such as Providing learning opportunities outside the classroom, such as in the library, so that students can see and feel a new atmosphere to pour into descriptive texts, Adjusting teaching methods, because there are some students who feel confused by the picture to picture

method, Providing intensive individualized guidance, especially for students who are still struggling in learning descriptive texts.

Difficulty in describing people who tend to be passive or quiet compared to people who are active in class. Students find it more difficult to observe and express the characteristics of quiet people. Lack of confidence in writing descriptions, as they worry about using words that are inappropriate or offensive to the person being described. Limited mastery of English vocabulary and grammar, especially in finding English equivalents for Indonesian vocabulary. This causes students to lack confidence in writing descriptions using grammatically correct English.

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