Investigating Students' Writing Skills in Generating Descriptive Texts: Experiences Learned from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Contexts in Privates Universities

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Abstract

Writing occupies a paramount role in the conveyance of ideas, demanding a profound comprehension of the nuances integral to crafting impeccable written compositions. The research under consideration was undertaken with the objective of delving into the writing skills of students and discerning the challenges they encounter in composing descriptive texts. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study engaged English learners at STIE AMM Mataram, constituting a cohort of 28 students. To attain a comprehensive understanding of their writing abilities and difficulties, the research employed writing tests and interviews as research instruments. The research outcomes revealed a mean score of 69.92 for the students, indicative of a concerning trend of inadequate proficiency in writing descriptive texts, essentially categorizing their abilities as 'poor.' A closer examination of the data delineated specific performance distributions among the students: 12% garnered scores below 60, designating them as 'poor,' while 40% fell within the 61-70 score range, also categorized as 'poor.' Moreover, 36% secured scores in the 71-80 range, positioning them in the 'average' category, and a mere 12% earned scores designated as 'very good. Vocabulary and organization stood out with ratings categorized as 'good to average,' showcasing relative strengths. Conversely, content, grammar, and mechanics were characterized by a 'fair to poor' categorization, underscoring significant areas of difficulty. In particular, students grappled with challenges concerning grammar, content development, and mechanical aspects of writing. In light of these findings, it is evident that students encounter multifaceted difficulties, particularly in the realms of grammar, content creation, and mechanics. As a viable solution, it is recommended that English teachers prioritize providing students with ample opportunities for writing practice. These opportunities should be designed to specifically enhance content development and grammar proficiency in writing descriptive texts.

Keywords: writing skills; descriptive texts; generic structures

INTRODUCTION

English holds a position of paramount significance within the realm of education, often regarded as the cornerstone of all scholastic disciplines. This distinction can be attributed to the fact that the four fundamental language skills - reading, writing, speaking,

and listening - are requisites that extend their influence, to varying degrees, across virtually every other subject within the curriculum of educational institutions (Al-zumor, 2021; Astiantih & Akfan, 2023). This ubiquity underscores the pivotal role that English plays in facilitating effective communication and comprehension, which, in turn, are essential for the acquisition of knowledge in diverse academic disciplines (Dari et al., 2022; Dwigustini et al., 2021). Indonesia, as a case in point, places substantial emphasis on the importance of English in its educational framework. The language's pivotal role becomes evident as it finds its place in the curriculum from junior high school through to the university level. The significance of English in Indonesia's educational landscape is further underscored by its integration into the national curriculum (Hadi et al., 2021; Hadi & Putra, 2021). This integration primarily emphasizes the development of the four language skills, as it is imperative for students to master the ability to communicate both verbally and in writing within the target language (Hadi & Herlina, 2021; Ismiati & Fitria, 2021). The measure of success attained by students in the process of learning English hinges significantly on their proficiency in expressing their thoughts and ideas within this linguistic framework. The capacity to articulate one's ideas coherently and effectively in English emerges as a decisive factor in determining the extent to which a student can be considered accomplished in their English language learning journey (Lating, 2022). Therefore, the ability to competently employ these language skills becomes a critical indicator of achievement in the study of English, including writing skills.

The skill of writing stands as a cornerstone of paramount importance in the pursuit of educational excellence, for it plays an instrumental role in fostering literacy. This association with literacy assumes critical significance, prompting the government's attention towards initiatives aimed at elevating and enhancing literacy levels in Indonesia. Notably, the urgency of addressing this issue is underscored by disconcerting statistics, such as Indonesia's literacy ranking, which placed the nation 60th out of 61 countries (Rachmaida & Mutiarani, 2022; Hadi & Karyadi, 2023). This ranking serves as a stark indicator of a literacy crisis prevailing in the country, raising concerns, particularly in the context of the ongoing Industrial Revolution 4.0. In the face of this literacy crisis, it becomes apparent that the demand for proficient writing skills persists. Paradoxically, many observers lament the inadequacy of writing practice and assignments provided to students in Indonesia, thereby accentuating a prevalent shortfall in cultivating these essential skills. In response to this situation, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the pressing need for continuous and sustained efforts to enhance students' writing abilities (Sumarsono & Permana, 2023). By addressing this deficit, educational institutions and policymakers can work collectively to empower the youth with the requisite writing skills that are indispensable in an era dominated by the forces of the fourth industrial revolution. Consequently, efforts directed at improving writing skills hold the promise of contributing significantly to the amelioration of literacy levels and educational achievement in Indonesia.

Writing serves as the linchpin for the transmission of ideas, and its mastery necessitates a profound understanding of the intricacies involved in crafting exemplary written texts. Haerazi and Irawan (2019) underscores that achieving proficiency in writing demands learners to engage both metacognitive and cognitive skills. This implies that learners must not only structure their writing goals meticulously but also comprehend the essential prerequisites and supporting sources that underpin the entire writing process. In essence, this highlights the multifaceted nature of writing as a skill that draws upon cognitive processes and strategic planning (Haerazi & Kazemian, 2021; Susilawati, 2023). The significance of writing in effectively conveying messages cannot be overstated. It is in line with Haerazi et al. (2021) who posits that this skill can be honed through dedicated

practice. In this context, students are presented with a wealth of references and a plethora of information sources that facilitate the exploration of pertinent information prior to embarking on the writing process. Consequently, the journey of learning English is rendered captivating as writing becomes an integral component of the broader English language acquisition process.

A proficient grasp of writing skill entails not only the comprehension of knowledge but also its practical application through the application of critical thinking (Wahid & Sudirman, 2023; Wismanto et al., 2022). The creation of a well-crafted piece of writing necessitates a holistic understanding of the underlying ideas, both before and after the writing process is undertaken. This underscores the pivotal role of comprehension, analytical thinking, and thoughtful reflection in the journey toward producing high-quality written work (Chukharev-Hudilainen & Saricaoglu, 2016). In essence, the multifaceted nature of writing encompasses cognitive, metacognitive, and critical thinking dimensions, all of which converge to enable the creation of impactful written communication.

The process of writing is intricately tied to the fundamental importance of generating compelling and coherent ideas (Syamsuri et al., 2016; Grenner et al., 2020). A rich repository of ideas is the bedrock upon which the creation of compositions and written materials relies. Without this essential wellspring of creativity, students risk succumbing to disinterest and boredom when tasked with the challenge of writing (Huda & Rahadianto, 2019; Williams et al., 2022). In essence, the availability of stimulating ideas is pivotal in kindling and sustaining students' enthusiasm for the writing process. Within the domain of writing, particularly in educational contexts, the significance of ideas cannot be overstated. Muhsin (2017) underscores that students undertaking writing subjects must cultivate a firm grasp of the ideas they intend to convey. This involves not only understanding the chosen topic but also evaluating the depth of their knowledge and making informed decisions about their theme. Moreover, students are compelled to engage in the intricate task of selecting a theme and subsequently delving into the meticulous process of identifying an appropriate lexicon to articulate their ideas effectively. This multifaceted approach necessitates thoughtful consideration, ensuring that the selected words resonate harmoniously with the intended message.

Descriptive texts serve as a powerful medium for engaging the audience's senses and imagination to impart a comprehensive understanding of the essence and particulars of a subject (Dongoran, 2020; Korucu, 2023). Writers of descriptive texts adopt a predilection for meticulously elucidating the subject by appealing to the reader's physical senses, thereby enabling the recipient to garner a wealth of detailed information. This emphasis on sensory engagement facilitates a profound connection between the audience and the subject under scrutiny. Rojiyah (2017) argues the structure of descriptive texts encompasses various elements, including their social function, generic structures, grammatical features, and purpose. The social function of descriptive texts lies in their capacity to convey intricate descriptions of persons, places, or objects, with the objective of enabling the audience to visualize and comprehend the subject vividly. The generic structures within these texts revolve around the dual processes of identification and description, enabling the reader to first recognize the subject and subsequently explore its characteristics in a systematic manner.

When engaging in the process of crafting descriptive texts, students often encounter a myriad of challenges (Khoiri, 2020; Smith, 2023). These challenges can be primarily categorized into several key areas. Firstly, students frequently grapple with a dearth of sufficient ideas to construct a coherent text, resorting to the undesirable practice of plagiarism by copying and pasting content from the internet. This predicament is compounded by their inability to transform their nascent ideas into well-structured

paragraphs that reflect their original thought processes (Serra et al., 2023; Marzuki et al., 2023). Secondly, students often lack the knowledge and skill to effectively express their ideas in a sequence of sentences and organize them into a logical, chronological, and coherent paragraph (Polat & Dedeoglu, 2023). Furthermore, they struggle with employing appropriate words and mastering the nuances of grammar. Lastly, students frequently confront difficulties in using correct spelling and punctuation, which hinder the readability and acceptability of their texts.

These challenges are exacerbated by the limitations of classroom instruction, which often fails to engage students effectively in writing activities, rendering the learning experience monotonous (Liu, 2022; McCarthey & Zhang, 2023). The task of producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing proves to be especially daunting for second language learners, further exacerbating their struggles. Consequently, students exhibit a diminished interest in writing, coupled with a deficiency in their ability to effectively convey their ideas using proper language usage, vocabulary, and punctuation. The confluence of these challenges underscores the multifaceted nature of difficulties that students encounter in their endeavors to compose descriptive texts, necessitating pedagogical interventions to facilitate their writing development. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' ability and to explore the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The novelty of the study lies on students who have slow learners in writing skills.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
The research design employed in this study is of a mixed-method nature, a framework that combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies, as elucidated by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The rationale behind employing such a design lies in the nature of the data gathered. The data under investigation encompasses two distinct categories, each demanding a specific approach for comprehensive exploration. On one hand, the study involves the assessment of students' writing skills, which inherently fall under the purview of quantitative data. This category of data lends itself to numerical and statistical analysis, allowing for the quantification and measurement of various aspects of students' writing proficiency. On the other hand, the study delves into an analysis of students' difficulties encountered during the production of descriptive texts, a domain that inherently pertains to qualitative data. This category involves non-numeric data, typically characterized by textual descriptions, interviews, or observations, which are essential for gaining insight into the multifaceted challenges faced by students in their writing endeavors. The choice to employ a mixed-method design thus becomes pivotal in enabling a comprehensive examination of these two distinct data categories, ensuring a holistic understanding of the research subject.

Research Samples
The research undertaken in this study centered on a group of 28 students enrolled at STIE AMM Mataram. This participant pool comprised seven male students and 21 female students, reflecting a gender-diverse composition. The selection of these students as research participants was guided by specific criteria related to their willingness and ability to attend the writing classes regularly. This deliberate choice to focus on students with a higher degree of flexibility in terms of their class attendance stems from the research's intent to investigate various aspects related to their writing skills and difficulties in producing descriptive texts. By selecting students who were more likely to consistently attend classes, the study sought to ensure the reliability and consistency of data collection,

as their active participation would yield more robust and representative insights into the research topic. This approach aids in the pursuit of a comprehensive and thorough examination of the research questions, contributing to the validity and depth of the study's findings.

Research Instruments

The research methodology employed in this study encompassed the utilization of specific research instruments, namely writing tests and interview guidelines, designed to facilitate a comprehensive investigation of students' writing skills and the challenges they encountered in arranging descriptive texts. The writing tests were administered as a critical component of the research, serving as a systematic and objective means to assess the students' proficiency in composing descriptive texts. These tests were designed to evaluate various aspects of their writing, including their ability to structure coherent and well-organized descriptive texts. By employing writing tests, the study aimed to gauge the students' competency in effectively arranging and articulating their ideas within the context of descriptive writing, thereby providing valuable insights into their writing skills. Complementing the writing tests, the study employed interview guidelines as a qualitative research instrument. These guidelines were thoughtfully constructed to elicit information directly from the students regarding the challenges they encountered during the process of arranging their written products. Interviews served as a dynamic and flexible method for probing into the students' experiences and difficulties in producing descriptive texts. The interview guidelines were structured to prompt open and candid discussions, allowing the students to articulate their concerns, hurdles, and areas of struggle, thus providing a more in-depth understanding of the obstacles they faced in their writing endeavors.

Data Analysis Technique

In the context of this research study, a rigorous and systematic analysis of data was undertaken to comprehensively investigate students' proficiency in writing descriptive texts. To facilitate this examination, a two-fold approach was employed, involving the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data collected in this study were subjected to analytical scrutiny through quantitative methods. This analytical process involved the application of statistical analysis techniques, with a specific focus on descriptive statistical analysis. Statistical software packages, such as SPSS, were utilized as tools to assist in the quantitative data analysis. This method allowed for the quantitative assessment of various aspects related to students' writing skills, offering numerical insights into their performance. The emphasis on statistical analysis enabled the research to quantitatively measure and evaluate students' achievements in writing descriptive texts.

Concurrently, the qualitative data gathered in the study underwent qualitative analysis, a method that offers an in-depth exploration of textual and non-numeric data. This approach allowed for a nuanced examination of the students' writing difficulties and challenges in producing descriptive texts. Qualitative analysis entailed a comprehensive exploration of the narrative and experiential aspects of the data, enabling a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives and the contextual factors influencing their writing process. Throughout the analytical process, the study maintained a keen focus on five essential dimensions of writing descriptive texts. These five key aspects included content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization. By directing attention to these facets, the research aimed to identify specific areas where students excelled and areas where they encountered difficulties. This systematic breakdown of writing dimensions provided a structured framework for the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a comprehensive assessment of students' writing skills and difficulties in producing descriptive texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Results
The result of students writing score, students' ability in writing descriptive text. Based on the results of the analysis of 28 students' in composing writing score of descriptive text of the third Semester of STIE AMM Mataram, there were 10 students or (40%) were categorized as poor, 9 students (36%) were categorized as average, and 4 students or (16%) were categorized as very poor, 2 students (8%) were categorized as very good .The Students' score in writing descriptive text were based on the five aspects of writing. There are the contents, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The result was showed as follows in table:

Table 1. Students' Scores in Writing Descriptive Text

No	Students	Vocabulary (20)	Mechanic (5)	Organization (20)	Grammar (25)	Content (30)	Total Score (100)
1	A	18	4	17	20	25	84
2	B	17	4	17	22	24	84
3	C	18	4	19	20	24	82
4	D	16	4	16	17	19	72
5	E	16	4	17	17	19	73
6	F	18	4		18	22	76
7	G	18	4	18	20	24	84
8	H	16	3	17	17	19	72
9	I	18	4	17	17	22	74
10	J	17	4	17	18	22	74
11	K	17	4	16	17	20	72
12	L	16	3	16	17	20	72
13	M	14	3	14	17	16	64
14	N	15	4	16	17	18	70
15	O	14	3	14	16	15	62
16	P	15	3	15	17	18	68
17	Q	15	3	14	17	17	66
18	R	15	3	14	16	16	64
19	S	15	3	15	16	17	66
20	T	15	3	16	16	18	68
21	U	15	3	16	17	19	70
22	V	16	3	16	16	19	70
23	W	16	2	13	15	14	58
24	X	17	2	13	15	13	56
25	Y	13	2	13	15	15	58
26	Z	16	3	16	13	18	66
27	A1	17	4	15	15	18	69
28	B1	17	3	16	14	20	70
	Total Score						1.748
	Mean Score						69.92

The assessment of students' writing skills, as revealed in Table 1, unveiled a notable trend indicating a general deficiency in their proficiency in this particular domain of study. The data represented in the table illustrated a spectrum of writing competence, with a significant portion of the student population exhibiting suboptimal performance. Specifically, the data disclosed that six students displayed exceptional outcomes in their

writing skills, with three achieving remarkably high scores reflective of their exceptional abilities. On the opposite end of the spectrum, an equal number of students, also numbering three, demonstrated considerably poor writing skills, as evidenced by their notably low scores. In the intermediate range, the majority of the students, amounting to ten individuals, fell within the category of poor performance, indicating significant room for improvement in their writing abilities. Furthermore, nine students were positioned within the average range, suggesting a relatively balanced and moderate level of writing proficiency. A critical summary of the data revealed that the overall mean score for the students, which is computed as 69.92, indicated that the collective performance was situated below the desirable threshold. This result underscores the pressing need for educational interventions aimed at enhancing students' writing skills, thereby fostering an environment that promotes growth and development in this crucial area of academic competency. The findings presented in Table 1 serve as a compelling call to action, highlighting the imperative of addressing the existing disparities in students' writing abilities and working collectively to elevate their overall proficiency levels. The students' achievement in writing descriptive text can be presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Score Level

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
91 - 100	Excellent	0	0%
81 - 90	Very good	3	12 %
71 - 80	average	9	36 %
61 - 70	Poor	10	40 %
Below 60	Very poor	3	12 %
Total		25	100 %

Based on the assessment of the students' writing scores, a comprehensive analysis was conducted to gauge the overall performance in this critical domain. The collective average score, which was computed at 69.92, reflected a moderate level of proficiency. This categorization positioned the overall performance within the 'average' range, signifying room for improvement in students' writing skills. A more granular examination of the distribution of scores revealed a varied landscape of performance. Notably, a proportion of students, constituting 12% of the total, exhibited exceptional writing abilities, with scores falling in the 'very good' range (81-90). Conversely, an equivalent percentage of students, also amounting to 12%, struggled with notably poor writing skills, registering scores below 60, thereby falling within the 'very poor' category. The majority of students, comprising 36%, obtained scores within the 'average' range (71-80), signifying a need for further development in their writing competencies. Finally, a significant segment, encompassing 40% of the student population, achieved scores within the 'very poor' range (81-90), underscoring the imperative of tailored educational interventions to enhance their writing capabilities. This nuanced analysis of students' writing scores underscores the need for targeted efforts to uplift their writing proficiency, ensuring that they can effectively convey their ideas and thoughts through the written medium.

Students' Writing Skills

Next step the writer analyzed the data in each aspects to find out which aspects are good and which aspects are weak. The students' ability in creating descriptive texts could be seen from the total scores which the students achieved for all aspects. The results of the analyses were based on the Heaton J.B (1998) level. Futhemore, after to be more focus

on analyzing the students' ability in each aspect or writing in terms of the content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic. The analysis of each aspect distributed in form of table as follows.

Table 3. Content of Writing Skills

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
30 - 27	Excellent to very good	0	0 %
26 - 22	Good to average	7	28 %
21 - 17	Fair to poor	12	48 %
16 - 13	Very poor	6	24 %
	Total Score	25	100 %

The table in question provides a comprehensive insight into the students' aptitude for composing descriptive texts, with a particular focus on the average score, which constitutes 48% of the total performance. This percentage signifies an overall moderate level of achievement in the realm of writing descriptive text. Delving further into the data, it becomes evident that this average performance is underpinned by an examination of students' capabilities within the specific dimension of content. Here, it is observed that students' proficiency in content is categorized as 'fair to poor,' which implies that their capacity to effectively generate and convey meaningful content within their descriptive texts is suboptimal. This discernment highlights a critical area of concern and suggests the need for targeted educational interventions to elevate students' competency in structuring and articulating content effectively within the context of descriptive writing. In essence, the findings from the table illuminate the imperative of honing students' abilities in crafting descriptive texts, particularly in terms of content development, to enhance their overall writing proficiency.

Table 4. Organization of of Writing Skills

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 18	Excellent to very good	2	8 %
17 - 14	Good to average	20	80 %
13 - 10	Fair to poor	3	12 %
9 - 7	Very poor	0	0 %
	Total Score	25	100 %

The data presented in the table offers a comprehensive insight into the students' competence in composing descriptive texts, with a particular focus on the average score, which stands at an impressive 80%. This percentage signifies a commendable level of achievement, underscoring the overall proficiency of students in the domain of writing descriptive text. To delve deeper into the specifics, attention is directed towards the evaluation of students' capabilities, particularly in the aspect of organization. It is discerned that students' aptitude for organizing their written materials is categorized as ranging from 'good' to 'average.' This categorization signifies that students have demonstrated a solid ability to structure their descriptive texts in a coherent and logically organized manner, with the majority achieving performance levels within the 'good' and 'average' range. The table's findings highlight a significant strength in students' writing skills, particularly in terms of organizing their written content effectively. This exemplary

performance in the organization aspect contributes to the overall high average score and underscores the students' proficiency in crafting well-structured descriptive texts.

Table 5. Vocabulary of Writing Skills

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 18	Excellent to very good	4	16 %
17 - 14	Good to average	19	76 %
13 - 10	Fair to poor	2	8 %
9 - 7	Very poor	0 %	0 %
	Total Score	25	100 %

The table under consideration offers valuable insights into the students' proficiency in composing descriptive texts, with a particular emphasis on the average score, which registers at an impressive 76%. This percentage underscores a commendable level of achievement, reflecting the overall competence of the students in the domain of writing descriptive text. In a more detailed analysis, the focus is directed toward the assessment of students' capabilities, specifically within the dimension of vocabulary usage. The data reveals that students' aptitude for effectively employing vocabulary in their written expressions spans across categories ranging from 'good' to 'average.' This classification implies that students have demonstrated a strong command of vocabulary in their descriptive writing endeavors, with a substantial portion exhibiting performance levels falling within the 'good' to 'average' spectrum. The table's findings underscore a notable strength in students' writing skills, particularly concerning their adept utilization of vocabulary. This proficiency contributes significantly to the overall high average score, affirming the students' ability to craft descriptive texts enriched with a diverse and appropriate selection of words and expressions.

Table 6. Grammar of Writing Skills

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
25 - 22	Excellent to very good	1	4 %
21 - 18	Good to average	5	20 %
17 - 11	Fair to poor	19	76 %
10 - 5	Very poor	0	0 %
	Total Score	25	100 %

The table provided yields valuable insights into the students' competence in the realm of composing descriptive texts, with a specific emphasis on the average score, which impressively stands at 76%. This figure attests to an overall commendable level of proficiency among the student population in the domain of writing descriptive text. However, a more nuanced analysis unveils a specific aspect that warrants attention, namely, the evaluation of students' aptitude in grammar usage. In this regard, the data indicates that students' grammar skills have been categorized as falling within the range of 'fair' to 'poor.' This categorization suggests that students have encountered challenges in maintaining consistent and accurate grammatical structures within their written compositions, with a substantial portion of them exhibiting performance levels categorized as 'fair' or even 'poor.' The table's findings shed light on an area of concern, implying a need for targeted interventions to enhance students' proficiency in grammar usage within

the context of descriptive writing. While the average score underscores a notable level of overall competence, the categorization of grammar as 'fair to poor' signals an imperative to further nurture and develop this specific writing skill among the students.

Table 7. Mechanic of Writing Skills

Score	Level	Frequency	Percentage
5	Excellent to very good	0	0 %
4	Good to average	11	44 %
3	Fair to poor	11	44 %
2	Very poor	3	12 %
	Total Score	25	100 %

The table presented above provides a comprehensive overview of the students' proficiency in crafting descriptive texts, with a focal point on the average score, which reveals a somewhat modest performance, registering at 44%. This percentage signifies an overall moderate level of accomplishment, reflecting the students' collective competence in the specific realm of writing descriptive text. However, a closer examination of the data brings to light the nuances within the students' writing abilities, particularly with regard to their skills in mechanics. These skills are observed to encompass a spectrum from 'fair to poor,' indicating that many students have encountered difficulties in consistently maintaining accuracy and proficiency in the mechanics of their written expression. This categorization, revealing deficiencies in mechanics, signals the need for targeted interventions to enhance students' grasp of this fundamental aspect of writing.

Interview Data

The insights gleaned from the interview sessions shed light on the perceived challenges faced by students in their journey to acquire effective writing skills. Notably, students expressed that writing skills present the most formidable linguistic hurdles for them, second only to speaking skills. The interviews also provided valuable perspectives from teachers, whose observations underscored certain key issues. Grammar, in particular, emerged as a significant stumbling block for many students. A prevalent difficulty appeared to be related to the appropriate use of the simple past tense in sentences, with students frequently exhibiting uncertainty in this regard. For instance, students commonly misused the simple present tense when the past tense was required, as exemplified by phrases such as "we visit some place" instead of "we visited some places." Additionally, students grappled with distinguishing between regular and irregular verbs, leading to errors that affected the quality of their descriptive texts. Furthermore, the organizational aspect of writing proved to be another area of concern. While students could competently construct the introductory orientation of their texts, they struggled to establish coherence between subsequent events and the concluding reorientation. This lack of cohesion in organizing their thoughts hindered their ability to produce descriptive texts with a logical and coherent flow. In light of these findings, it is evident that students face multifaceted challenges in developing their writing skills, particularly in the domains of grammar and organization. The identified issues underscore the need for targeted instructional interventions that address these specific areas of difficulty. Such pedagogical strategies should aim to clarify grammar rules, emphasize the correct use of tenses, and enhance students' understanding of text organization to empower them to become more proficient and confident writers.

The teacher also said that some students lack of punctuation, capitalization and spelling. In this aspect, most students are not able to put punctuation marks, capital letters and correct spelling. This aspect is also one of the aspects that really need to be considered in writing a descriptive text. The most important punctuation marks that are considered in writing are commas, periods, periods, semicolons, semicolons, apostrophes, quotes, hyphens. In addition, based on students' interview, they found it difficult to use past tense in writing. They said they were confused when to use past tense and past participle. Also they did not know how to make a sentence well. It leads them not to know how to use punctuation, coma, and period. The result is that the sentences were too long without coma or period. More practices are immportant to make them easier in writing a paragraph.

Discussion

The study under consideration aimed to provide a comprehensive description of the students' proficiency in composing descriptive texts. The findings reveal a prevalent challenge among students in terms of their writing abilities, with a pronounced weakness in key aspects of content, grammar, and mechanics, each predominantly categorized as 'fair to poor.' This is evidenced by the collective mean score of 69.92, classifying the students' performance within the 'poor' category. Further dissection of the data exposes the extent of these challenges, with a substantial 48% of students struggling in the 'poor' category with respect to content. A staggering 76% of students faced similar difficulties in the domain of grammar, while 44% encountered issues in mechanics, all of which fell into the 'poor' category. These findings are particularly noteworthy as they highlight a persistent concern despite the students' exposure to descriptive text writing since junior high school. The root of the problem lies in the intricate nature of writing descriptive text, which necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the schematic structure encompassing orientation, record of events, and reorientation (Erickson, 2022; Hadi & Herlina, 2021). Additionally, students are expected to adeptly incorporate the linguistic features intrinsic to descriptive text, such as specific participants, temporal and spatial circumstances, first-person narration, additive conjunctions, material processes, and past tense utilization (Ariati, 2018; Dari et al., 2022). Failure to assimilate these structural and linguistic elements significantly impedes the students' writing endeavors.

The students' competence in writing, as evaluated across various key dimensions such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, demonstrates a notable trend of proficiency falling within the low category. A comprehensive analysis of their performance in these critical aspects unveils a considerable deficiency. In particular, students' abilities concerning content, grammar, and mechanics are consistently categorized within the 'fair to poor' range. This indicates a prevalent struggle among students in effectively structuring content, adhering to grammatical rules, and maintaining proper mechanical conventions in their written work (Rachmaida & Mutiarani, 2022; Sumarsono & Permana, 2023). A closer look at the data reveals specific challenges within each of these categories, with a significant portion of students encountering difficulties. For instance, 48% of students are classified as 'fair to poor' in terms of content, 76% in grammar, and 44% in mechanics. This underlines the substantial scope for improvement in these areas. Conversely, students exhibit relatively stronger abilities when it comes to vocabulary and organization, with both dimensions receiving ratings within the 'good to average' range. In the case of vocabulary, 76% of students fall into this category, while for organization, 80% of students display competence in the 'good to average' spectrum. This suggests that students generally excel in selecting appropriate words and phrases and organizing their written materials in a coherent and structured manner.

The findings that indicate students' poor performance in writing underscore a pressing need for improvement through increased practice and exercises. This observation aligns with Susilawati (2023) who informs that the complex and multifaceted nature of this subject is because students need to be given writing practices and exercises. Teaching writing skills is no singular "right way", and the teaching of writing lacks a universal manual (Wahid & Sudirman, 2023). Given the inherent complexity of writing, it encompasses a myriad of theories, strategies, and approaches aimed at enhancing the quality of written compositions. Furthermore, writing's intricate nature necessitates an understanding that learning to write is a gradual and continuous process that extends beyond mere considerations of grammar and vocabulary. Indeed, Wismanto et al. (2022) inform that writing involves a multitude of factors that must be taken into account both in the process of learning and teaching writing. This multifaceted perspective underscores the importance of acknowledging the diversity of approaches to both writing itself and its pedagogy (Polat & Dedeoglu, 2023; Haerazi & Irawan, 2019). It is imperative to recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach in writing, and similarly, no single approach to teaching writing. Writing is a dynamic and versatile skill, and its instruction should mirror this versatility, accommodating various methods and strategies to meet the diverse needs of students. Therefore, the acknowledgement of this complexity and the exploration of diverse instructional approaches become essential in the endeavor to enhance students' writing abilities and ensure their successful development in this multifaceted domain.

The challenges inherent in students' difficulties with writing descriptive texts necessitate a strategic response that centers on the implementation of an enhanced writing curriculum, particularly one that places a significant emphasis on writing exercises. The findings derived from the combination of test results and interviews with students shed light on the persistent obstacles encountered by a substantial portion of the student population. Notably, the results underscore that a significant proportion of students confront substantial challenges in the composition of descriptive texts, with primary issues arising as recurrent hurdles. Haerazi et al. (2018) reported that students frequently grapple with the challenge of effectively structuring and arranging their sentences in a coherent and logical sequence. This issue pertains to the fundamental organization of their written content, encompassing the orientation, record of events, and reorientation, which are vital elements of descriptive text composition. Serra et al. (2023) argue that a significant number of students exhibit deficits in terms of mechanics, thereby encountering challenges in upholding proper punctuation, spelling, and formatting within their written work. These mechanical shortcomings can hinder the overall readability and coherence of their compositions.

A noteworthy proportion of students face difficulties in mastering grammar and tenses, crucial components of effective writing (Erickson, 2022; Hadi & Herlina, 2021; Ariati, 2018). Such issues encompass the accurate use of grammatical rules and the correct application of tenses in order to convey ideas with precision and clarity. In light of these challenges, the integration of more extensive and targeted writing exercises within the curriculum emerges as a vital solution. These exercises can provide students with opportunities to hone their sentence structuring skills, enhance their mechanical proficiency, and solidify their grasp of grammar and tenses. Through iterative practice and guidance, students can gradually overcome these persistent writing challenges, leading to improved writing abilities and a more profound command over descriptive text composition. This approach aligns with the need for a holistic strategy to address these complex writing issues and empower students to become more adept and confident writers.

CONCLUSION

Mastery of writing descriptive text is an essential skill that students are expected to acquire during their educational journey. However, it remains a persistent challenge for many students, as they grapple with various complexities in the process of composing descriptive texts. This study sheds light on the enduring difficulties faced by students in the realm of descriptive writing. It is evident that students continue to encounter formidable hurdles when tasked with generating descriptive texts. Primarily, they confront challenges related to the effective use of grammar, mechanics, and organizational principles in their writing endeavors. The culmination of this study underscores the prevailing difficulties students face in producing descriptive texts that adhere to the requisite standards of correctness and coherence. An in-depth analysis of students' writing reveals that issues extend to their proficiency in employing the appropriate generic structure, ensuring the coherence and logical progression of ideas between sentences, and accurately incorporating punctuation marks.

The students' writing is hampered by a deficiency in their vocabulary, which contributes to the overall difficulty they experience when composing descriptive texts. This study underscores the critical need for students to enhance their vocabulary and engage in regular writing practice. These improvements should not be confined to the classroom alone but should extend beyond the school environment. The overarching goal is to empower students with the necessary skills to write accurately and coherently, addressing the specific issues related to grammar, mechanics, organization, and vocabulary. The challenges presented in writing descriptive texts underscore the importance of comprehensive pedagogical approaches, both in schools and in extracurricular settings, to foster proficiency in writing and equip students with the tools needed to overcome these persistent writing hurdles.

RECOMMENDATION

Drawing from the insights gained in this study, researchers put forth a compelling recommendation for future investigations in the domain of writing education. The suggestion revolves around establishing a more profound connection between descriptive writing assignments and real-world scenarios and applications. By doing so, educators can foster a more meaningful and practical approach to teaching descriptive writing. This approach involves encouraging students to compose descriptions not just as academic exercises but as essential life skills. Specifically, students should be prompted to craft descriptions of places they have visited, recount their personal experiences, or vividly depict objects encountered in their day-to-day lives. The intent is to make descriptive writing more relatable and relevant to students, thereby enhancing their engagement and understanding of this writing genre. By bridging the gap between classroom assignments and real-world applications, students can acquire a more holistic grasp of descriptive writing and its significance in effective communication, ultimately leading to improved writing abilities. This recommendation thus underscores the importance of infusing practicality and authenticity into writing pedagogy for the benefit of students' writing proficiency.

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