

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English plays a crucial role in Indonesia, particularly in education. Therefore, English is taught as a foreign language at all levels of education. In education, English is also a crucial part of the curriculum, particularly the Kurikulum Merdeka. English education in schools can help students and teachers communicate and interact with each other, and can also enhance their knowledge of English usage. English is recognized as a crucial language and needs to be actively mastered by students (Astrianingsih 2021). In the context of English, several skills are involved: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While all of these skills are crucial, writing is considered the most complex and crucial skill to master.

Writing is the process of conveying ideas or responses in written form, so that readers can more easily understand and learn what the writer is saying (Darmayanti, 2022). A person can use writing as a tool to express themselves, conveying their thoughts, feelings, arguments, and knowledge in writing (Nurfidoh, 2021). To produce good writing, students need skills, talent, effort, and a strong desire.

Descriptive text is a way of conveying a detailed description of an object or situation and explaining it in an appropriate way so that readers can visualize the object (Rahmawati et al., 2022). The purpose of descriptive text is to encourage readers to imagine something the writer has described in the

text by using several clear and specific details (Basri & Syamsia, 2020; Ningsih, 2018; Siburian, 2013). Thus, descriptive text can be used as a simpler illustration to convey a message and create a deeper experience for the reader.

Descriptive text consists of identification and description. Identification is a way of describing something, a person, a place, or an object by describing its characteristics, such as features, shape, color, or anything else related to what the writer is describing. Descriptive text contains an explanation of an object or situation, perhaps involving sensory impressions (Fajriah & Fadhillah, 2020). Descriptions reproduce how something looks, smells, feels, or sounds. Descriptions can be used to describe a person's appearance and also describe their character traits or personality. Descriptive texts aim to give readers an impression of the object, idea, place, event, and similar things the writer wishes to convey (Zuhriyah et al., 2023).

Writing descriptive text is not as difficult as think, but sometimes students find it difficult because English is a foreign language. When writing descriptive text, writer use simple present tense which makes the writing contain repetitional, habitual, and general routines. Even though, one of the most important things in writing descriptive test is having a lot of vocabulary so that the words or sentence are not repeatedly used (Johannes, 2021).

According to the Kurikulum Merdeka program, ninth-grade students are expected to write descriptive texts clearly and accurately, describing people, places, or objects using appropriate language features. They must be able to construct well-structured paragraphs using content, organization,

vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Furthermore, students are expected to use correct grammar, express their ideas logically, and revise their texts with minimal teacher guidance. In other words, students must be able to apply what they have learned in class to produce descriptive texts that are meaningful and contextually relevant. This type of text has a social function of describing a person, place, animal, or object in detail so that the reader or listener can clearly visualize the subject. The structure of a descriptive text generally consists of two parts: identification, which introduces the subject, and description, which outlines the subject's characteristics such as appearance, qualities, behavior, or function.

At SMP Swasta Gajah Mada Medan, a school that has implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka, ninth-grade students are required to write descriptive texts as part of their English language learning outcomes. Based on initial observations conducted by researcher at SMP Swasta Gajah Mada Medan, during PLP II at 2024, the researcher observed that most ninth-grade students still experienced difficulties writing descriptive texts. These difficulties were not only related to their basic writing skills but also inconsistent with the expectations of the Kurikulum Merdeka. According to the curriculum, ninth-grade students are expected to write descriptive texts that adhere to the principles of proper and correct writing. For example, some students wrote descriptive paragraphs without clear vocabulary and grammar, while others simply wrote text they believed were correct without considering the actual components. It can be proved from an example below:

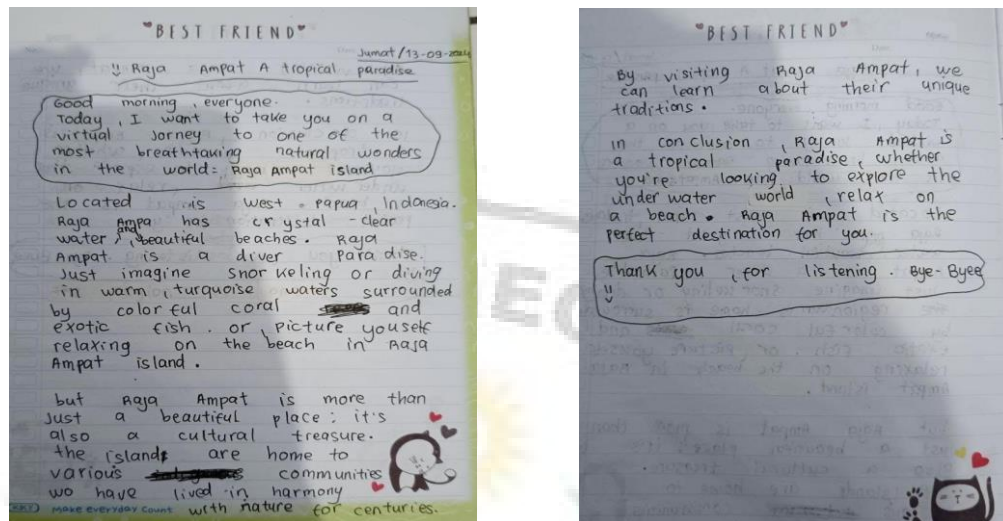


Figure 1.1 Student's writing example

From the example of descriptive text written by the student above, it can be seen that there are still many inappropriate errors. In terms of content, the student was able to present the main idea about Raja Ampat by mentioning its natural beauty, location, and cultural value. However, the content was still limited because the ideas were not well developed and there was repetition, making the description less detailed and rich. Regarding organization, the writing already had a logical order starting from the introduction, description, and cultural aspect, but the transitions between sentences and paragraphs were weak, causing the text to sound less coherent. In the vocabulary aspect, the student used some descriptive words such as breathtaking, crystal-clear, and exotic fish, but there were still repetitions of simple words like beautiful and some inappropriate word choices, showing limited vocabulary variety. In terms of grammar, there were several errors in article usage, plural forms, and sentence structure, for example, "Raja Ampat is a diver paradise" should be "a diver's paradise" and "the island are home" should be "the islands are home."

Finally, in mechanics, the student had problems with capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, such as writing “jorney” instead of “journey” and using inconsistent periods. Therefore, the student showed enthusiasm in writing a descriptive text but still faced difficulties in all five aspects of writing as stated by Brown (2004).

To analyze the difficulties experienced by students in writing descriptive texts, the researchers proposed a study entitled "Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Texts in Junior High School."

1.2 Problem of the Study

The problem of this study is formulated in the form of a question: What are the students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts in junior high school?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts in Junior High School.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the students' difficulties faced by ninth grade students at SMP Swasta Gajah Mada Medan in writing descriptive texts.

1.5 Significance of the Study

- 1) Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to increase students' knowledge about the progress and development of English language learning in schools.
- 2) Practically, this study provides useful information. Furthermore, the results are expected to provide insight into the difficulties students

face in writing descriptive texts. These findings are expected to help teachers understand these difficulties and find ways to address them.



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