

## AN ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH OF THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS AT QOMARUDDIN UNIVERSITY

By

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### Article History:

Received: 15-04-2023

Revised: 17-05-2023

Accepted: 19-06-2023

### Keywords:

Writing, Students' difficulties, descriptive paragraph, Qomaruddin University

**Abstract:** This research aimed to describe an analysis of the undergraduate students' difficulties in writing descriptive paragraph. This research was conducted in second semester of Qomaruddin University. The design of this research is a qualitative research. The population is all undergraduate students on English Language Education Study Program at Qomaruddin University.. From the population, the second semester of English Language Education Study Program which consist of 27 students is chosen as the sample of this research. The instrument of the study of the data from test, questionnaire, and interview.

The components of writing that are analyzed are generic structure (content), organization, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. The result of this research shows that the second semester students of Qomaruddin University have difficulty in writing descriptive text, the difficulties are difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, generic structure (content) and organization. Many of them make mistakes in the verb agreement and tenses in grammar, their vocabulary is still not quite right and the spelling of words is not correct, then punctuation marks such as the use of periods, commas and capital letters are still inaccurate and need to improve. While the factors that cause the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text are lack of interest, lack of knowledge, lack of proficiency, and almost of students were answered that their environment was quiet supportive for writing.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Research

Language is important for people life. They use language every time in their life. We can not express what we want to share, if we don't use language in our life. By language we can get good communication and interaction with the other people. Brown (2007 : 17) stated Language is acquired by all people in much the same way and used for communication. Language also means of communication to express everything that is

implied in humans. Communication will be carried out in the presence of language. Therefore, we must learn to communicate well by using language.

We can use many kinds of languages to communicate with other people in the world, and one of them is English. English has a great role many aspects of life. English is a tool of communication to get information and it can be used in formal education as the academic subject. It is taught as a compulsory subject in elementary, junior high school, senior high school and as a complementary subject in university.

English has four skills those are, listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are often divided into two types : receptive skill and productive skill. According to Brown (2001 : 232) language performance has fashioned two forms of receptive performance, aural (auditory) and reading, and two forms of productive performance, oral and written. Harmer (2007 : 265) stated that Receptive skills is a term used for reading and listening, skills where meaning is extracted from the discourse. Productive skills is the term for speaking and writing, skills where students actually have to produce language themselves.

Writing is important skill and to know about the ability, students have to make a writing activity. Each students is expected to produce a brief and well-organized paragraph. In writing class, usually are asked to write simple paragraph, such as narrative, recount, descriptive, procedure, discussion, review, spoof and expository, as their writing exercises process.

Writing descriptive paragraph is challanging that the undergraduate students have a difficulties in writing. Especially for the first year students of the University, who is learning writing various kinds of longer paragraphs Based on interview with lecture who teach writing in Qomaruddin University, the researcher know that the difficulties in writing subject is writing descriptive paragraph. It means that they are not be able to find the idea when writing a paragraph. they still difficult to develop their ideas well, In the other hand, the undergraduate students still confuse about understanding organization and mechanics. Most of them write incorrect the punctuation of paragraph They also could not finish their writing at the end of the time set because of not have ideas and lack of motivation to write. If the researcher wants to know about undergraduate students' ability in English, the researcher can see from their writing. This research is focused at Qomaruddin University.

## LITERATUR REVIEW

writing is one of the fourth skills in English. According to Harmer (2004:31) writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English . Writing is a form of communication that is conveyed in written form. According to Harmer (2001:79) writing is a form of communication to deliver though or to express feeling through written form. In this era, we always use written form in communication. examples of the form of writing that we use in our daily activities are text messages, letters, advertisements, emails, blogs and other social media. Writing is important for us to understand and learn, especially for students who are in the process of language learning. In language learning, writing is one of important skills because it is the most effective way to show someone's English proficiency.

Nunan (2003 : 88) states that writing is an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph

that is clear to be understood by the people. According to Brown (2001 :336): “writing is thinking process, because writing is a process of put ideas on the paper to transform thought into words and give them structure and coherent organization”. This process shows a requirement to digging or finding ideas and write them into a good paragraph. All of those written paragraph should be clear, so that the reader can understand all of the writer's ideas, desires, hope and the author’s experience.

Harmer (2004:63) argued that writing is exploring ideas and organizing ideas. Exploring ideas includes vocabulary, interviewing someone, and discussion. Meanwhile, organizing ideas consists of ordering information in a paragraph, writing topic sentences, limiting information, using a time sequence, making an idea map, categorizing and making outline, summarizing ideas, and writing title. Organizing ideas is important as a paragraph need to develop cohesion and coherence, in order to be easily followed by the readers. Based on writing theories, it can be concluded that writing is a process of thinking to realize an idea into a good paragraph, it is a communication tool through written form which has several rules to be followed and applied so the readers can understand the ideas of the writer.

According to Weigle (2002:116) there are five components in scoring rubric for assessing writing, they are : content, organization, language use/grammar, vocabulary and mechanic.

Table 2.1 scoring rubric for assessing writing

Component	Score	Level	Criteria
Content	16-20	Very Good	The content relevant to the subject of writing.
	11-15	Good	The content almost relevant to the topic, but lacks detail.
	6-10	Fair	The content has little substance.
	1-5	Poor	The content is nonsubstantive
Organization	16-20	Very Good	The writing is well organized and the ideas are clearly stated.
	11-15	Good	The writing is loosely organized but main ideas stand out.
	6-10	Fair	The writing is fairly organized but the ideas are disconnected
	1-5	Poor	The writing is poorly organized
Language use/grammar	16-20	Very Good	Few errors of grammatical inaccuracies.
	11-15	Good	Several errors of grammatical inaccuracies.
	6-10	Fair	Frequent errors of grammatical inaccuracies.
	1-5	Poor	Dominated by errors of grammatical inaccuracies.
Vocabulary	16-20	Very Good	Effective word choice and usage.
	11-15	Good	Occasional errors of word choice and usage.
	6-10	Fair	Frequent errors of word choice and usage.
	1-5	Poor	Dominated by errors of word choice and usage.
Mechanics	16-20	Very Good	Few errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Component	Score	Level	Criteria
	11-15	Good	Occasional errors of spelling,punctuation and capitalization.
	6-10	Fair	Frequent errors of spelling,punctuation and capitalization.
	1-5	Poor	dominated by errors of spelling,punctuation and capitaization.

According to this table, five evaluations of the same composition are made, each from a different perspective: organization (20 points), content (20 points), language use (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), and mechanics (20 points). The total score can range from 100 (maximum) to 25 (minimum).

Furthermore, the classification of undergraduate students writing score was broken down by Weigle (2002:116) into four mastery levels :

Table 2.2 categorization of students mastery level

Score	Categorize
76 -100	Very good
51-75	Good
26- 50	Fair
1-25	poor

## METHOD

The design of this research was descriptive qualitative. According to Creswell (2012 : 45), qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods. The phenomenon that occurred was about a real situation faced by someone. This research used descriptive form with words from the data. Sugiyono (2017:140) stated that qualitative research is called naturalistic method. For this research, qualitative descriptive used as a research design because all the data in the form of written or verbal words from observing people and behavior.

## RESULT

The researcher analyzed the difficulties faced by second semester students and the factors causing of the undergraduate students' difficulties in writing, especially in descriptive paragraph. In obtaining data, researcher used test,questionnaire and interview. The test was to check the second semester students' difficulties about writing descriptive paragraph. The questionnaire was to analyze for the factors of difficulties that faced by the second semester students in writing descriptive paragraph. The interview was to know the factors of difficulties that faced by the second semester students in writing descriptive paragraph through the lecturer. All of the data collection were held by offline process.

The data collection process was carried out three times. The first meeting was giving test to the second semester students. The second meeting was giving questionnaire to the second semester students. The last meeting was doing interview to the lecturer of writing in the second semester students.

Based on the findings above, the researcher discussed in detail. The data were obtained from instruments, they were : test, questionnaire and interview. The data was done by three meetings. First, the test was distributed to the second semester in Qomaruddin University. It was done via offline process. Before the test was distributed from the students, the researcher explained about structure of descriptive paragraph, give them list of vocabulary and example of descriptive paragraph. Then, the students was doing their test in individually. Second, the questionnaire was distributed to the second semester in Qomaruddin University. It also was done via offline process. The research asked to the students for doing the questionnaire based on their feeling for taking the writing class. There were 34 questions in the questionnaire. The last was the interview to the lecturer of writing class in Qomaruddin University. There were 10 questions to interview the lecturer. It was done by meeting her face to face in the campus. There were several things that must be noted down. It will be arranged based on the findings on each problem.

From the result of data analysis of interview and distributing questionnaire, the researcher found some factors causing the students' difficulties in writing descriptive paragraph. From 25 students only 5 of students' difficulties are caused by lack of interest, 25 of students' difficulties were caused by lack of knowledge, 25 of students' difficulties were caused by lack of proficiency. About the external factors, 24 of students were answered that their environment was quiet supportive for writing.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research related with the answer of the statements of the problem based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter. In this section, conclusion were drawn to answer one by one:

1. Based on data analyzed from test, it can be seen that there were 73% of students got a fair predicate their grammar aspect, In vocabulary 65% of students got a good predicate and 84% in mechanics got a good predicate, . In the organization 35% of students got the very good predicate and in the generic structure (content) 38% of the students had the very good predicate.
2. There were aspects about difficulties that the students faced in writing descriptive paragraph. namely grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. And the other difficulty were in generic structure (content) and organization. This can be proven through student test results that students face the most significant difficulties in aspects of grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. Many of them make mistakes in the verb agreement and tenses in grammar, their vocabulary is still not quite right and the spelling of words is not correct, then punctuation marks such as the use of periods, commas and capital letters are still inaccurate and need to improve.

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