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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING SKILL AT THE SEVENTH GRADE OF MTs PPTH TEMBILAHAN

Zuriani[1*], Samsul Amri[2], Melda Yeni[3]
[1,2,3]Universitas Islam Indragiri, Indonesia
Author (s) Email: [1]zurianizuri28@gmail.com,[2]mr.amri85@gamil.com,
[3]meldayenirez@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author Email: zurianizuri28@gmail.com

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find students difficulties in writing skill. Writing is one of the skills that can be called success in learning English. The design of this research was the descriptive quantitative method. Through the purposive sampling technique, 21 students of VII.1 at MTs PPTH Tembilahan were chosen as the sample of this research. In this research, the researcher used questionnaire as research question. The researcher found that the students of VII.1 at MTs PPTH Tembilahan had difficulties in writing skill. The researcher analyzed the data based on five indicators in writing. There was expressing idea, vocabulary, grammar, handwriting and mechanic of writing. The result showed the highest mean score is 88 (84%) in expressing idea, followed by handwriting with a mean score 81 (81%). Furthermore, the mean score of mechanic of writing is 78 (74%). Next, for the grammar mean score is 75 (71%), and the last indicator is vocabulary which shows mean score 73 (69%). Based on the analysis, it was concluded that the difficulties of students is caused students do not have much knowledge to expressing idea in writing, students not used to write in English, students are unfamiliar with mechanic of writing such as punctuation rules, comas, and periods, some student have difficulty grasping basic grammatical rules in the English language such as tenses and formula form, and some students limited vocabulary and problems choosing the correct words.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial element of communication that allows us to convey our thoughts, emotions, and views to others. According to Anjayani (2016), writing involves the act of recording language on paper or other surfaces to convey the writer's ideas and messages, encompassing language structure and vocabulary usage. Writing is a fundamental language ability that evolves into a sophisticated skill for learners to master. Writing is a productive skill that entails

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generating and organizing ideas in a written format. Individuals must acquire English writing abilities as it involves converting thoughts and concepts into written form.

According to Huy (2015) states that "Writing is crucial for success in college and university". Consequently, writing enhances skills in vocabulary and grammar. Subsequently, writing assistance aids the learner and assists in comprehending the text efficiently. Writing must be suitable and relevant to the title, and it is essential to understand the components of writing, including conjunctions, grammar, vocabulary, and various writing types, from general to specific. Consequently, during the writing process, students ought to consider language elements like grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Students will find knowledge and other resources more easily if they possess strong writing skills. Writing is a form of expression within a language that is formed by a specific set of symbols, carrying conventional meanings to represent the words of that language in a visual manner.

The researcher conducted study at seventh grade of MTs PPTH Tembilahan. The researcher found MTs PPTH Tembilahan offers the English subject to students, especially in term of writing skill. This school has used Merdeka Curriculum as guide in teaching and learning process. Based on ministry of Education and Culture about Merdeka Curriculum, the students should able to communicate their ideas and experiences through simple and structured paragraphs, showing development in specific vocabulary and sentence structure. But, the target in writing skill in this school has not been achieved. Their score of writing skill did not achieve the passing grade.

Following a pre-observation at MTs PPTH Tembilahan and interviews with teacher and students, it was found that some problems of the students. The students seem having problem in vocabulary. The students just repeat the same vocabulary with the other sentence. It means that the students do not have a lot of vocabulary. When the students compose the texts, they should have some vocabularies to they explore in sentence. Vocabulary is important in composing a text. Without vocabulary the students cannot develop their ideas into texts.

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Another reason that is it was found, why they were low in writing skills due to seem having poor in grammar. Based on the students writing, the students cannot arrange between one sentence and another sentence, not also in vocabulary and grammar but also the students seem having to get problems in expressing idea.

Considering the background above, the researcher was proposed the research proposal entitled *"*An Analysis of the Students' Difficulties in Writing Skill of Seventh Grade at MTs PPTH Tembilahan".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition Students Difficulties

Natsir & Anisati (2016) state that "Difficulty refers to something that is challenging to perform or comprehend." Challenges arise when learners commit mistakes in the educational process or while receiving guidance. Many students faced difficulties during the learning process due to a lack of understanding of the material or subjects, especially when composing English texts or during the teacher's instruction. Meanwhile, as stated by Mulyadi (2018) in Purnomo (2023), difficulty is a specific state that an individual encounters, characterized by the presence of challenges in the process of reaching an objective, necessitating increased effort to successfully navigate through them.

Higa (1996) in Ameliani (2019) offers another definition of difficulty, describing it as the effort students require to finish the task. It is a concept that holds both objective and subjective validity. It is also a comparative notion where certain starting points and objectives are specified while an implicit comparison is suggested. Then, according to Cronbach (1984) as cited in Ameliani (2019), anxiety can create challenges that motivate individuals to steer clear of psychological failure.

From those theories, it can be concluded that notion of difficulty is a situation that shows the characteristics of obstacles or difficulty in carrying out an activity to achieve a goal. Difficulties also often occur due to lack of effort, participation and motivation of students in the learning process.

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Definition Writing Skill

Khotimah in Khairunnisa (2019) states, “Writing is an activity that is inherently tied to everyone, as they regularly communicate both verbally and in writing in their daily lives”. Consequently, developing writing skills periodically should consistently aim for improvement. Particularly in today's globalized world, writing is a linguistic ability that holds significant potential in the realm of education. Suhendra in Alawiyah (2021) asserts that writing skills refer to an individual's ability to convey their thoughts and ideas in written format. Before a writer begins something, he must consider various aspects.

Abidah & Sabur (2019) argue that "Writing is a productive skill that students find challenging to comprehend as it requires the formation of grammatically accurate sentences". The writers must organize those sentences correctly to transform them into coherent texts that are straightforward to understand. Meanwhile, according to Dewi & Ayunisa (2020) state that “Writing is a difficult skill that students need to master”. Writing skill refers to an individual's ability to convey thoughts or concepts through the careful selection of words and the construction of clear sentences, allowing readers to easily comprehend and accept the message. Writing, as a productive skill, encompasses various elements, including the use of language, grammar, punctuation, handwriting, spelling, and appropriate vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, Jayanti (2019) determined that students need to comprehend these elements to write communicatively when conveying their thoughts.

From those theories, it can be concluded that writing skill is a skill that a person has in several aspects such as the correct use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary so that it is easy for readers to understand. Writing skills are also the ability a person has to articulate clear ideas, express thoughts and ideas in written form.

Difficulties in Writing Skill

According to Lestari (2023) states that "Mastering vocabulary and tenses is essential for achieving strong writing." We need to select suitable words to

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construct sentences and expand them into a paragraph. Writing abilities are a crucial aspect of communication.

According to Darmadi in Khairunnisa (2019) explains that typically, individuals face various issues or challenges when it comes to writing. Initially, challenges arise in developing and articulating concepts. Such issues arise as complaints, specifically that students remain unclear about how to identify engaging ideas or subjects for their writing. Secondly, there is the issue of language usage. Learners frequently continue to err while utilizing language. Additionally, due to the restricted vocabulary of students unfamiliar with using English, they frequently use repetitive words in their writing.

Additionally, Alkautsar in Wahyumi (2019) asserts that “Writing is a skill that is developed through learning.” Writing is an English skill that needs to be taught in an integrated way, yet it is considered the hardest language skill for students to master. According to Huy (2015) "Writing is frequently seen as the most challenging language skill because it demands greater productive language control than the other skills". In reality, the students lack the ability to produce quality writing.

Based on the opinion above, it can be concluded that there are some difficulties in writing skills such as, difficulties in term of expressing idea, grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling and punctuation. And mastering several of the aspects above is the main key to getting good writing.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used quantitative design. According to Paramita et.al (2021) quantitative research conducted to provide answers to a problem and obtain broader information about a phenomenon using the stages of a quantitative approach. The population of this research consisted of 43 students at seventh grade of MTs PPTH Tembilahan. In this research, the researcher used purposive sampling. As stated by Muin (2023) state that “Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples with special consideration or selection”. The researcher was only taking 21 students of VII.1 as the sample.

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The researcher used questionnaire as a technique in collecting the data. According to Sugiyono in Sayekti (2023) state that "Questionnaire is a technique for collecting data by asking the respondent question". The questionnaire consisted of 14 statements, the answer choices consist of a Likert scale model with five answer choices consisting of strongly disagree (score 1), disagree (score 2), neutral (score 3), agree (score 4) and strongly agree (score 5).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of students' difficulties in writing skill, the researcher classified the category of their difficulties. Below is the table's presentation:

Table 1. The Classification of Students' Difficulties in Writing Skill

No	Indicators	Mean score/ percentage	Classification
1.	Expressing idea	88 (84%)	Agree
2.	Vocabulary	73 (69%)	Agree
3.	Grammar	75 (71%)	Agree
4.	Handwriting	81 (77%)	Agree
5.	Mechanic of writing	78 (74%)	Agree

From the overall result of each indicator, it informs the students' difficulties in writing skill at the seventh grade of MTs PPTH Tembilahan. The researcher analyzed the data based on five indicators in writing. There was expressing idea, vocabulary, grammar, handwriting and mechanic of writing. From the data, it can be seen from analysis of the first indicator, the mean of this indicator is 88, it included in agree classification. Moreover, the percentage of the students' agreement with this indicator is 84%. Then in the second indicator, the mean of this indicator is 73, it included in agree classification. Moreover, the percentage of the students' agreement with this indicator is 69%. Then in the third indicator, the mean of this indicator is 75 and percentage is 71% of the students' agreement it included in agree classifications. Furthermore, in the fourth indicator, the mean of this indicator is 81 and percentage is 77% of the student agreement it included in agree classification. The last indicator, the mean of this indicator is 78, it included in agree classification. Moreover, the percentage of the students' agreement is 74%

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Based on the result above showed the highest mean score is expressing idea, indicating that students do not have much knowledge to expressing idea in writing. Followed by handwriting, indicating that students' not used to write in English. Furthermore, mechanic of writing indicating that students are unfamiliar with mechanic of writing such as punctuation rules, comas, and periods. Next, in grammar indicating that some students' have difficulty grasping basic grammatical rules in the English language such as tenses and formula form. And the last is vocabulary indicating the some students' limited vocabulary and problems choosing the correct words.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in MTs PPTH Tembilahan, it can be conducted to found out "what are the difficulties faced by students in writing skill?" after distributed the questionnaire to 21 students, the result showed that the most students had difficulty in writing skill. The researcher analyzed the data based on five indicators in writing. The result showed mean score in expressing idea is 88 (84%), followed by handwriting with score 81 (77%). The mean score of mechanic of writing is 78 (74%), the difficulty in grammar is 75 (71%), and difficulty of vocabulary is 73 (69%). Based on the analysis, it was concluded that the difficulties of students is caused students do not have much knowledge to expressing idea in writing, students not used to write in English, students are unfamiliar with mechanic of writing such as punctuation rules, comas, and periods, have difficulty grasping basic grammatical rules in the English language such as tenses and formula form and limited vocabulary and problems choosing the correct words.

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