

## THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT SMPI NURUSSHOBAH MUMBULSARI

Aan Nuriyandani<sup>1</sup>, Imam Ghozali<sup>2</sup>, Ribut Sabartono<sup>3</sup>

[aannuriandani@gmail.com](mailto:aannuriandani@gmail.com), [ighozali1977@gmail.com](mailto:ighozali1977@gmail.com), [ributsabartono@uij.ac.id](mailto:ributsabartono@uij.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

Teaching writing is an important way for communication and also it helps us develop, organize and reinforce our thoughts. This research reports on an analysis of the eighth-grade students' writing ability of descriptive text at SMPI Mumbulsari. 24 students were chosen as the sample. The method used in this study was descriptive research. The data from this research was collected from a writing test. It was found that the ability of the students in writing the descriptive text was in a fair category from the score. Based on the result, 1 student (Excellent), 7 students (Good), 10 students (Fair), 5 students (Poor), 1 student (Very Poor). Meanwhile, having to Analyze the students' ability in each aspect of writing, it can be said was not quite satisfying. It can be know from the students' mean score categorized as fair, and the students' score based on the five aspects of the mechanic was low.

**Keywords:** *ability, descriptive text, writing skill*

---

<sup>1</sup>Islamic University of Jember, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Islamic University of Jember, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Islamic University of Jember, Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

English at junior high school is developed Scientific Approach through four language skills, namely Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing. One of the language skills that are considered to be difficult is writing. This research focused on the students' writing ability, especially in writing descriptive text. The research has been conducted on the Eight grade students in SMPI Nurus Shobah Mumbulsari. The English curriculum that is used for Eight grade of SMPI Nurus Shobah is the 2013 curriculum for English junior High school, the English lesson taught twice a week for each class, with an allocated time of 6x40 minutes in two meetings. Dealing with the teaching and learning process in SMPI Nurus Shobah Mumbulsari, the teacher found that some students were able to write well but most of them still got difficulties in writing especially in a descriptive text (per some information, September 2019). Based information above, the researcher decided to conduct research on the students' writing Ability of descriptive text. In writing descriptive text the students are required to have good mastery in vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, content, and organization to describe the particular person, place, or things in descriptive text. To know the students, ability in writing descriptive text would be useful to identify the aspects of writing already achieved by the students by conducting a writing test. In writing tests, the students would be describing people especially a mother. The researcher decided to choose the topic about mother because this topic is quite easy for the eight class students to describe the mother.

As an interesting issue, several previous studies about writing ability in English language teaching (ELT) had been conducted in different contexts. Tamba, Situmurang, and Ginting (2020). Conducted in research Students ability in writing descriptive text at eighth-grade of SMP TD Pardede Foundation Medan in the form of descriptive qualitative design. The findings showed us that the collected data showed that the majority of the eighth-grade students in SMP TD Pardede foundation Medan were categorized average in writing descriptive text. The common mistakes were misspelling and lack of vocabulary. The research questions are: How is the writing ability of descriptive text of Eight grade students at SMPI Nurus Sobah Mumbulsari? How are the students' scores of descriptive text based on category levels of scores?, Which aspect(s) of writing ability do students perform poorly?

Based on the research question, this research was intended to describe the writing ability of descriptive text of eight grade students at SMPI Nurus Shobah, to describe the students' scores of descriptive text based on category levels of scores, and to describe the aspect(s) of writing ability the performed poorly by the students.

Purba (2018 states that writing as a process to get the product is influenced by some elements such as vocabulary, grammar, organization, spelling, and punctuation". The main objective is to make the writing becomes easier to learn by the students.

Writing is a productive and expressive activity. When we write, we compose meaning we put together facts and make something new. Hacer (2019) writing is not only an important way of communication but also helps us develop, organize, and reinforce, our thoughts. It means that writing is a process of thought.

Descriptive text is a text which has a purpose to describe a particular person, things, or places. According to Saraka (in Fardhani 2005) states that the description creates a sense of impression of readers, helping them visualize a scene of a person's place or things or understand the sensation. It means that descriptive text will make the readers see the person, place, or object in their imagination. Thus, the reader will know the item described by reading the description in descriptive text.

Sudarwati and Grace (in Tamba et al, 2020) mentioned that the generic structure of descriptive text consists of two components Identification (an identifying phenomenon to be described), and Description (described parts, qualities, and characteristics). The descriptive text has two elements first that identify phenomenon, Identification, and the second Description to portray parts, qualities, or characteristics in Descriptive text. The students' writing skill was evaluated from the aspects of writing as the indicators, namely: grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, content, and organization.

## **METHOD**

This research applied the descriptive research design because it intends to describe the students' writing ability of Descriptive text.

Those terms were operationally defined as follows:

Writing ability in this research referred to the students' ability to write a descriptive text that tells about description about their mother, considered 80 up to 100 words and the duration in the meeting was 45 minutes. The description of students' ability consisted of the ability to write a descriptive text based on the five aspects of writing including Grammar (using the simple present tense, articles, preposition, singular and plural non), Vocabulary (using variety of words, appropriate words in capitalization and spelling), Content (including clear description and information of the subject, the relevance to the topic), Mechanic (covering of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling), and Organization (unified paragraphs and focus on the main idea related to the topic, the use of transitions). The procedures used in this research adopted from Hughes (2003: 66) design are as follows: first Finding the research problem. Based on the preliminary study, the researcher found that eight grade students' had difficulties in their writing. By finding the research problem, the researcher chooses to research the eighth-grade students' writing ability. Secondly Determining the research is purposive. Third Determining the respondents of the research by using proportional random sampling. Fourth Constructing the research instrument in the form of a descriptive writing test. Five Asking the

students to write the Descriptive text sixth Scoring the results of the descriptive writing test based on the aspects of writing. seven Analyzed the students' ability based on the category levels of scores and finding the indicator(s) of writing ability that performs poorly. Finally, Concluding to answer the research problem.

Descriptive text in this research means a simple short text written by the Eight grade students of SMPI Mumbulsari which tells about the description of their mother. The descriptive text is written at least consists of 80 up to 100 words with the topic about mother, the description of students' ability consisted of the ability to write descriptive text based on the five aspects of writing including Grammar (using the simple present tense, articles, preposition, singular and plural non), Vocabulary (using a variety of words, appropriate words in capitalization and spelling), Content (including clear description and information of the subject, the relevance to the topic), Mechanic (covering of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling), and Organization (unified paragraphs and focus on the main idea related to the topic, the use of transitions).

The respondents of this research were the Eight grade students of SMPI Nurus Shobah Mumbulsari. There were four classes of the eighth-grade students in SMPI Nurus Shobah Mumbulsari. Each class consists of 30 students, so there were 120 respondents. To limit the population, the researcher took a sample for this research. A sample is the parts of the population to support the research and taken by using a particular technique. To determine the subject of this research, the writer conducted proportional random sampling and the research took 24 students for respondents.

The data about writing achievement were taken from the students' writing ability in writing descriptive text (i.e. in the form of scores) was the data of this research. To guarantee its content validity, the writing test was developed based on the basic competencies of writing stated in curriculum 2013 for junior high school. The writing test was assessed using an analytic scoring rubric based on the aspects of writing. According to Hughes (2003:100), the Analytic scoring method is a method of scoring that requires separate scores for each writing aspect.

The scores obtained from the writing test were analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics analysis.

First to know the students' ability in writing descriptive text, analysis of mean score would be used with the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M : students' mean score.

$\sum X$  : the total score of the students' writing test.

N : the total number of the respondents.

Secondly to know the distribution of score levels adapted from Jacobs, et al. (in Hughes, 2003) To know the distribution of score levels adapted from Jacobs, et al. (in Hughes, 2003) in the table below was used.

**Table 1. The category of the score levels**

Range of the score	Category
85 – 100	Excellent
70 – 84	Good
55 – 69	Fair
40 – 54	Poor
25 – 39	Very poor

Last to know which indicator(s) perform poorly, analysis of each aspect of writing

would be analyzed by the following formula

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

E : The percentage of students' writing ability for each indicator

N : The total score for each indicator

N : The total score for all indicator

(Adapted from Cohen, 2007)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 2. The Students' Writing test scores Given by scorer 1 and 2**

No	Name	Scorer 1	Scorer 2	Average
1	D C	72	76	74
2	R A	52	48	50
3	W A	60	64	62
4	R J	72	64	68
5	S A	56	48	52
6	U H	88	84	86
7	M S	56	56	56
8	I R	84	84	84
9	S N	64	60	62
10	S N A	32	36	34
11	M R	84	84	84
12	S S	68	60	64

13	N M	72	72	72
14	R M S	52	56	54
15	M N	60	56	58
16	M R F	72	76	74
17	M M	48	56	52
18	A H	68	60	64
19	M R F	68	64	66
20	MS	72	80	76
21	S H	64	68	66
22	M	60	64	62
23	M F	84	80	82
24	A P	40	40	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>15.40</b>	<b>1.524</b>	<b>1.542</b>

Based on table 1 above, the mean score of the students' writing ability was obtained by using the following formula.

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{N} = \frac{1542}{24} = 64,25$$

Besides the result of the data analysis above, it was revealed that the Students' mean score in the writing test was 64. According to the classification of score levels, the Eighth-grade students writing ability of Descriptive text in SMPI NurusShobah was categorized as fair since the score was in the range of 55- 69.

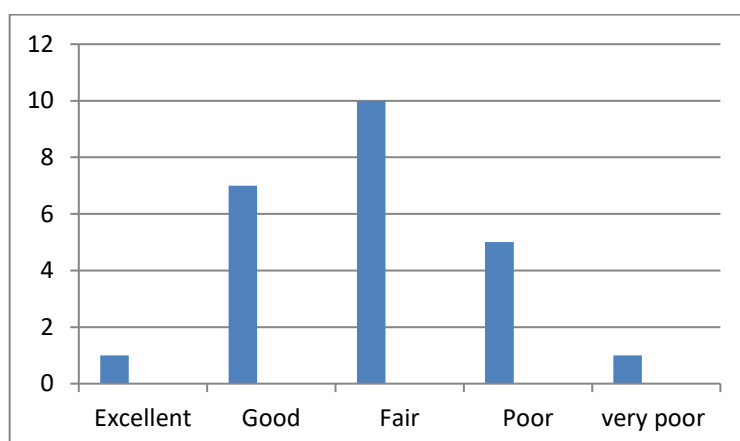
The detail of the students' scores in each writing aspect given by the first and the second scorer can be seen in Table 2 below. The students' scores in each writing aspect were also analyzed to know which aspect perform poorly. The students' Scores of Descriptive text Based on Category Levels of Scorers. The analysis of the students' scores in writing a Descriptive text was done by using the mean score formula. The students writing scores were given by the first and second scorer. The mean score of the students' writing obtained was classified based on the category of scores level. The category of scores level used to know the distribution of the students' score which adapted from Jacob et al. (in Hughes, 2003). The category of the students' scores in this research writing ability of descriptive text was presented in table 3.below.

**Table 3. the category of the score levels**

Range of the score	Category	Frequency
85 – 100	Excellent	1
70 – 84	Good	7
55 – 69	Fair	10

40 – 54	Poor	5
25 – 39	Very poor	1

From the table above, it can be known that there 1 student who was categorized as excellent since the students could achieve scores ranging from 85 to 100. 7 students were categorized as well most of them were able to achieve scores ranging from 70 to 84 scores. Meanwhile, it can also be seen that there were 10 students in the category of fair because the students got scores ranging from 55 to 69. Moreover, 5 students were categorized as poor since the students achieved a score ranging from 40 to 54. But there was 1 student in the category of very poor because the students got the score ranging from 25 until 39. On average, most of the students achieved the scores categorized as fair. To make it clear, the classification of the students' scores in writing ability descriptive text is presented in figure 1. below.



**Figure 1. the Classification of students' Writing scores Based on the Classification of the Score Levels**

The aspect of Writing Ability Performed poorly

The detail of the students' scores in each writing aspect given by the first and the second scorer can be seen in Table 3 below. The students' scores in each writing aspect were also analyzed to know which aspect perform poorly.

**Table 4. the students' scores in each aspect of Writing from score 1 and 2**

No	Score 1					Score	Score 2					Score	Ave Rage
	C	O	V	G	M		C	O	V	G	M		
1	4	4	4	3	3	72	4	4	4	3	4	76	74
2	3	3	3	2	2	52	3	3	3	1	2	48	50
3	3	3	4	2	3	60	3	3	4	3	3	64	62
4	3	4	5	4	2	72	3	3	5	3	2	64	68
5	3	3	4	2	2	56	3	3	3	2	1	48	52

No	Score 1					Score	Score 2					Score	Ave Rage
	C	O	V	G	M		C	O	V	G	M		
6	5	5	5	4	3	88	5	4	5	4	3	84	86
7	4	4	3	1	2	56	4	4	4	1	1	56	56
8	5	5	5	3	3	84	5	5	4	3	4	84	84
9	3	4	4	3	2	64	3	3	4	3	2	60	62
10	2	1	2	2	1	32	2	2	2	1	2	36	34
11	5	4	4	4	4	84	4	5	4	4	4	84	84
12	4	4	4	3	2	68	4	4	3	2	2	60	64
13	3	4	3	4	4	72	3	4	3	5	3	72	72
14	2	3	4	1	3	52	3	2	4	2	3	56	54
15	3	4	4	2	2	60	4	3	3	2	2	56	58
16	5	3	4	4	2	72	4	4	5	3	3	76	74
17	2	2	3	2	3	48	3	3	3	2	3	56	52
18	4	5	4	2	2	68	3	4	3	3	2	60	64
19	3	4	4	3	3	68	4	3	4	3	2	64	66
20	2	5	4	4	3	72	4	5	4	4	3	80	76
21	3	4	5	1	3	64	4	4	5	2	2	68	66
22	3	4	4	2	2	60	3	3	4	3	3	64	62
23	4	4	5	4	4	84	5	4	4	4	3	80	82
24	2	3	3	1	1	40	3	1	2	2	2	40	40
Tot	80	89	94	63	61	1540	86	83	89	65	61	1524	1532
Al													
Ave Rage	3	4	4	2	2		4	3	3	3	3		

Based on table 3, the students' scores based on each aspect of writing who perform poorly was mechanic. The students' mean scores in the mechanic aspect given by score 1 were 2 and the mean scores in mechanic aspect given by scorer 2 were 3. It means that some of the student's mean scores in writing descriptive text based on the aspect of mechanics were 2.3. To show the students writing scores in the aspect of a mechanic, the researcher decided to apply the following formula based.

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100 = \frac{2.3}{5} \times 100 = 46$$

E: The students' writing ability in one aspect of writing

n: The mean score in one aspect of writing

N: The total score in each aspect of writing

We know from the calculation above, it can be known that the students' scores in the aspect of a mechanic are 46 and it is classified as poor since the students' scores are in the range 40 – 54. The details of the students' scores in



the aspect of mechanics would be written in table 2 below. The number of the score in the table below has taken from the students' scores in the <sup>aspect</sup> of a mechanic from score 1 (the researcher scores) and the scores 2 (the teacher English Eight grade) to know the scores category based on the category level of scores, the researcher applying the following formula adapted from cohen.2007).

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

E: The students' writing ability in the aspect of writing

n: The mean score in one aspect of writing

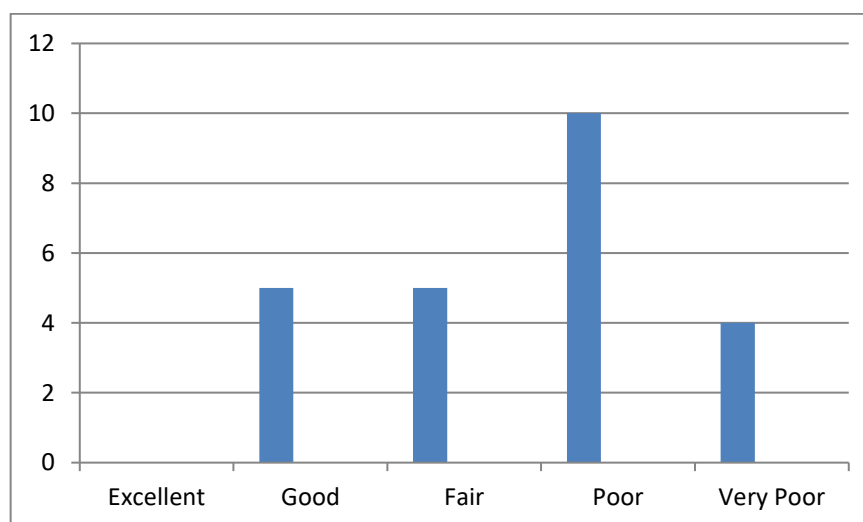
N: The total score in each aspect of writing

**Table 5. the Students' Scores in the Aspect of Mechanic**

No	Name	Scorer1	Scorer2	Average	Score	Category
1	D C	3	4	3,5	70	Good
2	R A	2	2	2	40	Poor
3	W A	3	3	3	60	Fair
4	R J	2	2	2	40	Poor
5	S A	2	1	1,5	30	Very poor
6	U H	3	3	3	60	Fair
7	M S	2	1	1,5	30	Very poor
8	I R	3	4	3,5	70	Good
9	S N	2	2	2	40	Poor
10	S N A	1	2	1,5	30	Very poor
11	M S	4	4	4	80	Good
12	S S	2	2	2	40	Poor
13	N M	4	3	3,5	70	Good
14	R M S	3	3	3	60	Fair
15	M N	2	2	2	40	Poor
16	M R F	2	3	2,5	50	Poor
17	M M	3	3	3	60	Fair
18	A H	2	2	2	40	Poor
19	M R F	3	2	2,5	50	Poor

20	M S	3	3	3	60	Fair
21	S H	3	2	2,5	50	Poor
22	M	2	3	2,5	50	Poor
23	M F	4	3	3,5	70	Good
24	A P	1	2	1,5	30	Very poor
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1.220</b>	
<b>Mean score</b>		<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>50,8</b>	

The result in table 5 above showed that the students' scores in the aspect of mechanics were performed poorly. 5 students achieved a good score in the range 70 until 84. Then, 5 students were categorized as fair since the students could achieve scores ranging from 55 until 69. Moreover, 10 students achieved poor scores in the range of 40 until 54, and the last there were 4 students categorized as very poor since they achieved the scores in the range of 25 until 39. To make it clear, the classification of the students score in the aspect of grammar is presented in the figure2 below



**Figure 2. The Classification of Students' Scores in the Aspect of Mechanic**

The following sections explain the detailed calculation of the student's ability in each aspect of writing, the calculation below is used to compare the students' number in one aspect to the other aspect of writing. The formula used was:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

E: The students' writing ability in on an aspect of writing

n: The mean score in one aspect of writing

N: The total score in each aspect of writing

The researcher also analyzed the students' descriptive text writing score distribution. In this case, the researcher classified the students' descriptive text writing score into five categories in which each category had its score range. Based on the result of the analysis, it was known that there was 1 student whose scores were in the range of 85- 100 and were categorized as excellent. Then, 7 students were categorized as Good since their scores were in the range of 70- 84. Meanwhile, in a fair category, the one with the highest frequency compared to the others, there were 10 students whose scores were ranging from 55- 69. Then, in the poor category, there were 5 students whose scores were ranging from 40- 54. For the last category, very poor, it was 1 student in the category very poor because the student got the score ranging from 35- 39.

In this research, the researcher also carried out an analysis dealing with the student's ability in the five aspects of writing Content, Organizations, vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanic.

We know from the calculation above, it can be known that the students' scores in the aspect of a mechanic are 46 and it is classified as poor since the students' score are in the range 40 – 54. The number of the score in the table below has taken from the students' scores in the aspect of mechanic from score 1 (the researcher scores) and the scores 2 (the teacher English eighth grade) to know the scores category based on the category level of scores, the researcher applying the following formula adapted from cohen.2007).

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

E: The students' writing ability in the aspect of writing

n: The mean score in one aspect of writing

N: The total score in each aspect of writing

### **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

It could be concluded that the Eight-grade students' descriptive text writing ability at SMPN 1 Nurus Shobah Mumbulsari was not quite satisfying. It can be know from the students' mean score categorized as fair, and the students' score based on the five aspects of the mechanic was low. The result of the research shows that the students' descriptive text writing ability was still in the poor category. suggested giving students more practice in writing, since it was known that the students' ability in writing was already categorized as fair and some of them got poor scores. Further, since this research found that the students' ability in the aspect of the mechanic was performing poorly, it is also suggested for the English teacher to give the students more practice to improve their ability in a mechanic.

the details of the students' scores in descriptive text writing ability below: The eighth-grade students' writing ability of descriptive text at SMPI Mumbulsari was categorized as fair since the mean score of the students' descriptive text writing was 64,25., the students' scores based on the category levels of scores classified as 1 student was categorized as excellent, 7 students who were categorized as good, 10 students who were categorized as fair, 5 students who were categorized as poor, and there was only 1 student who categorized as very poor., Based on the five aspects of writing described that the aspect of writing which is performed poorly was mechanic. it can be known from the students' scores in the aspect of the mechanic was categorized as poor since the mean score in the aspect of mechanic obtained was 50,8. Most of them got very poor scores.

## REFERENCES

- Cohen, L., Lawrence, M and Keith, M. 2007. *Research methods in education (sixth Edition)*. New York: Routledge.
- Fardhani, Aan Erliyana. (2005). *Developing Writing Skills: A Guide for Beginners to Write in English*. Jember University Press
- Hughes, A. 2003. *Testing for Language Teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lilis, J., Tamba, Yolani, F., Situmurang., Queen, H., Ginting. (2020). Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive text at Eight Grade of SMP TD Pardede Foundation Medan. *Journal English Language Teaching* 3 (1), 273-282
- Morris, J., Jehn, T., Vaughan, C., Pantages, E., Torello, T., Bucheli, M., Lohman, D, and Lue, R. (2007). *A student's guide to writing in the life sciences*. Harvard University: C. D. Vaughan.
- Purba, Rodearta. (2018). Improving the Achievement on Writing Narrative text through Discussion Strategy Story Technique. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9 (1): 27-30
- Ulu, Hacer. (2019). Investigation of Fourth Grade Primary School Students' Creative Writing and Story Elements in Narrative Text Writing Skills. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 15(5): 1-15