

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher gives some theories which are related to this study. Those are definition of writing, descriptive text, and the review of previous studies.

2.1 Writing

2.1.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is one of the essential skills that language learners need to learn as an important component of their professional lives, not just for academic practice. Writing is more than just picking up a pen and putting words on paper. Because the purpose of writing is actually to convey a message to someone, so the reader must understand the meaning that the writer wants to convey. Writing needs planning and thinking so that it can be meaningful to the reader. Writing is an activity of producing something in written form so that people can read, carry out or use it (Oxford, 2008).

Writing can be defined in various ways. There are some definitions of writing proposed by experts in various ways. There are some definitions of writing proposed by experts. According to Clay in (Helisa, 2019), writing is a way of communicating which employs regulars features and form including letter shapes, print direction, consistwnt spelling, and punctuation marks.

The next definition by Nation (2009), says writing is an activity that is useful for preparing work on other skills, namely listening,

reading, and speaking. Writing is also considered an indicator for students to develop their ability to express what they feel and think. Writing is one of the language skills that students need to master well in order to master English.

The next definition is given by Harris (1993), writing is a process that occurs over a period of time, especially when taking into account the sometimes extended period of thinking before creation of the first draft. In addition, written language is considered by some to be spoken language that is poured into written form. Furthermore, the assumption that writing is putting spoken language into writing only applies to activities such as self-dictation or transcribing recordings.

2.1.2 Purpose of Writing

Writing texts is an important part of the language learning process as it is used to help learners focus on accuracy, reinforce the new language learned into themselves as well as develop literacy skills. There are purposes of writing according to Grenville (2001) as cited in Aulia (2019) as follows.

1) Writing to entertain

Entertaining writing is writing that can make the reader feel good through the plot or emotions contained in the writing. Some examples of writing that aims to entertain are novels, stories, poems, song lyrics, plays, and screenplays.

2) Writing to inform

Writing to inform is meant to inform the reader about something. The examples include newspapers, articles, scientific or business reports, instructions or procedures, and essays for schools and universities.

3) Writing to persuade

Persuasive writing is writing that aims to persuade readers of something through providing evidence, for example: advertisements, articles, newspapers, and magazines.

2.1.3 Elements of Writing

To produce a good writing, writers need to pay attention to several elements of writing. Brown (2001) suggests five main elements of writing that should be required by a writer in producing a written text. These aspects of writing are vocabulary, grammar, content, mechanics, and organization.

1) Vocabulary

In writing, vocabulary is related to word choice. A writer should be careful in choosing words in writing, meaning that students need to pay attention to the words they use when writing because each word can represent different meanings. Vocabulary also relates to the ability to use the words used in the composition as much as possible. The more vocabulary used for the text, the higher the chance of getting better results.

Remembering that vocabulary refers to a set of words, Murphy (1994) classifies words into eight different words that are familiar to most individuals. The words are as follows:

- a) Verbs: eat, write, read, and sleep
- b) Nouns: book, soap, window, chair.
- c) Determiners: this, that, the, any.
- d) Prepositions: at, in, on, between.
- e) Adjectives: beautiful, ugly, diligent, smart.
- f) Pronouns: he, you, they, we.
- g) Conjunctions: but, or, and, because.
- h) Adverbs: tomorrow, yesterday, today and last week.

2) Grammar

Grammar is the term for the patterns or guidelines that are utilized to correctly and politely create sentences in English. The study of linguistic structures and forms is known as grammar. Grammar, often known as rules, is what guides the formation of language sentences. Grammar is a philosophy of language that describes how a language is put together and functions, according to Gerot and Wignell (1994). The discussion of syntactic structure and grammatical form makes up this aspect.

3) Content

Content refers to the topic and its explanation, discussion, evaluation, and conclusion, which should be clear, specific, and relevant. Good content should meet criteria such as being full of

substantive information making the development of the thesis clear and relevant to the problem.

Content is also one of the important aspects of writing that students should pay attention to when they write. Content in writing is related to the ability to provide clear information related to the topic of writing. In addition, content is also an important aspect of writing because it refers to the clarity of paragraphs. Clarity is an important component in writing because it includes explanations of examples, reasons, and word choices (Swick, 2009). To get good content in a piece of writing, the writer must write clearly by completing his explanation with additional information so that the reader can better understand the idea that the writer wants to convey. For example, if the writer wants to write about herbivores, the writer should provide examples of animals that belong to herbivores, explain the reasons why the animals mentioned belong to the herbivore category, and pay attention to word choice.

4) Mechanic

Kane (2000) as cited in Siregar (2020), states that mechanics refers to the appearance of words, how they are spelled or arranged on paper. Mechanics consist of capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Mechanics is the graphic conversational use of language. It refers to the appearance of words, and how they are spelled or arranged on paper. The rules of mechanics try to make writing look consistent and clear. These conventions may seem

somewhat arbitrary. They are developed from thousands of experiences. Mechanics represent an economical and efficient way of writing.

Mechanics relate to punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and the type of handwriting, whether the handwriting is clear and legible or not. It is important to manage writing mechanics well because it can affect the results of writing. Mastering how to write with the correct mechanics will make the resulting sentences easy to read and fit the intention. These aspects influence each other. Students must pay attention to language rules, punctuation and spelling, completeness of information, and relevance to the problem or topic of the writing task.

5) Organization of Ideas

Organizing ability refers to the ability to organize ideas in a paragraph in a logical order. Reep (2013) states that “a paragraph achieves coherence when its sentences proceed in an order that supports one point at a time”. The sentences in a paragraph should be arranged in a logical order to make a unified contribution to the whole paragraph. In addition, a good paragraph also has elements of unity and coherence (Oshima, 1997).

Unity is an important element of a good paragraph having unity, which means in each paragraph; only one main idea is discussed. It means unity to express the ideas in a paragraph. All sentences in a paragraph need to state one thing in the topic sentence.

Meanwhile, coherence means that the sentences must fit together, that is the movement from one sentence to the next must be logical and smooth. There should be no sudden jumps. Coherence means that ideas and sentences flow together smoothly in a logical and organized way. To make the paragraph flow well, students need certain writing abilities. One of them is knowing how to organize information chronologically, spatially, and by frequency of importance; knowing how to use sentence variety and how to combine sentences; also knowing how to connect ideas and sentences by transition words.

2.2 Types of Texts

There are many kind of text. They are Descriptive, Narrative, Report, and Recount.

2.2.1 Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is text that describes certain people, things, places and circumstances in particular. For junior high school students, descriptive text is one of the genres that students must master first when learning English. According to Gerot and Wignel (1994) as cited in Mardiyah (2013) state that descriptive text aims to describe a particular thing, person or place which shows the reader clearly the physical appearance of a thing. The other expert are Knapp and Watkins (2005) as cited in Mukarromah (2021), descriptive text is a type of text that describes a subject such as describing people, places and objects. Which explains the characteristics of people, places, animals and

objects. Descriptive text basically serves to provide information and social context. This text is to describe a particular thing, animal or person (Ardiana, 2017).

2.2.2 Narrative Text

Wardiman (2008) as cited in Aisah (2020) stated that narrative text is a text that contains imaginative stories to entertain people. The generic structure of a narrative text starts with orientation, which shows the setting and introduces the participants. Secondly, the complication tells the reader about the crisis that arises. Finally, the resolution tells the reader that the crisis is resolved for good or bad. Narrative text is a type of text that focuses on certain participants. Its social function is to tell past events and entertain its readers.

2.2.3 Report Text

Dirgeyasa (2016) as cited in Situmorang (2022) stated that report text is a type of text that presents information about something as it is which is the result of systematic observation and analysis. This text aims to convey stories of natural or non-natural phenomena or even social phenomena. This writing genre is a type of descriptive writing, but not too descriptive because it provides information related to natural or non-natural phenomena. The structure of the report text contains title, general statement, and description.

2.2.4 Recount Text

Recount text is a text that discusses past events chronologically, like a diary, to provide information or just entertain the reader. Recount

text refers to text that tells experiences in the past. Recount text is usually done to entertain by conveying a series of events that build a relationship between the writer/reader and the speaker/listener. The social purpose of recount text is to reconstruct previous experiences by retelling them in the original order (Azhar, 2015, as cited in Khairunnisaak, 2022).

In addition to describing objects or places, descriptive text is also the easiest text among other types of text that students must understand before moving on to other texts, which will be the topic of this study.

2.3 Descriptive Text

2.3.1 Definition of Descriptive Text

A descriptive writing is one that aims to characterize a specific subject, object, or person. It implies that descriptive writing is specifically created about a person, location, or object. Additionally, descriptive texts provide information about the issue by outlining its characteristics without expressing an opinion.

Oshima and Hogue (1997) state that as descriptive writing engages the senses, it describes the appearance, texture, taste, and sound of an object. A generic text that can be incorporated into another text is called a descriptive text. Husna (2013) defines descriptive text as a type of written text that includes definitions and descriptions of the features of an object or other entity. It is clear from the definition of descriptive text above that a text explains the physical attributes of

persons, locations, and objects. Students who are proficient in descriptive writing are better able to compose narrative, recount, and report texts.

2.3.2 Purpose of Descriptive Text

Every writing has a specific goal, common structures, and linguistic elements, of course. It has the text that provides description. It also serves a different purpose than the others. Telling about a particular person, location, or thing is the goal (Gerot, 1994). The aim of descriptive text is to explain or depict the current state of affairs.

2.3.3 Generic Structure of Descriptive Text

According to Gerot and Wignel (1994), generic structure of a descriptive text consists of identification and description. Both are as follows:

1) Identification

Identification is the part of a paragraph that introduces or identifies a character. Identification also means introduction to the subject of description. In identification, he identifies the subject to be described. Identification is usually stated in the first paragraph to introduce the reader to the topic that will be described in the next paragraph. Identification serves to introduce the reader to the object that people will describe before they tell more details about the object in the next paragraph. The purpose is to identify an object to be described.

2) Description

Description means explaining parts, qualities, specifications, etc. This part is used to give a enough description of the object as mentioned in the identification part. So, description in a descriptive text is the part of the paragraph that describes the character itself.

2.3.4 Language Features of Descriptive Text

Descriptive text also has language features that support the formation of a descriptive text. Gerot and Wignel (1994) state that the language features usually found in descriptive texts are:

- 1) Focus on certain participants. In describing something in written descriptive text, it must focus on one subject only, for example: my bicycle, a dog, and so on.
- 2) Use of simple present tense. Where usually passive sentences in descriptive texts especially when describing certain places.
- 3) Use of attributive and identification processes. This relates to the use of have or has.
- 4) The use of epithets and classifications that are often used in nominal groups, such as attractive and beautiful.

2.4 Students' Difficulties in Writing

Writing can be difficult for several reasons. Harmer (2004) stated that students' difficulties in writing includes problems with spelling, grammar, vocabulary choice, and text organization, which affect their ability to produce clear and structured written communication. The most common problems

they face are about how to write, what to write, lack of vocabulary, and inability to structure (Astrianingsih, 2021).

Additionally Byrne (1997), has explained that there are three main types of problems that make writing difficult: psychological problems (content aspect), linguistic problems (language use and vocabulary), and cognitive problems (organization and mechanics). Psychological problems happen because writing is usually done alone. Writers do not get direct interaction or feedback, which can make them feel unsure and unmotivated. Many students think they do not have enough writing experience, and they believe writing is hard. A lack of practice also adds to this problem. Linguistic problems relate to how writers express their ideas clearly. They need to choose the right sentence structure, increase vocabularies, and connect their ideas well so that the reader can understand the text without extra explanation. Cognitive problems are about learning how to write through instruction. Writers need to learn grammar and sentence patterns that are not often used in speaking. They also have to organize their thoughts clearly so the reader, who may not be present or personally known, can understand the message. Thus, the problems that make it difficult for students to write are supported by other argument.

As Duha (2022) stated in her research, there are many things that make it difficult for students to write. One of them is that they rarely study English, they also hesitate to write because they are afraid that their writing will not be understood. Some of the difficulties they experience include being confused about making sentences, not knowing the parts of the text structure,

they do not understand capitalization, spelling, and the use of punctuation, and some even do not know the difference between the subjects "he" and "she".

2.4.1 Factors of Students Difficulties in Writing

Numerous students encounter various factors that contribute to their writing problems. Some common writing issues that students encounter are ideas, structure, lack of vocabulary, and rewriting or paraphrasing. The following elements, as defined by Brown (2001), should be highlighted:

- 1) Self-worth. Possibly the most ubiquitous feature of human conduct is this. One could easily argue that without a certain degree of self-efficacy the belief in one's own ability to carry out an activity successfully and self-esteem and confidence one cannot successfully conduct any cognitive or affective activity. Low self-efficacy students could also blame their lack of starting skill for their failure.
- 2) Anxiety. The concept of anxiety is crucial to the emotive aspects of learning a second language. The dictionary defines anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system." In simpler terms, anxiety is linked to emotions such as unease, annoyance, uncertainty, fear, or concern.
- 3) The Lack of Motivation. Students who are motivated, either internally or externally, accomplish a task. Activities that have no true reward other than the act of doing them are said to be

intrinsically driven. Behavior that is driven by internal factors, such as sentiments of competence and self-determination, is said to be intrinsically motivated. In addition, extrinsic motivation stems from the desire to outperform oneself and receive benefits from outside sources.

- 4) The Nature of Writing. Writing is an action that needs to be mastered in order for it to be simple to perform. Pratiwi (2014), asserts that the fundamental element of writing difficulty is a person's capacity to employ grammatical, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and other parts of language.
- 5) Inadequate of Time. Writing is a time-consuming process. This is due to the fact that writing involves a lot of tasks, including planning, generating ideas, revising drafts, and finishing them. It will be challenging if students are required to write in insufficient time.
- 6) The lack of practice. Writing is a skill that takes practice to become proficient in. Students' writing abilities can advance if they commit their attention and make the time to practice writing, claims Ismail (2011). Since writing is a skill, as stated by Oshima and Hogue (1997), authors will write better the more they write. This claim demonstrates how students' writing abilities might be impacted by a lack of writing practice. Because their writing abilities are not refined, students will believe that writing is hard. It will cause their writing skills to become stuck. By writing frequently, one can progressively get past obstacles.

2.5 Students' Ability in Writing

Students' ability in writing refers to constructing meaningful, well-organized, and grammatically correct written texts. This ability involves idea generation, organization, word choice, sentence construction, coherence, and applying correct spelling and punctuation (Pratiwi, 2019). According to Ratnaya (2024), Writing ability means that writers can share ideas, opinions, and feelings with others through writing. If they want to express all their thoughts clearly and correctly, they need to choose the right words, use the right grammar, and spell all the words correctly. These parts are important so that readers can understand the message easily.

Students' ability in writing refers to students' ability to express ideas, thoughts, and information in writing using correct and contextual language structures. In English learning, this includes skills in using grammar, vocabulary, text structure, and aspects of writing mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The purposes of writing ability are to assess students' ability to develop ideas, identify strengths and weaknesses in writing aspects, and encourage critical thinking skills. According to Husniah (2023), the factors that influence students' writing ability include: reading habits mean that students who read often develop stronger writing skills; language proficiency means that first language disorders can affect second language writing; also teacher feedback and instruction mean effective guidance, and constructive feedback improves writing quality.

2.6 Previous Studies

There are several previous studies that are related to analyzing students' writing skills. The first study was conducted by Feni Aulia (2019) entitled "An Analysis of Students' Ability and Difficulty in Writing Narrative Text Made by Class XI Students of MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar". The aim of this research was to analyze the ability and the difficulty that students face in writing narrative text. The instrument of this study was writing test and questionnaire. This research used descriptive design. The sample of this research is the eleventh grade students that consist of 23 students in a class. The data on students' ability shows that 18 students got excellent to very good scores, 3 students got Good to average scores, and 2 students got Fair to poor scores. The researcher points out that the students had good competence in learning English in their ability to write Narrative text. Then for the difficulties, it is found that most of students have difficulty in writing narrative text. The result of the study is the mean score indicated that the eleventh grade students of MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makasar is good and has competence in writing Narrative.

The second study was conducted by Khairunnisaak (2022) entitled "The Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text". The aim of this research was to explain difficulties faced by the eighth graders of SMP Bait Qur'an in writing recount text. The instrument of this study was written test and questionnaire. This research used descriptive qualitative. The sample of this research is the eighth grade students that consist of 22 students in a class. The data were using percentage analysis, it's shows that 12 students

were very poor in writing content, 15 students were very poor in organization, 12 students were very poor in vocabulary, 19 students were very poor in grammar, and 16 students were very poor in mechanic. The result of this study showed that most students had poor ability in writing recount text. The majority of students had trouble understanding how to apply grammar in a recount text. It happened because they were lack of knowledge about the recount text itself and had less practice writing a recount text.

The third study was done by Yesica Situmorang (2022) entitled “An Analysis of Students’ Difficulties in Writing Report Text”. The aim of this research was to know the factors that cause of the difficulties that third semester students have in writing report text. This research used descriptive qualitative. The sample of this research is the third semester majoring English Education that consist of 15 students. The result of this study showed that some of them have difficulties in generic structure, lexico grammatical, right diction, and punctuation. The factor that caused it is they have lack of understanding.

The writer can draw conclusions about similarities and differences between previous studies and this study based on those previous studies. The similarity is the research design for all of previous studies that used descriptive qualitative. Then the similarity between this study and the second previous study is the sample of the research that use the eighth grade students. Generally, the same things are in the use of research design and the focus of the study, which is analyzing students’ writing skill.

Next, the writer explains the differences between this study and the previous studies. The first one, the sample is the eleventh grade students while the sample of this study is the eighth grade students. The kind of text is also different. The first previous study used narrative text, while this study is going to use descriptive text. Then the difference between this study and the second previous study is the kind of text. The text of the second previous study is recount text. Meanwhile, the text of this study is descriptive text. The last, difference between this study and the third previous study are the kind of text and the sample. The text of the third previous study is report text. Meanwhile, the text of this study is descriptive text. The sample of third previous study is third semester students, then this study is eighth grade students. Finally, it can be concluded that the difference is about the kind of text. That is why, based on the difference between the previous studies, the writer will conduct a descriptive study with the title “An Analysis of Students’ Ability and Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text in The Eighth Grade of MTsN 3 Kota Kediri”.

This study has a research gap in the instrument in the interview section which does not take samples randomly but is taken only partially but evenly from those with high to low abilities. Whereas in previous studies there were interviews that took all samples, there were studies that took several samples randomly, and some did not use interviews.