PROBLEMS FACED BY THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMK NEGERI 2 SALATIGA IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
“Sarjana Pendidikan”

Stefanus Bayu Seno
112013093

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN SATYA WACANA
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ABSTRACT

This study addressed problems faced by the tenth grade students of SMK N 2 Salatiga in writing descriptive essays. This study attempted to answer the research question: ‘What are the problems faced by the tenth grade students of SMK N 2 Salatiga in writing descriptive essays?’ To collect data, this qualitative descriptive study used individual test, observation and interview. The research participants of this study were 41 students from two classes, 25 tenth grade students of architecture and 16 tenth grade students of furniture engineering. The researcher chose three participants from each class that represent those who are good, adequate and poor in writing descriptive essays. Through qualitative-descriptive analysis, it was discovered that there were three most common problems, namely: 1) Problems related to vocabulary. 2) Problems related to grammar. 3) Problems related to organization. Hopefully the above findings will help teachers to identify problems which are faced by their students in writing descriptive essays and help them to solve the problems.

Key words: Descriptive essay, Writing Class, Problem Faced

INTRODUCTION

There are four skills in English which should be mastered, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is a spontaneous activity but writing is a conscious process which should be planned. Brookes and Grundy (1991) stated that “writing is more ‘attended to’ than speech, i.e. we are more conscious of what we are doing and tend to attach more important to correctness of every kind” (p. 1). In writing, students need to be able to make good sentences even a good paragraph. Also, writing is one of the ways that we translate our thought for other people. Writing as a part of language skills must be taught optimally by the teacher to students. Through writing, the students can exchange their ideas, thought and experiences. Moreover, to express their feelings, needs, and desires in written form, the students need writing skills. “There are 12 kinds of writing texts that are taught to vocational school students, namely: descriptive, recount, narrative, procedure, explanation,
Based on the basic competence of the 2013 Curriculum, the tenth grade students of vocational school (SMK) are expected to be able to: write simple descriptive essays about people and historical places by considering the purpose, structure of the essay and its language element correctly and appropriately. Droga and Humphrey (2005) stated “the descriptive essay has certain generic structure and language features” (p. 148). The generic structure of descriptive essays consists of identification and description. According to the writer’s experience as a student teacher in SMK N 2 Salatiga in 2016, many vocational school students in the tenth grade were not interested in writing descriptive essays because it is difficult for them.

Therefore, I am interested to know what problems are faced by the tenth grade students of SMKN 2 Salatiga in writing descriptive essays. There are some previous studies about problems faced by students in writing. For example, There are studies done by Younes (2015), Waliyyani (2011), Aprilliansyah (2015), Ikrima (2014), Rieska (2012), and Amrizal (2015). Some of them just explain about dominant problems which are faced by the students in writing. In my research, I am interested to know about the problems which are faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essays. This research might give contribution to the field of ELT, in relation to writing descriptive essays activities and might help the teacher to identify problems which are faced by their students in writing descriptive essays and help them to solve the problems.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many problems which are faced by students when they were learning English. One of the problems is in writing skill. In writing, many students do not understand the organization or the generic structure, grammar and vocabulary. There have been some previous studies from Younes (2015), Waliyyani (2011), Aprilliansyah (2015), Ikrima (2014), Rieska (2012), and Amrizal (2015) that mainly focused on problems faced by students in writing. However, writing should be planned and organized that will be clear for a reader. Therefore, the problems which are faced by tenth grade students in writing descriptive essays have been the important things to be discussed.

Definition of Writing

Language is the most important tool in the communication. Moeller and Catalano (2015) said “language is the vehicle required for effective human to human interactions and yields a better understanding of one’s own language and culture” (p. 327). In language learning, there are four aspects which need to be focused on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the skills in a language that is conscious process which should be organized. Tika (2007) stated “writing as a process to get product is influenced by some elements such as vocabularies, grammar, organization, spelling, and punctuation” (p. 1). Writing effectively may not be easy because there are several things that should be considered. For instance, sentence structure, grammar, word choice, and so on. Those are played a major role in expressing one’s ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. Through writing, people are capable of sharing ideas and feelings, persuading and convincing others. People may write for personal enjoyment or for some other purpose. They may address an audience of one person or more persons. According to Nunan (2003), “Writing in both a process and a product the writer imagine organizing, drafts, edits, read and research. (p. 88). From that statement, it
can be concluded that writing was thinking activity about how to express ideas by imagining, organizing, drafting such as essay, story, and letter or research paper.

**The Genres of Writing**

According to the theory, writing skill for young learners was divided into 12 types that are: recount, report, discussion, explanation, exposition analytical, exposition hortatory, news item, anecdote, narrative, procedure and descriptive as well as review. Based on the 2013 curriculum, there are three genres of monolog texts that have to be taught in writing for the tenth grade students in the vocational school. “These genres are: recount essay, procedure essay and descriptive essay” (Depdiknas, Indonesian Educational Department, 2013, p. 70). Each genre has different functions which may give different difficulties to the student. According to Hyland (2004), “recount is a genre that has social function to retell event for the purpose of informing or entertaining” (p. 85). In the recount essay, the sentences are usually organized according to time order or chronological order. One thing happens and then another thing happens, and the events are told in the same order. Procedure essay is used to instruct how to do a particular activity. It normally takes the form of direction or instruction.

Descriptive essay is a kind of essay that presents the characteristics of something in order to make clear impression of a person, place, object or event. According to Gerrot and Wignel (2000), “social function of descriptive essay describes a particular person, place, or thing” (p. 208). Droga and Humphrey (2005) stated “descriptive essay has certain generic structure and language features” (p. 148). The generic structure of descriptive essay consists of identification and description. Identification consists of general knowledge about the thing that will be described and the next paragraph is about the description. Description’s part consists of the specific description about the person or thing that will be described. Besides having social function and generic structure, descriptive essay also uses significant lexicogrammatical features that support the form of a descriptive essay. According to
Djuhari (2007), “the significant lexicogrammatical features of descriptive essay focus on specific nouns. It uses adjectives, relational process, figurative language, and simple present tense” (pp. 24-25). On the other hand, the language features of descriptive essay consist of three things, namely: it focuses on specific participant, it uses simple present tense, and it uses adjective and adverb.

**Problems in Writing**

Many Vocational School students are not interested in writing descriptive essays because it seems difficult for them. The first problem is that the students’ writing is not comprehensible. Because the content of the composition is not relevant to the topic, the ideas are not clearly stated, the ideas and sentences are not well organized. The second problem, Farooq (2012) found “there are many errors in structure, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling” (p. 186). The third problem, Hyland (2007) found “lack of motivation to study, sometimes students become lazy because they do not understand English” (p. 220). The problems faced in the class are sometimes the students have difficulties to build and develop their ideas, choose the right dictions, and use correct grammar. Writing individually does not work optimally to increase the students’ writing ability. Writing as a part of the language skill must be taught optimally by the teacher to the students.

**Relevant Studies**

There have been previous studies which are related to the problems which are faced by students in writing:

Younes (2015) conducted a research entitled “Exploring the most common types of writing problems among English language and translation major sophomore female students at Tabuk University”. The findings of the study showed that most language problems which are faced by the students' writing were as follows: 1) grammatical problems in the field of tenses, prepositions, syntactic, subject – verb agreement and the use of articles, 2)
Punctuation problems at the level of the absence, the misuse or the addition of punctuation marks, and 3) spelling problems in the field of substitution, omission, addition, disordering, segmentation and unrecognizable words. The findings also revealed the reasons behind students' writing weaknesses from their perspectives.

Besides, there were some previous studies from Indonesia, Oktona Waliyyani (2011) conducted a research entitled “A Descriptive Study on the Students’ Ability in Writing Recount Text at the Second Year of SMP N 2 Sragen in 2009/2010” Academic Year. Her conclusion is that the ability of the students in writing recount essay in regular class is bad, and in favorite class is good. The problem faced by the students can be seen from their vocabulary, and grammar. Also, cannot write the punctuation, spelling and finding the idea.

Aprilliansyah (2015) conducted a research entitled “Students’ ability in writing descriptive texts of the tenth grade year students’ of SMK N 6 Surakarta in 2015/2016 academic year”. His conclusion is the serious problems faced by students are related to organization, grammar, and vocabulary. The result showed the students’ ability in writing descriptive texts at the tenth grade of SMK N 6 Surakarta in 2015/2016 academic year is fair. There is no students’ work that got very good and poor category.

Ikrima (2014) conducted a research entitled “The problem of writing faced by the students of SMAN 4 Banda Aceh”. The result of this research showed that EFL students faced the main problem in grammatical and vocabulary. In addition, many efforts are able to be used for students that given by teachers such as learning more about grammar, memorizing the vocabulary, and giving more feedback for students. To conclude, two difficulties in writing skill were set in some effort to overcome these problems.

There are similarities about Aprilliansyah (2015) research and Ikrima (2014) research. They used qualitative methodology in their research. They have research about writing descriptive essays and found out the problems which are faced by senior high school
students. But, they just found out the major problems which are faced by senior high school students, like grammar and vocabulary.

Rieska (2012) conducted a research entitled “Students’ problems toward narratives writing in writing Narratives and Descriptive Class”. This study aims to investigate students’ problems in writing a narrative essay for Narrative and Descriptive writing students at FLL Satya Wacana Christian University. The results showed that the problems were caused by their organizational skill in sentence or paragraph level. Therefore, the study suggested that organization would be emphasized in writing class, how to choose and organize ideas into a structured and interesting paragraph.

Amrizal (2015) conducted a research entitled “Students’ ability in writing descriptive text”. The result of the study was students got several problems when they write descriptive essays. The first is that grammatical rules for the English language are much different than those of Bahasa Indonesia. The second, students typically possess a limited vocabulary. The third, students do not have much motivation to write English essay. One of potential solution is to increase writing skills for writing (descriptive essay) using cartoon media. In applying cartoon media, the teacher asks students to describe items based on a cartoon, and then after the students have described things such as color and form.

Looking at the six studies previously mentioned, all of those studies aimed to know the problems experienced by the students in writing. This current research is more or less similar to Aprilliansyah (2015) research. In this current research does not only evaluate three major problems about grammatical problems, organization and vocabulary. But, the researcher found out other specific problems in writing descriptive essays for vocational school students by interviewing the students directly. It may help the teacher to achieve effective English learning activity.

THE STUDY
Context of the Study

The study aims to know the problems faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essays. The setting for this study was in SMK Negeri 2 Salatiga which is located at Jl. Parikesit, Warak, Salatiga. SMK Negeri 2 has 9 majors, namely: Teknik Gambar Bangunan (Architecture), Teknik Konstruksi Kayu (Furniture Engineering), Teknik Konstruksi Bangunan (Construction Engineering), Teknik Elektronika Audio-Video (Audio-Video Electronics Engineering), Teknik Elektronika Industri (Industry Electronic Engineering), Teknik Elektronika Otomotif (Automotive Engineering), Teknik Permesinan (Machinery Engineering), Teknik Informatika (Informatic Engineering) and Teknik Komputer Jaringan (Networking and Computer Engineering). The curriculum used in SMK Negeri 2 is the 2013 Curriculum. The research question of this study aims at finding out what problems are faced by the tenth grade students in SMK N 2 Salatiga in writing descriptive essays. The data were collected through individual test, observation and interview.

Research Participants

Based on the 2013 curriculum, the descriptive essays only taught in first year of vocational school. In the first year, the students will study to write the descriptive essays about their family. From that case, the researcher decided to investigate the first year students of SMK Negeri 2 Salatiga. The researcher chose two classes with different students’ behavior to be observed: one class with orally active students and one class with passive students but diligent. From each class, the researcher chose three students with different capability good, adequate and poor in writing descriptive essays to be interviewed. So, there were six students who were interviewed.
Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collected the data through individual test, observation and interview. The researcher asked the English teacher to give individual test about descriptive essay to the students. Each student was asked to write descriptive essays about their family. The researcher observed how many students opened the dictionary and asked their classmate when they were doing the individual test about writing descriptive essays and took note on a piece of paper. To collect more data about problems which were faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essay, the researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher interviewed three students who represent those who are good, adequate and poor in writing descriptive essay. The interview has a purpose to collect more data by asking questions. The data were collected by listening to individuals and audio-recorded. The researcher used the semi-structured interview that consisted of four numbers of planned questions, but the researcher has flexibility to modify the wording and order of the questions. The first question tried to find out the general knowledge of students related to descriptive essays, the second question tried to know the students’ views on the importance of the writing descriptive essays, the third question figured out the common problems faced by the students, and the last question revealed the students’ solutions toward the problems.

Data Collection Procedures

Data in this study were collected using three instruments namely: individual test, observation and semi-structured interview. First, the teacher asked the research participants to write a descriptive essay about their family. While the participants did the individual test, the researcher took note using the observation form. The research participants were allowed to open the dictionary and to ask their classmate. So, observation form was used in order to observe how students wrote the descriptive essay. The researcher used purposive sampling to
choose the participants to be interviewed. The researcher was helped by the classroom English teacher to analyze the students’ work by using scoring rubric. The researcher chose three participants from each class that represent those who are good, adequate and poor in writing descriptive essay. Semi-structured interview was also used in order to collect more data. According to Kartono (2000), “interview was a face to face situation between interviewer and informant to get information by asked some questions orally. In this section, the researcher tried to get information about the students’ problems faced by students in writing descriptive essay.” (p. 187)

Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting all the data needed, the researcher was helped by the classroom English teacher to read carefully and evaluated students’ work by using scoring rubric. The students’ descriptive essays were analyzed based on (1) Content, (2) Organization, (3) Grammar, (4) Vocabulary and (5) Mechanics. The researcher used purposive sampling to choose three participants from each class that represent those who are good, adequate and poor in writing descriptive essays to be interviewed. Observation form was used to figure out how many students who opened the dictionary and asked their classmate. The data from the interview were transcribed by the researcher. The data were classified into several different headings and subheadings. Next, the data were displayed in figures and description so that the readers could understand the findings better.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After obtaining the data, the researcher classified the data into two headings, namely: the demographic information and problems faced in writing descriptive essays. Under the first heading, there are two subheadings explaining the profile of the participants containing
gender. The second heading consists of the most and less common problems which are faced in writing descriptive essays. Below are the details of the findings and discussion.

**Demographic Information**

*Individual Test Participants*

Figure 1. Demographic Information of Individual Test Participants

In Figure 1, the test participants were 7 male and 15 female students from the tenth grade of Architecture Engineering and 13 male and 3 female students from the tenth grade of Furniture Engineering.

*Interview Participants*

Figure 2. Demographic Information of Interview Participants
In Figure 2, the interview participants were three female students from the tenth grade of Architecture Engineering and one female and two male students from the tenth grade of Furniture Engineering.

**Problems Faced in Writing Descriptive Essays**

The observation form consist two parts. The first part is demographic of the students and the second part is the researcher note about how many students who opened the dictionary and asked their classmate. Based on the observation form, there 21 students of architecture that did the individual test. In first 10 minutes, the students tried to ask their friend as many as 15 times and 22 times to open the dictionary. The next 10 minutes, they tried to do individual test by theirselves, because their intensity to ask their friend and open the dictionary decreased. The students only asked their friend as many as 8 times and 18 times opened the dictionary. The following 10 minutes, the students tried to ask their friend as many as 10 times and 19 times opened the dictionary. The last 10 minutes, the students just 5 times asked their friend and 15 times opened the dictionary. Different with furniture engineering, there are 16 students of furniture engineering that also joined the individual test. In 10 minutes first, the students tried to ask their friend as much as 38 times and 14 times to open the dictionary. In the next 10 minutes, they tried to ask their friend as many as 31 times and 17 times to open the dictionary. In the following 10 minutes, they tried to ask their friend as much as 27 times and 17 times to open the dictionary. The last 10 minutes, the students tried to ask their friend 13 times and 8 times to open the dictionary.

There are differences about the finding from observation form. The students of architecture prefer opened the dictionary than asked their friend. In contrast to the students of furniture engineering, they prefer tried to ask their friend than to open the dictionary. It showed that the students of architecture were passive but dilligent because they tried to did
the individual test by themself. Different with the students of furniture engineering, they were orally active students. They prefer to ask their classmate to help their work than to open dictionary. The finding of the observation form showed all the participants have many problems when they wrote the descriptive essay.

The interview protocol consists of four questions. The first question tried to find out general knowledge of students related to descriptive essay, the second question tried to know students’ views on the importance of the writing descriptive essays, the third question tried to figure out students’ common problems faced by the students, and the last question tried to reveal students’ solutions toward the problems. Regarding to the questions and the responses, the researcher discovered most common and less common problems faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essay.

The findings revealed three most common problems faced by the students in writing descriptive essay: 1) problems related to vocabulary, 2) problems related to grammatical forms descriptive essay, especially unknown simple present tense, and 3) problems related to organization of descriptive essay. There were also four kinds of problems which were less commonly experienced by the participants. The discussion about these findings would be explained below.

**Most common problems which are faced by the students in writing descriptive essay**
Figure 3. Most Common problems

Figure 3 above shows the most common problems in writing descriptive essays. It shows that all of the participants that were interviewed had problems with vocabulary. They felt confused if they wanted to write something in English, because they did not know the translation of the words. There were 5 out of 6 participants found the problem with grammar. They did not understand about the grammar that should be used in writing descriptive essays. Although, the teacher had taught the pattern used in writing descriptive essays, the students still did not know how to apply the pattern in their work as they forgot the rule of simple present tense. Moreover, 3 out of 6 participants who were interviewed mentioned the problem in the organization of descriptive essay. They got confused about the order of the generic structure of descriptive essay. They did not understand what they should write in the first paragraph, and the following paragraphs. Below were the details about the most common problems faced in writing descriptive essay experienced by the participants.

Problems Related to Vocabulary

All participants had problems with vocabulary. They felt confused if they wanted to write something in English, because they did not know about the translation of the words. The participants explained in the interview as follows:

Excerpt 1
The problem that I faced is in finding the vocabulary that I don’t know. However, I can find more helps such as dictionary. Moreover, I can ask my friends who know more about it (Memei/interview/ May 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 2
I have a difficulty in using the vocabulary, and I tend to ask my friend for any vocabularies that I find it hard to be found (Ros/interview/ May 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 3
Sometimes I get confused to find out the meaning of some words, so I have to figure it out. Also, when I get confused, I tend to ask my friends (Susanti/interview/ May 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 4
When I don’t know about the meaning of the certain words, I usually open my dictionary. I prefer to use offline dictionary instead of Google translate because online dictionary is not allowed in my school. Moreover, I also ask my friends in order to be active in the class (Upin/interview/ May 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 5
The problem is about the vocabulary, especially for the new one because it is the most important one. If I don’t know, I open my dictionary then (Ipin/interview/ May 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 6
The vocabularies are very hard. Moreover, I just have a limitation about vocabulary. First thing first, I try it by myself, although I find it hard too. For more addition, I ask for helps to my friends if they are available, if they are not, I just go straight to understand the meaning (Cikgu/interview/ May 18th/ translated by the researcher).

According to the participants’ responses above, it could be concluded that they found difficulties in translating the words. They mentioned their vocabulary was so limited. Stahl (2005) says that “vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings and also puts vocabulary knowledge as the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the contexts”. Unfortunately, few students put the words which were contextually unsuitable (p. 77). Therefore, they tried to open the dictionary and ask their friends about writing some new words in English. Although they had some creative ideas related to their writing, they tended to find some difficulties in expressing them into words. It was found that three participants just asked their friends without using dictionary,
the other two participants opened the dictionary and asked their friends, and there was only a participant who opened the dictionary without asking their friends.

This above finding was the same as the research done by Apriliasyah (2015) and Ikrima (2016). Their research findings showed that the vocabulary is the important problem which was experienced by the students. When the participants were assigned to write descriptive essay, they were aware that had limited vocabulary. They admitted that the main problem which was faced by the students is when they did not know the words to be used. Problems related to vocabulary were very serious when they had to write descriptive essays.

Since vocabulary became an important part of learning English, it was suggested for the teachers to do drilling of vocabulary in classroom. This might reduce students’ confusion when facing difficult words which hamper their creativity.

Problems Related to Grammar

There were 5 participants that said if they found the problem with grammar, they were not understand the grammar that was used in writing descriptive essay. Although the teacher had informed the pattern used in writing descriptive essay, the students still did not know how to apply the pattern in their works. It was because they forgot the rule of simple present tense and simple past tense.

Excerpt 7:
I forget about the grammar rules. When I forget, I just ask my friends to make sure about the rules (Memei/interview / May 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 8:
In my opinion, simple present tense is very hard. I tend to ask the smart one when I get confused (Susanti/ interview/ May 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 9:
Simple present tense that I use is still random enough. When I got confused, I try to ask my friends who know more, because I cannot use Google translate in my school (Upin/ interview/ May 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 10:
Grammar is very difficult to be understood. Sometimes I just match the diction. About the additional –s/-es, I still need to learn more. I usually ask my friend about grammar, because there is no grammar explanation in the dictionary (Ipın/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

**Excerpt 11:**
I am confused with the grammar. I do know how to use simple present tense, but I forget how to use it in a test. I seldom use my dictionary because I prefer to ask my friends (Cikgu/interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Based on the interview, most participants forgot and got confused with the grammar used in writing descriptive essay (simple present tense). The problem could be like the rule of the grammar pattern, word forms, and additional -es/-s in verb of the sentence. As this problem happened, they tried to get help from their reliable friends. Some exercises could help them to remember the rule of simple present tense.

However, it was interesting to find a participant who did not find any difficulties in this problem.

**Excerpt 12:**
I have understood about grammar in writing descriptive essay because it is very basic in learning English (Ros/interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).

The participant was considered to easily absorb the material. Therefore, she could apply it in her work.

This above finding was similar to the research done by Aprilliansyah (2015). He found 43 out of 67 students or 74.6% that have problems in grammar because they forgot the grammar used. They make mistakes when they write the descriptive essay, although in previous meeting they already taught. Grammar is complicated for them. Some of them write the descriptive essay without follow the role of simple present tense. But, in my research also there are students that they understand the grammar pattern. They feel confident and could apply simple present tense in their work. Grammar is serious problem in writing descriptive essays, but if the students can remember the role of simple present tense and apply in their
work. It will help them to write descriptive essay correctly. So, the teachers should reviewing material about grammar before they give test or test to their students.

Problems Related to Organization

There were 3 participants that said if they found it hard to understand the arrangement in descriptive essay writing. Reep (2009) states “a paragraph achieves coherence when the sentences proceed in a sequence that supports one point at a time. Transitional, or connecting, words and phrases facilitate coherence by showing the relationship between ideas and by creating a smooth flow of sentences” (p. 82). In organizing the ideas the students have to use two components of generic structure of writing descriptive, they are identification and description. They forgot the generic structure of the descriptive essay which was identification and description. It caused them to arrange the paragraph in the wrong order. Then, they asked their friends which one was the correct part. The participants explained in the interview as follows:

Excerpt 13: I find it hard to understand about the content what in each paragraph is about. Sometimes it is hard to be explained but I forget, and I ask my friend when I get confused (Susanti/ interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 14: I just have a difficulty about the organization, so I ask friends to make me understand (Ipin/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 15: In the beginning, I am confused, but the day after I ask my friend, I get understand (Cikgu/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

Based on the interview results, it could be concluded that the most of the students in that school tended to ask their friends to solve their own problems. Moreover, they found problems about organization and generic structure.
There were three participants who said that for the organization of descriptive essay, they felt that it was the easy thing because it was just what they had learnt before. They also said that the language was harder than generic structure. The participants explain in the interview as follows:

Excerpt 16:
In my opinion, the organization section is very easy (Memei/ interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 17:
I have understood about it, the hard part is in the language and about the vocabulary (Ros/ interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 18:
I have understood about the organization section, because I have been taught by my teacher (Upin/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

It could be said that the participants did not get some problems in generic structure in descriptive essay because it was such an easy thing. Moreover, they had been taught by their teacher, so they just needed to remember it in order to do it correctly.

This above finding was similar to the research done by Aprillansyah (2015). 21 out of 63 students or 33.3% have problems in organization. They forget the structure of the generic structure of descriptive essays which was identification and description. It caused them to arrange the paragraph in the wrong order. In my research, some students displace the identification part and description part. It make the essays did not clear enough for the reader.

This finding revealed most common problems faced by tenth grades students in writing descriptive essays. Students had problems with vocabulary, they felt confused if they wanted to write something in English, because they did not know about the translation of the words. They also found the problems with grammar. They did not understand about the grammar that was used in writing descriptive essay. Accordingly they had problems in the organization of descriptive essay. They got confused about the order of generic structure of descriptive essay. They did not understand what they should write in the first paragraph, and
the following paragraphs. Although the students allowed to open the dictionary and asked their classmate, they still have problems as mentioned above. The solution could by increasing the intensity of the material reviewing, having exercises to practice arranging the generic structure and drilling vocabulary or made the game about vocabulary.

Less Common problems faced by the students in writing descriptive essay

Figure 4. Less Common problems

Figure 4 showed the result of the answer that containing the less common writing descriptive essay problems. These problems emerged from many students who were interviewed but it did not hamper them to write a descriptive essay. Below were the details of the less common problems.

Problems Related to Finding idea

We could see in Figure 3 that just one participant has problem in idea, he got confused to figure out the idea to write the descriptive essay, he does not know what to write at all.

Excerpt 19:
Sometimes, I get no idea what I am going to write, and how to begin my writing. My teacher only gives a topic about parents, but I still confused how to start. In fact, I was the last person who submitted my test (Susanti/ interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).
The activity was the teacher just gave the topic, without sharing the idea, so the students should develop the topic by their own idea in order to make a cohesive and coherence paragraphs. The idea that the student has been specified to be one topic was to make an easy assessment.

Problems Related to Student’s Focus

Two participants also said they did not focus when they wrote descriptive essay. They felt sleepy, hungry, and disturbed by friends’ distraction. External factor gave effect to the students’ performance in writing descriptive paragraph. The participants explained in the interview as follows:

Excerpt 20:
Actually, I wasn’t focused in writing, because I had no breakfast. This lesson started in the first morning, so I felt hungry and lost my focus (Memei/ interview/ may 15th/ translated by the researcher).

Excerpt 21:
I was disturbed by my friends because most of my friends tended to ask me. As a result, I got no focus in writing, so I forgot what I was going to write. Honestly, I was sleepy, because it was a day time to sleep (Cikgu/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).

According to participants’ responses above, some distractions may hinder their focus in writing descriptive essay. They also needed extra focus in order to make a descriptive paragraph that is appropriate with teachers’ requirement. However, many students lost their focus did their writing not seriously and tend to submit their name for the grading importance.

Problems Related to Spelling

There was one participant who has incorrect spelling when he did the test. They said the time is too quick to do the test. It make him did the test rushed. He felt did not enjoy and write a descriptive essay quickly. Therefore, it was make student lost their scrupulousness.

Excerpt 23
I tried to do the test quickly, but I less scrupulousness. So, I have some wrong spellings (Upin/ interview/ may 18th/ translated by the researcher).
According to participant’s response above. He tried to do quickly, it made him less scrupulous and his words became disorder. “The English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students” ( Gowere et al, 2001). The teacher gave 40 minutes to do the individual test. But, at the beginning, some students did not do the individual test seriously. When the time is almost over, they just started working on.

This research was in contrast to all of the relevant studies, all of the studies just evaluate major problems like grammar, vocabulary and organization. All of the studies focus on main problems without the specific ones. My research shows that the participants also have less problems such as; 1) confused to figure out the idea to write the descriptive essay. 2) did not focus when they wrote descriptive essay, because hungry, sleepy and disturbed by friends’ distraction. 3) found some difficulties in choosing a good diction or word-choice, based on the context, and 4) has incorrect spelling when he did the test. It can disturb them when they write writing descriptive essays, but it does not cause major problem. Not all of them get problems as mentioned above. Although it only less problems but it will disturb the students when they had to write descriptive essays and make the result of the descriptive essays less perfect.

The finding above concluded that the less common problems faced by tenth grade students were focus, idea, and spelling. As the teacher, the result of this research can be prevented by making a conducive class situation, stimulating students’ ideas by the pictures or any AVA needed that were helpful for students, providing some examples of descriptive essay contained good connective words, so that the students could get good example. 

CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to answer the research question: What problems are faced by the tenth grade students of SMK N 2 Salatiga in writing descriptive essays? There were three most common problems faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essay.
First, problems related to vocabulary. The second, problems related to grammar. The third, problems related to organization.

The findings did not only show the most common problems faced in writing descriptive essay experienced by most of the participants, but there were also three less common problems faced in writing descriptive essay experienced by the participants. Some participants agreed to the problems, but some others did not. The first, students were confused to figure out the idea to write the descriptive essay. Second, they did not focus when they wrote descriptive essay. Third, students got confused in choosing diction. The last, students make some mistakes in spelling.

The result of this study is expect to give benefit for the teachers when they teach writing descriptive essay for vocational students. Some participants stated that they have limited vocabulary, difficult to develop their ideas, forgot the rule of simple present tense, and need more explanation about descriptive essay. Although the students were allowed to open the dictionary and asked their classmate, they still have problems as mention above. The teachers could be increase the intensity of the material reviewing, having exercises to practice arranging the generic structure and drilling vocabulary or made the game about vocabulary to overcome the problem.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions as to follows:

1. English teachers should help the students to write good essays by giving various ways to develop and organize their ideas.

2. English teachers should provide tasks or homework about writing skill to students for practicing their writing skill before do the descriptive writing test.
3. English teachers and the students should brainstorm the topic together and make an outline before come to writing activities. Outline will help the student to organize and develop their ideas well.

4. Further research about writing descriptive essays should investigate more about problems faced by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive essay.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

1. Write a descriptive essay about your family in 200 words!
Observation Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site:</th>
<th>Grade:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Title:</th>
<th>Lesson plan: available/not available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

Demography of class: Number of students (male/female)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Ask Friend</th>
<th>Open the Dictionary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson activity "Whilst Teaching"

*adapted from Mambu (2017)
Interview protocol

1. Apa yang Anda ketahui tentang menulis *descriptive essay*?
2. Apakah *descriptive essay* penting dalam belajar bahasa Inggris?
3. Apa saja masalah – masalah yang Anda hadapi saat menulis *descriptive essay*?
4. Bagaimana cara Anda memecahkan masalah tersebut?