



## An Analysis of Teacher's Strategy to Overcome Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text at SMAN N 10 Padang

**Khansa Zhafirah<sup>1</sup>, Hamzah Hamzah<sup>2</sup>**

Student of English Language Education<sup>1</sup> (English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang), Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang, 25173

Lecturer of English Language Education<sup>2</sup> (English Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang), Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang, 25173

Correspondence Email : [khansazhafirah22041999@gmail.com](mailto:khansazhafirah22041999@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*This study is aimed at providing explanation on the the teacher's strategies to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text at the tenth grade of SMA N 10 Padang. The teacher's strategies were viewed from the components in writing the generic structures and language features of descriptive text. This study is qualitative research. The sample of the research was one of 4 English teachers who taught descriptive text at the tenth grade. The data obtained from interview and observation checklist. The findings of the study reveals that there were some strategies applied by the teacher. The strategies applied by the teacher in generic structure difficulties were observing, guiding question, while in language feature difficulties, there were sentence construction, giving opportunity to ask, metalinguistic feedback and giving the criteria. Among those strategies, guiding question was the most frequently used strategies in overcoming the difficulties in descriptive text.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching strategy is an activity, planning or way that the teacher uses in order to deliver the materials to the students. It is the way how the teachers teach and what they do to overcome the problems in the class. The strategies like peer discussion, group discussion, and others can be applied in the teaching and learning process.

In order to have a good learning process, the students also have to know what strategy that can help them during teaching and learning process. Especially in

context of language learning, the students have to find out the strategy to help them to overcome the problems they have in learning the language. However, according to Johnson (2007), teacher's pedagogical skills is important for quality education. Therefore, the teacher's strategies are needed since the the students' ability are comparable to how the teacher teaches in class.

Martono (2011:371) stated that strategy in teaching and learning is important in order to create an effective, efficient and optimal function and interaction between students and the components of learning, so that the learning objectives can be achieved. Hence, it is an obligation for teacher to consider what strategies in learning process that can be applied in order to help the students in the learning process and overcome their difficulties for the purpose of the students' success in learning.

Regarding to the students' difficulties, writing is one of the basic skills in English which is difficult to master for the students. As stated by Tribble (1996:3) writing is a language skill that is difficult to be learnt. It is more complex and difficult subject since it requires them to produce a text. In addition, there are thirteen genre of texts in English that require the students to understand many aspects or components included in the texts. Moreover, Coffin et al (2003) stated the students have difficulty to choose an article (a, an, the), word order, and prepositions (in, on, at), pronoun, and etc.

Paskal et al (2015) and Elfa (2020) discussed about the students' problem in writing genre of text which are hortatory exposition and analytical exposition text. The method used were quantitative and qualitative data. The result of the researches showed that the students' performance in writing was still low or they are categorized as "difficult. In Paskal et al's research (2015), the difficulty found were content, vocabulary, grammar and mechanic. The most difficulty the students have was in terms of grammar. While, in Elfa (2020), the difficulty found were in writing thesis, arguments, reorientation, vocabulary, language features, and mechanics.

Further researches related to the strategies applied by the teacher are also found in Muallifah (2019), Darman and Saunir (2014), and Niandari and Jufri (2012)'s researches. In Muallifa's research (2019), the strategy used by English teacher in teaching writing analytical exposition is scientific approach. Based on the finding, questioning is the stage that is difficult for teacher to implement. While, the researches by Darman and Saunir (2014), and Niandari and Jufri (2012) showed that the strategies are applied in sequence. They are implemented in order to help students to solve their problems in writing. The research stated that the strategies were effective to implement in teaching and learning process.

From the previous studies above, the researcher focuses on discussing the teacher's strategy to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The strategies are viewed from the components of descriptive text which are generic structure and language feature.

The researcher is interested to conduct a research entitled "An Analysis of Teacher's Strategy to overcome Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text at the Tenth Grade of SMAN 10 Padang" with the focus on the teacher strategies to overcome the students difficulties in writing generic structure and language feature.

## METHOD

Based on this study, the researcher used qualitative data. Creswell (2009:2) stated “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” This research categorized as qualitative data since it is used to analyze the phenomenon occurred in the class. Hence, the current phenomenons in this research to be analyzed by the researcher were the teacher's strategies to overcome students' difficulties in writing descriptive text.

Since descriptive text was taught at the tenth grade of senior high school, the researcher chose the sample from one of 4 English teachers who taught descriptive text at the tenth grade of SMAN 10 Padang.

The instruments used in this research were interview and observation checklist. Ary et al. (2010:480) said that interview is one of the most widely used methods to obtain qualitative data. It is used to get information related to the interviewees' opinion, beliefs, and feeling about the situation being asked in their own words orally. According to Ary (2010:47) observation is an instrumentation used to collect data or to obtain the comprehensive picture of situation.

The first instrument used was interview which was done to collect the data or information about the strategies applied by the teacher. The teacher was asked related to the teaching and learning process during teaching descriptive text and the strategy to overcome the students' difficulties in writing it. Meanwhile, observation was used to crosscheck the data related to the strategy applied by the teacher to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text obtained from the interview.

The data of the teacher's strategies were analyzed through four steps which are transcribing the interview, classifying the strategies based on the components of descriptive text, calculating the frequency of the strategies used. After classifying the data of students difficulties in writing descriptive text and the strategies applied by the teacher, it calculated to determine the most type of errors and frequently used strategies. To calculate the data, it was used the formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of Error

F = Frequency of Error occur

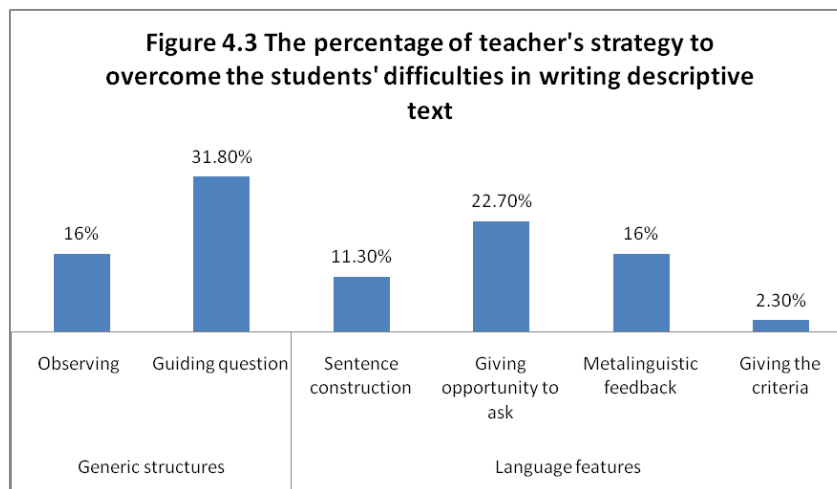
N = Number of total of error

The last step was concluding. In this step, the researcher concluded related to the teacher strategies to overcome those difficulties obtained from the interview and observation checklist.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Finding*

Based on the data analysis, it shows that there were some strategies applied by the teacher to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The data can be seen in the figure 4.3 below.



From the result obtained from interview and the observation checklist, there are six strategies applied by the teacher to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. The most frequently used strategy by the teacher is guiding question applied 14 times (31.8%) in overcoming the students' difficulties in generic structure. Meanwhile, the least frequently used strategy is giving the criteria applied 1 time (2.3%) in overcoming the students' difficulties in language features. Moreover, there was also another strategy applied in generic structure difficulties which was observing applied 7 times (16%), while in language features, there were sentence construction applied 5 times (11.3%), giving opportunity to ask applied 10 times (22.7%), metalinguistic feedback applied 7 times (16%) by the teacher.

In generic structure difficulties, one of the strategies applied by the teacher in generic structure difficulties was observing. It was showed from the interview and observation. In this strategy, the teacher gave the students a descriptive text contained two paragraphs. The teacher asked the students to observe what information included in the first paragraph, such as name and location. Besides, the teacher also asked the students to find the information included in the second paragraph which is the detail information of the text. The teacher required them to write any information, ideas, or questions they had and convey it. After the students wrote it down, then the teacher appointed some students to convey the information based on their findings. During the activity, the students seemed difficult to find the information. However, the teacher helped the student by guiding them. After they had known the information included in both paragraphs, then the teacher guided the students to differentiate between identification and description.

Another strategy applied by the teacher to overcome the students' difficulties was guiding question strategy. In this strategy, the teacher gave the students guiding questions that encourage them to think and gave them deep understanding about what being discussed. In addition, the teacher also provided the list of questions that can guide the students related to what should be included in their writing. Therefore, the students will not be confused about what idea that they have to write since they have guidance of the process. In the process, the teacher divided the students into three groups. They were given some pictures that they had to describe and the group were

asked to choose one of them. To begin writing, the teacher gave three guiding questions to organize their writing.

To overcome the language feature difficulties, the first strategy is applied by the teacher was sentence construction. Sentence construction is an important strategy to overcome the students' difficulties that help them to have well-developed vocabulary and grammar in their writing. To apply the strategy, the teacher gave five sentences that the words were arranged randomly. The teacher asked the students to put the words together in the right order to form sentences. However, there were some students who answered them wrong. Then, the teacher asked the students to choose the right answer and explained why it is considered as the right answer. In addition, the teacher and the students then discussed related to the grammatical form included in the sentences.

The second strategy the teacher applied in language features difficulties was giving the opportunity the students to ask question. This strategy is very beneficial for the students to overcome their difficulties related to their confusion of the material they have. The students were allowed to ask the questions about the vocabulary and the grammatical form during the learning process. The teacher applied the strategy when showing the power point including a descriptive text. While discussing about the text, the students asked the teacher question related to unknown vocabulary they had. The teacher then answered it by giving a clue to the students and by giving the similarity of the word based on the context instead of asking the students to look at the dictionary, so the students could answer it by themselves.

Metalinguistic feedback was the third strategy applied by the teacher. It is an important strategy applied by the teacher when the students make mistake, so that the students will not have the same mistake later on. The application of the strategy was the teacher gave the clue or information implicitly for the students' mistakes during learning process. In other words, instead of directly correcting the mistake, the teacher tended to trigger them to think about the correct one. To apply this strategy, the teacher gave the students a descriptive text and discussed the text together including the language features contained in the text. The teacher highlighted by coloring the word contained the language features, such as to be, noun phrase, prepositions, etc. The teacher asked the students each item and asked what the word or phrase is called. During the activity, many students did not know what the highlighted word or phrase is called. Therefore, when the students answered it wrong, the teacher asked other students to correct it until the correct one was found.

The last is giving the criteria. This strategy is an effort of the teacher related to a specific product goal that the students have to achieve. The teacher showed the power point to the students about the criteria of a good writing by using assessment rubric that the teacher used in teaching writing, one of which is mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling). This strategy was applied since the limited time the teacher had in teaching writing. In fact, the teacher said that mechanics was not too much considered by the teacher in teaching and learning process. Otherwise, the teacher was more focused on the students' understanding on organizing ideas rather than the mechanics.

### ***Discussion***

The findings obtained from interview and observation showed that the teacher applied the strategy in writing the generic structure. There were two strategy applied by the teacher in generic structure. The first strategy is observing. In observing, the

students were given a model of descriptive text that the teacher asked them to observe what information that they could find in the paragraphs of descriptive text. When the students had found the information included, then the teacher began to ask them to differentiate between both generic structures. This strategy is also stated in the research by Allal (2018) that the instruction of observing can be focused on what the model does and says that include the question on the students' reflections about the model. This action meant "learning-by-observation" that include the observation and answer to question about what is observed. He said that observing can have a significant impact on the student learning and needs to have a recognized place in writing instruction. The contrast of this research is the researcher took the student's peers as the model to read and observe the text. The second is guiding questions. In this strategy, the teacher gave the students three questions to create their writing. The questions led the students regarding to the information they had to organize in each paragraph. It is in the same way with the statement in Traver's theory (1998:1) that "a guiding questions is the fundamental query that directs the search of understanding". He believed that by leading the questions can guide the students' in writing process and explore the ideas they find for writing. The research by Damayanti et al (2020) also stated that guiding question is one of the strategy that can be applied to overcome the students' difficulties in organizing their ideas before starting to write them in a paragraph.

The teacher also applied the strategy to overcome the students' difficulties in language features. There were three strategies applied by the teacher. The first is sentence construction. In this strategy, the teacher gave the students the random words that they had to arrange into good sentences. The teacher gathered the students' answers and wrote them on the whiteboard. The teacher and the students then discussed related to grammatical form contained in the sentences. This strategy is in accordance with the research by Kalipa (2014) that sentence construction is one of the strategy that can be applied since it can help the students' difficulties in grammar and vocabulary. The difference from this research is the strategy of sentence construction was given by instructing the students to watch the video and write the sentences about it. The second is giving opportunity to ask. The strategy was applied by the way the teacher asked the students related to language features. The teacher gave the opportunity to the students to ask something they didn't understand. As what Liu and Zao (2010) stated that the interactive classroom helps the students in increasing their language ability, giving them opportunity to understand, using language and helping them to learn the target language easily and quickly. One of the way to achieve it is by questioning occurred in the classroom. The third is metalinguistic feedback. In this strategy, the teacher helped the students who made mistakes in language features while discussing about the text. This is in line with the theory by Lyster and Ranta (1997:47) that metalinguistic feedback contains either comments, information, questions about well-formedness of the students' utterance, without explicitly giving the correct form. If the teacher found the students made mistakes, the teacher asked another students to correct it by providing them the clue and questions to help them to answer it. The teacher triggered the students to think until the correct one was found and explained the reasons why. According to Tamayo and Diego (2017) metalinguistic feedback is effective for the students since it may be correlated to the students' self-realization of their mistakes and encourages them to be more actively to self-repair.

The last strategy the teacher applied is giving the criteria. In this strategy, the teacher just shared the students the rubric assessment containing the criteria of writing including

mechanics. The students were asked to pay attention to the criteria before they start their activity. The strategy was applied since mechanics was not the main concern of the teacher' assessment in writing. The same strategy was also proposed by Jurianto et al (2015) in their research. In the research, the researchers said that the teacher explained the purpose of the writing task and explained the criteria of good writing by using the assessment rubric the teacher used. From the research, it explained that the strategy was applied due to the time constrains the teacher had. The contrast with this research is that the strategy was done by the teacher in generic structures rather than in language features.

## CONCLUSION

The study on the teacher's strategy shows that the research on the teacher's strategy to overcome the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text, there were six strategies applied by the teacher in generic structure difficulties and language features difficulties. In generic structure difficulties, the teacher applied the strategies which were observing and guiding question. In language features difficulties, the teacher applied the strategies which were sentence construction, giving opportunity to ask, metalinguistic feedback and giving the criteria. The most frequently used strategy was guiding question (33.3%), while the least frequently used strategy was giving the criteria (2.3%).

From the findings, there are some suggestions offered. First, The researcher hopes the teacher can improve his or her knowledge about writing descriptive text and the importance of learning it for the students, so that the teacher can motivate the students to write. Second, it is important for the teacher to explore more about the students' difficulties in writing, especially in descriptive text, so that the teacher can determine and prepare the various strategies to be applied in overcoming their difficulties in writing. Third, the researcher hopes for other researchers to conduct further research related to the strategies in overcoming the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text, so that it can be the references for teachers in their teaching and learning process.

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