

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of several subchapters: Research Background, Problem Formulation, Research Objectives, and Research Significance.

1.1. Background of the Study

English language learning involves four main skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these, writing is considered particularly important in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it allows learners to communicate ideas, information, and feelings in a clear and organized written form. Writing is not a simple activity; it requires the integration of various elements such as organization, vocabulary mastery, and grammatical accuracy.

In the Indonesian EFL context, writing remains one of the most difficult skills for students to master. Irene & Misrita (2020) argue that writing is a demanding skill compared to other language skills such as reading, listening, and speaking, especially because it requires sufficient linguistic knowledge and the ability to transform abstract ideas into well-structured written forms. This difficulty is also reflected in the national assessment results, which show that students' writing scores are generally lower than their reading and listening scores (Education Assessment Centre, 2022).

At the senior high school level, students are introduced to several text types, one of which is descriptive text. Descriptive text aims to describe a

person, place, or object vividly and systematically so that the reader can imagine what is being described. Hyland (2004) highlights that descriptive text is one of the fundamental genres that helps students develop the ability to express ideas in a structured and detailed way. However, in practice, students often encounter difficulties in writing descriptive texts. These difficulties include a lack of vocabulary, frequent grammatical errors, and weak organization of paragraphs, limited content development, and errors in mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

At SMA Sint Carolus Kupang, particularly in Class XI, students are expected to be able to write descriptive texts as part of the English curriculum. However, based on preliminary observations, many students still struggle to produce descriptive texts effectively. Some students can identify the generic structure of descriptive text (identification and description), but they are unable to develop the content in sufficient detail. Others show weaknesses in grammar, particularly in the use of tenses and subject–verb agreement. Students' limited vocabulary also restricts their ability to describe objects or people precisely. Moreover, problems with mechanics, including spelling and punctuation, reduce the clarity and accuracy of their writing.

Several studies in Indonesia have examined students' writing abilities in the EFL context. For example, Putra & Abdullah (2019) analyzed students' general writing performance, while Sawalia Safitri (2021) focused on students' ability to write descriptive texts at the junior high school level. Other studies, such as those by Nisa (2020) and Halim (2021) examined

students' narrative writing skills. However, most of these studies either concentrated on general writing ability or on specific genres like narrative texts, and only a few provided a comprehensive analysis of descriptive texts written by senior high school students. Furthermore, previous research often emphasized generic structure and language features but paid less attention to a balanced analysis covering content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Therefore, there is a research gap in the form of a lack of comprehensive studies on high school students' descriptive writing skills in the context of EFL that highlight five main aspects: content, generic structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This study is entitled: **The Analysis of Descriptive Texts Written by Efl Students in Class XI of Sint Carolus Catholic High School Kupang.**

1.2. Research Problem

Based on the background and focus of the research, the research questions in this study are as follows:

1. Do the descriptive texts written by Class XI students meet the criteria of good writing in terms of content, generic structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics?
2. What specific problems do Class XI students encounter when writing descriptive texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?

1.3. Objective of the Study

By the research questions mentioned above, the objectives of this study are to:

1. To analyze whether the descriptive texts written by Class XI students of Sint Carolus Catholic High School Kupang meet the criteria of good writing in terms of content, generic structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.
2. To identify the specific problems and errors encountered by Class XI students of Sint Carolus Catholic High School Kupang in writing descriptive texts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

1.4. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions.

Theoretical Contribution

The study enriches the body of literature on EFL writing, particularly in analyzing descriptive texts produced by senior high school students. By examining five aspects—content, generic structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics—this research offers a comprehensive overview of students' strengths and weaknesses in writing. The findings can serve as a reference for future studies in the same field.

Practical Contribution

- **For Teachers:** The results help teachers recognize common difficulties faced by students in writing descriptive texts. They provide insights for designing effective teaching strategies to improve grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and idea organization, as well as encourage teachers to give more practice and feedback.

- **For Students:** The study raises students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in descriptive writing. It can guide them to improve accuracy (grammar and mechanics) and expression (vocabulary and content development), motivating them to practice more consistently.
- **For Future Researchers:** The research offers a foundation for further studies on EFL writing skills. Future investigations may expand the scope to larger populations, different grade levels, or other text genres, and can also be used to develop remedial programs or instructional materials for teaching descriptive writing.