

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In studying English, there are four essential skills that need to be developed: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learners are required to be proficient in these four skills. Besides that, they must also understand language elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Writing is one of the important language skills that should be learned by students. Kashani, Mahmud, and Kalajahi (2013) state that English is generally taught in formal educational environments, including schools, universities, and language institutions. In Indonesia, English has become part of the educational curriculum at both school and university levels, so Indonesian students have the opportunity to study it formally. Having good writing skills is very beneficial for students in academic and professional fields. It supports them in completing tasks such as writing essays, composing a thesis, preparing business documents, and conducting international communication.

Writing is often seen as the hardest skill for students who learn English as a foreign language. Rass (2001) explains that writing is difficult for both native and non-native speakers because they must pay attention to many things, such as ideas, organization, purpose, audience, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics like punctuation, spelling, and capital letters. Brown (2001) also says that writing is a thinking process. It means that when people write, they put their ideas into words and arrange them into clear and organized sentences. Because writing involves many aspects, it becomes more difficult for students who are not native speakers of English.

Students need to be able to write descriptive texts. A descriptive text is a type of writing that gives detailed information about a certain person, object, or place (Hornbill, 2017). Its main goal is to describe something clearly. Writing is often harder than other language skills because it requires many elements, such as content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary, to make the writing good.

From an interview with the English teacher at SMP Kristen 1 Amanuban Barat, the researcher found that some students could write English texts like procedure, descriptive, and recount texts. However, some students still had difficulties. The main problems were limited vocabulary, weak grammar knowledge, and lack of ideas.

SMP Kristen 1 Amanuban Barat uses the 2013 Curriculum in teaching English. This curriculum requires students to learn various types of writing, including descriptive text.

According to Jacobs (2008), to write a descriptive text well, students need to pay attention to five parts: content (developing ideas), organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Developing ideas is the most important part because it helps students write clear and complete texts.

When organizing ideas, students need to identify the person, place, or thing they want to describe according to the rules of descriptive text. In grammar, they should use the correct and suitable words to express their thoughts. For mechanics, students must pay attention to punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. These points help the writer and the scorers in evaluating the students' tests.

Using these indicators, the writer can see the students' abilities through their writing and analyze their work. The purpose of this study is to find out how well the students can write descriptive texts. Based on this, the researcher gave the study the title "A Study on the Ability in Writing Descriptive Text of SMP Kristen 1 Amanuban Barat in the School Year 2023/2024.

1.2 Research Problem

From the background above, the researcher identifies the following questions for this study:

1. What is the level of ability of EFL students in writing descriptive texts?
2. What challenges do eighth-grade EFL students encounter when writing descriptive texts?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

1. To determine how well EFL students can write descriptive texts.
2. To identify the challenges EFL students face when writing descriptive texts.

1.4 The Significant of the Study

1. For the Writer

The writer can understand how to assess students' writing and learn about the difficulties students face. This will help the writer choose the most suitable techniques for teaching writing in the future.

2. For the Teacher

English teachers can use this research to improve their teaching methods. It can help them identify students' strengths and weaknesses in writing descriptive texts and other types of texts.