
**EXPLORING STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING PROCEDURE TEXTS:
INSIGHTS FROM SMA AISYIYAH 1 PALEMBANG**

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to find out the difficulties encountered by the students in writing procedure texts at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. Writing is often considered a productive and crucial skill for students' future, yet many learners find it difficult to master due to complex components such as vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. This study applied qualitative research with a case study design to investigate the specific phenomena of student challenges in depth. The participants of this study were seven students from the tenth grade, selected by using a purposeful sampling technique, specifically homogeneous sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the primary data, which were then analyzed by using the thematic analysis procedure. The research findings revealed that there were five major difficulties faced by the students in writing procedure text. These difficulties included grammatical problems, specifically in determining pronouns, and mechanical problems such as deciding the right spelling for unfamiliar words. Additionally, students struggled with sentence structure when arranging the steps of the procedure, and faced psychological barriers, including a lack of self-confidence and significant writing anxiety. Problems with the generic structure of the text were also identified. In brief, the tenth-grade students still face diverse challenges in writing, and it is recommended that they improve their comprehension and skills in this specific genre.

Keywords: *difficulty; procedure text; writing*

**MENGEKSPLOR KESULITAN SISWA DALAM MENULIS TEKS PROSEDUR:
TEMUAN DARI SMA AISYIYAH 1 PALEMBANG**

ABSTRAK: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh siswa dalam menulis teks prosedur di SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. Menulis sering kali dianggap sebagai keterampilan produktif yang krusial bagi masa depan siswa, namun banyak pelajar merasa kesulitan untuk menguasainya karena komponen yang kompleks seperti kosakata, tata bahasa, dan struktur kalimat. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus untuk menyelidiki fenomena spesifik mengenai tantangan siswa secara mendalam. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah tujuh orang siswa kelas sepuluh yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik *purposeful sampling*, khususnya *homogeneous sampling*. Wawancara semi-terstruktur dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data utama, yang kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan prosedur analisis tematik. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa terdapat lima kesulitan utama yang dihadapi siswa dalam menulis teks prosedur. Kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut meliputi masalah tata bahasa, khususnya dalam menentukan kata ganti (*pronouns*), dan masalah mekanis seperti menentukan ejaan yang tepat untuk kata-kata yang tidak dikenal. Selain itu, siswa berjuang dengan struktur kalimat saat menyusun langkah-langkah prosedur, serta menghadapi hambatan psikologis termasuk kurangnya rasa percaya diri dan kecemasan menulis yang signifikan. Masalah terkait struktur generik (*generic structure*) dari teks juga teridentifikasi dalam penelitian ini. Singkatnya, siswa kelas sepuluh masih menghadapi

beragam tantangan dalam menulis, dan disarankan agar mereka meningkatkan pemahaman serta keterampilan mereka dalam genre teks khusus ini.

Kata Kunci: *kesulitan, teks prosedur, menulis*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian schools, learning English formally requires students to acquire four primary skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Writing has traditionally been perceived as a difficult skill to master. According to Saputra et al. (2022), writing is the most demanding language competence. It is the act of expressing thoughts and opinions in a readable format through the strategic use of letters, punctuation, and spaces. Mastery of language basics—specifically vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure—is essential for writing effectively. According to Anjayani (2016), writing involves developing and maintaining written language to express an author's ideas and messages through appropriate grammatical structures. In addition, writing was a productive skill, which, despite its significance, was a difficult skill to learn. Irawan (2023) also suggests that the writing activity must undergo a series of interrelated phases, which further complicates this language skill. According to Huy (2015), writing is always considered as one of the crucial parts for students' future.

Based on the *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)* of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* for Senior High Schools, one of the key genres studied is the procedure text. A procedure text provides steps, processes, or instructions on how to make or operate something. Susanti (2015) notes that the goal of these texts is to provide sequenced information so that individuals can perform tasks appropriately, safely, and efficiently. To achieve this goal, the text must follow a specific generic structure consisting of the goal, materials, and steps (Anderson & Anderson, 2003). Moreover, it requires the precise use of imperative verbs and temporal connectives to ensure clarity. As highlighted by Knapp and Watkins (2005), the primary function of procedural language is to direct the reader through a process, making the logical organization of ideas a critical element for students to master.

However, students often encounter significant difficulties with this genre. An informal interview with an English teacher at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang revealed that many tenth-grade students struggle with drafting procedural texts. Lack of vocabulary and poor grammar mastery often lead to these challenges, prompting some students to copy content from the internet. Consequently, identifying the specific difficulties students face in writing procedure texts is the primary focus of this research.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative research approach with a case study design. A case study is utilized to conduct in-depth research on a small number of participants, focusing on understanding a particular phenomenon or situation. The researchers acted as the primary instrument to examine the natural objects of the study, focusing on finding students' difficulties in writing procedure text at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. The participants of this study were seven tenth-grade students from SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. The researchers employed a purposeful sampling technique, specifically homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling aims to select participants who share similar traits or properties. Data were collected through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Interviews allowed the researchers to exchange information and obtain clearer insights into the students' experiences. For data analysis, the researcher employed the thematic analysis procedure as outlined by Creswell (2012). This involved systematic steps to categorize interview responses into specific themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

After analyzing the data from the interview, the researchers found some problems faced by students: difficulties in writing procedure text at SMA ‘Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. There are some themes and codes listed from the analysis of qualitative data that are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Students’ difficulties in writing procedure text at SMA Aisyiyah 1 Palembang.

NO	THEMES	CODES
1	Grammatical Problems	Students struggle with determining the correct pronouns for their text.
2	Mechanical Problems	Students have difficulty deciding on the correct spelling of words.
3	Problem of Sentence Structure	Students find it difficult to arrange the steps of a procedure text in detail.
4	Lack of Self-Confidence	Students feel insecure about their comprehension of writing tasks.
5	Writing Anxiety	Students feel anxious due to a lack of knowledge and fear of missing deadlines.

Grammatical Problems

According to data obtained from the interview, some problems faced by students at SMA ‘Aisyiyah 1 Palembang were that the students stated they had difficulties in selecting the appropriate pronouns for their text. As claimed by student H, *“I’m still not good at grammar, and sometimes I misspell words, and I’m still wrong in using pronouns.”* Also, D described, *“I think it is still lacking. I still found it difficult to arrange sentences correctly.”* This statement also detailed: J, who claimed, *“Yes, because of my little knowledge of the procedural text, maybe it will be a little difficult for me.”* (Personal Interview, August 21st, 2024). In conclusion, the students had difficulties in determining pronouns in writing procedure text.

Mechanical Problems

According to data obtained from the interview, some problems faced by students at SMA ‘Aisyiyah 1 Palembang were that the students stated they had difficulties in deciding the right spelling, and they felt a lack of capability in using the spelling of the words to determine a good sentence. This is supported by students: D said, *“I have some difficulties in deciding the right spelling when writing a procedure text,”* and J stated *“I have difficulty deciding which word to use, so I have difficulty determining it”*. In this case, M reported, *“Sometimes it is a bit difficult to spell difficult words and unfamiliar words. Emm, like the word ‘squeeze’, I do not know how to write it”*. (Personal Interview, August 21st, 2024). In conclusion, the students had difficulties in using the appropriate spelling in making procedure text.

Problem of Sentence Structure

According to data obtained from the interview, some problems faced by students at SMA ‘Aisyiyah 1 Palembang were that the students felt a lack in creating the sentence structure of a procedure text. Some students said, *“I still lack understanding of sentence structure, so I do not understand. I had a little problem as there were some parts I have not really understood”* S stated *“I have difficulty in the steps section because I am confused about the preparation of the steps at the beginning and the end”*. R also stated, *“When I wanted to write, I was still confused about how to make the sentence steps”* (Personal Interview, August 21st, 2024). In

conclusion, the students had difficulties in understanding of sentence structure in writing procedure text.

Lack of Self-Confidence

According to data obtained from the interview, some problems faced by students at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang were that the students did not feel confident or afraid to write the procedure text. S stated, *"As a student, once, it felt like the writing was wrong and felt it was not right, the words also felt wrong. So, I felt less confident"*. D stated, *"I did not really understand the writing procedure text, so that made me less confident"* (Personal Interview, August 21st, 2024). In conclusion, the students were not self-confident because they thought their comprehension of writing a procedure text needed to be higher.

Writing Anxiety

According to data obtained from the interview, some problems were faced by students at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang, which was that the students felt worried about making mistakes in writing the procedure text because they did not know the contents of the procedure text. This statement stated some students J and M: *"I felt anxious because I'm afraid I'll be late submitting it and I'm afraid it won't be accepted by the teacher anymore"* M also stated *"My knowledge of procedure text is still lacking, I will find it difficult to write down assignment given by the teacher"* (Personal Interview, August 21st, 2024). In conclusion, the students felt anxious about writing procedure text because they did not have much knowledge.

Discussion

Thematic analysis was used in data analysis above; after that, the researchers found some difficulties faced by students at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang. There are difficulties in grammatical problems; difficulties in mechanical problems: difficulties in the problem of sentence structure; lack of self-confidence; writing anxiety; and generic structure in writing procedure text. As a result, the factors were explained as follows to obtain information about them.

The first problem faced by students was the grammatical problems in the writing procedure text. They identified grammar, particularly pronouns, as a significant challenge. The students had difficulty using grammar because they did not know the appropriate verbs. A study conducted by Hidayah et al (2021) claimed that the dominant factor of students' problems in writing procedural text was language features, such as vocabulary and grammar, making it difficult when writing the text. Other manuscripts, such as Suryanto et al (2020), found that the challenges of learning English include a lack of grammar, a lack of vocabulary, and a lack of ability to write procedure text.

The second problem faced by students was the difficulty of mechanical problems in writing procedure text. They struggled with spelling, especially for unfamiliar words like "squeeze". The students had difficulty in using mechanical problems because they did not understand well. According to Alfaki (2015) reported that Grammatical problems, mechanical problems, and sentence structure problems became a factor causing students difficulties in developing a procedural text.

The third problem was regarding sentence structure. Students found arranging steps to be confusing. The students encounter difficulty in using sentence structure because they do not understand how to choose the right words to write. According to Xiao and Chen (2015), the findings indicate that the difficulties that engineering students have in English academic writing in three aspects, i.e. content, structure, and language. The students have difficulty in preparation the steps because their understanding of grammar is still not good. According to Richard and Renandya (2002), the difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. This study shows that students feel confused about writing the steps in the correct grammatical order because they tend to focus solely on the words they want to write.

The fourth problem was the students' lack of self-confidence in learning of procedure text. The students felt they did not have high self-confidence or were afraid to write the procedure text. This condition was supported by Octavia (2016) stated that psychological problems are a problem in writing skills. The factors intrinsic to students, such as lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, and writing anxiety, are challenges that learner in this research face. Afterward, the students' lack of self-confidence may occur from sociocultural issues.

The last difficulty was they writing anxiety in writing procedure text. They felt anxious to complete the task if the teacher asked them to write and make errors. According to Octavia (2016), writing anxiety is said to negatively influence both the learners' motivation and their academic achievement. If the students' writing anxiety is high in a particular learning situation, they will also lose their attention to learning writing skills, misbehave, and face discipline problems.

The contribution of this study has been to confirm that students felt difficulties in writing the procedure text carefully. Five issues were suitable for the theories. First, students felt they had a grammatical problem. Second, they had a mechanical problem. Third, they had a problem with sentence structure. Fourth, they had a lack of self-confidence. Fifth, they felt writing anxiety. Last, they had difficulties in generic structure.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this research conducted with seven tenth-grade students at SMA 'Aisyiyah 1 Palembang reveal that students face a variety of significant challenges when composing procedure texts. These difficulties span across linguistic, structural, and psychological dimensions, specifically involving grammatical issues with pronouns, mechanical struggles regarding spelling, and limitations in sentence structure when organizing sequential steps. Furthermore, the findings highlight that students encounter obstacles related to the generic structure of the text, alongside psychological barriers such as writing anxiety and a lack of self-confidence. While the students maintain a positive level of motivation, their overall proficiency is hindered by these five identified factors, suggesting a clear need for targeted instructional support to improve their mastery of the procedure text genre.

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