

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

Writing skills are among the skills that become the stage in which a person learns a language. Rahman (2018) shows that Indonesia is one of the countries that widely teaches English as a foreign language. Writing is one of the most important productive English skills students should master. Ariyanti & Fitriana (2017) reported that Indonesian EFL students had trouble with grammar, cohesion, coherence, and writing errors in paragraph organization, diction, and spelling. Moreover, many students lack writing skills due to the increasing use of smartphones and other electronic devices. They only look for answers on the internet through their smartphones, then copy the answers to their writing without knowing the error in their writing.

According to Burne and Siegel (2018), writing does not simply involve the production of texts that are influenced by discourse knowledge and strategies. Writing also involves socio-cultural factors such as topic, audience, purpose, and cultural norms. The topic of a piece of writing can greatly influence how different audiences receive it. Understanding the purpose of writing helps writers convey their message clearly and persuasively. Cultural norms also play a significant role in how we write. Different cultures have varying expectations regarding politeness, formality, and directness in communication.

Harmer (2006a) says many factors reduce students' motivation to write. Firstly, a common feeling among students is fear of failure or rejection when they fear not achieving their goals or making mistakes. Secondly, they write in an uncertain mood, do not dare to reveal their weaknesses and write in a condition of certainty about what they are writing. Providing learners with a variety of comfortable writing activities on familiar and appealing topics is very important in encouraging them to try.

Moreover, the teaching of English writing does not run very smoothly. Fact shows that EFL learners generally have problems with grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics while at the same time producing a quality piece of writing. According to Suhartoyo (2014), writing is a challenging skill for students learning English as a foreign language. Besides grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics, cultural differences can affect EFL students' writing skills. Different cultures have different linguistic styles and traditions that may not align with those of English academic writing. As a result, EFL students may struggle with adapting to the expectations of English-speaking readers.

The Montessori method is currently utilized to teach students writing. Under this Montessori Method, students can learn to write by choosing their topics. By giving students the freedom to select their writing topics, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated in the writing process. For writing, students can choose their interests from the material. In addition, the teacher prepares the material with different topics. The teacher can make five options for writing material in descriptive text, such as students' personal experiences on holiday, making fable stories from their imagination, fairy tales, hobbies, or favorite things. These options stimulate students' desire to understand the material in English lessons. Handayani (2014) argues, "A new approach to learning, such as the Montessori method, can enlighten children. The classroom style, the play with tools, and the teachers in the Montessori approach make children enjoy learning English."

Moreover, Sensorial activities in Montessori focuses on lessons and activities help develop the five senses in see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. The lessons and activities provided in the sensorial area of the classroom help children classify, clarify, and understand the world around them. Students can imagine what they want to write in sentence and paragraph.

Based on the Montessori method, this study examines the writing skills of students in the Montessori method in order to write descriptive

texts, as well as the learning process and the responses to students' writing. The Montessori method is grounded in child psychology when it comes to the four skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. In the following stages, the researcher will learn more about the learning process and respond to students' skills in writing descriptive text using Montessori method. This method will be implemented by the teacher to teach writing skills to students in public school other than Montessori schools in order to determine how far the students have advanced in their writing skills.

Students' choice to write their writing uses the Montessori method as the alternative to learning descriptive text. In this era, students use their phones to access their material through learning sites. They take pictures, screenshots, or copies of the results they get from the site and the materials their teachers provide. Based on the researcher's experience in English for Young Learners course practice in sixth grade in Darut Taqwa Elementary school for the final exam, the researcher found that some of them were not used to making notes in their notebooks to complete what they had learned and making it their own. They waited for their friend to write the material on the board and would copy it at home.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are three questions in this research:

1. How is the process of learning to write a descriptive text using Montessori method?
2. How do the students' responses to learning to write a descriptive text using Montessori method?

C. RESEARCH PURPOSES

There are two purposes in this research:

1. To find out the process of learning to write a descriptive text using Montessori method.
2. To find out the students' responses to learning to write a descriptive text using Montessori method.

D. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCES

The findings from this research are anticipated to be both theoretically and practically applicable.

1. Theoretical Significances

This study is expected to provide the theory of writing descriptive text using the Montessori method for first grade at junior high school in Batam. In particular, this study will explain students' interests and experiences in using the Montessori method in their writing descriptive text activity. This study may also be one referral in searching for alternatives to teaching English primarily in Batam. Then, the Montessori method in writing descriptive text at non-Montessori schools can be applicable.

2. Practical Significances

From the study's background above, the teacher can use the Montessori method to write descriptive text in the classroom for English lessons. Next, the teacher will consider this method a valuable way to improve student's skills in the writing context using the Montessori method.

E. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study wants to explain the students' experience writing descriptive text using the Montessori method in junior high school writing activities and students' responses in writing descriptive text using the Montessori method in class activities. In the class, students and the teacher will interact about the activity that will be processed from the beginning of

the lesson to the end of the lesson. Students get basic writing knowledge from the teacher, and the teacher's responsibility is to increase students' acceptance of learning material during learning activities in the classroom. Suprijono (2009) says, "Learning motivation directs behavior, ensures persistence, and creates a spirit of learning."

In the Montessori classroom, sensory activities encourage the development of the five senses: sight, touch, hearing, gesture, and smell. According to Faryadi (2009), students' performance in English language learning was statistically improved through educational environments such as Montessori classrooms using sensorial activities. Teacher gives their students freedom by visualizing their writings with what they see, hold, and feel. Students also feel free to express their body language to make them feel like their writing is coming.

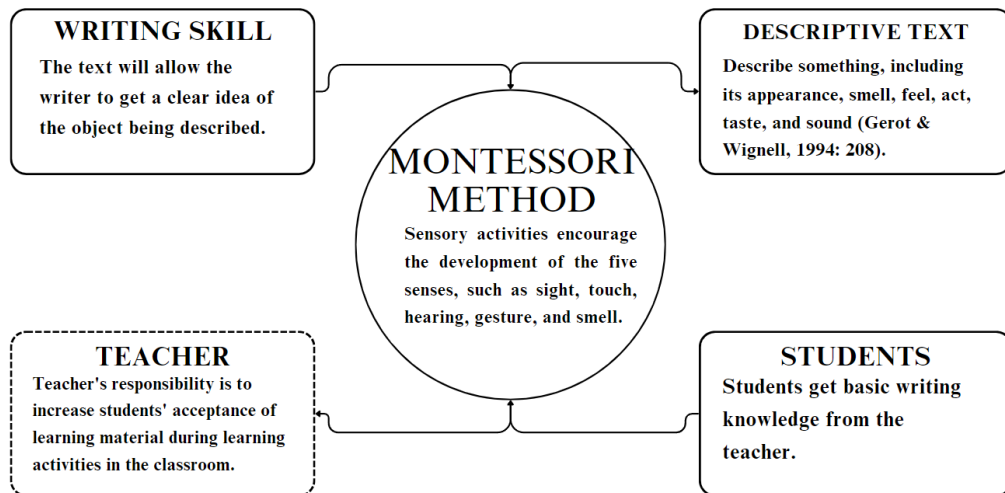


Figure 1.1 Montessori Method in Writing

In the Montessori method, the notion of a teacher does not refer to a traditional teacher. According to Montessori philosophy, teachers must provide their students with the opportunity to grow into their own personalities (O'Neil, 1997; Torrence & Chattin-McNichols, 2004) and

achieve higher levels of developmental potential for children (Hedeem, 2005); as a result, Montessori teachers must assume guidance responsibilities.

In this study, writing performance will be combined with the Montessori method. Handayani, S. (2014) suggests that new approaches to learning, such as the Montessori approach, enlighten children. In Montessori classrooms, children learn by playing with tools while learning, and teachers represent interesting personalities, making learning English enjoyable. Learning activities begin with the teacher asking the students to get the materials. After that, the teacher explains the lesson using the materials provided. The next step is for the students to work with the material itself. These activities help students develop their experience to complete their work. In this writing performance, Descriptive text is to be used as one of the materials used in this Montessori method.

Meanwhile, descriptive text describes something, including its appearance, smell, feel, act, taste, and sound (Gerot & Wignell, 1994: 208). It explains the characteristics of people, places, and things. The reader can create a mental image of the situation by providing details. Abisamra (2001: 1) also believes in descriptive text. He argues, "A descriptive text describes a subject, place, or thing in detail so that the reader can visualize the subject, place, or thing described." Thus, writing a descriptive text will give the writer a clear idea of the object being described. By describing an object, the readers can easily visualize the object that is described clearly, just as in real life, because the description activity is used to describe an object.

F. PREVIOUS STUDY

The first study by Batubara et al. (2020) under the title "Five Factors Influencing the Students' Motivation to Learn English as a Foreign Language: A Closer Look into Montessori Classroom Environment" explained the study focuses on the Montessori method, designed to train students' independence in learning, this method of education encourages

students to be self-sufficient. In this study, the factors of the Montessori classroom environment on the motivation of students in Royal Prime Montessori Elementary School Pekanbaru in the academic year 2018/19 are described using a descriptive quantitative research approach. Five classes were selected to represent the sample of 55 students. This study found the five factors influencing the students' motivational condition are the teacher's presence, personal attitude, Montessori materials, classroom conditions, and friends' influence. This study conducted with this method revealed that students who learn English this way are active and cooperative.

Research by Sary et al. (2023) entitled "Analysis of the Montessori Method in Beginning Reading Skill of Indonesian Subject in of Students SD Negeri 1 Jawaringin". The aim of the study is to describe how the Montessori method improves students' beginning reading skills in SD Negeri 1 Jatiwaringin. The data collection methods used in this study are descriptive qualitative, with oral and written test results, interviews and observation. Montessori teaches children according to their developmental level, in order to help them develop cognitive, psychomotor, and affective abilities.

Then, study by Denervaud et al. (2020), with the title "Effects of Traditional Versus Montessori Schooling on 4- to 15- Years Old Children's Performance Monitoring," was carried out on the students' young learners' performance monitoring detect and learning from unexpected outcomes. Study participants were 234 children between the ages of 4 and 15 from Montessori and traditional classrooms, who performed flanker tasks under performance monitoring. Performance monitoring is critical for academic learning and improves through childhood, the susceptibility to educational influences has not been examined. In Montessori classrooms, learners are encouraged to work independently with specially designed materials that support learners' discovery of their own errors.

This study focuses on students' writing skills using the Montessori method in writing descriptive text, along with the process of students'

learning and responses to writing. In contrast, previous research on the Montessori method has focused more on child psychology in examining the four skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Then, the researcher will learn about the learning process and respond to students' skills in writing descriptive text using the Montessori method. To find out how far along the students are in terms of writing skills, the researcher will use this method implemented by the teacher to teach writing skills to students in public schools other than Montessori. Students write sentences or maybe just one paragraph about what they like to write as a means of using the Montessori method.

