

**EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education



By :

SHEFIRA BELLA MURBARANI

SN. 2520046

**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
2024**

**EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education



**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
2024**

SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI

Dengan ini saya

Nama : Shefira Bella Murbarani

NIM : 2520046

Program Studi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Menyatakan bahwa yang tertulis dalam skripsi yang berjudul **“EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS’ DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT”** ini benar-benar karya saya sendiri, bukan jiplakan dari karya orang lain atau pengutipan yang melanggar etika keilmuan yang berlaku, baik sebagian atau seluruhnya. Pendapat atau temuan orang lain yang terdapat dalam skripsi ini dikutip berdasarkan kode etik ilmiah. Apabila skripsi ini terbukti ditemukan pelanggaran terhadap etika keilmuan, maka saya secara pribadi bersedia menerima sanksi hukum yang dijatuhkan.

Demikian pernyataan ini, saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya.

Pekalongan, 9 Maret 2024

Yang membuat pernyataan



SHEFIRA BELLA MURBARANI

2520046

NOTA PEMBIMBING

Kepada

Yth. Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan

UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan

c/q. Ketua Program Studi Tadris Bahasa Inggris
di Pekalongan

Assalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

Setelah melakukan penelitian, bimbingan dan koreksi naskah skripsi saudara:

Nama : Shefira Bella Murbarani

NIM : 2520046

Program Studi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris

Judul : **Exploring EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing
Descriptive Text**

Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diujikan dalam sidang munaqasyah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

Pekalongan, 19 Maret 2024

Pembimbing,



Dr. Nur Khoir, M.A.

NIP. 19750207 199903 1 001



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN ILMU KEGURUAN
Jalan Pahlawan KM. 5 Rowolaku, Kajen, Kabupaten Pekalongan
Website: ftik.uingusdur.ac.id Email: ftik@uingusdur.ac.id

APPROVAL SHEET

The Dean of Faculty of Education and Teacher Training K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid State Islamic University Pekalongan approved this thesis by:

NAME : Shefira Bella Murbarani

SN : 2520046

TITLE : **EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN
WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT**

It has been examined in the thesis defense by the examining board of the Faculty of Education at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan on Friday, 15th February 2024 and declared PASS as well as accepted as one of the requirements for obtaining the Bachelor of Education degree.

The Examiners

Examiner I

Chubbi Millatina Rokhuma, M.Pd.
NIP. 19900507 201503 2 005

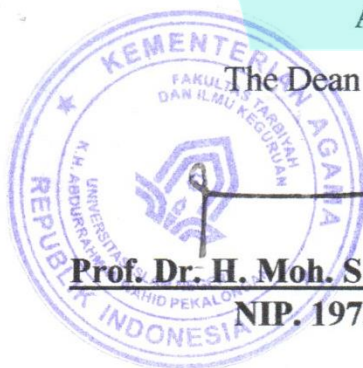
Examiner II

Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd.
NIP. 19860509 2023 212043

Pekalongan, 19th March 2024

Assigned by

The Dean of FTIK Pekalongan



Prof. Dr. H. Moh. Sugeng Solehuddin, M. Ag.
NIP. 19730112 200003 1 001

MOTTO

“Usaha + Doa = Sukses”



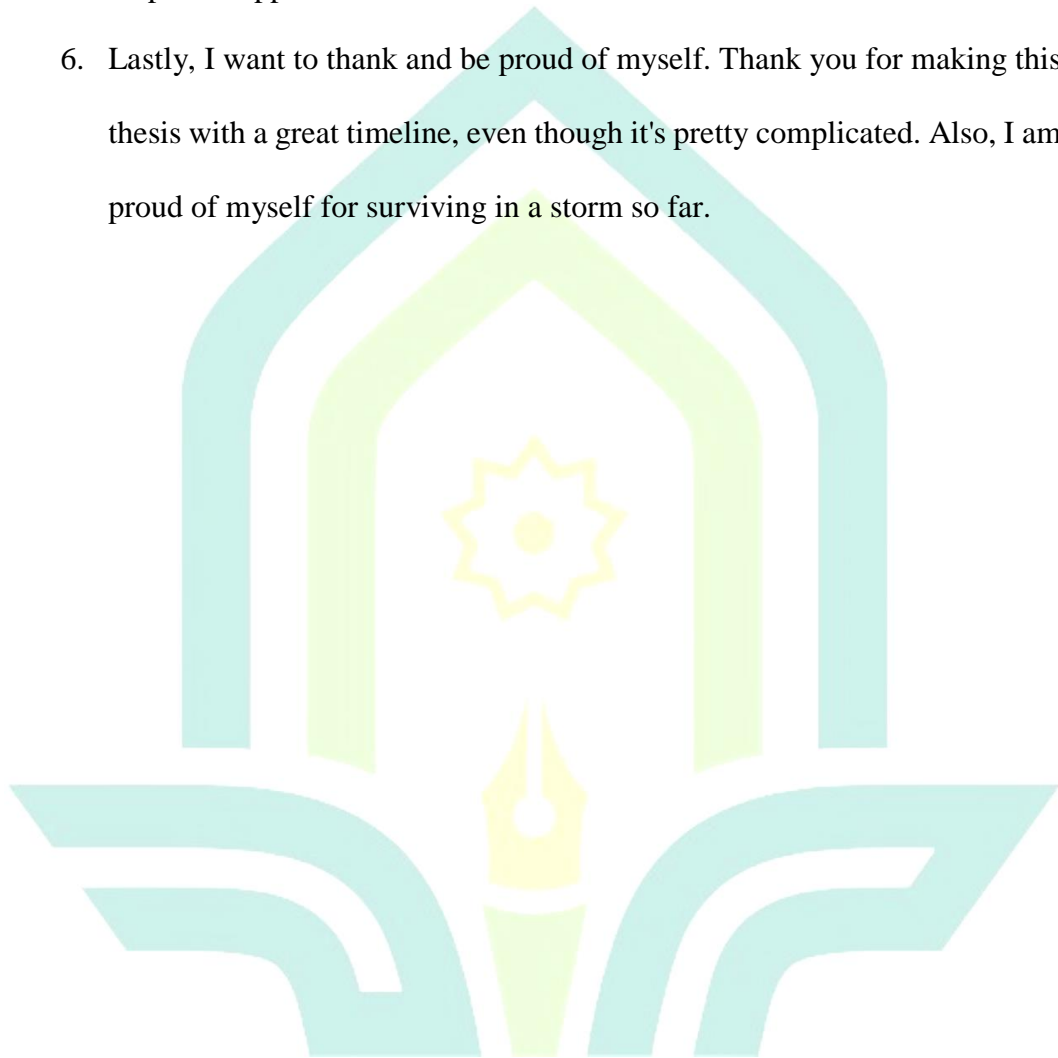
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world. My thesis has become a reality and is getting many kinds of support from many individuals. Therefore, I sincerely thank all of them.

1. First of all, to my beloved mother, I would like to express my gratitude to the strongest I have, Ida Kusuma Wati Ningrum, for your support, prayers, and endless love for expecting me to finish this thesis quickly. To my little brother, Gibran Tegar Prayudha, thank you for witnessing my confusion while doing my thesis at home.
2. Second, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr. Dr. Nur Kholis, M.A. Thank you for guiding my proposal patiently and believe this student will finish the thesis as far as she can.
3. Third, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my pals since vocational high school, Abiyasa Sakti Niagara and Dinda Hasanatul Jamila, for their unwavering support during my academic journey through my thesis.
4. Fourth, I will mention my gratitude to my fellow members of the English Education Department 2020. Thank you for knowing me well and adding me as your friend. I am glad to be your part of this batch even though we got online classes first in several semesters. To, Adi Soyadi, I appreciate the opportunity you gave me to be an integral part of your group. And not forgetting, I also want to express my gratitude to SAD Reborn who has

been the best friend at the beginning of the semester, spending almost all time playing together with enjoyable agendas.

5. Fifth, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to my thesis. I apologize for not mentioning it individually. I am very grateful for your help and support.
6. Lastly, I want to thank and be proud of myself. Thank you for making this thesis with a great timeline, even though it's pretty complicated. Also, I am proud of myself for surviving in a storm so far.



ABSTRAK

Penguasaan kemampuan menulis praktis semakin penting untuk persiapan siswa menuju kesuksesan di abad ke-21. Begitu juga dengan siswa EFL yang mengalami kesulitan dalam menulis, terutama dalam teks deskriptif. Peneliti bermaksud untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan metode penelitian naratif dengan wawancara semi-struktur. Studi ini melibatkan tiga peserta siswa kelas X di sebuah sekolah menengah atas di Pekalongan, Indonesia. Hasil mengatakan bahwa ada tiga kesulitan yang ditemukan ketika menulis teks deskriptif. Pertama, aspek yang paling memengaruhi secara psikologis ketika para partisipan menulis teks deskriptif adalah kurangnya motivasi saat menulis. Kedua, aspek linguistik berpacu pada kurangnya pengetahuan tentang grammar, pemilihan kata yang kurang tepat serta pola kalimat yang kurang memperhatikan fokus para pembaca. Yang terakhir adalah permasalahan kognitif. Pada permasalahan ini, para partisipan merasa bahwa mereka sulit untuk menyusun kalimat untuk menjadi paragraf dengan kesatuan yang utuh. Selain itu, sebelum mengonstruksikan kalimat, para partisipan sulit untuk memikirkan ide atau tema yang akan dikembangkan di dalam teks deskriptif.

Kata kunci: teks deskriptif, kesulitan, siswa EFL, menulis

ABSTRACT

Mastery of practical writing abilities is increasingly essential for students' success in the twenty-first century. In the same way, the EFL students in writing, especially in descriptive text. The researcher intended to discover the students' difficulties in writing descriptive text. To reach the aim of this research, the researcher applied the narrative inquiry method with semi-structured interview. This study involved three participants, grade X students at a high school in Pekalongan, Indonesia. The result indicated that they experienced three difficulties in writing descriptive text. To begin, the most psychologically influencing factor when participants write descriptive text is a lack of motivation to write. Second, the linguistic problem is concerned with a lack of grammatical knowledge, incorrect word choice, and phrase patterns that do not take advantage of the readers' focus. At last, there is a cognitive difficulty. In this difficulty, participants struggle to organize sentences into paragraphs that flow together cohesively. Furthermore, before constructing sentences, participants struggle with developing ideas or topics for the descriptive text.

Keywords: descriptive text, difficulties, EFL students, writing



PREFACE

Praises and gratefulness are sent to Allah SWT, who has poured His grace and His gift and bestowed me guidance, health, and patience so that the writing process of my thesis entitled "**Exploring EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text**" can be completed. It is submitted to English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfil one of the requirements for Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan. This study can be accomplished because of the support from kind-hearted people. Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following:

1. Rector of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Prof. Dr. H. Zaenal Mustakim, M.Ag.
2. Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Prof. Dr. H. M. Sugeng Sholehuddin, M.Ag.
3. The head of the English Education Department and Teachers' Training Faculty of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, Mr. Ahmad Burhannudin, M.A., and Mrs. Eros Meilina Sofa, M.Pd., the secretary of the English Education Department and Teachers' Training Faculty of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
4. Dr. Nur Kholis, M.A., is my supervisor, who has given me suggestions, guidance, and time in writing this thesis.
5. All lecturers and staff of the English Education Department, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

6. My beloved family has given me endless support, prayer, advice, and encouragement in writing this thesis.
7. My dearest friends have fought through the journey together since the beginning.

Pekalongan, 9 March 2024



Shefira Bella Murbarani



TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	i
SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI	ii
NOTA PEMBIMBING	iii
APPROVAL SHEET	iv
MOTTO	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ABSTRAK	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xii
LIST TABLE	xiii
FIGURE LIST	xiv
TABLE OF PICTURE	xv
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study.....	1
1.2 Limitation of Problem.....	3
1.3 Formulation of Problem.....	3
1.4 Operational Definition	3
1.5 Aims of Study	4
1.6 Significances of Study.....	4
CHAPTER V	6
CONCLUSION	6
5.1 Conclusion.....	6
5.2 Recommendation.....	6
REFERENCES	36

LIST TABLE

Table 1.1 A rubric of writing	8
Table 2.1 List of Participants	17
Table 3.1 Result of the difficulties in writing the descriptive text.....	22



FIGURE LIST

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework.....	15
--------------------------------------	----



TABLE OF PICTURE

Picture 1 A descriptive text written by Alda	38
Picture 2 A descriptive text written by Sania	39
Picture 3 A descriptive text typed by Aldi	40



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Language has various functions. The absence of language is just a lack of communication. Language has a huge role from the beginning of time. The four needs in language, sometimes known as the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, have been identified as the need of the hour and play an essential part in any language learning quest (Lorena & Sadiku, 2015).

Language abilities are a person's capacity to use language effectively; one is writing skills. Writing may be measured in various methods, including vocabulary exams, word definition activities, and academic language competence assessments (Lü et al., 2023). Writing skills are essential for academics and may be improved through exercises and educational activities. Therefore, writing can be used to explore and address complex topics, and then it develops critical thinking skills.

In the twenty-first century, mastery of excellent writing skills has been recognized as the most critical element for students' success. Good writing abilities have an essential effect on effectively communicating ideas and information over the global digital network. Writing has been emphasized as a critical process skill in a society driven more than ever by text and numerical data. The enhanced knowledge base on the nature of

written text and writing processes developed by researchers in disciplines such as composition studies, second language writing, genre theory, and contrastive rhetoric has further improved the writing standing within applied linguistics (Hyland, 2003).

In high school, students should communicate ideas, situations, and objectives through various text. One of these is descriptive text. Students must understand the main concepts and relevant topics and plot development of descriptive text. Furthermore, during this phase, students use English to convey issues close to them. Therefore, descriptive text is one of the primary references for learning English in Phase E of the Merdeka Curriculum Kemendikbudristek (2022).

In a world where digital technology experiences increasing advertisements, leading to fast and massive ways of communication, high school students are required to demonstrate a more defined of writing descriptive text. Contextually, the descriptive text has several structures. Those are identification, body, and conclusion. Based on the researcher's observation, EFL students need help constructing descriptive text, such as ideas, sentences, or even psychologically. Furthermore, descriptive text has to be composed using a descriptive text structure. Therefore, it needs to investigate their difficulties in writing descriptive text more deeply.

1.2 Limitation of Problem

Based on the research topic, this study explored the problems that EFL students have while writing descriptive text. The focus of this study included the specific issues people confront while writing descriptive text, as well as how these difficulties develop. The researcher dived deeper into the research problem by categorizing them as psychological, linguistic, or cognitive.

1.3 Formulation of Problem

This research attempted to answer one question. It required the response to, "What are the EFL students' difficulties in writing the descriptive text?" The answer to the investigational question is expected to guide students in improving their skills in writing descriptive text.

1.4 Operational Definition

1. **Difficulty:** A thing refers to something hard to do that needs to be solved (Maki, 2014).
2. **Writing skill:** A skill to effectively convey messages through written language, including various elements such as organization, vocabulary, content, structure, and mechanics (Yeping et al., 2014).
3. **EFL Students:** an individual acquiring English within a context considered a non-primary language. The acronym "EFL" represents "English as a Foreign Language," indicating that the learner is studying English in a setting where it is not the predominant language (Agus et al., 2023).

4. Descriptive text: a written or spoken communication that aims to provide a detailed and vivid description of a person, place, thing, event, or concept (Gerot & Wignell, 1994).

1.5 Aims of Study

This research aimed to investigate the mentioned difficulties to provide significant insights into problem understanding and an essential component for future learning evaluations.

1.6 Significances of Study

1. Theoretical : This study will validate Byrne's theory, which states that three aspects of difficulties in writing have an essential effect on students' writing skills and progress in school. Furthermore, the research will assist in discovering the students' writing difficulties and support their enhancement in English writing learning.
2. Empirical : This study will provide perspectives on students' challenges in writing descriptive text within the context of English learning and serve as a means for reflection and evaluation.
3. Practical : The findings of this study are expected to stimulate readers' interest and motivate them to

improve their descriptive writing skills by utilizing various learning approaches and understanding important writing indicators.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The results and discussions show three problems in writing descriptive text. Below are the factors of difficulties faced by EFL students in writing descriptive text:

1. Psychological problem.

Most of the participants felt a lack of motivation and support. This factor requires individuals to boost motivation substantially more.

2. Linguistic problem.

This study discovered that the participants were unable to comprehend correct grammar. Moreover, they were also confused about using the appropriate vocabulary in English.

3. Cognitive problem

EFL students have yet to understand the creation of concepts that will be expressed as themes in descriptive text.

5.2 Recommendation

The researcher understands that this study is still far from perfect. Because this study only included three participants, it can be expected that this research would give insight into EFL students' difficulties while creating descriptive text. This research might be a starting point for additional studies from a different perspective, providing new insights into the same background.

REFERENCES

- Agus, S., Nur, S., Asrifan, A., Hameed, H., & Anto, A. (2023). *EFL students' views, experiences, and expectations toward plagiarism practices in Indonesian higher education*. 6(2), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.33750/ijhi.v6i2.184>
- Alfaki, I. M. (2015). *University Students' English Writing Problems: Diagnosis and Remedy*. May.
- Alisha, F., Safitri, N., & Santoso, I. (2019). *STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING EFL*. 2(1), 20–25.
- Astrianingsih. (2021). *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text at The First Grade of SMAN 1 Kuala Kampar*.
- Bowen, G. A. (1997). *Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method*.
- Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skills*. Longman Singapore Publishers.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Flower, L. S., Hayes, J. R., & Hayes, J. R. (2012). *Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process*. 39(4), 449–461.
- Gardner, R. . (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.
- Gerot, L., & Wignell, P. (1994). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Antipodean Educational Enterprise.
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*.
- Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing*. Oxford University Press.
- Humairoh, S. A. (2021). *Exploring Students' Difficulties in Writing (A Case Study at the Department of English Education UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta) A Skripsi Presented to the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of S*.

- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kemendikbudristek. (2022). Salinan Keputusan Kepala Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. In *Kemendikbudristek* (Issue 021).
- Kharma, N. (1987). Arab Students' Problems with English Relative Clause. *ERIC*.
- Langan, J. (2009). *John Langan*. McGraw-Hill.
- Leki, I. (1991). *The Preferences of ESL Students for Error Correction in College-Level Writing Classes*. 3.
- Lorena, C., & Sadiku, M. (2015). *The Importance of Four Skills Reading, Speaking, Writing, Listening in a Lesson Hour*. 1(1), 29–31.
- Lü, C., Pace, A. E., & Ke, S. (2023). Bidirectional transfer of definition skills and expressive vocabulary knowledge in Chinese-English dual language learners. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 26(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2022.2108308>
- M. Reid, J. (1983). *Teaching ESL Writing*. University of Wyoming.
- Maki, U. (2014). *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science Scientific Imperialism: Difficulties in Definition, Identification, and Scientific Imperialism: Difficulties in Definition, Identification, and Assessment*. October, 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02698595.2013.825496>
- Makmun, A. S. (1996). *Psikologi Pendidikan: Perangkat Sistem Pengajaran Modul*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Novariana, H., Sumardi, & Tarjana, S. S. (2012). *Students' Difficulties in Writing English (A Study at The Third Semester Students of English Education Program At University of Bengkulu Academic Year 2011-2012)* Kristy dwi pratiwi Universitas Bengkulu Email: kriskitty2015@gmail.com ABSTRACT

The title. 1964.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. McGraw-Hill.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford University Press.

Roza, N., Effendy, G., & Mahdum. (2011). Roza, Nurmadilla, and Effendy Gultom.

"A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF MA DARUL QURAN IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXTS. *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa (JOM) Bidang Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 4.2, 1–12.

Starkey, D. (2017). *Creative Writing: Four Genres in Brief* (3th Editio). Mcmillan learning.

Sugiyono. (2015). *Metode Penelitian Sugiyono - 2015.pdf* (p. 346).

Thahir, A. (2014). *Psikologi Belajar 1*.

Yeping, T., Changhua, L., & Yinong, H. (2014). *Challenges of Animal Derived Food Safety and Counter- measures*. 8.

Yoandita, P. E. (2019). an Analysis of Students' Ability and Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text. *Jurnal JOEPALLT (Journal of English Pedagogy, Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching)*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.35194/jj.v7i1.534>

Zamel, V. (2013). *to Student Writing Responding*. 19(1), 79–101.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name : Shefira Bella Murbarani

Student Number : 2520046

Place and Date of Birth : Pekalongan, July 16 2001

Gender : Female

Address : Mayangan, RT/RW 09/03 No. 23 Wiradesa, Pekalongan,
51152

Educational Background:

1. TK 17 Agustus Kepatihan (2007)
2. SD N 01 Kepatihan (2013)
3. SMP N 1 Wiradesa (2016)
4. SMK N 1 SRAGI (2019)
5. English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, UIN K.H Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan (2024)

