

# AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PROBLEM IN WRITING A PERSONAL LETTER AT 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OF MAN 4 AGAM

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## ABSTRACT

There were some students' problems that the writer found at MAN 4 AGAM. First, some students could not develop their ideas when writing. Second, some students were confused about using tenses. Next, some students had limited vocabulary. The last, some students were wrong in diction. This research aimed to discover the students' problems in writing personal letters and the causes of students' problems in writing personal letters. In this research, the researcher used mix method by using descriptive design. The mixed-method was the combination of quantitative and qualitative research. The informants of this research were the students of the XI IS-1 class, which consisted of 19 students. The data were obtained through documentation and interview. This research found five aspects of students' problems in writing a personal letter—the problems which percentage 18,2 % was content. The second was organization, with a percentage of 15,4 %. Next, the student's problem in grammar was 25,3 %. After that, the problem of vocabulary was 23,2 %. The last, mechanics' problem was 17,7 %. Therefore, from the percentage, the most common of students' problems was grammar. There were some causes why students got a problem in writing a personal letter. There was the psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problem. Thus, based on an interview with some students, the most cause of the problem was linguistic problems.

**Keywords:** Students Problem, Writing

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the productive skills in language learning, like speaking. In writing, there is a message and idea delivered by the writer. Nunan said that writing is when someone invents ideas, expresses ideas, and organizes ideas into statements or paragraphs (Nunan, 2003). Thus, it is a process that the writer can explore the message and his mind and give the readers information through his thought—one of the important skills required by the students in writing. Writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and the workplace. If students do not know how to express themselves in writing, they do not communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. The English language teaching practitioners have realized the importance of writing. Good language users are supposed to be able to express themselves in written language. As an attempt to increase the proficiency of learners in the written is the production of English.

Furthermore, writing is important because it plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. Through the activity, people can share ideas, feelings, persuading and convincing others. People may write for personal enjoyment or some other purpose. There are many different styles of writing, formal and informal. Formal writing is done by rules suitable for an official or important situation or occasion, while informal is having a relaxed, friendly, or unofficial style. To do good writing, students should focus on content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics. All of them are essential aspects that students know when producing good writing.

Thus, students should improve their writing and practice a lot. Then, they should comprehend the structure and materials in writing because it is the key to do good writing. According to Harni et al., they said that in writing skills, writers need to know and master the writing components (Basonggo et al., 2016). Furthermore, Haris stated that to do good writing, the writer needs to recognize writing skills such as content, forms, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (*TESTING a Second Language*, 1969). Thus, these components will help the writer to produce good writing. In language learning, writing is a language skill that is very important for the students. Writing personal letters is necessary for the students to express and convey their ideas to their friends or family. Therefore, to make the reader understand their letter, the students have to pay attention to writing rules. Students often got a problem when they are asked to write their ideas in English because, as we know, English in this context is not our first language. It is natural if students get the problem. The teacher cannot expect students to learn perfectly for the first time.

In the curriculum of Senior High School, the students had learned about the letter. The students are taught how to write the letter. The students were told the components of the letter, both formal and personal letter. The formal and personal letter has a difference in structure, form, content, and style. A formal letter has essential points: the heading, name and address, salutation, body, and closing. At the same time, the personal letter has structure, namely the heading, salutation, body of the letter, and closing. Based on the preliminary Research at MAN 4 AGAM, the researcher did it on February 10 2020, and February 27 2021. The researcher interviewed two students and a teacher. The researcher found some problems from the interview with students: First, some students could not develop their ideas when writing. They were not able to organize their idea; meanwhile, they had more ideas. It was supported by students' statement "*writing tu susah miss, karna translate per kata, terus vivi susah mengembangkan idenya miss*". From the statement, the researcher knew that she got difficulties in expressing ideas.

Second, some students were still confused about using tenses, such as simple present tense or simple past tense. Most of them got difficulty determining what verb that they have to use in writing personal letters. It was supported by students' statement "*Kadang ingin menceritakan masa lalu kan ms, tapi untuk past tense itu awel kurang*". Third, they had limited vocabulary. Limited vocabulary made some students could not make or arrange sentences.

Besides interviews with students, the researcher also interviewed the teacher. The researcher found some problems: The first, students were lack of vocabulary. Some students were wrong in diction. When learning English, most of the students did not bring a dictionary. It was supported by teachers' statement "*masalah yang paling sering dihadapi siswa itu kosa kata g dibuat anak, yaa biasa tia anak-anak minim kosakata, pemilihan kata-katanya masih banyak yang salah*". The second was a grammatical error. Students made ambiguous sentences because they got a problem with grammar. Miss Nurhayati said that most of them got a problem with grammar. Sometimes she did not understand what students write. It was supported by statement "*kebanyakan grammar anak-anak tersebut bermasalah, kadang apa yang dibuat anak ibuk kurang bisa pahami. Ada juga sebenarnya idenya yang bisa ibuk mengerti, tapi ya karna grammar sama susunannya kata nya kena, jadi kelihatan ambigu.*"

Based on the explanation above, the researcher found that the students still had difficulties writing personal letters. Moreover, the researcher expects to research the students' problems and the causes of students' writing problems.

## METHODS

### *Research Design*

This research used a mixed-method. The mixed-method was the combination of quantitative and qualitative research. Gay explained that "mix method research is a research style that uses procedures for conducting research that is typically applied in both quantitative and

qualitative studies to understand a research problem more fully” (Gay et al., 2012). Creswell stated that mixed-method research is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in a study (Creswell, 2012). Thus, it was suitable for this research because the researcher found the answer to the question from understanding the data patterns. The researcher used a quantitative method to answer research questions about the students’ problems in writing personal letters. Then, to find about the causes of students’ problem, the researcher used qualitative method. .

### ***The subject of the research***

The subject or the informant or of this Research was XI<sup>th</sup> students of MAN 4 AGAM. There were four classes. The researcher did not use all of the population as the informant, but the researcher chose one class. It was XI IS 1, which consist of 19 students. The researcher chose it because it can help the researcher discover, understand, and doubtless things related to the research.

### ***Instrument of the Research***

The instruments were used in this research were documentation and interview. The researcher used documentation from the students’ writing to answer the research question about the students’ problem in writing a personal letter. The researcher got students’ writing from the teacher—the interview used by the researcher to get information about causes of students’ problems in writing a personal letter. The researcher interviewed eight students because they have more problems than other students.

### ***The technique of collecting data***

#### **1. Documentation**

In this research, the researcher used the documentation in written form. The researcher asked the students’ tasks from the teacher. The document that the researcher used was the 19 students’ task about personal letters. Thus, the researcher used documentation to answer research questions related to the students’ problems in writing personal letters.

#### **2. Interview**

The researcher used the interview until got information from eight students to collect the data and answer the causes of students’ problem writing personal letters. The researcher did an interview directly.

### ***The technique of analysis Data***

#### **1. Documentation**

After the researcher collected the data, it was analyzed to achieve the intended purposes. Then, the researcher signed the problems by underlined or gave a circle. The researcher used raters to help analyzed data to determine scores of the students’ assignments. In analyzing the data, the researcher used a mixed-method to found out students’ problems in writing. The procedure is as follows :

- a. After the researcher collected the data from 19 students’ tasks as documents, then assess the data. To make the validity of the data analysis, the researcher joined with their English teacher to analyze the data. Three persons assessed the data. The first rater was the researcher, the second and the third were the English teacher.
- b. Tabulation. The score of students’ writing is tabulated after getting the score on each aspect of the problem in writing a personal letter. The researcher found out the average of each score from raters 1,2, and 3. The result of data is included in the table below :

*Table 1. The Students' Problem in Writing Personal Letter*

No	Name	Criteria														
		Content			Organization			Grammar			Vocabulary			Mechanics		
		R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R3	R3	R1	R2	R3

The researcher used the formula by Sudijono in Diana to determine the average of the first, the second, and the third rater. The formula of average :

$$Mx = \frac{X1 + X2 + X3}{N}$$

Mx: Mean of Average

X1: Score from Rater 1

X2: Score from Rater 2

X3: Score from Rater 3

N: Number of raters (Lisa & In, 2017).

- c. After the students' score was classified, the researcher found the percentage of classification. The researcher used a formula of percentage :

$$p = \frac{f}{N} \times 100 \%$$

P: Percentage of Problems' item

F: Frequency

N: Total of Problem

By using the formula above, the researcher calculated the total score of students for each aspect of the problem in writing.

- d. Describing the data

The researcher described students' problems in writing a personal letter

- e. Analyzing the data

The researcher analyzed students' problems in writing a personal letter

- f. Making conclusion

The researcher concluded the analysis of students writing to look at the problem of students in writing a personal letter.

After that, the researcher used the interview to see the causes of students' problems writing personal letters. There were several procedures to analyze the data with the interview as proposed by such as:

2. Interview

The data was analyzed by using some steps; according to Sugiyono, it would be explained as follow :

- Data collection : the researcher collected the data through interviews.
- Data reduction : the researcher resumed the data and focused on the research aspects, and unnecessary aspects were reduced.
- Display the data : the researcher made the result of the research about the causes of the problems.
- Conclusion : the researcher concluded the finding (Sugiyono, 2013).

## RESULTS

### a. Documentation

The documentation analysis in this research was 19 students' written tasks. In analyzing data, the researcher analyzed students' tasks based on five aspects of writing. There were content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The documentation was taken from the teacher. After the researcher collected students' documentation, the researcher got the students' data to analyze students' problems in writing personal letters. To make valid data, the researcher asked three raters to help of analyzing them. The researcher joined with the English teachers to analyze the data. The first rater was the researcher and the second and third rater was the English teacher. To assess it, the researcher used the assessing writing rubric from Cohen to get the score. After that, the score of students' writing is going to tabulate. The score could be seen in table 4.1 as follow :

*Table 2. Students' Score of Problem in Writing a Personal Letter from 3 raters*

Name	Criteria														
	Content			Organization			Grammar			Vocabulary			Mechanic		
	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
DI	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2
SP	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	2	2	3
WFJ	4	5	4	4	5	4	3	4	4	3	5	5	3	4	5
AW	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
NAF	2	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
AJ	3	2	4	3	3	4	1	2	3	3	2	4	3	4	4
PS	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4		4	4	5	4	4
SNA	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
SPP	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
OP	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
RS	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
NM	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
APD	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3
MRW	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3
FA	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
INH	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
YI	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
MKS	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4
FM	1	1	1	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3

The researcher added the scores within the 1-2 range of each rater from the data above. The data were obtained from the counting scores of students who had a problem with the range 1 and 2 that were made in red from each rater. After that, the researcher counted the average of each problem and found the percentage of them. Moreover, got results like the table below :

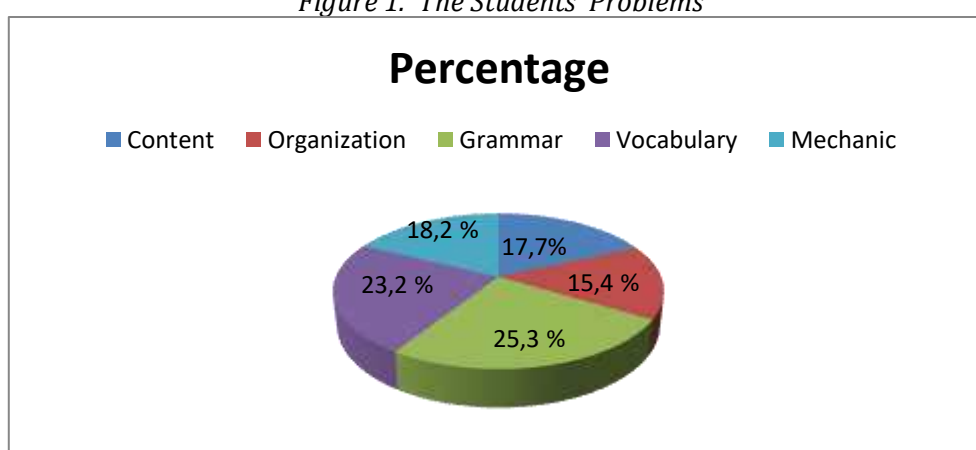
*Table 3. The students' problem in writing a personal letter*

Item of problem	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	average	Percentage
Content	8	14	11	11	18,2 %
Organization	8	14	6	9,3	15,4%
Grammar	18	14	14	15,3	25,3%
Vocabulary	13	14	15	14	23,2 %

Item of problem	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	average	Percentage
Mechanic	9	14	9	10,7	17,7 %
Total				60.3	99,8 % = 100 %

According to the data above, the researcher found that grammar was the common students' problem with a total score of 15,3 or 25,3 %. The second was vocabulary, with a total of 14 scores or 23,2 %. The next is content with 11 total scores of 18,2 %. Then, mechanics with a total of 10,7 scores or 17,7 %. The last was an organization with a 9,3 score or 15,4 %. After that, the result of each aspect of students' problem in writing a personal letter can be seen in the following chart below:

*Figure 1. The Students' Problems*



As explained in chapter two, there were five students' problems that the researcher found. The researcher used initial students' names to make identification easier. The researcher described the five problems that were found as the following:

### **Content**

There were some indicators in this aspect. They were whether the paragraph was understandable or not and paragraph unity. Paragraph unity itself had sub-indicators consists of the main idea, change opinion clearly, topic sentence. The document students' written result showed that the students have a problem in making good content. Based on the data from DI, the researcher found he wrote a personal letter just in one paragraph. She wrote a paragraph that started by greeting. Her idea was still ambiguous. The researcher was unable to understand the paragraph. It was caused due to the main ideas were not at all clear. The reader could understand the information of this personal letter. At the end of the paragraph, DI also wrote a conclusion, but the conclusion was too brief.

AW did the same thing, but she wrote a personal letter in two paragraphs. From her written task, the researcher found that she could not express her idea. Each sentence could not be understood. She was unable to develop her ideas. Each sentence was not described the topic sentence. She wrote a personal letter in two paragraphs, but the first and second paragraphs were not connected. In the second paragraph, the reader is unable to understand what idea will be delivered. It just consisted of one sentence. In AW's letter, there was no conclusion. Moreover, based on MKS's letter, the researcher found that she wrote an invitation card, she did not tell about her or something which the letter should be like. It can be seen that she did not understand what the teacher means. The teacher's instruction was to write a personal letter, but in fact, she wrote an invitation card.



On the other hand, the researcher found a personal letter that had an average category, APD, made it. His letter was able to understand. He wrote a personal letter in three paragraphs. Although each paragraph consists of a minim sentence, the content of this letter was quite clear. In the first paragraph, he talked about his holiday; he talked about his hobby in the second paragraph. For the last paragraph, he wrote the conclusion. Every sentence was not too clear, but the reader can understand it—furthermore, SSP's letter. The paragraph was quite difficult to understand because of grammatical and spelling errors.

### Organization

The indicator of the organization was coherence. It has sub-indicators consists structuring the paragraph, topic development of a paragraph. The researcher found that some students got a problem organizing ideas. It can be seen from the NAS's task. The researcher found that she made a mistake in organizing personal letters. NAS had the problem of structuring the paragraph. She wrote jumping ideas. For example, it was quoted by NAS task, "*How are you ? I miss you so much. gloomy me self. I miss you*". In this sentence, she could not arrange the sentence. In the first sentence, she asked about her friend's condition, next followed by an expression of missing. Then, the sentence " gloomy my self," which was the opposite of the previous sentence. So that reader cannot understand what she will tell. There was some sentence that could not support the topic.

Moreover, the researcher found that NM did not understand how to do good writing well. She could not arrange her idea. However, it was quite to be understood. Her sentence was not too jump. At the end of her writing, she did not conclude clearly.

On the other hand, the researcher had analyzed PS's writing. The researcher found that PS was able to arrange the paragraph. Each sentence supported the topic idea so that she could write a good paragraph. She told me the reason why she sent the letter well. From the data found by the researcher, for aspect organization, only four students had a problem in the organization. The percentage of the organization supported it was 15,4 %.

### Grammar

The researcher found the problem in grammar. The problem in grammar will influence certain patterns of how words are put together to form the correct sentences. Some students are still confused about using verb tense, pronoun, auxiliary, and word order. They were not able to select correct verbs based on the tenses they use when writing. It happened because the students did not understand it well yet. The researcher found that most of the students got a problem with grammar. For examples :

**Table 4.3**  
**Students' Problem in Grammar**

No	Grammatical error	Correct sentence
1	I know you angry (to be)	I know you are angry
2	You will got an exam tomorrow right? (word order)	Will you get an exam tomorrow, right?
3	I miss you and if all your family	I miss you and all of your family
4	How you are? (word order)	How are you?
5	So time I <b>wont</b> to house you (tenses)	Sometimes, I <b>want</b> to come to your house
6	You idola (possessive pronoun) SNA	Your idol
7	What you still to remember whith I	Do you still remember me?
8	You to know (NAS)	Do you know?
9	Do you plan to come have? (Word order)	Do you have a plan to come?
10	I wish you can to accept	I hope you can accept

11	I travelling to Padang with my family in the next holiday (tenses)	I will travel to Padang with my family in the next semester holiday
12	I hape you are (AG)	I hope you are fine

### **Vocabulary**

Besides some problems above, vocabulary is another problem that students faced in writing. Researcher found some problems in diction. The problem is explained as follows :

- Incorrect: I wishing very can meet you **more** (DI)  
Correct : I wish can meet you **again**
- Incorrect : Now, **I'm together and family** in Linggai (FA)  
Correct : Now, **I am with my family** in Linggai
- Incorrect : to begin with (PSY)  
Correct : In beginning
- Incorrect : I am sorry because no can **audience** party brother (NM)  
Correct : I am sorry because I cannot **attend** your birthday party
- Incorrect : I to **expect** you happy there (NAS)  
Correct : I **hope** you happy there
- Incorrect : As like Padang Beach, transmarket, zoo, and **as to much** spot picnic.  
Correct : As like Padang Beach, transmarket, zoo, and **other** spot picnic
- Incorrect : you can **winner** olympiad Math ( YID)  
Correct : you can **win** Math Olympiad
- Incorrect : so time I want to house you (YID)  
Correct : sometime, I want to come to your house
- Incorrect : I to hope for you **good<sup>2</sup>** there (DI)  
Correct : I hope you are **fine** there
- Incorrect : I hope you will **succeed** in the next time (APD)  
Correct : I hope you'll be **successful** next time

From the explanation above, the researcher found if the students still had difficulty in diction. Researchers found that some students were lack of vocabulary. Their writing showed it.

### **Mechanics**

The indicators of mechanics were capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Based on documents resulting from students' written tasks, most students did not pay attention to capitalisation, punctuation, and spelling when writing personal letters. For examples :

- Wen I araif** (spelling error)  
The correct sentence :  
When I arrive
- I'm sorry **becaus** no can audience (spelling error)  
The correct sentence :  
I am sorry because no can audience
- My birthday **parti** (spelling error)  
The correct sentence :  
My birthday party
- how** are you? I wish to invite you to go to the agenda (capitalization)  
the correct sentence :  
How are you? I wish to invite you to go to the agenda
- My friend I miss you. (punctuation)  
The correct sentence :  
My friend, I miss you



6. I **hape** you **mis** me too (spelling error)  
The correct sentence :  
I hope you miss me too
7. **hi**, ayu. **how** are you? (capitalization)  
The correct sentence :  
Hi, ayu. How are you?
8. ....father and **mather wil** give you some present ( spelling error)  
The correct sentence :  
.... Father and mother will give you some presents
9. **Januari** 21, 2020  
The correct sentence :  
January 21, 2020
10. Sunday I and friend the other go to play ....  
The correct sentence :  
Sunday, I and my friend the other go to play

Based on the data above, the researcher found that most students got mechanical problems writing personal letters. They were errors or mistakes in spelling. Then, some students also got problems with capitalization and punctuation.

### Interview

This interview aims to find out what the causes of students' problem in writing a personal letter. Three indicators involve the research question: psychological problem, linguistic problem, and cognitive problem. The first was psychological problems. Some of the students had a lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation, and writing anxiety. It was supported by the student's statement, such as DI said that she got a problem when writing personal letters because before she started to write, she always thought that she would make mistakes, which made her lack self-confidence and lack of motivation. NM also said that writing the personal letter was difficult, and it caused her was lazy to write, and she did not have the motivation to write. Furthermore, APD also said that "*iya, saya tidak percaya diri dalam menulis personal letter, karna saya selalu merasa tidak bisa untuk menulis dalam bahasa Inggris. Saya merasa bahasa inggris itu susah, ketika membuat sebuah kalimat dan menghafal kosa katanya*". In addition Jovita said that "*iya ms, karena banyak kata yang tidak saya ketahui dalam bahasa Inggris ms*". Some students also said that they were lack of self-confidence if they used dictionary when learning. From the statement above can be seen that some students were lack self-confidence. They always thought that they would be wrong. It can be concluded that psychological problems influenced problem writing.

The second was linguistic problems. The linguistic problem influences students writing. Linguistic refers to grammatical, limited vocabulary, difficulties in word classes. The students' statements supported it. Some students said that sometimes when they have ideas, they could not express their idea. They could not write in English because, in English, they should be aware of grammar correctly. They also have limited vocabulary. It was supported by YI statements "*iya sulit ms, vocabulary saya kurang ms, jadi untuk menulis personal letter saya harus ada kamus untuk membantu saya.*" Meanwhile, they seldom brought the dictionary when learning English. Students said that they made a paragraph in Indonesia form firstly, after that they will translate into English, it caused they did not care about grammar. NM said "*kalau saya suka bingung miss, di surat tersebut saya ingin menceritakan kejadian yang lalu, jadi saya pertama membuat paragraph nya dalam bahsa indonesia, setelah itu baru saya translate pakai kamus ke dalam bahasa inggris miss. Jadi untuk verbnya saya suka ragu, mau pakai present atau past tense*". It is similar to Sarah's opinion; she was confused when she wanted to write. In addition, Septia said

she worried that what she was about to write was not what she meant because she did not understand grammar.

The third problem was cognitive problems. It refers to student problems in organizing paragraphs, getting lost the generic structure, concluding. Based on the researcher's data, some students said they got problems when making a coherent paragraph. They also did not care about the generic structure. They tend to write what they think without being aware of organizing paragraphs. DI's statement supported it. She said that she was not understood how to formulate her idea. Furthermore NM said that "*ga tau miss, yang saya tau saya menulis apa yang ada di pikiran saya aja miss*". Then, most of the students did not conclude their letter. It can be concluded that they did not care about the generic structure in personal letters. AW's statement supported it. AW said "*saya ga hafal komponen-komponen dalam surat miss, saya hanya menuliskan apa yang ingin saya sampaikan*". It was similar to another student's opinions. APD said that "*saya tidak terlalu hafal generic structure dalam personal letter, yang saya tau Cuma ada isi dan tangan serta pengirim dan penerima surat*". From the statement above can be seen that they did not care about the generic structure then, there was a lack of extensive reading. It also supports by student's written tasks, seldom of students that concluded in their writing.

## DISCUSSION

The researcher has found five aspects of students' problems identified in 19 students' writing a personal letter based on the data analysis above. Those problems include content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. From the data above, it can be concluded that students still had difficulty in writing. Writing becomes the most difficult skill when foreign language learners learn it. According to Rass in Zulaikha (2018: 13) stated that writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and non-native speakers due to writers must be able to write it multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, vocabularies, audience, and mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Zulaikah et al., 2018). This statement supports this research because there were students who got the problem for all off aspects.

Based on the data analysis above, the researcher found that grammar with percentage was 25,3 %. The researcher concluded that grammar in writing personal letters could be the biggest problem because when students wrote it, they tried to improve their language. They tend to wrote what they think without think about grammar. Writing a personal letter was different from writing formal letters due to formal letter differences in structure, form, content, and style. Otherwise, based on Dwi's finding, she found the most dominant aspect in the students' writing is the language use and vocabulary aspects, and conversely in the organization, mechanics, and content (Octaviani, 2016). Grammar is an essential part of the language that cannot be understood easily.

The second problem was vocabulary, with a percentage of 23,2 %. Some students possess a limited vocabulary. So that they got difficulties in doing their writing a personal test. Researchers also found that some students were wrong in diction. For example: "*I to hope for you good<sup>2</sup> there*" it should be "*I hope you are fine there.*"

Another example was "*you can **winner** olympiad Math*" it should be "*you can win olympiad Math.*" The next problem was content. The percentage of this problem was 18,8 %. The researcher found that some students wrote an incomprehensible personal letter. Meanwhile, there was more content in writing personal letters that could be understood while there were grammatical errors.

The fourth problem mechanics with a percentage of 17,7 %. It happened due to the students ignored spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. According to Gowere in Alfaki, spelling problems happened due to other languages, variant pronunciations, and other historical reasons; the English spelling system, which has become inconsistent, is complex for students (Alfaki, 2015). In addition, for the capitalization problem, Alfaki stated that learners have problems using capitalization properly (Alfaki, 2015). There are reasons for students' problems in using proper

capitalization. The rules of capitalization are not universal, and classifying nouns as proper and common nouns is difficult for students. The last problem was an organization with a percentage of 15,4 %.

The indicator of the organization was coherence. It has sub-indicators consists structuring the paragraph, topic development of a paragraph. The researcher found that some students got a problem organizing ideas. From the finding of the interview's data, the researcher found that there were three causes of writing. The first cause is based on an interview with students was a psychological problem. The psychological problem made students got a problem when writing a personal letter. Self-confidence and motivation have large influences to support students when writing. Davis in Dwi Warry Octaviana states that the students will be encouraged to write if writing tasks motivate them and keep them interested (Octaviani, 2016). The desire of the writer to communicate something is very important because it is much more difficult for students to write about something they have no interest in. So then, the students' motivation is said to relate to how the students acquire writing knowledge intensely.

The next cause was linguistic problems. Linguistic problems refer to grammatical errors, vocabulary. Students that have limited knowledge and did not understand grammar, vocabulary will get problems in writing. In this research, the researcher found that some students sometimes have ideas, but they could not express their ideas. It was caused due to they should be aware of used grammar correctly. They also have limited vocabulary. Then, students made a paragraph in Indonesia form firstly, after that they translated into English, it caused they did not care about grammar. The last cause of problems was cognitive problems. It influenced their writing, but it did not have a significant impact on their writing.

## CONCLUSION

The purposes of the research were to find out the student's problems and the causes of problems in writing a personal letter. Based on the findings and the discussions, it can be concluded that students in 11 are 1 of MAN 4 AGAM in this study have committed five aspects of students' problem. The problems were found by collecting the documentation of 19 students' writing. Those problems include content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Those aspects answer the first research question of the study. The most common problem in the students' writing a personal letter was grammar with 25,3 %.

According to analysis, the problems happened because of psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems. Psychological problems related to the lack of motivation, lack of motivation, writing anxiety. Linguistic problems related to ungrammatical, limited vocabulary. The last problem was the cognitive problem, and it is related to organizing paragraphs, difficulties in remaining word classes, getting lost the generic structure, concluding, and punctuation.

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