



An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text

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Abstract : Teaching English in Junior High School focuses on improving four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students are expected to be able to master those four language skills. Improving productive skills is the most important in teaching English. One of the productive skills that have to be improved is writing. However, in practical level, a lot of students have difficulties in writing English texts. Therefore, this research aims to analyze students' difficulties in writing recount text at the 8th students SMP 15 Kota Serang. The method used in this research was qualitative method which used some instruments like documents, questionnaires, and interview. Based on the result of the research, the most difficult aspects of writing recount encountered by the students were in term of grammar, and then followed by the use of verb, capitalization, the use of to be, punctuation, spelling, preposition, and vocabulary. Moreover, based on the result of students' recount tasks, the biggest errors made by the students were error of misformation, and then followed by error of omission, error of disorder, and error of addition.

Keywords : Students' Difficulties, Recount Text

INTRODUCTION

Teaching writing especially in Junior High School has changed to more concern on genre. In genre teaching, samples of specific genre are introduced and some distinctive characteristics of genre are pointed out. As stated in Kurikulum13, there are twelve kinds of suggested genre that are applied in English teaching, such as Spoof, Recount, Report, Explanation, Analytical Exposition, Hortatory, Exposition, News Item, Anecdote, Narrative, Procedure, Descriptive, and Discussion. Writing skill has finally been recognized as an important skill for language learning. Harmer laid stress on the essence of the writing skill by saying, "The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right" (Harmer, 1998).

Moreover, writing is a process and that what we write is often heavily influenced by the constraint of genres, and then these elements have to be present in learning activities

(Harmer, 2004). It explains that writing is a process and the writing itself will focus on the certain genres. Afterwards, those genres will be presented in learning activities. In line with Harmer, writing is defined as implementation of linguistic competence expressed in a written language form (Pardiyono, 2006). In practical level, a lot of students frequently face the difficulties in writing text. They seemed to get confused when they were asked to write recount text due to the lack of knowledge about the text they are going to write. In line with those obstacles in teaching writing, one of the crucial factor is that the teaching method only focused on transferring knowledge and information from teacher to students. It can be stated that the practices of writing in the classroom are less than theories (Alwasilah, 1993). In this research, the researcher focused on analyzing students' difficulties in writing recount text.

Recount text is the chronology of activities done in the past (Kane, 2000). In addition, recount text is a meaningful sequence of events told in words. It is sequential in that the events are ordered, not merely random. Sequence always involves an arrangement in time (and usually other arrangements as well). Recount text generally begins with an orientation, giving the reader the background information needed to understand the text e.g. who was involved, where it happened (Peter Knapp, 2005). Then the recount unfolds or opens out with series of events ordered in chronological sequence. At various stages there may be some personal comments on the incident (e.g. we had a wonderful time), we call it as re-orientation.

In the process of writing recount text the students face some problems. As written above, they are difficult to develop their ideas and to put their ideas in an appropriate sentence. Many students are also lack of knowledge about grammar as well as vocabulary, so that it causes some errors in their writing. The most significant problems are lack of vocabulary mastery and language used. The students assumed that they had limited knowledge in constructing sentence grammatically and also their lack of vocabulary mastery made them felt confused in choosing the word (Alisha et al., n.d.). Besides, they also had problem in spelling. They often left hesitant in writing English word and assumed their spelling is not good enough. Moreover, there were two factors that caused students' difficulties in academic writing (Budjalemba & Listyani, 2020). The two factors were internal and external. Internal factors consisted of self-motivation, self-confidence, lack of knowledge and feeling of under pressure.

External factors consisted of the teacher's teaching style, classroom atmosphere, materials, and writing aspects. In addition, a lot of students have some difficulties in writing text in term of generic structure, grammar, and spelling (Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020). While

the factors that caused the students' difficulties in writing are lack of proficiency in the text production skills, lack of knowledge relating to the subject contents of the script to be written, and lack of interest in learning English.

In line with previous study, there are five aspects of problem faced by students in writing, such as: content, vocabulary, organization, language, and then mechanics. It means that, the most dominant problem in writing text is mechanics. Moreover, psychological difficulties were experienced by the students are low confidence, low motivation, and writing anxiety (Chairunnisa, 2021). They also experienced difficulties in four writing aspects, there are; vocabulary and language use which are classified into linguistic difficulties, content and mechanic which are classified into cognitive difficulties. Then, the biggest difficulties that happened to the students when writing narrative text are vocabulary and language use aspect. The students still had limited vocabulary. They also are less knowledge about English grammatical (Amelya & Baa, 2022).

Therefore, the teachers must try their best to avoid the problems faced by the students without discouraging them. In addition, knowledge of source of the students' problems will help the teacher to find out the source of the students' problems. The teacher also needs to provide the effective teaching method related to their problems in order to enable students to construct the sentences with appropriate language form. Based on the problems analysis at this school, the researcher found out more complete data that can be used by the teacher to minimize the students' problems in writing recount text. The difficulties faced by the students are usually in term of tense, grammar, structure, vocabulary, and etc. Hence, this study was conducted to find out and analyze students' difficulties in writing recount text.

RESEARCH METHOD

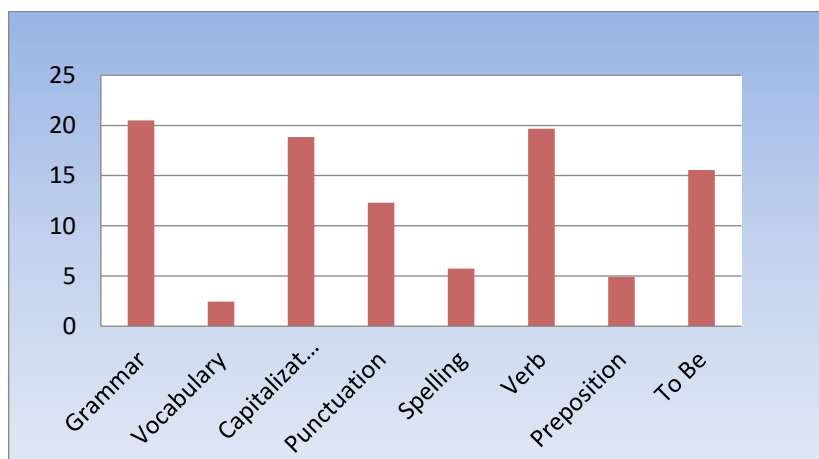
This research used qualitative method. In this study, the research problem is generally formulated at the first research stage, and then the formulation is focused when collecting data (Latief, 2000). A common feature of qualitative method is that the researcher aim to create understanding from the data as the analysis project (Richards, 2005). The qualitative design that the researcher used was a case study. Case study is a research approach in which one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in depth. This research was conducted at SMPN 15 Kota Serang, Banten Province. The researcher selected class VIII/E that consists of 31 students. Data collecting techniques in this research were documents, questionnaires, and interview.

The documents were the recount text tasks of students and also several photos of students' learning activity in the classroom. The students' recount text task was used to analyze students' difficulties in recount text writing. Questionnaire is a written instrument to collect the data which contains the questions that should be answered or be completed by the research respondent (Latief, 2000). In this research the researcher chose questionnaire to find out students' difficulties in writing recount text. The questionnaire consist of 30 multiple choice questions; those questions related to students' feeling, experience, and ability. Interview is a technique to collect the data by doing verbal interaction directly with our research subject (Latief, 2000). The interview consisted of 10 major crucial questions given to students VIII/E.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research revealed that the highest difficulty that the students faced was in term of grammar and verb. In addition, the most error that they faced was term of grammar. Based on the data collected, the difficulties encountered by the eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Serang as follows.

Table 1. The Percentage of Student's Difficulties in Writing Recount



Grammar Problems.

Incorrect form:

1. I was got up when arrived in Malioboro.
2. I not confused again.
3. I went to shopped in Cibaduyut.

Correct form:

1. I got up when I arrived in Malioboro.
2. I was not confused again.

3. I went to shop in Cibaduyut.

From the sentences above, it can be seen that students make some mistakes in term of grammar. The first sentence student wrote *I was got up when arrived in Malioboro*. In the past tense form, the pattern is S+V2, so that it cannot be added 'to be' after subject like *was*. Moreover, after conjunction we cannot directly put the past verb like *arrived*, we should add subject before that past verb. The correct subject that should be added is *I*. Thus, the correct sentence should be *I got up when I arrived in Malioboro*. In the second sentence student wrote *I not confused again*. We know that *confused* is an adjective, we need 'to be' to make it correct. Because the subject is *I*, so *was* is the right 'to be'. Thus, the correct sentence should be *I was not confused again*. In the third sentence student wrote *I went to shopped in Cibaduyut*. This sentence is called 'to infinitive', the pattern is S+V+to+V1, so we cannot put the past verb after *to*. Thus, the correct sentence should be *I went to shop in Cibaduyut*.

Vocabulary Problems

Incorrect form:

1. My bad luck on Wednesday deepened yesterday.

Correct form:

1. My bad luck on Wednesday happened yesterday.

Based on the sentence above, it shows that students made mistake in term of vocabulary. He wrote *deepened* that was irrelevant with that sentence. The word *deepened* must be changed into *happened* to make it relevant. Thus, the correct sentence should be *My bad luck on Wednesday happened yesterday*.

The Use of Capitalization

Incorrect form:

1. After having lunch we went to malioboro.

2. I Fought Karateka From Sulawesi.

3. botanical garden in united states was new york.

Correct form:

1. After having lunch we went to Malioboro.

2. I fought karateka from Sulawesi.

3. Botanical Garden in United States was New York.

From the sentences above, it can be seen that the students make some mistakes in term of the capitalization. In the first sentence student wrote *malioboro*. We know that it is the name of place, so we should use capital letter to write it. Thus, the correct word should be

Malioboro. In the second sentence student wrote *I Fought Karateka From Sulawesi*. In a sentence we don't have to write every word with capital letter at the first letter, we write capital letter if the word needs to be written in capital letter at the first letter. Thus, the correct sentence should be *I fought karateka from Sulawesi*.

In third sentence student wrote *the botanical garden in the united states was new york*. Like in the previous sentence, we should write capital letter if that word needs to be written in capital letter. In the sentence above, we can see that *botanical garden, united states, and new york* are the names of place. Those need to be written in capital letter at the first letter. The word *the* in that sentence should be written in capital letter because every sentence must be initiated by capital letter. Thus, the correct sentence should be *The Botanical Garden in United States was New York*.

The Use of Punctuation

Incorrect form:

1. Before we went to Jogjakarta I prepared something.
2. We decided to end the relationship. Due to the third person.
3. I went to my grandfather's house in Bandung for holiday

Correct form:

1. Before we went to Jogjakarta, I prepared something.
2. We decided to end the relationship due to the third person.
3. I went to my grandfather's house in Bandung for holiday.

From the sentence above, it can be seen that students make some mistakes in term of punctuation. In the first sentence student wrote *Before I went to Jakarta I prepared something*. This sentence is compound sentence because it has connective 'before'. We must add (,) after the word *Jakarta* to make it correct. Thus, the correct writing should be *Before I went to Jakarta, I prepared something*. In the second sentence student wrote full stop (.) after the word *relationship*. That sentence is actually one sentence, the student should not add (.) after the word *relationship*. Thus, the correct writing should be *We decided to end the relationship due to the third person*. In the third sentence students did not put full stop (.) in the end of the sentence. It is clearly incorrect. Since that is an informative sentence so we must put full stop (.) in the end of the sentence. Thus, the correct writing should be *I went to my grandfather's house in Bandung for holiday*.

Spelling Problems

Incorrect form:

1. We are verry happy.
2. I bought some snack and sovenir for family in house.
3. I met with selebritis.

Correct form:

1. We are very happy.
2. I bought some snacks and souvenirs for family in house.
3. I met celebrities.

From the sentences above, it can be seen that students made mistakes in terms of spelling. In the first sentence student wrote verry, he wrote it with double 'r', whereas it is written by only one 'r'. Thus, the correct word is *very*. In the second sentence student wrote *sovenir*, the correct one is that it should be added by word 'u' after the word 'o'. Thus, the correct word should be *souvenir*. Moreover, in the third sentence student wrote *selebritis*. It should not be written by 's', but by 'c' in the first letter. Thus, the correct word should be *celebrities*.

The Use of Verb

Incorrect form:

1. We check in and airplane suspend an hour.
2. I say I would like to go back to my uncle house.
3. We play in the fields.

Correct form:

1. We checked in and airplane was suspend an hour.
2. I said I would like to go back to my uncle house.
3. We played on the field.

From the sentences above, it can be seen that students made mistakes in term of the use of past verb. In the first sentence, student wrote *check*. In recount text writing we know that almost all the sentences use simple past because all events happened in the past. In that sentence student still used verb 1, he should use verb 2.

The Use of Preposition

Incorrect form:

1. In January of 2019, I went to my grandmother's house in Bandung.
2. At 14 December, Wednesday, I shoot by Alam, grade 7.
3. The night I went with my uncle to cafe.

Correct form:

1. On January of 2019, I went to my grandmother's house in Bandung.
2. On December 14th, Wednesday, I was shot by Alam, grade 7.
3. At night I went with my uncle to cafe.

From the sentence above, it can be seen that students did some mistakes in term of preposition use. Student made mistake in the first sentence by writing *in* before word *January*. That is incorrect because to mention month we must use preposition *on*. Thus, the correct one should be *on January*. Student made mistake in the second sentence as well, he wrote *at* before *14 December*. *At* must be changed become *on* to mention month like explained before. Moreover, in the third sentence student wrote the night that was clearly incorrect. *The* must be changed into *at* (at night).

The Use of to Be

Incorrect form:

1. They are the turtles, snakes, and sea birds.
2. There are so many monkeys.
3. That is wonderful time to me.

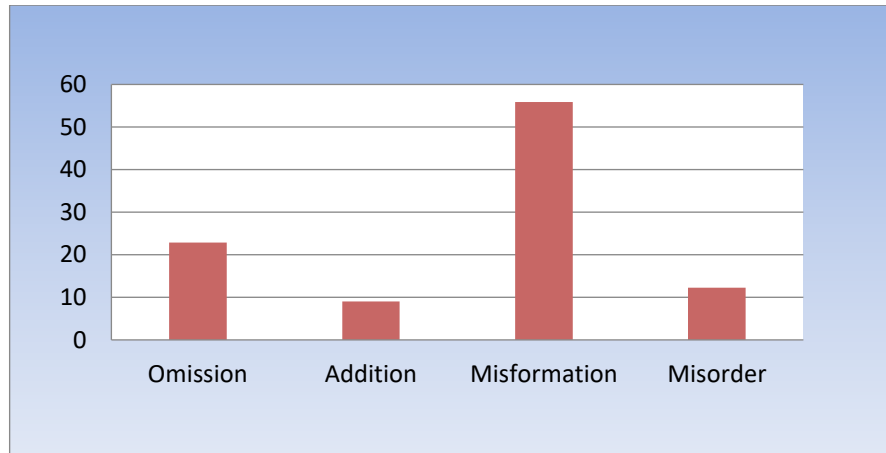
Correct form:

1. They were the turtles, snakes, and sea birds.
2. There were so many monkeys.
3. That was wonderful time to me.

From the sentence above, it can be seen that students made some mistakes in term of the use of to be. In the first sentence student wrote to be in the present form 'are'. Since recount text must be written in the past form, so he must write to be in the past form as well become 'were' because the subject is plural (they). In the second sentence student also wrote 'are' after subject, it is incorrect as well. It must be changed with 'were', refers to 'many monkeys'. Moreover, in the third sentence student wrote 'is' after subject 'that'. It must be changed into the past form become 'was' since the subject is singular form (that).

Classification of Students' Errors in Writing. After all errors were identified, they were classified into their types. It revealed the cognitive process that underlines the learner's construction of the new language, in which errors can be described into four types: omission, addition, misformation, and disorder.

Table 2. The Percentage of Student's Errors in Writing Recount



Based on the result of students' recount tasks, the biggest errors made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Serang was in term of error of missformation 55.85% (with the frequency 105 times), and then followed by error of omission 22,87% (43 times), error of misorder 12.23% (23 times), and error of addition 9.04% (17 times). Thus, total of error was 188 times.

Error of Omission. This type of error is identified by the absence of one or more items that must appear in a well-formed sentence. The examples of errors of omission based on the data as follow:

- a. The students omitted *to be*.

They omitted to be before adjective. If the word is not verb, we must use to be in the past form (was/were).

The Form of Error		The Correct Form	
1.	Reality and saying never same.	1.	Reality and saying were never same.
2.	I so happy.	2.	I was so happy.

- b. The students omitted *end with -ed*.

If there is adverb of time (last time) using V₂ because it shows that activities happened in the past.

The Form of Error		The Correct Form	
We enjoy the day at beach.		We enjoyed the day at beach.	
The promoter announce the ticket's price.		The promoter announced the ticket's price.	

Error of Addition. This type of error is characterized by the presence of one or more items in a well-formed sentence.

a. The students added *to*.

The Form of Error	The Correct Form
1. They would to perform SS4 concert.	1. They would perform SS4 concert.

b. The students add *to be*.

Some students used to be before verb, while if the word is verb we may not use *to be*.

The Form of Error	The Correct Form
1. I am forgot.	1. I forgot.

c. The students add *-ed*.

The students added *-ed* at verbs that should not be added by *-ed*.

The Form of Error	The Correct Form
We went to shopped at Cibaduyut. I tried to helped her.	We went to shop at Cibaduyut. I tried to help her.

Error of Misformation. Errors of misformation are characterized by the use of the wrong forms of the morpheme or structure.

The Form of Error	The Correct Form
. 500.000 is the cheapest of all ticket's price. . I went to my grandfather's house in Bandung to the holiday. . Finally I'm in the airplane.	. 500.000 was the cheapest of all ticket's price. . I went to my grandfather's house in Bandung for holiday. . Finally I'm in the airplane.

Error of Misorder. Errors of misorder are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morpheme in an utterance.

The Form of Error	The Correct Form
We went to shopped at Cibaduyut. I tried to helped her.	We went to shop at Cibaduyut. I tried to help her.

The result of questionnaire show that students' low scores were from the questions related to students' ability. Most of students did not comprehend grammar so that most of them did grammar errors in their recount writing task. Hence, they got low point in term of grammar use. Moreover, they were also lack of comprehension in using past tense form. It was proven from their tasks results which showed low point in term of past verb use.

Based on the result of questionnaires, students actually had sufficient comprehension in the use of capitalization. However, in fact many of them did the mistakes in using it. It could be caused by their carelessness or their habit from the beginning. Some students were not careful in the use of capitalization. Moreover, it was also their unchanging habits not to pay more attention to the use of capitalization in their writing. Thus, based on the result of

questionnaires students had the same difficulties as in the result of students' recount task. They faced difficulties in term of grammar, the use of verb and to be, capitalization, punctuation, and so on. It happened because they were lack of grammar mastery, regular and irregular verb mastery. Moreover, it is caused by students' habits and carelessness so that they made mistakes in term of capitalization and punctuation (mechanics). Thus, this study had the similar results with the previous study which revealed that there are five aspects of problem faced by students in writing, such as: content, vocabulary, organization, language, and then mechanics. Based on that study, the most dominant problem in writing text is mechanics (Chairunnisa, 2021). It is also in line with the previous study (Ismayanti & Kholiq, 2020) that a lot of students had some difficulties in writing text in term of generic structure, grammar, and spelling.

Based on the result of interview, most of students did not understand the use of simple past tense. They did not master the use of past verb, sometimes they could not differ between regular and irregular verb. There was only one from five students who could make the correct sentence in simple past. The students revealed that writing text in English was difficult. They got difficulties to translate from Indonesian to English. To solve their difficulties, they sometimes asked to their teacher or friends. Beside of that, they tried to open the dictionary when finding the unknown vocabulary. Some students also did not comprehend about the recount text itself so that they did not comprehend about generic structures and language features in recount text as well. When the researcher asked if their teacher ever gave them the strategy in writing, they revealed that their teacher ever gave it but they forgot the strategy itself. Thus, it is line with the previous study that the students still had limited vocabulary. They are also less knowledge about English grammatical (Amelya & Baa, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research at the eighth grade of SMPN 15 Kota Serang, the most difficult aspect of writing recount faced by the eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Serang was in term of of grammar (20.49%), and then followed by the use of verb (19.67%), capitalization (18.85%), the use of to be (15.57%), punctuation (12.29%), spelling (5.73%), preposition (4.91%), and vocabulary (2.45%). Moreover, based on the result of students' recount tasks, the biggest errors made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 15 Kota Serang was in term of error of misformation (55.85%), and then followed by error of omission (22.87%), error of disorder (12.23%), and error of addition (9.04%). The researcher hope that

this study will hopefully contribute both practical and theoretical values for the teachers, the students, as well as the following research. The teachers are also expected to give an appropriate method on teaching recount writing. Moreover, they should give the task continuously to the students, so that they would be able to know and to make a good composition in writing.

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