
An Analysis on Student's Ability and Problems in Writing Recount Text at The Eighth Grade of SMPN 2 Lingsar

Rizkia Prahasti Aprilia*, Lalu Thohir, Ahmad Zamzam, Udin

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP, Universitas Mataram, Jl. Majapahit No. 62, Mataram NTB, 83125. Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: rizkiaprahasti@gmail.com

Article History

Received : March 06th, 2025

Revised : April 27th, 2025

Accepted : May 05th, 2025

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the students' ability in writing recount text, and to explore the problems they faced in writing this text type. By using a qualitative method with a case study, this research involved 28 students as samples in the VIII grade of *SMPN 2 Lingsar* in the academic year 2023/2024. They were selected with a purposive sampling method. The data were collected by using a set of validated questionnaires and a writing test and they were analyzed descriptively based on the purposes of this research. The findings show that the students' abilities in writing recount text are in the poor category, with an average score of 47. The students experienced problems that cause them to make many mistakes in writing recount texts are grammar with an average score of 33, vocabulary with an average score of 28 and mechanics with an average score of 26. The students should practice writing and the teacher needs to assist the students to develop their writing skill by applying appropriate strategies.

Keywords: Recount Text, Writing Ability, Writing Problems.

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is important to master or learn (Maduwu, 2016). In various countries, English has even become a second language apart from the native language of countries such as India, Singapore, Pakistan, and Malaysia. In Indonesia, English has become a central subject for students to study at every level of education, especially in junior high school. To improve their abilities in English, students in junior high school are required to master various skills in English, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the four skills students should master when learning English. Writing ability is one of the communication skills that is necessary in education and everyday life. Writing is a continuous process of thinking, organising, rethinking, and recognizing (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2002). Writing is a process of thinking about an idea that comes to mind and forms an idea that results in new understanding or knowledge. Thus, writing is an activity that involves a continuous thought process and systematic organization of information.

Writing skills are referred to as productive skills because writing requires not only a large vocabulary for making paragraphs but also proper grammar. Writing involves procedures

that require ideas, thoughts, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and the expression of these ideas (Bazir, 2016). In English subjects, especially the learning process that focuses on writing skills, one of the materials that students will study is a recount text. A recount text is a type of text that narrates past experiences or events. Recount text refers to texts that describe past experiences (Harris et al., 2014). Recount Text contains experiences that have occurred in the past chronologically or sequentially. In the Recount text learning process, students are asked to tell stories by writing about events or experiences they have experienced. To be able to create a recount text, of course, students must understand how to write in English by paying attention to vocabulary and appropriate word structures in writing. Bryne (1988) divided the problems that make writing difficult into three categories:

“There are three problems that cause difficulties in writing, namely; The first is Linguistic Difficulty. Linguistic aspects like grammar, vocabulary, language use, and choice of sentences in writing must be fully monitored. The second is Physiology Difficulty, which focuses more on the writer's difficulty because there aren't direct interactions and feedback from the reader when they are writing. This difficulty focuses more on the difficulty in developing

written material or content of the composition. The third is cognitive difficulty. Writing has to be taught through formal instruction like spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing”. Based on the explanation above, this research will focus on the ability and problems in writing recount text at the Eighth Grade of SMPN 2 Lingsar.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Cresswel (2014) stated that the data that appear from qualitative research is descriptive. The population in this study was 28 students, and the sample used was total students in Class VIII/10, totaling 28 students. This study used purposive sampling, in which the participants were students of *SMPN 2 Lingsar*, especially the VIII/10 grade students in class VIII. The research sample only takes students from 1 class, with 28 students participating in this research.

There were two research instruments used in this study: test and non-test. This study used the test to collect the data. It is a task to measure students' ability to write a recount text based on their experiences, measuring their ability to express ideas and write well. In implementing the test, students were asked to write a Recount Text test with the topic “The Happiest Moment in Life.” Further, the data derived from students' writing test of Recount Text were analyzed to identify the errors and to assess the students' ability using an analytical scoring rubric adapted by Brown (2007).

Following the quantitative phase, the research seamlessly transitions into a qualitative inquiry by incorporating a questionnaire. This

instrument serves as a valuable tool to delve into the nuanced aspects of the students' writing experiences. Specifically, the questionnaire aims to identify and understand problems that students encounter when tasked with composing recount texts. The closed-ended questionnaire contains nine questions about students' understanding of writing Recount Text. Nine questions were answered with 2 answers, namely “YES” and “NO” for each question. Questions in the questionnaire consist of questions about how many students understand Recount Text and what problems they face when creating Recount Text.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the research conducted at SMPN 2 Lingsar, two types of data collection were used, the first using a writing test and the second using a questionnaire. The writing test was conducted to determine the ability to write recount texts in students, while the questionnaire was used to determine students' problems in writing recount texts. In assessing the results of the students' tests, the researcher collaborated with other researchers who had an educational background in English language education so that there were two assessors who assessed the students' tests to maintain the validity of this study. The results of students' writing abilities were analyzed based on the aspects of writing put forward by Brown (2007), namely, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. While in analyzing the results of the survey questionnaire, the researcher analyzed based on the criteria and Likert scale data analysis.

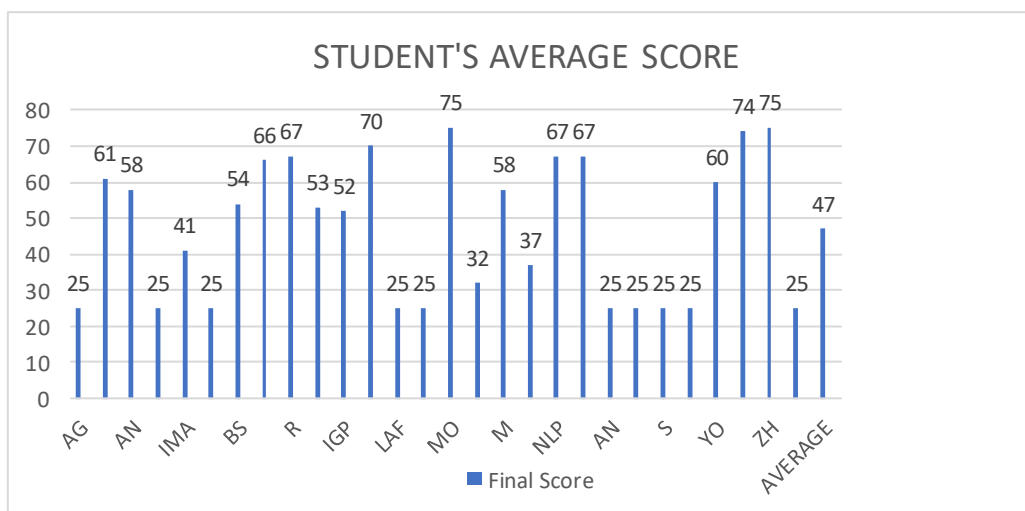


Figure 1. Student's Average Score of Recount Text

Figure 1 below shows student's average score of recount text by rater 1 and rater 2 based on the previously determined assessment rubric, that the

average student score is 47. No students got the Very Good category.

Table 1. Category of Student's Ability in Recount Text

No	Range of Score	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
1	80-100	Very Good	0	0%
2	70-79	Good	4	14%
3	56-69	Fair	8	29%
4	46-55	Poor	3	11%
5	0-45	Very Poor	13	46%
	TOTAL		28	

Table 1 that there were five ranges of scores and five categories of students' abilities. The table above explains that 4 students got the "Good" category with a percentage of 14% and a score between 70-79, and no students got "Very Good" with a score of 80-100. Furthermore, 8 students got the "Fair" category with a percentage of 29% and a score between 56-69. Then, 3 students got the "Poor" category with a percentage of 11% and a score between 46-55.

Then 13 students got "Very Poor" with a percentage of 46% and a score between 0 and 45. So, there were still many students who got Low scores or still could not write a recount text. Therefore, the average obtained from student's ability to write recount text, which is 47, is far above average. So, from the explanation above, it can be concluded that errors or problems were found in the student's writing. Some students also made mistakes when taking the writing test.

Table 2. The Result of Questionnaire's

No	Questions	Answer	Frequency	Percentage
1	Do you know what recount text is? (Taukah kamu apa itu Recount Text)	Yes	23	82%
		No	5	18%
2	Do you have difficulties finding a topic to write in recount text? (Apakah kamu kesulitan menemukan topik untuk ditulis dalam Recount Text)	Yes	25	89%
		No	3	11%
3	Do you have difficulties developing a topic in writing recount text? (Apakah kamu mengalami kesulitan mengembangkan topik dalam menulis Recount Text)	Yes	24	86%
		No	4	14%
4	Do you have difficulties distinguishing the structure of writing recount text (orientation, event, and reorientation)? (Apakah kamu kesulitan membedakan struktur penulisan Recount Text orientation, event, dan reorientation)	Yes	17	61%
		No	11	39%
5	Do you have difficulties organizing the structure of writing recount text? (Apakah kamu kesulitan mengatur struktur penulisan Recount Text)	Yes	26	93%
		No	2	7%
6	Do you have difficulties in using past tense sentences in writing Recount Text? (Apakah kamu mengalami kesulitan dalam menggunakan kalimat past tense dalam menulis Recount Text)	Yes	24	86%
		No	4	14%
7	Do you have difficulties writing recount text due to lack of vocabulary? (Apakah kamu mengalami kesulitan dalam menulis Recount Text karena kurangnya kosa kata)	Yes	20	71%
		No	8	29%
8		Yes	14	50%

	Do you know some conjunctions commonly used in recount text? (Tahukah kamu beberapa konjungsi yang biasa digunakan dalam Recount Text)	No	14	50%
9	Do you enjoy writing recount text? (Apakah kamu menikmati menulis Recount Text)	Yes	15	54%
		No	13	46%

The questionnaire above showed that several problems caused students to have difficulty in writing recount texts. These problems cause errors in the compositions made by students. To gain a deeper understanding of the questionnaire, the researcher explains in detail the issues of students in writing recount texts as follows. Based on the questionnaire data, most students in grade VIII/10 knew what recount text meant. This can be seen in the first question, where 23 students answered yes, with a total percentage of 82%. It can be concluded that many students understand the meaning of recount text. On the other hand, five students answered that they did not know what recount text meant, with a total percentage of 18%. In other words, a more interesting but straightforward explanation method is still needed to make it easy for students to remember.

The students were asked if they had difficulty finding a topic to write a recount text. 89% of students answered Yes to this question. This means that most students in grade VIII/10 had difficulty determining the topic they used to create a recount text. Determining the topic is the beginning of writing a recount text. If deciding on a topic is difficult for students, then students had difficulty in made a recount text. In addition, only 14% of students stated that they did not had difficulty in determining the topic. Therefore, a prominent and detailed explanation is needed so that they can quickly understand the concept of recount text. On question number 3, the researcher asked the students whether they had difficulty developing the topic of the recount text. With this question, there were 24 students with a percentage of 86% who answered Yes. The students had difficulty developing the topic because they sometimes found it challenging to convey their ideas through words in a recounted text. Meanwhile, five students, with a percentage of 14%, answered No; therefore, a clear and detailed explanation is still needed, and students should increase their learning concentration to understand.

According to question number 4, the researcher asked the students whether they had

difficulty distinguishing the structure of writing Recount Text. 17 students answered Yes, for a total percentage of 61%, and 11 students answered No, for a total percentage of 39%. Most students could not distinguish the structure of the recount text. There are three structures: orientation, event, and reorientation. If the three structures cannot be distinguished when students write a recount text, they will have difficulty. The researcher asked the students whether they had difficulty organizing the structure of writing the recount text on question number 5. There were 26 students, with a total percentage of 93%, who answered Yes, and two students, with a total percentage of 7%, who answered No. Many answered Yes because they could not distinguish the three structures of the recount text, so when writing a recount text, students had difficulty arranging the structure with the correct structure, namely orientation, event, and reorientation. Students still needed a correct understanding of the structure of the recount text.

According to number 6 of the question, many students still had difficulty using past tense sentences and were still confused about past tense verbs in what situations, such as what changes from verb1 to verb2. 24 students answered Yes, for a total percentage of 86%, and 4 students answered No, for a total percentage of 14%. Students still need an understanding of the use of past tense sentences. In the question about vocabulary in the number 7, Most students responded that they had difficulty because they did not have enough vocabulary knowledge and had trouble with the correct grammar in the text. 20 students, or 71%, answered Yes. On the other hand, eight students, or 29%, answered No.

On number 8 of the questionnaire, 14 students answered Yes, with a percentage of 50%, and 14 students answered No, with a percentage of 50%. Students still needed a more detailed explanation of conjunctions so that their recount text writing was more precise and structured. In the last question, the researcher asked students whether they enjoyed writing recount texts. 15 students answered yes, for a total percentage of 54%. This suggests that some

students consider writing fun. On the other hand, 13 students answered that they did not like writing recount texts, for a total percentage of 46%. Thus, this suggests that writing is a tedious activity for some students. The questionnaire results suggest that students in grade VIII/10 had difficulty writing recount text. These difficulties can include difficulties in developing vocabulary mastery, grammar, and mechanics.

Discussion

Writing is an important skill for communication in daily life and the academic world, especially for school students. This ability is one of the communication mediums for people to express their thoughts, opinions, feelings, or ideas about particular information and certain experiences through words (Marpaung, 2019). Being able to write well and correctly is not easy, and it requires a long process. To write well, especially in writing a recount text, it is necessary to pay attention to several aspects of writing, such as content, organisation, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. As the researcher stated above, students should pay attention to the five aspects of writing to be able to write well. However, students' ability was at the "POOR" category level. Students still need to improve to minimise errors in writing. Students' writing tests are assessed and analysed using analytical scores (Brown, 2007).

Table 3. Average Score of Student's Writing Aspects

Aspects	Rater 1	Rater 2	Score
Content	61	61	61
Organization	42	37	39
Grammar	33	33	33
Vocabulary	27	30	28
Mechanics	24	28	26

The findings showed several errors in each aspect category, with the most dominant problems students face in writing Recount Texts such as organisation, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. These four aspects were in the "Fair" to "Poor" category. This means that students' scores for this aspect were categorised as low, and they needed to practice more, make improvements, and learn to understand these writing aspects better in the future. Meanwhile, other aspects (content) were in the "Good" to Average category. The results showed that students had difficulty making good Recount Text paragraphs and made most organisation, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics errors.

Thus, teachers should pay attention to this problem and find the right strategies and methods so that students understand the material better.

Three problems cause writing difficulties. The first is Linguistic Difficulty. Linguistic aspects like grammar, vocabulary, language use, and choice of sentences in writing should be fully monitored. The second is Physiology Difficulty, which focuses more on the writer's difficulty because there were no direct interactions and feedback from the reader when writing. This difficulty focuses more on the difficulty in developing written material or content of the composition. The third is cognitive difficulty. Writing has to be thought through, and formal instructions should include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. To learn more about students' difficulties in writing recount texts, the researcher used a questionnaire for 28 students in grade VIII/10. The questionnaire contained 9 questions, which included questions about how much students enjoyed writing recount texts, students' knowledge of recount text material, and students' difficulties in writing texts.

Question number one, the researcher investigated students' knowledge and understanding of the material and concepts of recount texts in general. The researcher investigated students' difficulties in finding and developing topics in questions two and three. In questions four to eight, the researcher investigated students' difficulties in writing aspects such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. In the last question, nine, the researcher investigated whether students enjoyed writing recount texts. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the questionnaire results were related to students' problems in writing recount texts.

Students still do not understand the recount text material, including its structure. So, students had difficulty with content, especially in developing the given topic. Some students found it difficult because they did not know about the topic and felt it was complex. Students had difficulty writing recount texts due to a lack of vocabulary. Students had difficulty with vocabulary. This problem causes students to have trouble expressing ideas in their writing. The lack of vocabulary that students had made them write imperfectly so that errors in grammar and mechanics also occur. Students had difficulty using past tense sentences, punctuation, and

spelling. Many students were confused because they had to apply the correct grammar and mechanics to their writing, which caused errors. In conclusion, the ability to write recount texts of class VIII/10 students of SMPN 2 Lingsar is in the Low category. Based on the writing assessment rubric, this level is not the best category. Thus, this shows that students still had obstacles in producing recount texts. These results were supported by questionnaire data, which show that class VIII/10 students of SMPN 2 Lingsar still have obstacles in writing recount texts, especially in the linguistic and mechanical aspects.

This study has differences and similarities with previous related studies in the second chapter. The similarity of all these studies lies in the purpose of the study, which is to determine students' ability to write recount texts. However, many differences were also found, especially in terms of the various variables, methods, and instruments used. These things are what make each study different, unique, and engaging.

CONCLUSION

Students' ability to write recount texts in grade VIII/10 at SMPN 2 Lingsar is low. This can be seen from the results of the student's written tests, most of which, namely 16 students out of 28 (57%), got bad grades, as indicated by the average student score of 47. Based on the data analysis in the previous chapter, it can be seen that no one got the Very Good category (0%), four students (14%) were categorized as Good, eight students (29%) were categorized as Fair, three students (11%) were categorized as Poor, and 13 students (46%) were categorized as very poor. There were problems in writing recount texts: formulating sentences in simple past tense, choosing the right words and topics, not being able to differentiate the structure of writing recount texts, and inability to connect ideas. Most students have problems in structure and grammar, which can be seen from the results and number of votes they chose in the questionnaire given by the researcher to confirm the problems experienced by students in writing recount texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to the two Supervisors and the examiner who have guided me in completing my research in this journal. Thank you also to the

principal and Mrs. Andre Artari, the English teacher at the SMPN 2 Lingsar, who have facilitated the implementation of the research at the SMPN 2 Lingsar.

REFERENCES

- Bazir, A. H. (2016). The role of writing a diary in a classroom. *International Journal of Research in Linguistics, Language Teaching and Testing*, 1(1), 82-88. Retrieved from <http://ijrltt.com/fulltext2/paper-28102016213657.pdf>.
- Boardman, A. C., & Frydenberg, J. (2002). *Writing to Communicate: Paragraphs and Essay*. University of California, San Francisco: Longman.
- Brown, H. D. (1991). *Teaching by Principles an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy Second Edition*. Longman
- Bryne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skill*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Framana, A. (2019). *An Analysis on Students' Writing Recount Texts (A Case Study at the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 22 Bengkulu Selatan in the Academic Year 2017/2018)*. IAIN Bengkulu.
- Harris, A., Ansyar, M., Radjab, D. (2014). *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text at Tenth Grade of SMA N 1 Sungai Limau*. *Journal English Language Teaching (ELT)* 2(1), 55-63.
- Husna, A., Multazam, A. (2019). *Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text at Inclusion Classes*. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal* 9 (1), 52-76.
- Maduwu, B. (2016). *Pentingnya pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di sekolah*. Universitas Dhamarwangsa.
- Mahfuza, N. (2021). *An Analysis of Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text to The Tenth Grade Of Man 1 Inhil*. University Of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.
- Marpaung, U. S. (2019). *Teaching Writing Recount Texts Through Blog*. Tanjungpura University.

Roza, M. (2017). *An analysis on Students' Errors in Writing Recount Text*. [UMSU Repository](#).

Shalihah, M. (2022). *Students' Ability and Difficulties in Writing Recount Text*. Department Of English Education Faculty of Educational Sciences Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.