

JOURNAL ARTICLE

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS'  
ABILITY IN WRITING A RECOUNT TEXT AT  
SMPN 2 TENGGARANG BONDOWOSO  
IN 2013/2014 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research was intended to describe writing recount text ability of the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso covering five aspects: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. The research respondents were 33 students of 8A which were collected by using clustering random sampling. The research data were collected through writing test, interview, and documentation. The students' writing test was analyzed using descriptive statistic in the form of mean score formula. The result of the analysis presented that writing recount text ability of the eighth grade students was categorized as fair since the students' mean score in writing recount text was 60.72. There were 17 students who were categorized as fair, 9 students were categorized as good, 6 students were categorized as poor, and only one student was categorized as excellent. Specifically, the students' ability in content aspect was fair since the mean score was 65.2. Then, the students' ability in organization aspect was fair since the mean score was 62.2. Then, the students' ability in grammar aspect was also fair since the mean score was 52.2. However, the students' ability in vocabulary aspect was poor since the mean score obtained was 41.5. Meanwhile, the students' ability in mechanic aspect was good since the mean score was 72.*

Keywords :a descriptive study in writing, writing recount text ability

**INTRODUCTION**

In teaching English, one of the important language skills that has to be taught to students of junior high school is writing. It has been mentioned in the Ministry of Education regulation no. 23 year 2006 in English language curriculum for junior high school through standard competency. The regulation states that the standard competency of writing for junior high school is expressing meaning in written form in a simple interpersonal and transactional discourse both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive and report in the context of daily life. Thus, through this regulation, it shows that teaching English particularly teaching writing is important in order to improve students' skill in writing.

Writing enables students to communicate their ideas and feelings to others in the written form. In line with this idea, Spaventa and Spaventa (2001: 6) and Leo, et al. (2007: 1) defines that writing is an important tool of communicating and a process to express ideas or thoughts in words form. Thus, writing can be known as a skill to convey the students' ideas and communicate their thought in the form of words to be informed to readers.

On the other hands, writing is regarded as a difficult activity to do. As Ploeger (2000: xiii) states that writing is known as the hardest thing that the students ever try to do. This means that based on the students' opinion, writing is not easy to do. Since writing is hard to do, students are also required to consider some aspects of writing when they are writing. Those aspects consist of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. Content refers to

ability in writing clearly to make the readers understand well with the ideas that the writers want to write. Organization refers to the ability in relating all sentences to be coherent and unified. Then, grammar refers to the ability in writing sentences using a correct English structure. Next, vocabulary refers to the ability in selecting the appropriate words written in the text. Finally, the aspect of mechanic refers to the ability in using the correct capitalization and punctuation such as full stops and commas. Hence, students writing will be categorized as a good writing if all those writing aspects are included in their writing.

Based on the curriculum (KTSP, 2006) for the English subject of junior high school, there are five text types that the students need to learn to develop their writing ability. They cover procedure, descriptive, report, narrative and recount text. This research only focused on the recount text since this text type is stated in the curriculum and it commonly relates to the experiences in which students certainly have their own experiences, especially the experiences of holiday.

As it is known that writing a recount text is one of the materials taught to the eighth grade students. Recount text is a text that retells readers a series of events happened in the past (Keir, 2009: 9). In this case, students learn the recount text covering the generic structure and language features of recount text.

Further, teaching writing recount text had been taught to the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso. In teaching writing recount text, the teacher asked some leading questions first. Then, she explained the definition of recount text while showing the students an example provided in a textbook. Next, she asked them to discuss and find the difficult words of the text in a dictionary and wrote them down in their book. It was continued by explaining the generic structure and language features by analyzing the text. After that, she asked them to write a recount text based on their own experience. Further, all students' writing samples were assessed by using holistic scoring rubric since the teacher gave scores by considering all of writing aspects simultaneously. These information was obtained by interviewing the English teacher of SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.

Additionally, the previous relevant research conducted by Andayani entitled "A Descriptive Study of the X-8 Year Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text At SMAN Arjasa Jember In The 2012/2013 Academic Year", showed that the students' writing recount text ability was poor. Similar result was also found by Lisyulianti who was conducting research entitled "A Descriptive Study On The Tenth Year Students' recount Text Writing Ability At MAN 2 Situbondo In The 2012/2013 Academic Year". She found that students' ability in writing recount text of that school was poor. Besides, those two previous researches found that the most difficult aspect encountered by students in writing recount text was grammar. Through these

results, the researcher was interested in conducting the similar research in the level of junior high school. The researcher was interested to know whether or not the grammar weakness in the level of senior high school students of the previous researches would also occur in the junior high school students level of this research.

This research was a descriptive study because it was intended to describe the ability of the eighth grade students in writing recount text related to the aspects of writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. It described the students' ability in writing recount text since the material of recount text had been provided in the English curriculum of junior high school for the eighth grade particularly the standard competency of writing in the second semester. Then, it was conducted through writing test in which the result of the test was analyzed using an analytic scoring rubric. Thus, the research entitled "A Descriptive Study on the Eighth Grade Students' Ability in Writing a Recount Text at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso in 2013/2014 Academic Year" was conducted.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research was a descriptive study. It was intended to describe the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text on the aspects of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. The area of this research was SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso which was selected using purposive method. Moreover, the respondents of this research were 33 students of class 8A which were selected from 6 classes of that school using clustering random sampling by lottery.

Then, since this research focused on the students' writing ability, this research used writing test to collect the primary data. Besides, interview and documentation were used to obtain the secondary data of this research. In writing test, the type of test used in this research was the subjective test since the test required the students to give the answer in the form of essay or writing recount text based on their own personal experience during holiday. The students were asked to write a recount text based on the topic of holiday. They needed to write a recount text that consisted of 100 up to 150 words in 60 minutes by considering the aspect of content (the content of the text was relevant to the topic), organization (the unity and the coherence of the text), grammar (the use Simple Past Tense), vocabulary (the word choice and word spelling) and mechanic (the use of punctuation and capitalization).

The validity of the test in this research was content and face validity. In content validity, the writing test material was constructed based on the curriculum 2006 for junior high school in particular the standard competence and basic competence of writing for the eighth grade students. The material of the writing test was also consulted to the consultants and the English teacher in order to know whether or not the material of the writing test had been

already appropriate to the eighth grade students. The face validity of the test of this research was known from the instruction of the test instrument. It asked the students to express ideas in written form of recount text about their holiday that consisted of 100 to 150 words in 60 minutes. Moreover, to ensure the reliability of the test analysis, this research applied Inter-rater Method which was involved the researcher as the scorer 1 and the English teacher of the eighth grade students as the scorer 2 in scoring students' writing using an analytical scoring rubric.

Additionally, interview and documentation method was used to collect secondary data. In the interview, semi structured interview technique was applied. The information obtained through interview was about the curriculum, the textbook, the topic, and the media used in teaching students. It was also obtained the information of the procedures of teaching writing recount text, the assessment of writing recount text, and the scoring rubric used in scoring students' writing. In documentation method, it was obtained the documents of the names of the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso and the students' scores in the previous task of writing recount text given by the English teacher.

After collecting the data, the next step was analyzing the students' writing test by using an analytic scoring rubric. In this scoring rubric, the students ability in the aspects of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic were scored separately. The aspect of mechanic had the highest score in this rubric, whereas the lowest score was in the aspect of organization. Then, by scoring students' writing using an analytical scoring rubric, it was obtained the data of students' writing in the form of scores. Next, all those scores were analyzed by using the mean score formula to get the students' mean score in writing a recount text. The students' scores in each writing aspect was also analyzed using mean score formula to get the students' mean score in each writing aspect. After that, both students' mean score in writing and in writing aspect were classified based on the interpretation of score levels to know the students' ability in writing recount text and students' ability in writing aspects.

## RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This part is divided into three parts of explanation. They are the explanation of the secondary data analysis, the primary data analysis, and the discussion of the research result.

In the analysis of the secondary data, the result of the interview showed that the curriculum applied in teaching the eighth grade students of SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso in 2013/2014 academic year was curriculum 2006. Then, the text book used to teach the students was *English in Focus*. The media used were LCD projector and picture. Next, relating to the procedure of teaching writing a recount text, the teacher stated that teaching writing recount text to the eighth grade students was conducted in

two meetings. Moreover, the assessment of the students' writing was done based on the holistic scoring rubric.

Additionally, in the result of documentation, it was obtained the documents of the names of the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang, Bondowoso in the 2013/2014 academic year. It was used to guide the researcher in determining the respondents of this research. Besides, it was obtained the document of the list of the students' scores in the previous task of writing recount text given by the English teacher. It was used to know the mean scores of the students' ability in six classes of that school. Further, it was known that the mean scores of the students' previous writing recount text from six classes were in the range of 77-79. It means, the students' ability in each class was in the same level. Through these similar mean scores, the researcher was able to determine the respondents randomly. Based on the clustering random sampling method using lottery, the students in class 8A were selected as the respondents of this research.

Relating to the primary data analysis of this research, it was known that the mean score of the students' writing recount text was 60.72. Based on the interpretation of score levels, this mean score was in the range of 50 – 69. It means that the ability of the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso in the 2013/2014 academic year was categorized as fair. There were 17 students who were categorized as fair, 9 students were categorized as good, 6 students were categorized as poor, and only 1 student was categorized as excellent.

In the aspect of content, the students' ability was categorized as fair since the mean score was 65.2. Most of them had written a recount text that told about their holiday, but there were still some irrelevant sentences written in a text. Some students still had difficulties in developing the topic of writing so that the information relating to their experience written was unclear. Then, the students' ability in the aspect of organization was categorized as fair because the students' mean score was 62.2. In this case, there were some students who were not able to write a recount text with complete generic structure. Some of them also wrote a recount text with lack of supporting details and made some errors in the use of transitions. Next, the students' ability in the aspect of grammar was also categorized as fair since the mean score was 52.5. Most students still made some mistakes in writing correct sentences of Simple Past Tense. Then, the students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary was categorized as poor since the mean score obtained was 41.5. It was known that most students had problems in using the appropriate words in sentences and had problems in writing using correct word spellings. Even they used the words that did not refer to the intended meaning. Meanwhile, the students' ability in the aspect of mechanic was good because the students' mean score was 72. It means that most students did not make many mistakes in punctuation and capitalization.

In conclusion, it was interesting considering that the result of this research was different from the previous researches. In the previous researches, it was known that the most difficult aspect of writing in the level of senior high school students was grammar. However, based on this research result, the most difficult writing aspect in the level of junior high school students was vocabulary since the students' ability in vocabulary aspect of this research was poor. Moreover, this result did not correspond to the theory stated by Hughes (2003: 106) in which he states that the more important aspect in writing is mechanic. Since this research found that the students' ability in vocabulary was poor, it should be the most important aspect of writing which must be considered by students in writing.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the students' scores in writing recount text test, it can be concluded that the writing recount text ability of the eighth grade students at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso in the 2013/2014 academic year was categorized as fair since the mean score of students recount text writing was 60.72. There were 17 students who were categorized as fair, 9 students who were categorized as good, 6 students who were categorized as poor, and only 1 student who was categorized as excellent.

Specifically, the ability of the eighth grade students in the aspect of content was categorized as fair since the mean score obtained was 65.2. Then, the ability of the eighth grade students in the aspect of organization was categorized as fair since the mean score obtained was 62.2. Next, the students' ability in the aspect of grammar was also categorized as fair since the mean score obtained was 52.2. Then, the students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary was categorized as poor since the mean score obtained was 41.5. Meanwhile, the ability of the students in the aspect of mechanic was categorized as good since the mean score obtained was 72.

In addition, the English teacher of the grade eight at SMPN 2 Tenggarang Bondowoso is suggested to give students more exercises relating to the material that can improve students' vocabulary ability. It is important since this research found that the students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary was poor. For example, it can be done by giving the students exercises to find out the similar words or opposite words of certain words in the text. Then, asking them to find the meaning of words in dictionary and write those words in their book. By giving the students more exercises in vocabulary, it can help the students to have a great number of vocabularies. Certainly, the students will be able to produce a good writing by using the appropriate words in sentences and using a variety of word choice. Besides, for the other researchers, they are hoped to be able to conduct the other researches relating to the students' ability in writing a recount text in order that the students' ability in writing a recount text can be improved.

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