

**A STUDY OF THE EIGHTH YEAR STUDENTS' ABILITY OF USING CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION IN RECOUNT TEXT WRITING AT MTS AT-THOHIRIYAH JEMBER IN THE 2013/2014 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research was intended to describe the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in writing recount text at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember. The research design used was descriptive research. The research subject of this research were 63 students of the eighth year at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember. The research respondents were determined by using purposive method. Since the total number of the eighth year students was less than 100, all the population were taken as the research respondents. The data collection method that were applied in this research were interview, documentation, and writing test. It was found that there was 1.6% of the students in the category of *excellent*, 55.5% of the students in the category of *good*, 41.2% of the students in the category of *fair*, 1.6% of the students in the category of poor, and none of the students in the category of *failed*. Based on the result of the research, it was concluded that the eighth year students' ability in using capitalization and punctuation in writing recount text was *good*.

**Keywords:** *capitalization, descriptive research, punctuation, recount text, writing ability.*

**INTRODUCTION**

English as a foreign language is a subject that has to be taught in the junior high school up to the university level. In School-Based Curriculum (KTSP), the main objective of teaching English for junior high school is to develop their communicative comprehension in English as the target language (TL) both spoken and written form. This means that communication can be done orally (directly) or in the written form (indirectly). So that, those ways of communication have to be taught for the junior high school students. Hence, the junior high school students ought to be assisted by those two kinds of language forms: (1) speaking, consisting of intonation, gestures, and body language; and (2) writing, consisting of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization.

In communication, the speaker has to use the important factors needed in speaking, such as the facial expression, tone, speed changes, interlude in speaking, and so on to make the listener understand the idea easily. In line with it, Owens (2012:12) says that communication is accomplished by three aspects, namely linguistic, paralinguistic codes, and means of transmission of a message, such as speech, intonation, gestures, and

body language. This means that in the process of communication, they have to use the linguistic aspects including speaking and listening, writing and reading, and signing. Besides, paralinguistic codes including intonation, stress or emphasis, speed or rate of delivery, and pause or hesitation are also needed to show the emotion of a speaker. In oral communication, listeners might ask the speaker directly when he/she feels confused about the meaning of the speaker's statement. Besides, the speakers can also repeat their statement with other words when they think that their speech is not clear enough.

It is different from communication in written form by which writers cannot meet all of their readers and show the facial expressions, tone, speed changes, and interlude or pause directly. Writers should have the ability of delivering their ideas to the readers clearly to avoid the misunderstanding. It is important for writers to choose and use the appropriate words to be developed in a larger form, like a paragraph or a text. In choosing the appropriate words into the written form, writers have to be careful with the unfamiliar words. They have to look at how the words are used in a context and also to check their meaning in the dictionary to avoid the misused

words. The meaning of the ideas that is transferred in written form will be more clear if it is supported by the appropriate capitalization and punctuation. As a result, the ideas is sent succesfully and the misunderstanding between the writers and the readers can be avoided.

As stated before, facial expressions, tone, speed changes, and interludes or pauses are the factors that cannot be shown in written form. Nevertheless, those paralinguistics are also have meanings that are delivered from the writers to the readers. Besides, it is not easy to represent those paralinguistics in written form. As stated by Fairbairn and Winch (1996:8) that writing skill is more difficult than speaking skill. It is supported by Hughey *et al.* (1983:38), that writing is often found as the most difficult skill of the English skills, both as the first and the second language. This means that communication in written form is not as easy as oral communication because oral communication can be accomplished by applying the paralinguistic codes. Unlike oral communication, communication in written form use punctuation which functioned similarity with paralinguistic codes in oral communication.

Based on Curriculum, called KTSP for junior high school, it is listed that the Standard Competence (SK) and Basic Competence (KD) of the eighth year students are expected to be able to express the meaning of short functional text and short essay in the form of *descriptive*, *recount*, and *narrative* text in daily life (BSNP, 2006). Various forms of the text and essay always apply punctuation as the element used in the process of writing. Besides, there is also another element, called capitalization. The main function of capitalization is to show the beginning of a sentence, proper name or characters, places, etc. Hence, the use of capitalization and punctuation is very important in the written form to make it easy to understand and avoid the misunderstanding between the writer and the readers. By applying the capitalization and punctuation, it is easy for the readers to understand the text easily and the misunderstanding can be avoided. Both are the important factors needed in writing text that is classified as mechanics writing aspects.

Relating to the types of text, recount text was chosen because it has been taught by the teacher in the first semester of the eighth year students. Besides, recount text is appropriate to be used in this study for some reasons. First, capitalization is needed to show the name of the characters involved in the story. Second, punctuation plays the important role in recount text.

The research questions of this research were: 1) "How is the eighth year students' ability of

using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount text at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in 2013/2014 academic year?", 2) "What are the common mistakes of the eighth year students of using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount text at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in 2013/2014 academic year?". The objective of this research were: 1) to describe the eighth year students' ability in using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in 2013/2014 academic year, and 2) to describe the common mistakes of the eighth year students in writing a recount text by using capitalization and punctuation at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in 2013/2014 academic year.

Considering all the explanation above, this study focused on describing the students' ability using capitalization and punctuation in completing text using capitalization and punctuation in given recount text under the title "*A Study of the Eighth Year Students' Ability of Using Capitalization and Punctuation in Recount Text Writing at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in 2013/2014 Academic Year.*"

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research design was descriptive research. Arikunto (2000:309) notes that descriptive research as a research which aims to collect the information related to a real phenomenon. This idea is supported by Zuriah (2009:47), who defines a descriptive research as a research which aims to describe the fact or phenomenon related to the characteristics of certain population systematically and accurately. The purpose of this research was to describe the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation and to know the eighth year students' most common mistakes of using capitalization and punctuation at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember.

This descriptive research was conducted at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember. The area of this research was determined by using purposive method. Arikunto (2006:139) states that a purposive method was a method which is used based on certain considerations. The respondents of this research were the eighth year students of MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The total number of the eight year is 63 students. The methods that were used in collecting the data were writing test, interview and documentation.

In this research, the primary data was collected through a writing test to gain the information about the eighth year students' ability in using capitalization and punctuation on recount text writing at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember. The writing test in this research was teacher made test

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which was created by the researcher. The test material was consulted first to the teacher and it was conducted in the beginning of even semester at the 2013/2014 academic year.

Achievement test was used in this research because it was used to measure how successful the individual students have achieved the goal of teaching and learning process (Hughes, 2003:13). In other words, achievement test was used in this research because it measured the students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in recount text writing that has been taught before. Dealing with the way of scoring, the test was regarded as an objective test. Hughes (2003:22) says that an objective test is a test that does not require judgment in the scoring process. The type of the test used in this research was rewriting a recount text. This type of the test was chosen because it enable the teacher to give scores objectively.

Hughes (2003:26) states there are two criteria to conduct a test namely validity and reliability. A test is said to be valid if it measures accurately what is intended to be measured. In this research, the test established content validity because the test was constructed based on the indicators to be measured, namely: noun, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs learned by the students. The test that had content validity might be reliable. Hughes (2003:34) states that if a test is not valid, it cannot be reliable. This statement implied that a valid test will be reliable as well. A test is considered to be reliable if it gives consistent result when the same test is given in different time.

The test was divided into two tasks. The first task consisted of 52 test items whereas the second task consisted of 53 test items. The tasks consisted of 26 items of the first letter in sentence, 4 items of the first letter in quotation mark, 5 items of the pronoun "I", 8 items of the name of person, 4 items of the name of day and month, 12 items of the name of place, 18 items of period, 12 items of comma, 6 items of apostrophe, 4 items of quotation mark, and 6 items of question mark. So, the total test items of the writing test were 105 which consisted of 59 items of capitalization and 46 items of punctuation marks.

The data of the writing test were analyzed by using two procedures covers the analysis of the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount text and the analysis of the eighth year students' most common mistakes of using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount text. The analysis of the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in writing a recount text was conducted through 3 steps. They were calculating the students' raw scores of writing test, calculating the

students' total scores, and grading the students' total scores. Whereas, the analysis of the eighth year students' most common mistakes was conducted through calculating the students' raw scores of writing test, calculating the total score of each indicator, calculating the average score of each indicator, and identifying the score of capitalization and punctuation.

The data obtained from writing test were calculated by using a formula. They were calculated to find the total score of the students' who achieved 70 as the standard score requirement (passing grade). To know the students' total score of using capitalization and punctuation in writing recount text, the following formula adapted from Healey (2005:26) was used:

$$E = (f/N) \times 100$$

E = the total score of the writing test

F = frequency of the total number of correct answers

N = the total number of the test items

To know the students ability of using capitalization and punctuation, the analysis results of the calculation were classified based on the classification of the score levels proposed by Djiwandono (1996:154).

Score level	Category
90-100	Excellent
70-89	Good
50-69	Fair
30-49	Poor
< 30	Failed

In this research, interview was used to collect the supporting data. The interview was guided interview which the questions are listed before the interview activity (Arikunto, 2006:156). The information obtained from the interview were the curriculum and the books used, the English teaching and learning of capitalization and punctuation, and the students' difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation. Another method of collecting the supporting data was documentation. Hikmat (2011:83) defines documentation as the investigation in collecting the data needed from the documents that are available. The documents collected were the curriculum of KTSP, the list of standard score requirements, and the list of the students names. The data were taken from the school administration staff of MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis of the research, it was found that the eighth year students' ability of

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using capitalization was categorized as *good*. There were 48 students (76%) categorized as *good* and the rest was in the category of *excellent, fair*, and *poor*. No respondent in the category of *failed*. Whereas, the that the eighth year students' ability of using punctuation was *fair* since there was no student in the category of *excellent* and most of the students (54%) were categorized as *fair*. The rest of the students were in the category of *fair, poor*, and *failed*. However, the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in writing recount text was *good* since there were 57% of the students were categorized as *excellent* and *good*.

The finding is closely relevant to the theory that appropriate punctuation plays a role as traffic signals guiding through a city (Wingersky *et al.*, 1999:310). It could be said that by using appropriate punctuation in written form, especially writing recount text, could help the readers in identifying the beginning and the end of sentence. If the writer put appropriate period in a sentence, he/she would be able in identifying the beginning of sentence and he/she would be able in capitalizing the first letter of the sentence appropriately.

Furthermore, the finding was also relevant to the previous research result. For example, the research result found by Novianti (2010) entitled "An Analysis on the Ability of Using Capitalization and Punctuation in Paragraph Writing of the Grade Eight Students at Mts Al Ashri in the 2010/2011 Academic Year". In her descriptive research, she found the teaching learning process of using capitalization relatively successful because the number of respondents below the *fair* category was relatively small. However, the teaching learning process in using punctuation was not successful because the number of the respondents below the *fair* category was big.

The interview to get the supporting data was conducted on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The interviewee was the English teacher of the eighth year of MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember. Based on the result of the interview, it was found that the the school used curriculum of KTSP (2006) and taught capitalization and punctuation integrated with reading and writing. The textbook used was *Contextual English* and the workbook was *Canggih Bahasa Inggris Pendamping Siswa*. The English teacher informed that the students' still had difficulties in capitalization and punctuation, especially in capitalizing the names of particular places and using comma. It was because of the lack of exercises and the students' did not give more attention in the teacher's explanation.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the result of analysis, it can be  
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concluded the eighth year students' ability of using capitalization and punctuation in writing recount text at MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year was categorized as *good*. Meanwhile, they still had difficulties in the indicators of capitalizing the first letter in sentence and in using comma since the total score of those indicators were the lowest among the other indicators.

Specifically, the total score of the eighth year students of MTs At-Thohiriyah Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year in indicator of capitalizing the first letter in sentence was the lowest among all the indicator of capitalization. The total score was 71.9 but it still in the category of *good*. The total score in indicator of using comma was the lowest among all the indicator of punctuation. It was 55.8 or in the category of *fair*.

On the basis of the results of the research, it is suggested that the English teacher provides some more exercises about writing recount text in the form of letter and short essay by using appropriate capitalization and punctuation for the students. By having more exercises, the students will be more familiar with the use of appropriate capitalization and punctuation. As a result, the teacher can help the students in writing a good recount text.

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