THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT AT MTs. MIFTAHUL ULUM WIROWONGSO AJUNG IN THE 2016/2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

THESIS

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2016

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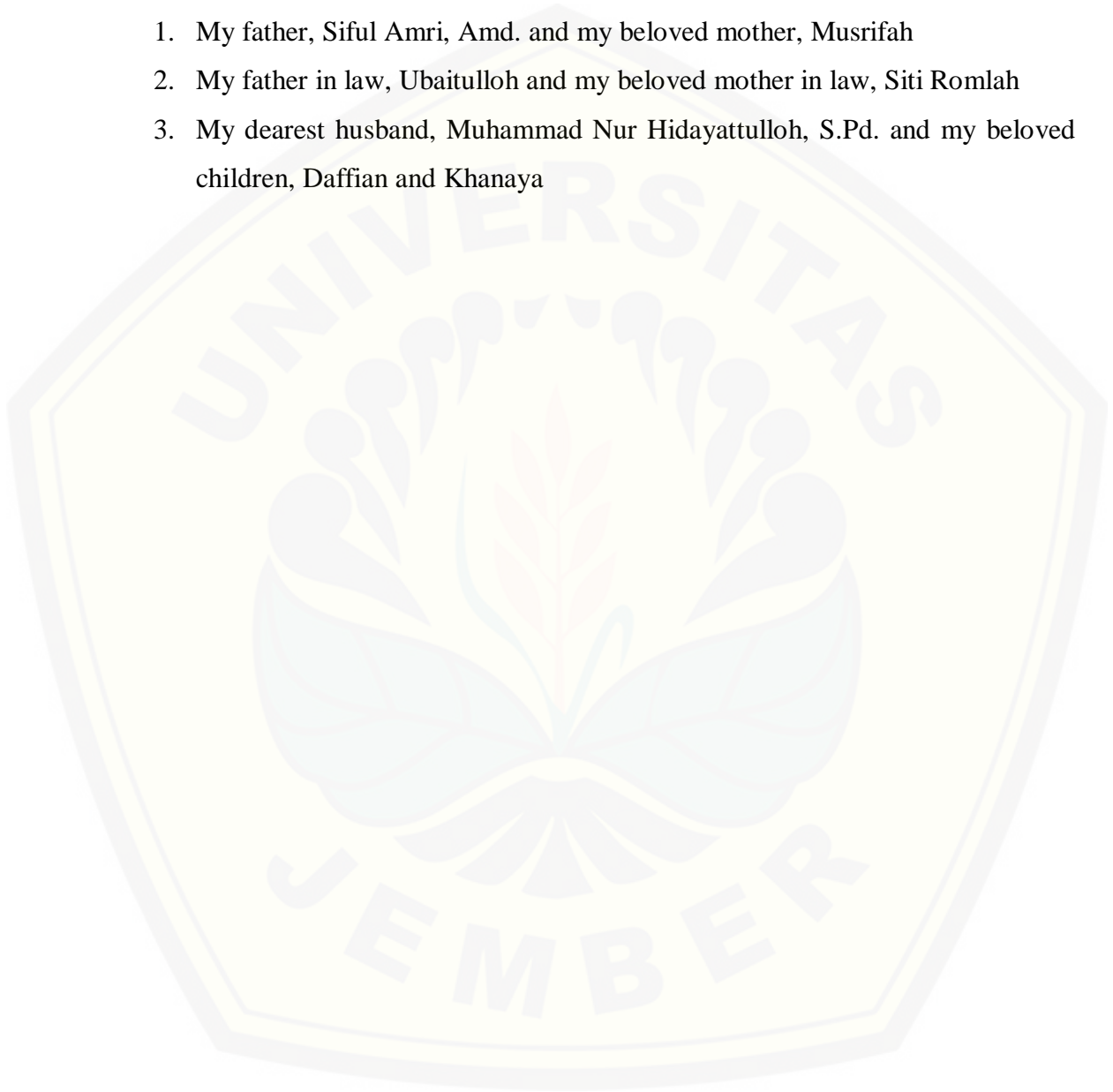**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

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2016

DEDICATION

This thesis is honorably dedicated to:

1. My father, Siful Amri, Amd. and my beloved mother, Musrifah
2. My father in law, Ubaitulloh and my beloved mother in law, Siti Romlah
3. My dearest husband, Muhammad Nur Hidayattulloh, S.Pd. and my beloved children, Daffian and Khanaya

MOTTO

Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear

(Quran: Al-Baqarah: 286)

STATEMENT OF THESIS AUTHENTICITY

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CONSULTANTS' APPROVAL

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT AT MTs. MIFTAHUL ULUM WIROWONGSO AJUNG IN THE 2016/2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

THESIS

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      I do understand that this thesis has some weaknesses. Consequently, I hope that there will be constructive criticism and suggestion from the readers to make this thesis better. Finally, I hope that this thesis will be useful for the readers.
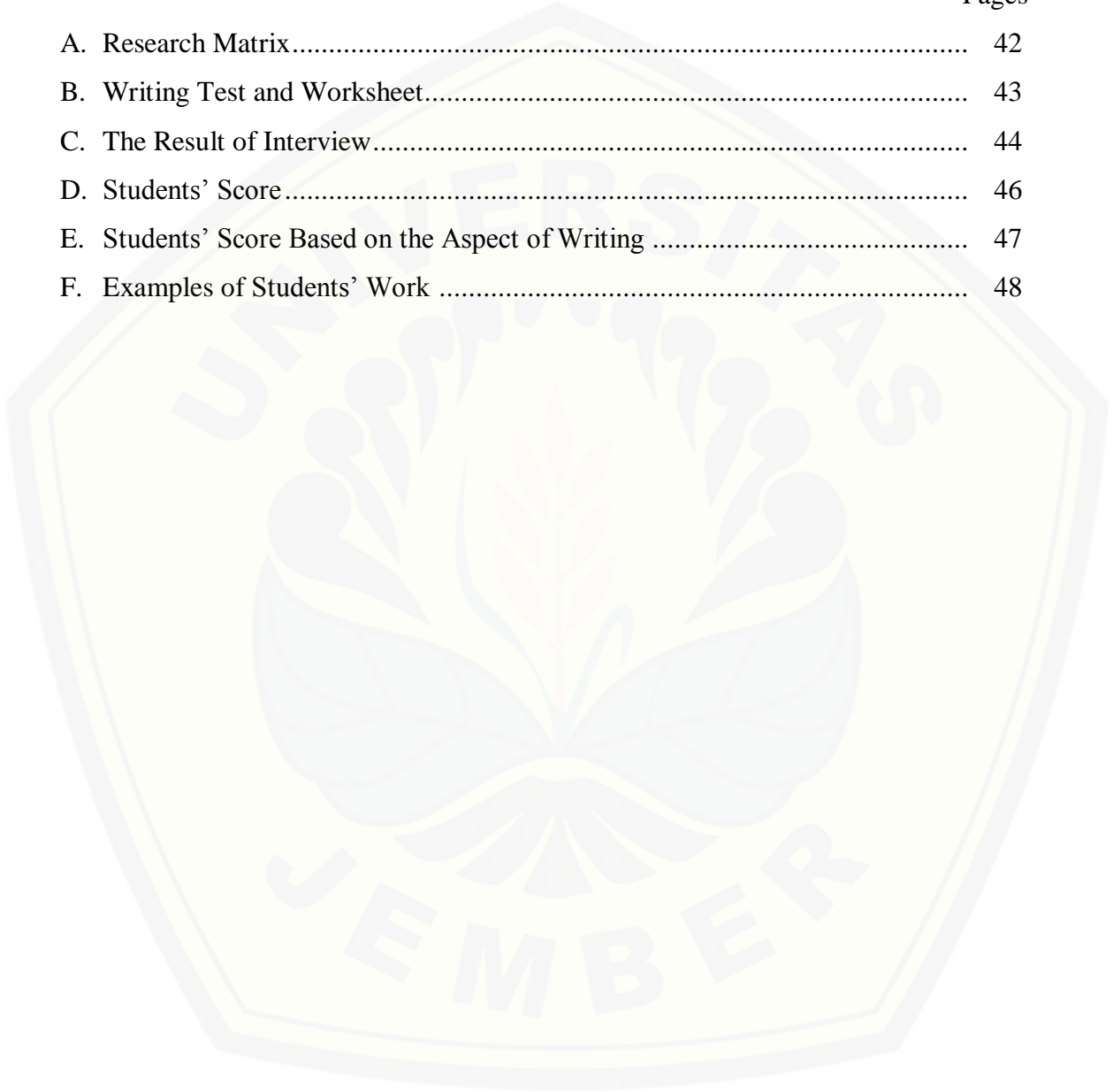
Writer

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SUMMARY

The Junior High School Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2016/2017 Academic Year; Nisfi Haufiyatur Rohmana, 090210401039; 2016: 38 pages; English Education Program; Language Arts Education Department; The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education; Jember University.

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Key words   : Descriptive study, Writing ability

Descriptive study of the students' ability in writing recount text was implemented in this research because this research was not intended to verify any hypothesis, but to describe the students' recount text ability. The area of this research was MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung. The respondent of this research was the population of the eighth grade students. The research area and respondent were choosen based on the purposive method, because the descriptive study had never been done in this school. The total number of the respondents was 36 students.

The data of this research were collected from the students' score of writing test, interview, and documentation. The result was analyzed by using SPSS. Based on the calculation, the mean score of the students was 59. As the result, the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text was categorized as average based on norm reference approach interpretation.

Further, related to the students as achiever, based on the spread of score from the normal curve of standard deviation there were 0 students categorized as excellent achiever, 8 students categorized as high achievers, 21 students categorized as average achievers, 6 students categorized as poor achievers, and 1 student categorized as very poor achiever. The problems of writing that the eighth grade students experienced in writing a recount text were grammar and vocabulary.

CHAPTER1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents global information related to the research topic that is recount text writing ability. First, it discusses the background of choosing this topic, the problem of the research, the objectives of the research, the scope and limitation of the research, and the significance of the research. Each point presents respectively in the following sections.

1.1 Background of the Research

Nowadays, a lot of schools in Indonesia use new curriculum. They used curriculum 2013. Curriculum 2013 for junior high school aims to develop the ability of communication in the target language (English) in the spoken and written form. The teaching learning process includes four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, also three language components: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. To develop the ability that the students should achieve all of the language skills and language components should be taught integratedly in the class.

The English teacher at MTs. MIftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung that has already applied Curiculum 2013 said that English was a difficult subject for the students to master. The students usually got low score in English writing. Unfortunately, the teacher cannot give detailed information about the students' writing ability and the students' problems in writing. That is why, the research about the students' ability in writing especially recount text was needed in this school to describe the detailed information about the students' ability and the students' problem in writing recount text.

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. They often feel confused with what they have to write and how to start it.

Brannan (2003:3) also states that the competent writers are often confused to find the idea of writing and develop it into written form.

According to Spaventa and Spaventa (2001:6), writing can be defined as an important tool of communication. It means that the students were able to communicate their ideas and feelings to the other through writing skill. Besides, in the context of English teaching as a foreign language, writing had an important role. Hirsch (in Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacob,1983:6) states that writing is an efficient tool to facilitate and reinforce other language skills.

Writing is a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into "self-initiated" topics. Hammer (2001:79) also states writing is a form of communication to deliver through written form. Nation (2009:112) argues that writing is an activity that can usefully be preferred for by work in other skills of listening, speaking and reading. Those statements mean that writing is a personal ability to take ideas and transform them into topics to communicate in written form.

Since writing is hard to do, students are also required to consider some aspects of writing. Those aspects are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Content as the first aspect of writing refers to ability in writing clearly to make the readers understand well with the writer's ideas. Second is organization that refers to the ability in relating all sentences to be coherent and unified. Third, grammar refers to the ability in writing sentences using a correct English structure. Fourth, vocabulary refers to the ability in selecting the appropriate words written in the text. The last aspect is mechanic that refers to the ability in using the correct capitalization and punctuation. Therefore, students' writing will be categorized as a good writing if all those writing aspects are included in their writing. Related to the aspects of writing, the teacher at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung finds difficulty in identifying the students' ability in writing that concerns with the aspects of writing. This research was also needed to give the detail information about the students' problems in writing. It is used as the information about which aspect that students mastering well and which one that they are lacking.

Writing a recount text is one of the materials that is taught to the eight grade students of junior high school. Recount text is a text that retells the readers a series of events happened in the past (Keir, 2009:9). The students learns what a recount text is, also comprehend the generic structure and language features of a recount text. It means that the students are expected to be able to write a well organized recount text with correct generic structure in chronological events using past tense and chronological connectors correctly. This research focused on student's ability in writing recount text because it is taught in the eighth grade students.

After interviewing the eighth grade English teacher at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung on March 1st 2016, it revealed that the students were difficult to be motivated to improve their writing skill. It is because the teacher did not give detail feedback about their recount writing. It makes the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text is low. They cannot get high score in English especially writing. The maximum score that the teacher can give to the students is only 71. Although, in fact, the eighth grade students usually get 45 up to 65 in the English test.

The English teacher in MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung hopes that this research gives the detail information about the students' ability in writing recount text, because the teacher did not read any descriptive research before. Therefore, the research about the students' ability in writing recount text is needed in this school.

Relating to the previous relevant research conducted by Lisyuliani 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 the students' average ability in writing a recount text of that school was categorized as poor with the percentage of 45.16%. Similar result 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".She found that 42% of the students' writing test was in the range score of 40-59. As a result, the students' writing recount text ability was poor.

Considering the description above and the teacher's explanation, the researcher was interested in conducting the similar research that is descriptive research to find out the students' ability in writing recount text related to the five aspects of writing (content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic). Also to know the biggest problem that the English teacher faced in teaching writing recount text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung. Considering the description above, it is necessary to conduct a research entitled "The Junior High School Students' Ability in Writing Recount Text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2016/2017 Academic Year"

1.2 The Problem of the Research

Based on the research background, the problems of this research are formulated as follows:

a. How is the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2015/2016 academic?

b. How many students are categorized as excellent achievers, high achievers, average achievers, low achievers, and very low achievers?

c. What are the problems of writing experienced by the students?

1.3 The Objective of the Research

Based on the research background, the objectives of this research are formulated as follows:

a. To describe the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2015/2016 academic.

b. To know how many students are categorized as excellent achievers, high achievers, average achievers, low achievers, and very low achievers.

c. To know what problems of writing experienced by the students.

1.4 The Scope and Limitation of the Research

This research has the limitation in describing the phenomenon. The description focuses on the eighth grade students' ability in writing recount text at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2016/2017 academic year. The subject of this research is the eighth grade students at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung in the 2016/2017 academic year. This research also focuses on personal recount text about holiday. The students are required to write their holiday story in writing test. In writing a recount text, the tense focuses on the use of simple past tense.

1.5 The Significance of the Research

a. For the English Teacher

The results of this research are hopefully useful for the teacher as information about the students' ability. It will give the information about the weaknesses of the students in writing recount text, so the teacher can conduct new method/technique to solve those problems.

b. For the other researcher

The result of this research hopefully useful as the information or a reference to conduct further research in writing using experimental or classroom action research design.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents some important theories and concepts related to the description of the students' recount text writing ability briefly. There are three significant discussions in this chapter. The first discussion presents the literature review that deals with the writing achievement, the second discussion deals with the Teaching of Writing at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung, and the last discussion deals with Recount Text.

2.1 Concept of Writing Ability

Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacob (1983:38) state that writing is essential in language use. In addition, Fairbairn and Winch (1996:31) state that writing, like speaking, is a form of communication. Hughey also adds that writing can be used as another way to communicate with other people instead of speaking. However, written language is not just spoken language written down (Cox, 1994:151).

Writing is a process of developing ideas and putting them down into a written form. Fairbairn and Winch (1996:32) say that writing is about conveying meaning by using words that have been selected and put together in a written or printed form. It means writing is the expression of ideas that transferred into written form. In general, writing is a process of discovering, organizing, and communicating the writers' thoughts to the readers (Wingersky, Boernerand Holguin-Balogh. 1999:4). Leo, Groth, Yugianingrum, Lilyana, Kendra, and Lukman (2007:1) also state that writing is a process to express the writers' ideas or thought in words form. It means that writing is the writers' ability in finding out the ideas of writing in order to develop them into written form. Further, Brannan (2003:3) says that writing is an activity done by the writers with the certain purpose, whether it is to inform, to entertain, or to persuade readers. In summary, writing is a skill to communicate the ideas and thoughts to inform, entertain, or persuade the readers in the written form.

Writing is a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into "self-initiated" topics (Hamp-Lyon, 1990).Hammer (2001:79) states writing is a form of communication to deliver through written form. Nation (2009:112) argues that writing is an activity that can usefully be preferred for by work in other skills of listening, speaking and reading. Those statements mean that writing is personal ability to take ideas and transform them into topics to communicate in written form.

Writing skill is considered as a difficult skill to develop, especially for most of the students who learn in the context of English as a second or foreign language. Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacob (1983:38) state that writing is often found as the difficult skill of all the English skills, both as the first and second language. This is supported by Richards (1990:100) who says that learning to write in either a first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks a learners encounters and one that few people can be said to fully master. He also adds that learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process.

Besides, in writing, the students are required to have the ability of using the appropriate vocabulary, the correct sentence structure (grammar), punctuation and capitalization. They are also should have the ability to develop message and information into a coherent text. It can be assumed that writing skill is not an easy skill to do by the students. It is because they need to pay attention to some aspects of writing. They are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic.

Heirston states six characteristics of good writing. They are:
1. Good writing should be significant. It means that a piece of writing should tell something suitable with the purposes of writing.
2. Good writing should be clear. It means that a piece of writing must be understandable, for that the readers do not have to reread the paragraph several times to find out the meaning.
3. Good writing should be unified. It means, in a piece of writing, each sentence must support each other in a logical sequence or coherence.
4. Good writing is economical. It means, each point exposed in writing should be written in a simple way. Rewriting some sentences or some words that do not support the main idea should be avoided.
5. Good writing should be adequately developed. It means writing should have limited topic. The topic should be developed by having suitable supporting details.
6. Good writing should be grammatically acceptable. It means writing must use correct grammar and punctuation.

(Adapted from Heirston, 1996:5)

The statements above give us clear description about the characteristics of a good writing. A writing is considered as a good writing if it is significant or suitable with the purpose of writing, clear or understandable, unified, economical or written in simple way, adequately developed, and grammatically correct. Therefore, the students should consider the aspects of writing in order to make a good writing. The researcher also should consider the aspects of writing to evaluate the students' writing test.

2.2 Recount Text Writing

Recount text is one of the English text type states in the curriculum for junior high school. Recount text is a text which retells the past events or experiences that have been experienced by the writer with the aim both to inform and to entertain readers (Stubbs, 2000:8; Hyland, 2008:v; Warner, 2009:25). Keir (2009:9) adds that recount text describes the events happened in the past in a sequence of activities. In summary, recount text is an English text type taught in junior high school that retells the events or experiences happened in the past in chronological order with purpose to inform or to entertain the readers.

Basically, recount text has generic structures and language features. Recount text consists of three generic structures. The first is organization. According to Stubbs (2009:9), orientation is a part that gives the background of the story or introduction information needed by the readers. In the orientation, the writers need to introduce the participant that is involved in the story, the time and place of the events happened to the readers. The second is events. The writers need to tell the readers about the events happened in their past experienced in chronological sequences from the first to the last. The last generic structure is re-orientation. Re-orientation is a part to summarize the result of the story. It is usually contains of the writers' feelings or comments about the story. Furthermore, there are the language features of recount text that the students or the writers should understand in order to write a recount text.

2.2.1 Types of Recount Text

There are some types of recount text that the students should know. According to Barwick (1998:4), recount text consists of personal, factual, and imaginative recount text. Barwick also classifies recount text into three different types based on the audience of the story, the tense used, the language used, the participant of the story, the additional details of story and the series of the events that include the sequence details of who, what, when, and where the events of the story happened. Stubbs (2000:8) adds that the other types of recount text are procedural and biographical recount. Stubbs classifies recount text into some different types based on three points. They are the language used in the text, the participants of the story, and the detailed information added in the story. It is different from Barwick's opinions

Based on the explanation above, recount text is classify into five different types. They are personal, factual, imaginative, procedural, and biographical recount. The explanation of each type as follows:

1. **Personal Recount**

Personal recount is a text which retells an activity that the writer has been involved in. It means that the writer has experienced the events by himself, such as a diary entry, an autobiography, and a family holiday. It is usually written in the first person (using I and we). The tense used in this type of recount is past tense and the language focuses on the use of emotive language to influence the readers' feelings.

2. **Factual Recount**

Factual recount is a text which records the particular events of an incident or true events that happened in the past, such as news report, police report on an accident, science experiment report, and sport report. The writer of the factual recount is not always involved personally in the situation. It can be said that the writer usually written in the second or third person pronouns, such as you, they,

he, she, and it. In factual recount, the writer selects the details to help the readers reconstruct the incident accurately. Further, the tense used is past tense and the language focuses on the use of evaluative language to make judgments of people behaviors or attitudes. The details of time and place are added in this type of recount to complete the information of the events in the text.

3. **Imaginative Recount**

Imaginative recount is a text that tells the readers about an imaginative story. The writer produces the imaginative creation so that there is no fact and real experience. It is usually written in the first person (i.e., I and we). Since it is created based on imagination, its purpose is certainly to entertain the readers. The tense used in this text is past tense and the language focuses on emotive language to give an appeal to the story.

4. **Procedural Recount**

Procedural recount is a text that retells series of events from certain process that has been done or learnt. It is written in the first person (I and we). The tense used in this text is past tense. The examples of this text are the recipe of making something, the steps done in science experiment, and the steps to solve some certain problems. The information of the time and place of the events are added in order to make the readers understood the idea.

5. **Biographical Recount**

Biographical recount is a type of recount which tells the readers about certain person's life story. It includes the person's achievement. The detailed information about name, date of birth, times, place, and events also includes in the text. It is written using a third person (he, she, and they). The tense used in this text is past tense. The series of events are arranged in order to make it clear for the readers.

2.3 Characteristics of Recount Text

There are some characteristic of a recount text. Recount text has generic structures and languages features.Stubbs (2000:9) states that there are three generic structures of recount text. They are: orientation, series of events, and re-orientation.

1. Orientation

   The orientationprovides all the necessary background information to enable the audience to make sense of the text. To ensure that the orientation is detailed and thorough, use 5W formula. The writer or speaker needs to give information about what happened, who or what was involved, when and where the events occured, and why. An awareness of audience and purpose will assist the author in selecting the amount of detail needed.

2. Series of Events

   Events are usually sequenced chronologically but students should be encouraged to experiment with flashbacks or arranging events in order of iportance. Unity between paragraphs is created through the use of time connectives, so that the separate events from part of a cohesive text.

3. Re-orientation

   The final section concludes the recount by summarising outcomes or results, evaluating the topic's importance or offering personal comment or opinion. It can also look to the future by speculating about what happen next.

   (Adopted from Stubbs:2000:9)

From the explanation above we can conclude that recount text has three generic structures.They are: Orientation, Events, and Re-orientation. Orientation is a set of scene and necessary background information using 5W formula. It contains of who is in the story, when and where the events happen in the past. Events contain of the events happen in the past that are written in the chronological order and logical sequences. Unity between paragraphs are created using time connetives. Re-orientation includes closing statements, personal comments or opinion from the writer.

The language features of recount text that Stubbs (2000:9) notes are as follows:

1. Simple Past Tense is used in most recounts.
2. Subject-specific term are used to record fact and events accurately.
3. Specific descriptive word (adjectives) helps the audience visualise or imagine events.
4. A range of conjunctions (because, although, while) is used to link clauses within sentences.
5. Time connectives (firstly, next, finally) are used to link separate events or paragraphs into a cohesive whole text.
6. Passive voice is used, paticularly in factual recount, to give objectivity to the text.
7. Adverb (yesterday, outside) and adverbial phrases are used to indicate specific times and places.
8. Specific participants (noun and pronouns) provided detail and credibility.
9. Pronouns are used to provide cohesion by tracking participants through the text.
10. A range of sentence types (simple, compound, and complex) is used to dd variety nd interest.
11. Personal comment may be woven into the text or added as a conclusion.
12. Emotive language may be used to influence the reader's attitude to the topic

(Adopted from Stubbs: 2000: 9-10)

From the information above we can conclude that Simple Past Tense is used in writing recount text. The use of subject-specific and adjective helps the readers visualise and imagine the events accurately. Conjunctions and connetives are used to link sentences, events, and paragraphs into a cohesive text. Passive voice is used to give the objectivity to the text. Adverb and adverbial phrases are used to indicate specific times and places. Noun and pronouns are used to provide detail and cohesion. Simpe, compound, and complex sentences are use to add variety and interest. Personal comment may be added as a conclusion. Emotive language may be used to influence the readers.

In this research, the students need to make their own personal recount text. In this case, they should be aware about the generic structure and the language features. They need to write a recount text using personal pronouns (I and We). They also need

to focus on the important events about their holiday in the past. The recount text should be well organized, relates the events using appropriate linking verbs and cohesive devices (using time conectives and appropriate conjuction).

2.4 Model of a Good Recount Text

Here is the example of personal recount text:

My Holiday

    Last weekend, I went to my grandma's house in the village near my town. It was a beautiful village. In that beautiful village, I had many activities. I went to my grandma's farm in the first day. My grandma had a lot of chicken and fed them. The chicken made a lot of noise while I fed them.   1

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    Next day, I planted some flowers in the garden. I planted roses, gardenia, and morning glory. After that I played with the village kids. They were cheerful and kind-hearted. We played together in the river. They taught me how to catch fish using hand and dragnet.

    The last day in the village, they gave me hand-made souvenirs before I went home. I felt very happy. I am sure that I will never forget the days I spent in the village.   10

(Adapted from Interactive English: 2009: 34)

    The orientation of the above text is in the sentence 1 and sentence 2 in first and second line. Those sentences give us the explanation about who is in the story, when and where the story took a place. The events of the above text is in the sentence 3 until sentence 13 in line 2 until 11. Those sentences give us the sequence explanation about the events that happen in the past. The re-orientation of the above text is in the sentence 14 and sentence 15 in line 11 until 12. Those sentences contain of the writer feelings.

    The language features from the example of a recount text above are as follows: The sentences in the recount text re in the form of Simple Past Tense. For the example, "Last weekend, I went to my grandma's house in the village near my

town.". That sentence is the form of Simple Past Tense because the verb used is *went* as the past verb from the verb *go*. Another verb that in the past form are*was, had, fed, made, planted, played, were, taught, gave, felt, spent*.

There are some action verbs used in the text above, such as *went, fed, made, planted, played, taught, gave, felt,* and *spent*.There are also some adjectives such as *beutiful,cheerful, kind-hearted,* and *happy*.There are some time connectives such as *first and next*also conjunction *and*.The text above used pronouns such as *I, my grandma,*and *we*.

2.5 The Aspects Assessed on Recount Text Writing

According to Cohen (1991:328-329), there are five aspects of writing skill; content, organization, vocabulary,grammar, and mechanics. The following parts will explain the aspects of writing in detail.

1. **Content**

    Referring to content, it should be made clear, specific, and relevant (Leo, Groth, Yugianingrum, Lilyana, Kendra, and Lukman, 2007:1). The writer must make sure that the writing should be clear, specific, and relevant to deliver the ideas and messages expressed to the reader. He also adds that the writer must have a clear concept of what to convey to the reader. Clarity is important because the reader cannot directly ask a question for clarification (Fairbairn and Winch, 1996:55). In addition, Heaton (1991:35) states that content deals with the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information. In the sum, content not only creates a picture in readers' minds, it gives them a sense of being in that situation (Kanar, 1998:142).

    In this research, content refers to the students' ability in writing recount text which is relevant to the assigned topic. The students should write a recount text with a good content that all sentences related to the topic. They should describe the topic and tell about their holiday. They also have to give clear information relates to their holiday experienced.

2. Organization

Organizing is to develop a paragraph from beginning to the end in harmony. A well organized paragraph must be written in unity and coherence. The sentences of paragraph are united when they all work together to make and support a main idea (Kanar, 1998:75). In accordance with that statement, Wong (1999:369) defines unity as all the supporting sentences in the paragraph are related to the main idea. In addition, she defines coherence as the ideas and the sentences flow together smoothly in a logical, organized manner. Cohere means to stick together, a paragraph has coherence when it is so well organized that the evidence seems to flow smoothly and to stick together (Kanar, 1998:77). That definition is supported by Fairbairn and Winch (1996: 58) whom state that coherence is the need for overall message or argument that writer conveyed meaning to hang together and be consistent.

Organization of recount text writing in this research means that the students needed to write a recount text in a good organization. It must be consists of complete generic structure of recount text.

3. Vocabulary

In constructing a good writing, a writer must have a great stock of words, their change of form, and their meaning. As Bram (1995:48) states that words are basic tool for writing. It is supported by Kanar (1998:406), words are the most basic units of meaning. Therefore, to make meaningful writing in constructing a good paragraph, the writer must pay attention to know and select the right words and put them together correctly. Langan (2008:439) also states that the writers should choose the words carefully in writing.

There are eight parts of speech in English, they are: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, articles, and prepositions. In this research, vocabulary skill will be focused on the choice of adjectives.

Adjectives modify, or change, the meanings of nouns and pronouns by explaining what kind, which one, how many, or whose (Kanar, 1998:415).

In summary, the students need to pay attention on choosing the words that they use in their writing. It will be hard for the students who only know a few words in English to express their ideas. Thornbury (2002:2) argues that it is frustrating to find the precise words used in writing to fit intended meaning when the words known by someone is limited. It shows that lack of vocabulary makes students difficult in choosing and using the correct words for their writing.

This research focused only on the use of nouns, pronouns, verb, adverbs, adjective, and conjunction appropriately in the students' sentences in their recount text. They should use the appropriate vocabulary and use correct spelling in their writing.

4. Grammar

Grammar plays an important role in writing. According to Fairbairn and Winch (1996:108), grammar is one of writing aspects as a set of rules to help a writer to construct sentences that make sense and are in acceptable English. In this case, grammatical skill helps a writer to make meaningful writing. In addition, Heaton (1991:135) states that the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences is called grammatical skill. To make a sense and acceptable writing for the reader, a writer needs to apply grammar in the writing correctly. In this case, this research focuses on using past tense.

Generally, Simple Past Tense indicates actions that happen in the past. It is also used to express past events or actions in different situations. Alter (1992:148) states the function of Simple Past Tense as follows:

a. Simple Past Tense is used to show an action that happened at a definite time in the past.

b. Simple Past Tense is used to express past habit.

c. Simple Past Tense is used in indirect speech to replace the present tense in direct speech.

d. Simple Past Tense is used when we do not know who performed the action.

Pardiyono (2001:59-60) also explains that the functions of Simple Past Tense are as follows:

a. Describing an activity happens at a specific time in the past;

b. Expressing the past incident or the past event;

c. Describing a situation or a condition happened in the past.

Indeed, the students need to know the pattern of Simple Past Tense. They need it to guide them in arranging the words into a good sentences in order to write a recount text. Pardiyono (2001:59-60) gives some patterns used to construct sentences in the form of Simple Past Tense.

a. Pattern of Simple Past Tense with the main verb,

Positive form (+)   : subject + past verb + object

Example   : Dana swam in Mumbul Garden yesterday.

Negative form (-)   : subject + did not/didn't + infinitive + object

Example   : Dana didn't swim in Mumbul Garden yesterday.

Interrogative form (?) : did + subject +infinitiove + object?

Example   : Did Dana swim in Mumbul Garden yesterday?

b. Pattern of Simple Past Tense with the verb "be".

Positive form (+)   : subject + was/were + noun/adj./adv.

Example   : Dana was a swimmer two years ago.

Negative form (-)   : subject + was/were not + noun/adj./adv.

Example   : Dana wasn't a swimmer two years ago.

Interrogative form (?) : was/were + subject + noun/adj./adv.?

Example   : Was Dana a swimmer two years ago?

In summary, the students must be aware in using Simple Past Tense in order to make a recount text in their writing. Simple Past Tenseuses in the text to indicate and describe that the events of their experiences are happened in the past. They needed to follow the ruled or pattern of Simple Past Tense in order that the sentences they made are grammatically correct.

5. **Mechanic**

Mechanic refers to punctuation and spelling. Mechanical skill is the ability to use conventions correctly in the written language, such as punctuation and spelling (Heaton, 1991:135). The wrong application of mechanical skill can make someone misunderstood the message in certain writing.

Many ESL learners might agree that most English words are spelled 'strangely'. They find the spellings difficult to remember (Bram, 1995:83). Sometimes the students cannot recognize a word that has been spelled wrongly when they see one (Fairbairn and Winch, 1996:100). They also add that poor spelling can make meaning ambiguous.

Kanar (1998:165) says that spelling errors may result from two major problems: not knowing the common rules of spelling and confusing the spelling of words that look or sound alike. In accordance with his idea, Fairbairn and Winch (1996:101) state that some of the most common spelling mistakes arise from confusions between words that sound the same but are spelled differently and mean different things.

According to Fairbairn and Winch (1996:81), punctuation is the name given to a variety of devices that we use in order to help readers to understand our meaning when we write. The use of correct punctuation will help readers to understand what the writer intend to communicate. The writers should ensure that they are able to make correct use of the following:

a. Capital letters (A, B, C, D, E)

Capital letters or 'upper-case' letters are used at the beginning of the sentences (*There are five apples on the table*). Capitals are also used for the names of people (*John*), organizations, the days of the week (*Sunday*), and months (*November*) of the year, for tittles and for abbreviation (*Mr.*). The pronoun 'I' is always as a capital '**I**' and never a lower case 'i'.

b. Full stop or period (.)

Full stop has several different functions. First of all, it is used to mark the longest pause in a piece of writing – at the end of a sentence, except in the case of questions and exclamations, where no full stop is necessary. For example: *I have a beautiful smart friend in my class., She likes eating Sate.,* etc. The full stop is also used with shortened forms of word and abbreviations. For examples, *Prof.*, *Oct.*, *B.B.C.* (British Broadcasting Corporation), *M.Ed.* (Master of Education).

c. Comma (,)

Comma is used to mark a pause much briefer than the pause indicated by the full stop and also (often rather too frequently) to separate distinct parts of a sentence. Bram (1995: 94) adds that comma used to separate a series of items from the same category, such as nouns, phrases, and clauses. For the examples: *we are looking forward to buy shirt, shoes, trousers, and skirt.; to live, to die, to win, to lose seem to be inevitable for every human being.; that he often behaves impolitely, that he smokes a little too much, and that he seldom finishes his work on time, make us reluctant to co-operate with him in future.*

d. Apostrophe (')

The apostrophe has two uses – to indicate possession and to denote contractions of words. In the case of possession, for examples: *Tom's car,*

women's right, ladies' handbags, a thesis' contents. The use of the apostrophe to denote contractions is most common in colloquial English. For examples: *don't* (do not), *can't* (cannot), *couldn't* (could not), *I'm* (I am), *you've* (you have), *we'd* (we would), *we'll* (we will).

e. Colon (:)

Colon has several uses. It may be used to introduce lists. For example: *the ingredients for pineapple surprise pudding are: one medium pineapple, three tablespoons of Greek yogurt, one fresh egg, one tablespoon of honey, freshly ground roasted almonds.* Colon also may be used to introduce examples. For example: *lots of flowers appear in spring. For example: snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils, and primroses.*

f. Brackets ( )

Brackets are used to indicate an aside from the main train of thought, most often within a sentence. Sometimes brackets are known as 'parentheses'. For example: *this alternative would have the benefit over the last, that doctors would not put (and could not be accused of putting) ideas into the heads of those who were satisfied with their lives.*

This research focused on the use of spelling and punctuation, such as: capitalization, comma, full stop, and apostrophe.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research method applied in this research. This includes the Research Design, Area Determination Method, Respondent Determination Method, The Operational Definition of Key Terms, Data Collection Method, and Data Analysis Method.

3.1 Research Design

This research applied descriptive research aiming at describing phenomena as they exist. It is used to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of a particular problem or issue (Neville, 2007:56). Therefore, the purpose of this researchwas not intended to verify any hypothesis, but to describe the students' recount text writing ability. The research was conducted at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung. Adapted from Collin Neville, the procedures of this research were as follows:

Stage 1: Choosing the topic and searching the lierture: in this stage the reaseacher need to choose the topic based on the choosen school by the reasearcher. After that the reaseacher needs to find the literature that relates to the topic choosen. Then the reaseacher needs to review the literature and define the research problem/research questions based on the problem of the school choosen.

Stage 2: Collecting the research data by conducting the interview as the preliminary study and obtaining the supporting data by doing documentation to know the details about the school and the teaching learning process. After conducting the interview the reaseacher needs to determine the respondents of the research, deciding which grade or class that will be the respondent.

Stage 3: Deciding the test specification by considering the test type usually used by the English teacher. Then the reaseacher needs to construct the recount text writing test by considering the 2013 standard and basic competence, research indicators and the students' difficulty level. Then she needs to consult the test with the English teacher and the research consultants.

Stage 4: Collecting the main data by administering a writing test. Then the reaseacher needs to analyze the collected data and formulate the data to get the mean scores. After that classifying the result of data analysis based on the mean scores using a normal curve distribution.

Stage 5: Drawing the conclusion of the research result to answer the research problem.

3.2 Area Determination Method

The research area of this research was determined by using purposive method. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006: 101) explain that purposive sampling method means the use of the researchers' judgment to select samples that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need. The purposive method is the way of taking respondents based on certain purposes. Based on those ideas, the researcher has choosen MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung as the research area with the consideration that this school could provide the data needed.

3.3 Respondent Determination Method

The respondents of the research were the populations of the eighth grade students at MTs Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajung. There are 36 students of the eighth grade students that are divided into 2 classes.

3.4 Operational Definition of Key Terms

The operational definitions of the terms used in this research are needed to avoid misunderstanding between the researcher and the readers about the concept and the variables. The concepts that were necessary to be defined operationally in this research were descriptive study, writing achievement, and recount text.

3.4.1 Descriptive Study

In this research, a descriptive study described systematically, accurately, and factually the students' ability in writing a recount text.

3.4.2 Writing Ability

Writing ability in this research refered to the students' ability to write a recount text measured by writing test on the aspects of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic in the form of students' score of writing test.

3.4.3 Recount Text

The material used in this research wasa recount text. The recount text refered to a text about the students' personal experienced.

3.5 Data Collection Method

Data collection method is the method to collect the required data. There were two kinds of data in this research, the main data and the supporting data. This researchused three instruments of data collection. They were test, interview, and documentation. The main data were obtained through writing text test, while the supporting data were collected from interview and document.

3.5.1 Writing Test

Writing test was used to get main data, that was students' writing achievement in the form of students' score of writing test. A test is an instrument that presents to

each subject a standard set of questions that requires the completion of a cognitive task (McMillan, 1992:114). In addition, Heaton (1991:171) divides test into four types, they are: proficiency test, diagnostic test, aptitude test and achievement test.

A test is considered to be good if it is valid and reliable. McMillan (1992:100) defines the validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what it says it measures to measure. The validity of a test is the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure and nothing else (Heaton, 1991:159). There are three types of validity. They are content validity, construct validity, and face validity. This research used content validity for constructing the test. A test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of the language skill (Hughes, 1996:22). This writing test measured the students' ability in writing a recount text covering the component of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanic.

The test was used to obtain the data of this research. The test made by the researcher and it was consulted to the English teacher. The studentswere asked to write a recount text about their personal experienced that is consisted of 80-100 words in 60 minutes. To know whether the time allocation was appropriate or not, the researcher administered a tryout test which is given to the eighth grade students.

Dealing with reliability, Hughes (1996:29) says that the more similar the scores would have been, the more reliable the test is said to be. This research used inter-rater reliability. It used different judges to assess the test. Therefore, this research used two scorers, the first scorer was the researcher and the second scorer was the English teacher. This technique were applied by copying the students' answer sheet twice. The researcher scored on the first copy of paper sheet. Meanwhile, the English teacher scored the second copy of paper sheet and scored them in different place. If the result of scoring by the two scorers is the same or nearly the same, then the test could be categorized as reliable. The main scoreswere obtained by combine the scores then divided the score into two.

The scoring rubric for this research was adapted from Heaton (1991: 146). The scoring rubric was presented in the tables below.

Table 3.5.1 The Scoring Rubric of Content

Aspect	Score	Criteria
C O N T E N T	30-27	**Excellent to very good:** the content of the text tells about the topic of holiday that includes clear explanation and information of the event; most sentences in the text are relevant to the topic (1 sentence is not relevant to the topic)
	26-22	**Good to average:** the content of the text tells about the topic of holiday that includes clear explanation and information of the event; only few sentences in the text are not relevant to the topic (2-3 sentences are not relevant to the topic; the development of topic sentence is adequate)
	21-17	**Fair to poor:** tells about holiday but lose focus; some sentences are not relevant to the topic (4-7 sentences are not relevant to the topic); the development of the topic is limited; insufficient detailed or unclear information of event.
	16-13	**Very poor:** Almost all sentences are not relevant to the topic (8 or more sentences are not relevant to the topic).

Table 3.5.2 The Scoring Rubric of Mechanic

Aspect	Score	Criteria
M E C H A N I C	5	**Excellent to very good:** free errors in punctuation and capitalization or there are few errors in punctuation and capitalization(0-3 errors in punctuation and capitalization)
	4	**Good to average:** occasional errors in punctuation and capitalization (4-8 errors in punctuation and capitalization)
	3	**Fair to poor:** frequent errors in punctuation and capitalization (9-13 errors in punctuation and capitalization); it leads sometimes to the obscurity meaning of sentences.
	2	**Very poor:** severe errors in punctuation and capitalization (14-17 errors in punctuation and capitalization), so that is difficult to understand; all sentences in text use incorrect punctuation and capitalization, so the handwriting cannot be read clearly.

Table 3.5.3 The Scoring Rubric of Grammar

Aspect	Score	Criteria
G R A M M A R	25-22	**Excellent to very good**: no errors and almost free of grammatical errors in writing sentences of Simple Past Tense, time signal, articles, pronouns and preposition (0-2 errors in making sentences of Simple Past Tense)
	21-18	**Good to average**: few errors in making sentences using Simple Past Tense, time signal, articles, pronouns and preposition (3-6 errors in making sentences of Simple Past Tense)
	17-11	**Fair to poor:** some errors in making sentences using Simple Past Tense, time signal, articles, pronouns and preposition, that do not confuse the readers (7-9 errors in making sentences of Simple Past Tense)
	10-5	**Very poor:** dominated by errors in making sentences using Simple Past Tense, time signal, articles, pronouns and preposition (more than 10 errors in making sentences of Simple Past Tense), so it was difficult to understand.

Table 3.5.4 The Scoring Rubric of Organization

Aspect	Score	Criteria
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	20-18	**Excellent to very good:** highly organized; complete and correct generic structure of recount; logical order of ideas; clear supporting details; most of transitions are used appropriately and correctly (1-2 errors in the use of transitions)
	17-14	**Good to average:** well organize; complete generic structure but the orientation is unclear; not all events are in order (1 event out of order); logical order of ideas; limited supporting details; few errors in the use of transition (4-5 errors in the use of transitions)
	13-10	**Fair to poor:** lack of organization; incomplete generic structure; unclear orientation; some events are out of order (2-3 events are out of order); the ideas are confusing; lack supporting details; some errors in the use of transitions (6-8 errors in the use of transitions)
	9-7	**Very poor:** disorganized; does not follow the generic structure of recount; the ideas is unclear and confusing; lack of supporting detailed; no transition used

Table 3.5.5 The Scoring Rubric of Vocabulary

Aspect	Score	Criteria
V O C A B U L A R Y	20-18	**Excellent to very good:** uses a variety of word choice; uses the appropriate and correct words in sentences based on their function; all of the words refer to the intended meaning; has few errors in words spelling (0-3 words are used inappropriately and 0-3 errors in word spelling)
	17-14	**Good to average:** uses an adequate range of word choice; some words are used inappropriately; occasional errors in using the word based on their function; uses some words that do not refer to the intended meaning; has occasional errors in words spelling (4-5 errors in word form and 4-5 errors in word spelling)
	13-10	**Fair to poor:** uses a limited range of word choice; uses inappropriate or wrong words frequently; does not use the words based on their function frequently; the sentences use incorrect word form frequently; has frequent errors in words spelling(6-8 errors in word form and 6-8 errors in word spelling)
	9-7	**Very poor:** uses very limited range of word choice; dominated by errors in choosing the word appropriately; almost all of the words do not lead to do intended meaning; dominated by errors in word spelling (more than 8 errors in word form and word spelling)

(Adopted from J.B. Heaton:1991)

3.6 Data Analysis Method

1. The students' ability in writing recount text is indicated by mean score and using Norm Criterion Approach.It was using the calculation as follows:
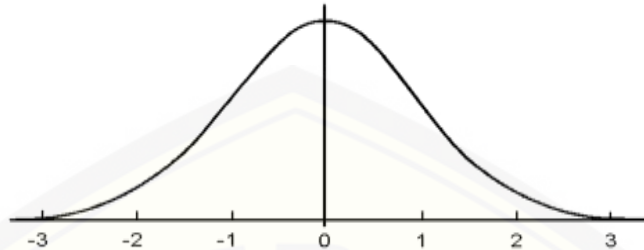
$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

(Gay, Mills, and Arasian, 2011:323)

Note:

$\bar{x}$ = the mean score

$\sum x$ = the total score

N = the total number of students

2. To categorize students' ability in writing text, the researcher used normal curve distribution of standard deviation based on the students score.

The example graph of this curve by GayMills, and Arasian showed below:

When viewed as a continuous probability density function, we can show that the standard normal curve has a mean of 0, and a standard deviation of 1. Standard deviation (s.d.) is another way of showing the spread of score. It measures the degree to which the group of score deviates from the mean; in other words, it shows how all the scores are spread out and thus gives a fuller description of test scores than the range, which simply describes the gap between the highest and the lowest mark. The simple method of calculating s.d. is shown below:

$$s.d. = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$$

Note:

s.d   = standard deviation

d   = the deviation of each score from the mean

N   = the number of scores

The result will be categorized based on the following table:

Table 3.6.1 Students' Category Based on Standard Deviation

Standard Deviation	Students' Category
More than +2 s.d.	Excellent achiever
+1 –(+2 s.d.)	Good achiever
-1 –(+1 s.d.)	Average achiever
-2–(-1s.d.)	Poor achiever
Less than -2 s.d.	Very Poor achiever

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and some suggestions related to the result of this research. The suggestions are proposed to the English teacher and other reseachers.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the result of the students writing recount text test and the discussion presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded as follows:

Generally, the eighth grade students ability in writing a recount text at Mts. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso ajung in the 2016/2017 academic year was categorized as averagebased on norm reference approach, since the mean score of students recount text writing was 59. There were0 students categorized as excellent achiever, 8 students categorized as high achievers, 21 students categorized as average achievers, 6 students categorized as poor achievers, and 1 student categorized as very poor achievers.

The problems of writing that the eighth grade students experienced in writing a recount text were grammar and vocabulary. They used Simple Present Tense instead of Simple Past Tense and used the easiest vocabulary in writing their recount text.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the result of this research, the suggestions below are intended to the following people:

1. The English Teacher

   The English teacher of the eighth grade students at MTs. Miftahul Ulum Wirowongso Ajug is suggested to give the students more practices in writing in order to improve the students' writing ability because it was known that the students ability in writing was stiil categorized as fair. Farther, since this research found that the students' ability in the aspect of vocabulary was poor, it is also suggested for the English teacher to give

the student more practices to improve their ability in vocabulary. For example, it can be done by giving the students exercise to find out the similar words or opposite words of ccertain words in the text. Then, asking them to find the meaning of words in dictionary and writing 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.

2. The other researcher

The other researchers are hoped that they are able to continue this research to find the students' problem using questionnaire for the students.It is important in order to improve the students' ability in writing a recount text.

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