

## Investigating Students' Problems In Writing Recount Text To The Eight Grade Students

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**Abstract.** This study aimed to describes students' writing recount problem. This research used descriptive method and was conducted at SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak. It revealed the most serious problem in writing recount text was in the area of grammar. It found when the students wrote recount text which applied past tense with regular or irregular verb. The second problem came from the vocabulary aspect. It happened when the students demonstrated to state the main idea and include choosing the word that supporting in writing recount text. The third problems found in the area of organization aspects. It happened when the students composed the text paragraph coherently. The last problems found in the part of mechanics. It came when the students wrote down the recount text paragraph in the zone of spelling and punctuation

### Introduction

Writing is one of language skills in learning English. Sometimes, many students write text, but not many of them are able to write the text based on the correct structures and features of the text itself. Writing is not easy because they should use correct structure, mechanics and spelling of word. It is one of language skills that must be mastered by the students in learning English. It is also the way to share ideas, feelings and opinions. If the students do not master good writing skill, they will have some problems in conveying their ideas in writing.

Writing is perhaps the most demanding skill of English. Recount text is one kind of texts that is taught at Junior High School for writing skill. Recount text is the text that retells past experience and it should be written in the past form. The students have to be able to apply the principles of past tense in writing recount text. They are expected to write well-structured sentences. Thornbury (1999:1) states that grammar is part of what forms (or structure) are possible in a language[1]. The students will be good at writing if they master the grammar knowledge. The message in writing will be conveyed well if they can construct sentences properly.

The students learn about writing in the form of text. Based on Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, there are four kinds of text that should be learn by the students of junior high school. They are descriptive, narrative, procedure and recount text. The last one is recount text. It reconstructs past experiences by retelling events and incidents in the order in which they have occurred. It tells about the experience that happened in the past event. This text is almost same as narrative text, but both of them have different characteristic: The main difference between the two is the absence of complications of problems or conflicts experienced by the characters in the text recount. Recount text should be written in the past form. In this research, writer focuses to conduct a research about recount text and give information about it.

There are some problems in writing recount text faced by the students. In writing recount text, it should be written in past tense and the students retell their past experiences. When the students started to write a recount text, sometimes they forgot about the usage of spelling. Spelling is one of part of mechanics in writing recount text. This problem caused the students got confused in writing sentences.

In this study, the researcher will explain the area of problem in writing recount text. According to

Ngabut cited in Karani (2008: 11), there are four problems in writing recount text which are taken as the indicators in this research. They are organization, vocabulary, grammar and Mechanics.[2]

Integra (2009: 5) argues that there are four problems that make students have disabilities in learning process. They come in many forms and their effects are different from person to person. They relate to: Getting information into the brain (Input), making sense of this information (Organization), storing and retrieving information (Memory), getting information back out (Output).[3]

In this research, the researcher analyzed students' problems in writing recount text. Recount text is one of texts that should be learnt by students at junior high school, especially for eighth grade students. It is a kind of text which describes past experience by retelling the events in the order in which they happen (chronological order). The researcher wanted to know the students problems in writing recount text by asking them to write their past experiences. This kind of text could be easy to be applied in writing process, because this text retells past experience. Every student has past experience; it means that the students are able to retell their past experience in their writing. By telling their past experience, students can develop their ideas or express through written form easily. Directly, they have motivation to be able to be good at writing. According to Shaw (2003:2) "the wide variety of themes, together with the range of ideas spread across them, should ensure that all students have plenty to write about"[4]. For the reason, students are able to write about something that is in their minds because they have a variety of ideas that can be stated in a variety of themes. Students have a lot of experiences that they can write in a book or piece of paper.

This research focuses on the four indicators of recount text such as organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. The students wrote recount text by following the sequence of generic structures in the form of the past tense. The generic structures of this are orientation, event and reorientation. Orientation refers to the introduction of the information which wants to be shared. Events consist of the points of problems that are told in order sequences and the re-orientation consists of the conclusion or personal comments. The students also wrote recount text by following a good mechanics in putting capitalization, punctuation and correct spell of words.

## **Method**

This study used descriptive qualitative research. In accordance with the formulation of the problem described previously, this type of research is a descriptive study with qualitative methods. Descriptive research method is a research method used to describe the problem and solve it. Marzyk et al (2005:16) state "descriptive research is useful because it can provide important information about the case being investigated".[5]

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak. It is located on Jl. Khatulistiwa No. 150, kel. Siantan Hilir, Kec. Pontianak. It has twenty four classes with 615 students. Dawson (2002:49) said the sample size will depend on what we want to do with the results of the research[6]. The researcher chose the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak. It has six classes where in each class consist of about 35 students. The researcher purposively selected 30 students of eighth grade of SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak as the sample. All of those classes became sample for this research, but from each class only 5 students have been selected. From five students some of them are students who have good quality and the others are average. By involving the eleventh grade students of SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak as the subject being observed, it means that the writer provides the technique of purposive sampling. Creswell (2005: 204) argued "in purposeful sampling, researcher intentionally select individuals and site to learn or understand the central phenomenon".[7]

## Results and Discussion

### Research Findings

#### The Students' Score in Writing Recount Text

Table 1  
Students' Score in Writing Recount Text

Information	Score				Total
	Organization	Vocabulary	Grammar	Mechanics	
Maximum Score	17	9	12	2	87
Minimum Score	32	17	25	13	36

The researcher calculated the students' individual score in writing recount text and the result was showed that first, the minimum score was 36. It means that the students had serious problems in writing recount text. They did not write recount text well and also did not master all indicators in writing recount text. Thus, from the result the students should improve their writing recount text by practicing to write recount text at home and always study hard to get a good score in writing recount text. Referring to the Heaton criteria (1988), the mean score of 62,13 is qualified as average to good [8]. After knowing the mean score of students' writing recount text, the researcher concluded that students had to do more practices and study hard in writing recount text because many of them were still poor in their writing of recount text.

#### The Students' Mean Score of Writing Recount Text

This analysis was done by considering the scoring profile as stated by Megawati and Mirjam (2012)[9]. From the scoring, the researcher could get the students' mean scores as shown in the table below:

The students' mean score:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$M = \frac{1864}{30} = 62,13$$

The result of the computation was 62,13. Referring to the Heaton criteria (1988), the mean score of 62,13 is qualified as average to good. After knowing the mean score of students' writing recount text, the researcher concluded that students had to do more practices and study hard in writing recount text because many of them were still poor in their writing of recount text.

#### The Students' Mean Scores of The Four Indicators

The specification of the students' writing result of the four indicators according to Megawati and Mirjam criteria are as follow:

Table 2  
The Students' Mean Score of the Four Indicators

No	Indicators	Result	Category
1	Organization	22	Good
2	Vocabulary	14	Fair
3	Grammar	17	Fair
4	Mechanic	10	Good

The mean score of organization is 22 or at the range of 28-22. It is therefore categorized as good. It means that some of students did not have problems with organization in writing recount text.

Organization in writing recount text is a crucial indicator because it consists of orientation, event, and re-orientation. In table 3 the researcher displayed an example that made by students.

Table 3

## Sample of The Students' way in Organizing their Writing Recount Text

<p><b>Orientation:</b> I spent my vacation in Sintang. It is a beautiful city in West Borneo. It has a black rock called "Bukit Kelam".</p> <p><b>Event:</b> It was 15 June 2011. The day was dark. It was night at 7 p.m. We rode a bus to Sintang. The bus could run fast because of the fire road.</p> <p><b>Re-orientation:</b> We left Sintang in the evening. My uncle made me happy during my stay in Sintang. That is an unforgettable moment for me.</p>
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The mean score of vocabulary is 14 or at the range or 14-12 and therefore categorized as fair. It means students need to pay attention on vocabulary. They have to master vocabulary well. The vocabulary could be an essential indicator in writing recount text because if the students do not master in choosing words, their writing will not be easy to understand. In table 4, the researcher displayed some mistakes that were made by students.

Table 4

## Samples of Students' Vocabulary Mistakes

The Wrong Vocabularies	The Right Vocabularies
1. I can always remember how happy I was learning to ride her bike.	I always remember my happiness when I was learning to ride motorcycle
2. That time I was five years old	The time when I was five years old
3. 2 years ago my and family go to grandma's house.	2 years ago, I and my family went to our grandma's house.
4. When he got in Jakarta we took a cab in front of the airport to the hotel.	When we arrived in Jakarta, we used a taxi that was in front of the airport to go to the hotel.

The mean score of grammar is 17 or at the range of 21-17 and therefore categorized as fair. It means grammar is a problem for the students. Grammar is an essential part in writing recount text because if the students are wrong in using grammar, the readers may misinterpret in understanding the ideas. So, the students have to master grammar knowledge to get a good writing. Based on the research findings the researcher found some grammar mistakes made by students.

Table 5

## Samples of Students' Grammar Mistakes

Incorrect	Correct
1. We <b>don't</b> forget to take a photo in there.	1. We <b>didn't</b> forget to take a photo in there.
2. My family and I <b>stay</b> in my uncle's house.	2. I and my family <b>stayed</b> in my uncle's house.
3. I ever follow the pre test from my school before I <b>study</b> at junior high school 20.	3. I ever follow the pre-test from my school before studying at SMP Negeri 20 Pontianak.
4. I see the pre-test <b>is more easy</b> from previously.	4. I saw the pre-test <b>was easier</b> than previously.
5. We were there seen a lot of people	5. We saw a lot of people in there.

The mean score of mechanic is 10 or at the range of 12-10 and therefore categorized is good. It means that some of students do not have a serious problem with the mechanic. Mechanic is also an essential part in writing recount text, because through which the readers can get the ideas of the writing easily and clearly. Some mechanic mistakes made by students can viewed in table 6.

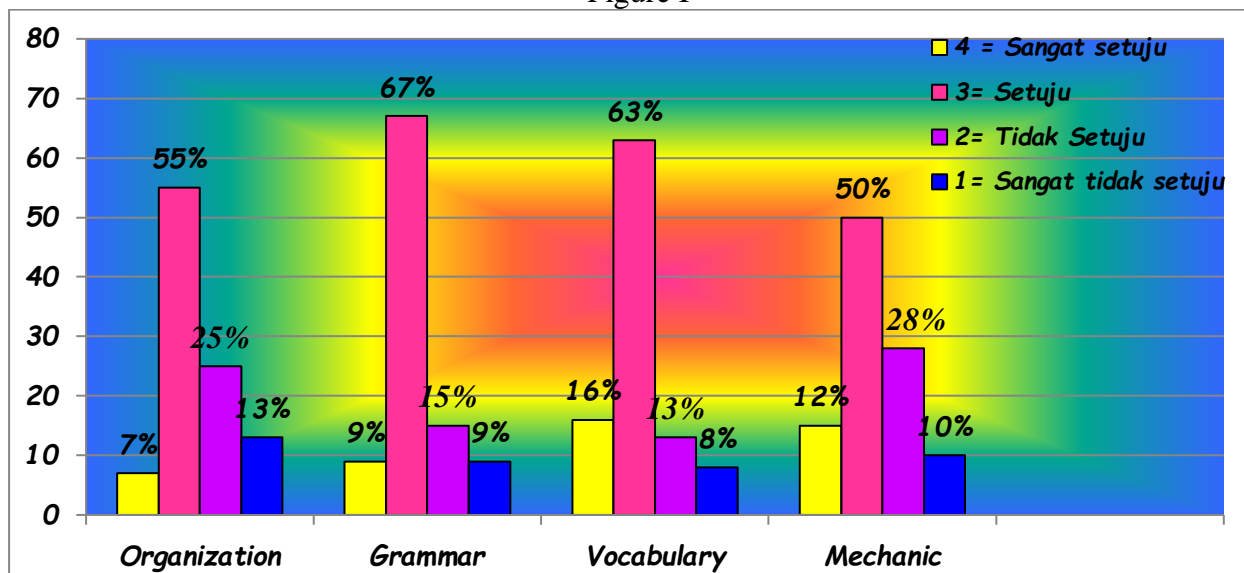
Table 6  
Sample of Mistakes on Mechanic

Incorrect	Correct
1. We want there by plane	1. We went there by plane
2. The next afternoon we when to jakarta	2. The next afternoon we went to Jakarta
3. I always study and study everyday. Because my value of my test is bad, my friend mock me.	3. I always study everyday because my value of my test was bad and my friend mocked me.
4. I went to the class outing Pontianak zoo, with friend and teachers.	4. I went to the class outing in the zoo with my friends and my teachers.
5. Her Tomorrow, because I've felt able to ride a motorcycle, I try to be more rate.	5. The next day, because I've been able to ride a motorcycle and then I try to be more active.

**The Result Analysis of the Questionnaire**

After analyzing the questionnaire the researcher found that the students admit that they were not able to write recount text properly due to their problems in writing recount text. It means that they have problems in writing recount text because they do not master the all of indicators in writing recount text. In this finding, the researcher explains the result base on the students' responds from the questionnaire, the result is:

Figure I



Based on the diagram above, the researcher found that the students admit that they have some problems in writing recount text. The first problems is about grammar, second is about vocabulary, third is about mechanic and the last is about organization. The result showed that so many students have serious problems in writing recount text. They did not

master in writing recount text. Thus, they have to improve their writing especially in writing recount text.

### **Discussion**

Recount is the text that is taught to the eighth grade at the first semester. So, they have learnt about recount text but they were not able to write recount text well, it made students have some problems in writing recount text. According to Shaw (2003:2) “the wide variety of themes, together with the range of ideas spread across them, should ensure that all students have plenty to write about”[10]. For the reason, students are able to write about something that is in their minds because they have a variety of ideas that can be stated in a variety of themes. Students have a lot of experiences that they can write in a book or piece of paper. Okano et al (2000:) said that memory is a fundamental mental process, and without memory we are capable of nothing but simple reflexes and behaviors. Learning and memory problems can be caused by a number of factors.[11]

The questionnaire consists of 20 items by using four categories (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). And the questionnaire have been tried out to know the validity and reliability and for the result there are 17 items were valid and 3 items were not valid. When the questionnaire was given by students, all of them answered the questionnaire given by the researcher. Based on the information given by the students, the researcher got the information what their problems in writing recount text.

From the questionnaire the researcher found that some students answered that they were not able to write recount text that is caused that they have problems in writing recount text. From the result of questionnaire the researcher try to find out the students problems in writing recount text and then compare the students’ writing and the questionnaire items. The result which the researcher got from questionnaire is most of them is still poor in their understanding in writing recount text but there are some of them is good in their understanding in writing recount text.

The students have some problems in writing recount text, such as: in organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Some of them admitted that they have problems in writing recount text, they cannot write recount text well.

First, the problems in organization, it means that students have to know and memorize about the generic structure, characteristic and language feature in writing recount text. It was problem for students because they cannot organize their writing especially in writing recount text.

Second, the problems in grammar, there are sixteen tenses in English and they have learnt about it. One of tense is simple past tense that has function to tell about experience which happened in the past time. Recount text should be written in simple past form. Walker and Elsworth (2000: 15) argue that simple past tense is used to describe completed action and state in the past[12]. Therefore, Simple past is also important to reconstruct their past experience, because recount text is built by using simple past tense. The most of students at Junior High School have problem in using simple past tense. They do not understand the pattern and the use regular and irregular verb for simple past tense.

Third, the problem on vocabulary knowledge. Many students at Junior High School did not master in choosing word. So, they have problem in writing recount text. Some of them reluctant to practice their vocabularies. Mathews & Aydinli (2007: 3) said that “students also need to understand that their goal is to work together to solve a problem, but for the activity to benefit their language learning, they must use only English in their groups. [13]

The last is problem in mechanics. There are some students did not master on spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. They did not understand about how to write a good spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Vitale (2004) said that re-write our writing draft is the only step where we do any re-writing and editing. So, the students who have diary will have the opportunity to re-write and edit their writing.[14]

### Conclusion

Based on the result finding, it can be inferred that the result of students' writing recount text based on the four indicators was classified as good enough, but most of them were still good enough still encountered with serious problems. The most serious problem in writing recount text was in the area of grammar. It found when the students wrote recount text which applied past tense with regular or irregular verb. The second problem came from the vocabulary aspect. It happened when the students demonstrated to state the main idea and include choosing the word that supporting in writing recount text. The third problems found in the area of organization aspects. It happened when the students composed the text paragraph coherently. The last problems found in the part of mechanics. It came when the students wrote down the recount text paragraph in the zone of spelling and punctuation.

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