Students' Problems in Writing Recount Text at Grade X SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh

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Abstract

Writing is a difficult skill due to it has several processes that have to be followed by the students. In producing an effective writing product, the students have to know the writing components such as content, vocabulary, generic structure, language feature, and mechanics. This research aimed to analyze students' problems in writing Recount Text at grade X SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh. This research was a descriptive research. Writing test was done by using a software namely Translog-II for collecting the data. The result found that most of the students had problems in writing recount text. Those problems were related to the writing components. They made 1.6% errors in organizing idea, 18.6% in vocabulary, 37.6% in grammar, 3,7% in generic stucture and 38.5% in mechanics. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the students' problems were related to mechanics (38.5%) and grammar (37.6%). It can be concluded that writing commponent is the most difficult problem facedby student in writing recount text.

Keywords: *students' problems, writing, recount Text*

Introduction

Writing is an essential language skill that is used for indirect communication without being face to face with the interlocutor. Through writing, someone can express his ideas and thoughts in written form. Walsh (2010) argues that writing can be said as an important language skill, since it is used extensively in higher educational level and in the workplace. Therefore, the students must be able to produce an effective and a good writing. A writing can be said as an effective product if it consists of right components of writing. Those components namely: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Hughes, 2003: 100-104). Thus, those components can be a guidance for the students in producing a good writing.

Beside knowing the writing components, the students also need to have a lot of practices and exercises to produce effective and good writing. This is particularly true due to writing skill is difficult to be learnt and has complicated procces. Hasley in Nunan (1991: 91) said that in writing, someone will face complex process. Moreover, Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) add that one the most complicated skill for second and foreign language students is writing. They claim that writing is not only about how to generate and organize ideas of our mind, but also how to translate it into a readable and an understanable text. Based on their arguments, it seems common that many students particularly those of foreign language students have some problems in writing.

In the context of Indonesia, writing is one of language skill which is taught at school. In curriculum 2013, one of the purposes of teaching English in Senior High School is to develop the ability and potential of the students in order to help them to communicate in interpersonal, transactional, and functional text by using a variety of English-language texts both oral and written. Thus, for Indonesian students, they are expected that not only be able to build a communication in spoken, but they also have to be able to communicate in written form. In line with this, there are some types of text used by the teacher to teach the students in speaking and writing skill at grade X in Senior High School, one of them is recount text.

In producing a good and effective recount text, the students need to master a number of elements. But in fact, not all students are succsesful in writing recount text due to they do not know those elements well. Some previous studies have found that mostly, students faced problems in generic structure and language features of recount text (Sayukti and Kurniawan, 2018). In addition, the students did not really master about content, vocabulary, and grammar of writing recount text (Sari et.al, 2013). Furthermore, Harris et.al (2014) found that the students had lack of knowledge about generic structure and language features. It can be concluded that general problems in writing recount text faced by the students are related to generic structure and language features.

Based on informal interview conducted by the researcher with English teacher in SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh, the students of class X MIA often faced some problems related to writing recount text. Those problems are: they had lack of motivation in writing the text, they did not know the appropriate strategy in

writing the text, and they also had lack of knowledge about the components of recount text such as they did not know precisely about the purpose, language features and generic structure of the text.

The problems and the previous studies above become the reasons of why this research is necessary to be conducted. This research analyzes about students' problems in writing recount text at grade X MIA SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh. Those problems can be seen from the components of writing such as, content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Method

This research was a descriptive research. It aimed to get information about phenomenon in order to describe existed condition in the field. Arikunto (2013:3) defines descriptive research is as a research that aimed to investigate the circumstances, conditions, or the other thing that have been mentioned, the result is presented in form of research report. The phenomena that was investigated in this research is about students' problems in writing recount text.

The population was the students of X MIA in SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh in the year 2018/2019. They consisted of five classes (MIA 1, MIA 2, MIA 3, MIA 4, and MIA 5). The numbers of the students are 149 students. They were taught by the same teacher. Cluster random sampling was used by the researcher to choose the sample of this research. Then, the students of class X MIA 4 was selected calss to become the sample of this research which consisted of 27 students.

For collecting the the data, the researcher used writing test as the instrument. The writing test was done by using a software, namely Translog-II. It is a windows-oriented program to record and study reading and writing proceses in computer. It means that, the students wrote their recount text by using computers. Writing test was used to get the data about students' problems in writing recount text. Based on the syllabus for X grade students in Senior High Schools, the students are required to write a recount text about experience/ activity/ events that happened in the past by considering about social function, structure, and language features of the text. Thus, students had been given three topics about *holiday, bad experience and good experience*. Those topics had been disscussed with the English teacher who teaches in X grade students in SMAN 4 Sungai Penuh. The students wrote recount text in 90 minutes and they had to write 150-200 words.

To know students' problems in writing recount text, the researcher used scoring rubric developed by Hughes (2003). The scoring rubric had been adapted by the researcher based on the research need. Hughes (2003) mentions five indicators of writing, thoes are content, vocabulary, generic structure, language feature, and mechanics. Content validity was used in this research which meant that the material of the test was based on the syllabus. Then, the researcher and the English teacher also discussed about the topics of recount text that would be given to the students. It means that, the topics of the test was related to the material that had been learnt by them. On the other hand, to know the test reliability, the researcher used inter-rater reliability to measure the students' writing scores consistency. It means that there were two or more raters to score the test, and minimize the subjectivity in scoring.

Results and Discussion

After conducting the test, the researcher continued to analyze the data. The data obtained from the results of 27 students' writing test. The data was analyzed by the researcher based on five writing indicators that proposed by Hughes (2003) to know about students' problems in writing recount text. Then, the number of errors which made by the students was calculated by the researcher based on each indicator and made the percentage. The number of the errors and the percentage of each indicator is shown as follow:

Table 1. The Students' Problems in Writing Recount Text

The students' Problems	Number of the Errors	Percentage
Content/Organizing Idea	22	1.6%
Vocabulary	258	18.6%
Grammar	521	37.6%
Generic Structure	52	3.7%
Mechanics	534	38.5%
Total	**1387**	**100%**

The table above shows that the students faced some problems in writing recount text. Those problems can be categorized into five indicators. First, related to content/organizing idea, the students had few problems. They did not have supporting sentence to support their idea in writing the text. It was proven by

the data that they did 22 (1,6%) errors from 1387 total of errors. The next problem was related to vocabulary. The students did 258 (18.6%) errors from 1387 total of errors. Most of them had problems in choosing the appropriate words for their writing. it was difficult for them to choose and differentiate between noun and verb. Grammar/language features was the next problem encountered by the students. Based on the results of the students' writing test, the researcher found that the students had a big problems in grammar. Most of the problems in grammar was in using simple past tense. They did not know and still doubt in determining simple present and simple past tense. From the table, it can be seen that the students did 521 (37.6%) from 1387 errors. The next problem was related to generic structure. Based on the data that the researcher found in students writing test, students had good ability in generic structure. However, there was few students still had problem in generic structure. A few students did not make re-orientation in their writing. It was proven the data that the students did 52 (3.7%) errors from 1387 total of errors. The last problem was dealing with mechanics. All of the students had problem in punctuation. It was hard for them to differentiate the use of full stop and comma and most of them did not use these two essential elements of writing in their writing. From 1387 total of errors done by the students, there were 534 (38.5%) errors found in mechanics.

Based on the explanation above, it could be stated that the main problems of the students of X MIA 4 SMAN 4 Sungai penuh in writing recount text were related to mechanics 534 (38.5%), grammar 521 (37.6%), and vocabulary 258 (18.6%).

Based on the research findings, it found that mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary were big problems faced by X MIA 4 students in SMAN 4 Sungai penuh in writing recount text, which mechanic was the biggest problems faced by them. While, the studies conducted by Harris et.al (2014) and Sayukti and Kurniawan (2018) found that the problems of the students were related to generic structure and language features. In addition, Sari et.al (2013) found that the students' problems were they did not really master about content, vocabulary, and grammar. In sum, based on the findings of the three previous studies, they did not find that the students faced problems in writing recount text related to mechanic as found in this research.

Thus, it can be the consideration for further researchers to conduct studies about students' problems related to mechanics in writing recount text. It is necessary to know about the causes of the students made errors in mechanics, especially in punctuation.

Conclusions

Referring to the five components determined in writing an effective recount text, there were a number of problems faced by the students. First, dealing with content/organizing idea. The problem in organizing idea was related to unclear idea and there was no supporting sentence to support the idea. Next, the students also had problem in vocabulary. Most of the students had problems in choosing the appropriate words for their writing. They were difficult to choose and differentiate between noun and verb. Then, their problem was also related to grammar. Most of them were doubt to determine and differentiate between simple past and simple present tense. The other problem faced by the students was related to generic stucture. Re-orientiation is a part of generic structure in recount text that became the problem faced by the students. The last problem was mechanics. In mechanics, punctuation was the biggest problem of the students. All of the students made errors in punctuation.

Acknowledgment

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