

STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT AT THE NINTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP SWASTA KRISTEN BNKP TELUKDALAM

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Abstract:

This study was aimed to find out the kinds and the reasons of difficulties in writing narrative text which was divided into grammar, vocabulary, spelling, handwriting, punctuation and layout done by the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam especially in writing narrative text. In doing this study, the writer used descriptive analysis of qualitative research design. Additionally, in collecting the data document and interview were used. English teacher and students were interviewed to get additional information about the background of students' knowledge in writing narrative text, and test was given to the students to know the difficulties they made. Furthermore, the participants of the test were 20 of the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam. Both result of interview and test were analyzed to get a comprehensive conclusion. The finding shows that most of students got difficulties in writing narrative text. The classification of difficulties which has been done by the students is grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and layout and handwriting. The result of interview shows that the reasons of difficulties during writing narrative text faced by students were students have not enough knowledge about English structure, lack of vocabulary, students are not interested in English or students lack of motivation, the first language influences the learners' concept about English pattern and the way of reading and writing are different.

Keywords : Students' Difficulties; Writing; Narrative Text

1. PENDAHULUAN

Language is inseparable part in human life used as the means of communication. According to Jordan (1999:39) "Language is a signalling system which operates with symbolic vocal sounds, and which is used by a group of people for the purposes of communication". It is human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures and written symbols. It means that, language is a system of communication that enable humans to work together. Without language people will not able to communicate one another.

Writing is a process of expressing ideas, thoughts and feeling in words on a written form. Writing actually is transferring information, message or idea in grammatical sentences. According to Kamehameha (2007:2) "Writing is a uniquely individual undertaking and the same individual may use different methods to express him or herself". Writing is one of language skills which is used to communicate indirectly. It means that in communicating a message, writers are usually distant in time and place from persons with whom they wish to communicate. In addition, Hayes (2008:366) says "writing is best understood of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organized during the act of composing". It can be seen in people daily life activities when they need to write memos, letter,

notes, invitation, brochure, articles, application letter, and many others. Writing plays an important role in modern societies. The examples of writing activities products are books, magazine and newspaper that we read almost everyday. Based on the statement above it can be conclude that writing is not only ability in arranging sentences and paragraphs, but writing is combination both effort and process when a student convey the ideas or feeling in written form.

One of the languages in the world that has greatest roles in developing science and technology is English. English may not be the most spoken language in the world, but it is the official language in a large number of countries. English is called as an international language because it holds the main important function needed in human life. It is not surprising that English can be found almost in the whole of aspects of human being, such as science, education, economic and in the communication and information technology.

After the writer explain the writing process and the functions of writing, so writing also has some types based on the expert. There are several types of writing in English. Department of education WA (2013: 38-127) divides writing in to some types based on its social purposes, they are: a) Writing to describe. In texts that describe, information is systematically organized and recorded to classify and describe a whole class of

things, e.g. computers, lions, Life on the Victorian Goldfields. b) Writing to entertain – Poetry. Fiction is a generic term given to a range of texts that seek to entertain the reader, and includes poetry and prose. Poetry is a way of manipulating and arranging words to create unique perspectives of the world. c) Writing to entertain – Prose. Prose takes many forms: narratives, cartoons, song lyrics and jokes are all texts designed to entertain through prose, and they can be presented on paper, live or on screen. d) Writing to explain. Texts used to explain, set out the stages involved in a process, rather than a ‘thing’, e.g. how things work, how things come to be the way they are. Information is usually presented in a sequential and logical order; this requires the writer to analyze the process in order to show the relationship between the parts. e) Writing to inquire. Texts that inquire often focus on information gathering or data collection. A question, in its simplest form, is a text designed to inquire. f) Writing to instruct. Texts that instruct are often multi-modal. They can be used to guide behaviour or to tell how something is done. g) Writing to persuade. A text written to persuade expresses an opinion about a topic. Writing to persuade involves the critical evaluation of ideas, and can include discussion, argument, persuasion or debate. h) Writing to recount. Texts that recount involve the writer retelling or recounting past experiences or events. The audience is given an insight into an experience, when it happened, who was involved, what happened and why. i) Writing to socialize. These forms of writing can be formal or informal in tone, depending on the relationship between the writer and the audience. Different text forms used to socialise include apologies, thank you notes, invitations, greetings, notes and messages.

The various affects a writer may wish to have on his or her readers—to inform, to persuade, to entertain—result in different kinds of prose. The most common is prose that informs, which, depending on what it is about, is called exposition, description, or narration (Kane, 2000: 6-7).

Exposition explains, how things work, ideas, facts of everyday life, history, controversial issues laden with feelings. But whatever its subject, exposition reveals what a particular mind thinks or knows or believes. Exposition is constructed logically. It organizes around cause/effect, true/false, less/more, positive/negative, general/particular, assertion/denial. Its movement is signaled by connectives like *therefore, however, and so, besides, but, not only, more important, in fact, for example*.

Description deals with perceptions—most commonly visual perceptions. Its central problem is to arrange what we see into a significant pattern. Unlike the logic of exposition, the pattern is spatial: above/below, before/behind, right/left, and so on.

The subject of narration is a series of related events—a story. Its problem is twofold: to arrange the events in a sequence of time and to reveal their significance.

Persuasion seeks to alter how readers think or believe. It is usually about controversial topics and often appeals to reason in the form of argument, offering evidence or logical proof. Another form of persuasion is satire, which ridicules folly or evil, sometimes subtly, sometimes crudely and coarsely. Finally, persuasion may be in the form of eloquence, appealing to ideals and noble sentiments. Writing that is primarily entertaining includes fiction, personal essays, sketches. Such prose will receive less attention here. It is certainly important, but it is more remote from everyday needs than exposition or persuasion.

Based on the WA and Kane view's above, the conclusion can be drawn that types of writing are consist of describe, entertain, explain, inquire persuade,

People communicate with others by using English either in spoken or in written form to interact around the world. However, they often use direct conversation or spoken language to interact each others in daily activities rather than written language. It is because people can convey ideas easier in spoken form. They can communicate face to face, ask for clarification, explain the topic and use facial expression.

English skill can be identified into four skills, namely: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The skills are divided in two parts; they are receptive skill and productive skill. Receptive skill is the ability in recognizing and understanding the word when in sound, while productive skill is the ability in using words fluently and appropriately in speaking or writing. Writing is called productivity for writing produces opinion in written form, and expressive activity, for writing expresses ideas of the knowledge of the writer itself to reader. Writing skill is an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow someone to communicate the message with clearly through written form. So that, Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are keys in written communications.

Writing a text in English as foreign language is not easy. People have difficulties to write in English well because English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. This tendency is likely caused by its different syntax, organization, vocabulary and spelling from the native language Indonesia. For instance, the word “mother” (English) has the same meaning with the word “ibu” (Indonesian) but, they have different spelling, structure, and word.

According to Harmer (2005:12,255-256) there are some difficulties for students' in written text, such as; grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, layout and punctuation. While Westwood

(2008:64-66) describes the students difficulties in writing such as; spelling and handwriting.

Based on the curriculum of *Kurikulum 2013 (K-13)* which is implemented in Junior High School of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam especially in syllabus of ninth class, the students are expected to master one of the subject which is writing the narrative text. However, in reality most of the students are not able to convey their ideas in writing of narrative text caused by lack of vocabulary, grammar, translation process, encouraged by teaching and learning, and etcetera.

In writing, students often find difficulties in transferring ideas from their source language (Indonesian) in to the target language (English). To express the idea, the writer usually uses certain writing types. It means that during process of teaching and learning especially to acquire the second language or foreign language students will get the difficulties in writing. So that, the important role to find out what makes the students get difficulties to conducting writing in a piece of paper.

According to Harmer (2005:16,255-256) there are five students' difficulties in written text, namely:

1. Grammar

The grammar of language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. If grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer, creating a good grammar rules is extremely difficult. The formulation of sentence (S) contains a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). The noun phrase contains a determiner (D) and a noun (N) whilst the verb phrase contains a verb (V) and another noun phrase (NP). For example: The mongoose bit the snake. Many students difficult in writing the correct sentences. In many cases, students need to focus about grammar rules. For example, the 'rule' which says that some is used with affirmative sentences whilst any is used with question and negative sentences. The teacher should explain this rule to the students.

2. Vocabulary

The vocabulary included in students difficulties because the word has the synonyms and antonyms meaning. Words have synonyms that mean exactly or nearly the same as each other. It is very difficult to find the real synonyms, for example, costly and expensive might seem on the surface to mean the same yet they are subtly different: we tend to use the former about larger project and larger amounts, while expensive has a broader range of use. For the example of word antonyms, the meaning of full by saying that it is the opposite of empty, cheap is the opposite of the word expensive.

3. Handwriting

Many students whose native-language orthography is very different from English have difficulty forming English letters. For example students should get special training. Sometimes the teacher can write sentences out neatly with spaces underneath for the students to imitate that writing. Handwriting is personal issue. Students should not all be expected to use exactly the same style, despite copying exercises. We should encourage students with problematic handwriting to improve it. In addition, developing clear and accurate expression through writing presents major problems for most students with learning difficulties. Written language is perhaps the most difficult of all skills to acquire because its development involves the effective coordination of many different cognitive, linguistic and psychomotor processes.

4. Spelling

One of the reasons that the spelling is difficult for students of English is that the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious. A single sound (or more correctly, a single phoneme) may have many different spellings (**paw, poor, pore, pour, daughter, Sean**), and the same spelling may have many different sounds (**or, word, information, worry, correspond**). That issue makes spelling difficult for some students is the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way. One of the best ways to help students improve their spelling is through reading, especially extensively. We can also draw their attention to spelling problems and explain why they occur. Copying from written models is one way to do this; when students see and reflect on their copying mistakes, their spelling 'consciousness' is raised. The events may be real or nonfiction as in histories, biographies, and newspaper stories or imaginary or fiction, as in short stories, novel and plays. Related to this view, Hastuti (2010:7) "Narrative text that tell a story that is used to inform, entertain, motivate, or to teach the readers". Therefore, most students are ready to make material such as writing a fiction story that encourage creativity to pour their imagination out to their story and writing personally.

Based on these views, a conclusion can be drawn that narrative is a story which is chronologically arranged, telling past events and aiming at entertaining readers. Furthermore, narrative deals with problematic events which lead to crisis or turning of some kind, which is in turn finds a resolution and tells of some true factious event or connected sequences of events. A narrative will consist of a set of event recounted in a process of narration, in which the events are selected and arranged in a related sequences order.

Based on the researcher's observation in the field during taken PPLT (Macro-teaching),

especially the eight grade students of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam as the subject of the researcher in this research, there were some difficulties that affect the students writing narrative text such as, organizing ideas, grammatical mistakes, lack of vocabulary, using incorrect punctuation, and the contents are arranged unlogically.

2. METODE PENELITIAN

In this research, the researcher will apply the qualitative approach. Where, the descriptive qualitative will be used as research design. According to Creswell (2014:32) "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups describe to a social or human problem". While descriptive qualitative is one of method which is focused on describing the social phenomenon. The social phenomenon in this research is students difficulties during composing writing narrative text. In addition, Creswell (2014:32) says "qualitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables". These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures.

The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. It can be concluded that qualitative research concerns on yielding an understanding of the types, processes and reasons of occurred phenomena. Thus, the researcher is interesting in what something occurred, such as what are the types and causes of difficulties in learning English. This view can be concluded that qualitative research is a kind of research that aims at finding out the social phenomena

3. TEMUAN PENELITIAN

This research was conducted at SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam which was located in Telukdalam District of South Nias. The total number of teachers in this school consists of 38 persons and the total of classes were 11 which consisted of 463 students. The subject of this research is the ninth grade students which is consisted of 20 students. The data were collected directly by the researcher among the students of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam by collecting the handwriting of narrative text and interviewing the students.

Grounded on the result of the data analysis that has been describe previously, the finding of this research lying into two research finding, namely types and reasons of students' difficulties in writing narrative text. The finding shows that the ninth grade students of SMP Swasta Kristen BNKP Telukdalam, have some difficulties in writing English, especially in writing narrative text namely

difficulties in grammar, difficulties in vocabulary, difficulties in spelling and difficulties in layout and punctuation.

In addition, there were some reasons the students difficulty in writing, namely: First, first language interference. Students admitted that difficulties occurred because English is not their mother tongue, it makes them difficult in studying another language especially English. Second, students are not interested in studying English or students do not have motivation to study English. Students were lazy to study and are not interested because English language is very difficult to learn. Third, students do not enough knowledge about the structure of English sentence. It means that students got difficulties to arranged the sentence correctly. It is indicates that students lack of the English structure. Fourth, students do not have sufficient vocabulary. Fifth, it is difficult to the students because the way of reading and writing in English are different.

Based on the data that has been analyzed from the students' worksheet at the ninth grade students of SMP Kristen BNKP Telukdalam, it was found that some of students were not able to write narrative text yet. There were some types of students difficulties during writing narrative text namely difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation and layout.

For example students difficult in grammar. "my friend and me walked to the seashore.". This sentence is incorrect. The true one is "my friend and I walked to the seashore.". It shows that students did not master grammar especially in placement of personal pronoun as a subject and pronoun as object. It is caused by English is not their mother tongue. Furthermore, students have no enough knowledge about the structure of English sentence. And it is strengthened by theory of Adas and Bakir, one of causes writing problem is students' difficulty to understand because of the ill-structured sentences in composition.

The second types of students' difficulties is vocabulary. For example. "*We can not take mangga because the batang is long*". This sentence is incorrect. The true sentence is "we cannot take the mango because the stem of mango is high". It means that students were very limited a vocabulary that is why the students were not able to arrange a sentence correctly. It is caused by the lack of vocabulary of the students, that is why she got difficulties in writing narrative text in English language. And this problem strengthened by theory of Adas and Bakir said that English language learners have limited vocabulary. Therefore, students end up repeating the same words this hinders creativity.

The third type of students' difficulties is spelling. For example "*We verry happy*". The true one is "We were very happy". It means that she got difficulty to spell the words. It is caused by

students were not able to differentiate between sounds of the word and the correct spelling. So, that is way students' difficult to spell because when they reading the words are different when they write. And this problem strenghtened by theory of Adas and Bakir said that when the learners read their writing aloud, they could't distinguish whether what they read or write is right or wrong.

The last types of students' difficulties is punctuation and layout. For example "i went to holiday in genasi hill with my friend". The true one is "I went to holiday in Genasi hill with my friend". Based on the students' sentence above, students' got difficultiy in using of conventions of english such as the capitalize of names, monts, and the pronoun I. And this problem strenghtened by theory of Harmer (2005:254) state that different writing communities obey different punctuation and layout convention in communications such as letter, reports, and publicity. Some punctuation conventions, such as the capitalization of name, months, and the pronoun I, are spesific to only one or a few languages.

Referring to the research finding, it could be narrated that this result has differentiation from the grounded theory which is stated by Harmer (2005:254-257) that there are five of students' difficulties in written text, namely difficulties in grammar, difficulties in vocabulary, difficulties in handwriting, difficulties in spelling and difficulties in punctuation and layout. However, based on the result of data analysis, The finding of this research lying into four types of students' difficulties in written text, especially in writing narrative text, such as difficulties in grammar, difficulties in vocabulary, difficulties in spelling and difficulties in punctuation and layout.

In addition, referring to the previously researcher which was conducted by Annisa Dewi Ratna Sari in 2014 entitled, "Students Difficulties in Writing Recount Text at the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Murni Surakarta in 2014/2015". She states the types of students' difficulties during writing recount text namely; (1) the students are difficult in arranging generic structure completely (2) the students are difficult in changing the tense (3) the students are difficult in arranging grammatical sentence correctly (4) the students have problem in choosing appropriate vocabulary (5) the students are difficult in delivering their idea in writing recount text. While, the next researcher was conducted by Hulu Sokhinitehe in 2015. He found that the types of students error in writing narrative text namely omission error (27.15%), addition error (21.93), misordering error (7.31%), and misinformation error with percentage (43.60%). Furthermore, the are some reasons students got difficulty during writing narrative text namely, the influence of the first language, students lack of knowledge about English structure, less of

teacher control and motivation and students were lack of vocabulary.

One of the types of difficulties that did not found is difficulties in handwriting. This matter was because the four difficulties found were sourced from the students' handwriting of narrative text. Therefore, handwriting was excluded in the process of data analysis.

4. KESIMPULAN

Based on the finding in the previous chapter, students still have some difficulties in writing. The difficulties are in grammar, the lacknessess of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and layout. The causes of difficulties are the influence of mother tongue, lack of grammar, lack of interested in studying English and lack of vocabulary. Therefore they need to be taught seriously about English structure which were found as the most dominant difficulties of the students in writing.

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