

## THE DIFFICULTIES OF STUDENTS TO WRITE NARRATIVE TEXT AT THE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 1 LOLOWAU

By :

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to explain 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 eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau 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 eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau. 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 layout except, in 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 learning 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. Knowing the difficulties and causes of them, it is suggested to English teacher at this school to overcome the difficulties of students to write narrative text.

**Key words:** Students' difficulties; writing; narrative text

### 1. BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

Language is inseparable part in human life used as the means of communication. According to Jordan (1999:39) "Language is a signaling system which operates with symbolic vocal sounds, and which is used by a group of people for the purposes of communication". 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.

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 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 Negeri 1 Lolowau especially in syllabus of eighth 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.

Based on the researcher's observation in the field during taken PPLT (Macro-teaching), especially the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau 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.

This research, the researcher would like to analyze the difficulties of students in writing narrative text. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting research titled "*The Difficulties of Students to write Narrative Text at the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau.*"

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a process of expressing ideas, thoughts and feeling in words on a written form. According to Kamehameha (2007:2) "Writing is a

uniquely individual undertaking and the same individual may use different methods to express him or herself". 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. 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.

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

**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.

**Vocabulary**The vocabulary included in students difficulties because the word has the synonyms and antonyms meaning. 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.

**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.

**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.

According to Westwood (2008:64), there are some specific difficulties with spelling and handwriting, namely:

**Phonological and phonic skills**

**Spelling**the majority of unfamiliar words requires the application of phonic knowledge. While it is true that not all words in the English language follow a simple sound-to-letter relationship, there is sufficient phonological information contained within almost all words to give some clue to their possible spelling.

**Visual memory**Even when students do manage to reach a phonetic stage in spelling they appear unable to move beyond it because they do not use effective visual strategies to help store images of words and syllables in their visual memory, or to judge whether a word looks correct or incorrect after they have written it.

**Spelling strategies**

A major weakness in poor spellers is their adoption of inefficient methods of learning new words or for checking the spelling of words they have written.

**Punctuation and Layout**

Different writing communities obey

different punctuation and layout conventions in communications such as letter, reports, and publicity. Some punctuation conventions, such as the capitalization of names, months, and the pronoun I, are specific to only one or a few languages.

Based on the explanation above, there are some students' difficulties in writing which covered, grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, punctuation and layout. In this research, the researcher was focused on all the types of students' difficulties except, handwriting. It is caused by handwriting was very abstract and subjective to the students.

#### **Causes of Writing Problem**

According to Adas and Bakir (2013:255) identifies there are some causes of writing problem, namely :The teaching method and the environment are the main causes of their weaknesses in English.

English language learners have limited vocabulary. Therefore, students end up repeating the same words this hinders creativity.

English language learners don't use invented spelling and their written text are restricted to words which they know.

The present tense is the only tense used in their writing.

The students' writing is difficult to understand because of the ill-structured sentences in composition.

Students are unwilling to share their work with other students and they don't get the suitable feedback.

When the learners read their writing aloud, they couldn't distinguish whether what they read or write is right or wrong.

#### **Narrative Text**

Narrative text is the text which tells about story or past event from the beginning to the end.

According to 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.

According to English K-6 (1998:37) there are four generic structures in narrative text namely orientation, complication, resolution, coda.

**Language Features of Narrative text**

Besides having generic structure, narrative text also has use significant grammatical features that support the form of a narrative text. English K-6 (1998:37) "Narrative text has grammatical features such as past tense, noun, action verb,

saying verb, adjective, adverb/adverbial phrase and conjunction”.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

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

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.

#### Technique of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, data analysis is the important part of a research because it is the way for getting the answer of the research problem. Miles and Huberman(2014:31) says the activity steps of data analysis. They said that data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of step: data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification.

#### Data Condensation

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming.

Selecting the data means selecting or choosing the exactly needed data from the data large number of data.

Focusing The focus of data analysis is to meet what are the types of students difficulties in writing narrative text based on the theory of Harmer and westwood and also the reasons why the students are dominantly get the difficulties.

Simplifying means the data is splited become a small unit or part into simple elements to make it easy to understand. In this case, researcher classified the data into classifications.

Abstracting means summarizing the data which has been selected in order to make it comprehensive. In this case, the data that has been classified is unified into table and the number were counted.

Transforming is the process that covers the activity of summarizing or paraphrasing (rewriting the data in into a simple and understandable form).

Data Display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking. The most frequent form of display for qualitative data has been obtained in narrative

text. The result of data reduction is put into data display as the data which has close relation and support the research. In this case, the data is discussed and explained by the researcher such as, putting the data in table, underlined each word that included the part of difficulties.

#### Conclusion Drawing/Verification

The data from data display is put into conclusion. Then, the data is verified by comparing with the theories.

#### Research Finding

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau which was located in Telukdalam District of South Nias. The data were collected directly by the researcher among the students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau in 2016/2017 by collecting the handwriting of narrative text and interviewing the students.

In analyzing the students’ writing, the researcher selected those writing into data display by numbering each data that has related to the objectives of this research in order to make the reseacher easier in comprehending it. The result analysis of the student’s writing are provided in the appendix 1. Description of the difficulties are elaborated as follows:

#### a. Students’ Difficulties in Grammar

Based on the result of data analysis, it was found that the highest cases of difficulties occurred in grammar. Students’ got difficulties in using some of grammar rules when they write a narrative text. The students’ difficulties in grammar are listed as follow:

#### 1) Difficulties in Using Verb 2 (Past Tense)

Based on the analysis result, it was found that many students were not able to apply Past Tense rules in their writing. In fact, the students got difficulties in using Verb 2 as the verb that refers to the past activity. The examples of difficulties could be drawn as follows:

Example 1 : (Remark GM-01:3) Student statement:  
*We invite her to go*

From students’ statement above, it realized students’ difficulties in using rules of Past Tense which is used of verb 2 that refers to the past activity. The correct statement should be *we invited her to go*. Another illustration could be seen as follows:

Example 2 : (Remark GM-01:15) Student statement: *I try for come back to home*

Viewing from the student’s statement above, it represented that students tend to use verb 1 (infinitive) in expressing the past activities. It was an fact that most of students were difficult in using verb 2 (past tense). To make it more acceptable in rule, the statement should be *I tried to come back home*.

#### 2) Difficulties in Using Pronoun

From the analysis result, it found that most of students got difficulties to differenciate the use of pronoun as subject, pronoun as object and the

use of possessive pronoun. Difficulties are illustrated as follows:

Example 1 : (Remark GM-02:8)

Student statement : *My friend and me arrived at the beach*

Based on the sentence above, it can be concluded that student difficult to differentiate the using of pronoun as subject and pronouns as object. The correct statement should be *My friend and I arrived at the beach.*

Example 2 : (Remark GM-02:12)

Student statement: *the family findshe*

In accordance with the example, it is illustrated that students got difficulties in using personal pronoun as object. Students tend to use 'She' as the subject pronoun instead of 'her' as the object pronoun. Therefore, the grammatical statement should be *the family find her.*

3) Difficulties in Using Preposition

From the result of analysis, it showed that many students got difficulties in using correct preposition. They tend to use inappropriate preposition in their handwriting of narrative text. Such difficulties are described as follows:

Example 1 : (Remark GM-03:12)

Student statement: *I went to there with my friends*

Viewing from the statement, it shows the students difficulties in using preposition in their writing. In this case, students tend to add preposition 'to' preceded adverb of place 'there'. The preposition should be omitted and formed correct statement of *I went there with my friends.*

Example 2 : (Remark GM-03:7) Student statement:

*we arrive in museum 12 a.m*

In accordance with the statement above, it could be seen that student tend to omit preposition 'at' to refers the time. This issue affirmed that students got difficulties in applying appropriate used of preposition. The correct statement should be *we arrived in museum at 12 a.m.*

4) Difficulties in Using Correct Word Order

In conjunction with the data analysis result, it was found that student got difficulties to arrange the words in sentences based on English grammatical structure. These difficulties are illustrated as follows:

Example 1: (Remark GM-04:7)

Student statement: *Motorcycle my favorite*

Based on this statement, it showed the students difficulties in using correct word order. They got difficulties in composing noun phrase in their writing. In this case, the adjective noun phrase 'my favorite' should be put preceded noun 'motorcycle' them formed a correct grammatical sentence is *my favorite motorcycle.* Another example could be seen as the following:

Example 2: (Remark GM-04:15)

Student statement: *I went to the house my uncle*

Based on the sentence above it can be seen that student were not able to arrange the sentence based on English sentence structure. In fact, they arranged the sentence based on Indonesian sentence structure. It means that student got difficult in using the structure of English language (grammar). To make it correct in grammar, thus statement should be *I went to my uncle's house.*

5) Difficulties in Using 'To Be'

In case of using auxiliary verbs in Past Tense, To Be *was* and *were* are appropriate to be used refers to the past activity. However, it was found that students got difficulties in using such auxiliary verbs in writing statements. They got difficulties in differentiate used of 'present to be' and 'past to be'. In addition, they tend to use to be in verbal sentences while to be only used in nominal sentences. For examples:

Example 1: (Remark GM-05:9)

Student statement: *We are back to home*

Student get difficulty in using to be in simple past tense. They used to be "are" while in language features of narrative text is using past tense. Actually, the structure of this sentence above is correct but one of the language features of narrative text is using past tense. In fact, students were not mastering in using past tense in writing narrative text. It means that student got difficulty in using of 'To Be' in past time. The grammatical sentence should be *we back to home.*

Example 2 : (Remark GM-05:6)

Student statement : *Finally we very happy*

Based on this statement, it shows that students omitted use past to be 'were' to make the sentence grammatically correct. That is why the statement should be *we were very happy.*

6) Difficulties in Using Article

Another difficulty found was students' difficulties in using or applying appropriate form and position of articles in their writing. From students' writing, it affirmed that students got difficulties in determining position and correct form of preposition to use in their sentences. These difficulties could be described as following example: Example 1 : (Remark GM-06:5) Student statement: *After the we to stop for a moment*

Based on the statement, it could be affirmed that student got difficulties when appropriate article is used. In this case, definite article is used preceded noun, nor for pronoun. However, they added definite article before pronoun. Thus, to make it more grammatical correct, article 'the' should be omitted and will form a sentence of *After we stopped for a moment.*

Example 2 : (Remark GM-06:7)

Student statement: *the we come back to our home*

In the sentence above, it could be seen that student added to use definite article 'the' to preceded pronoun. It shows their difficulties in

using article appropriately. The grammatical sentences should be *we come back to our home*.

7) Difficulties in Using Demonstrative Pronoun

From the analysis result, it also found that student got difficulties in using demonstrative pronoun. The difficulty is as follow:

Example: (Remark GM-07:1)

Student statement: *at to night sister me has die*

In accordance with this statement, it shows that student got difficulties to use demonstrative pronoun to address the time signal of 'night'. In the case of 'night' refers to the one night in the past, appropriate demonstrative pronoun should be used is 'that'. Therefore, the statement above could be revised into more grammatical correct as *at that night my sister was died*.

8) Difficulties in Using Conjunction

Another difficulty found was students' difficulties in using conjunction to combine their sentences into good structure. This case is described as follows: Example: (Remark GM-08:1) Student statement: *All us just cried and could not help she*

Based on the statement above, it shows students' difficulties in using conjunction in their sentence writing. Conjunction 'of' should be added to preceded object pronoun 'us' in the sentence. So, the correct sentence should be *All of us just cried and could not help her*.

9) Difficulties in Using 'To Infinitive'

In accordance with the result of analysis from students' writing of narrative text, it found that one of the students' difficulties is difficulties in using 'to infinitive'. It found that student used to infinitive in the past verb while to + verb 1 is the correct structure. This case is narrated as the following:

Example : (Remark GM-09:1)

Student statement: *We are readito continued our traveling*

From the statement above, it could be affirmed that students used wrong form of to infinitive. The correct structure should be To + Verb 1, then the grammatical correct statement is *We were ready to continue our travel*.

10) Difficulties in Using Apostrophe (')

Apostrophe (') is used to refers possession of things to the personal subject. It used by putting apostrophe (') in the top of personal name. These difficulties is elaborated as follows:

Example 1: (Remark GM-10:3)

Student statement: *we went to my friend house*

Viewing from this statement, it could be seen that students got difficulties in using apostrophe to refers the possession of things to a person. In this case, apostrophe (') should be putted in upper of 'friend' to refers that 'house' is belongs to 'friend'. Thus, the correct statement should be *we went to my friend's house*

Example 2: (Remark GM-10:10)

Student statement: *I went to house my uncle*

Considering this statement, it shows that students got difficulties in using apostrophe (') to addressed possession of 'house' to upper of 'uncle'. Thus this statement could be revised and meet acceptable grammar structure as *I went to my uncle's house*.

b. Students' Difficulties in Vocabularies

Based on the data analysis, students' got some difficulties in using appropriate words during writing narrative text. The students' difficulties in using appropriate vocabulary and tend to use another word which were not acceptable and inappropriate in meaning. This difficulties could be described as follows:

Example 1: (Remark VB-01:10)

Student statement: *We can not take mangga because the batang is long.*

Based on the student sentence above, it shows that student got difficulty in using appropriate words in English vocabulary and students got difficulty to find words in the target language. As a result, students tend to use their first language (Indonesian) to make their writing flow. The statement above should be *We cannot take the mango because the stem of the mango is high*.

Example 1 : (Remark VB-01:8)

Student statement: *in jouneya parts of us fell dizzy*

Based on the students' statement above, it could be described that students got difficulties in using indefinite pronouns. In this case, students have low mastery of vocabularies. As a result, student wrote 'a part' instead of indefinite pronoun 'some'. Therefore, the correct statement should be as follow: *in the journey, some of us felt dizzy*.

c. Students' Difficulties in Spelling

Spelling could be stated as the way how to name or to write the letters of a word in their correct order or to put the letters of words together in the correct or accepted order. In English writing, spelling is important to determine the meaning and form of the words used in the sentence. However, based on the result of data analysis, it was found that students' got some difficulties in spelling during writing narrative text. Some of students got difficulty to spell some words in English correctly. The students' difficulties in spelling are elaborated in the following examples: Examples:

Table 2.1

Students Difficulties in Spelling		
Student Spelling	Correct Spelling	Remark
1. We goby motorcycle	<i>We went by motorcycle to <u>start</u> our <u>activity</u> there</i> <i><u>She</u> likes ice cream</i>	SL-01:1
2. to star our activiti there	<i>But my friend <u>didn't</u> agree</i> <i>It's very <u>funny</u></i>	SL-01:3
3. Shi like eskrim		
4. But my friend did't		

agree	SL-01:6
5. It's very vary	SL-02:1
	SL-01:11

Source: Collection of Students' Difficulties in Spelling

Based on the students' sentences above, it shows that students got difficulty in writing correct and acceptable letters of words in their sentences. They wrote wrong form and wrong order of letters in the words. They also difficult to use construction of negative form. It means that students got difficulties to put the letters of words together in the correct or accepted order in their writing.

#### d. Students' Difficulties in Punctuation and Layout

Grounded from the data analysis result, students' got some difficulties in punctuation and layout during writing narrative text. The students' difficulties when to use capitalization, comma, full stop, and other punctuation. These difficulties could be described as follow:

Example 1:

Table 2.2

#### Students Difficulties in Punctuation and layout

Student statement	Remark
I went to the museum in city <i>gunungsitoli</i>	(LP-01:8)
I went to holyday in <i>genasi</i> hill	
We are Joni, Dedo, auren, and Bolot	(LP01:21)
	(LP-01:13)

Source: Collection of Students' Difficulties in Layout and Punctuation

Based on the students' sentence above, it shows students' difficulties in using correct capitalization. In English language, the first sentences, the name of place, people, month, and the subject of I should be capitalized. In fact, student to determine where they used capitalization or not. As result, they write wrong statement as the example above. Student did not capitalize letter in first name of a city as in 'gunungsitoli' instead of 'Gunungsitoli', name of a place as in 'genasi' instead of 'Genasi' and the name of people as in 'auren' instead of 'Auren'. It affirmed that students got difficulties in applying capitalization in their writing.

In other case, student got difficulties in using apostrophe in their writing. This difficulties could be seen from student's sentence as:

#### Example 2 : (Remark GM-10:1)

Student statement: *my grand mothers house in gomo*

Based on the students sentence above, it can be concluded that student got difficulty in using apostrophe. It can be seen from the sentence, student got difficulty in using of Appostrophe. Acceptable sentence should be *my grandmother's house in gomo*.

In addition, students got difficulties to determine the used of other punctuation like putting comma and fullstop. In this case, students used 'comma' and 'full stop' not in the right position. It means that, they used these punctuation inappropriately.

Table 2.3

#### The Percentage of students' Difficulties in Writing Narrative Text

No.	Types of Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
1	Grammar	75	53.44%
2	Spelling	29	20.27%
3	Vocabulary	14	9.70%
4	Punctuation and Layout	25	17.48%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>99.99%</b>

#### Discussion

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 eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Lolowau in 2016/2017 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. Based on the data that has been analyzed from the students' worksheet at the eighth 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, speeling, and punctuation and layout.

#### Conclusion

Based on the finding in the previous chapter, students still have some difficulties in writing. The difficulties are in grammar, the lackness 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.

#### Suggestion

After carrying out the research, researcher would like to give suggestion related to this result of research. Hopefully it can be applied easily in teaching learning activity and decrease the difficulties.

For Students The finding of this research is definitely advantageous for students as a source of knowledge about difficulties they have done specifically in writing narrative text. By knowing the difficulties, they can improve their ability in writing narrative text itself.

For English Teacher Teachers should teach students intensively about English grammar rules, vocabulary and other features of grammar. Emphasizing teaching learning grammar in the

exercises process, and giving students' opportunity to know their errors and mistakes to be revised. In addition, teacher should have best teaching strategy and method to teach writing that could be combined teaching learning of grammar in order to make the students interested in learning English. It also can help the students to switch their concentration from the previous class-subject to focus on the material. In addition, English teacher should create an impressing teaching writing technique which can catch the students' attention toward English writing activity.

For Readers The finding of this research is also advantageous for readers, such as the students of English department in the College of Teacher Training and Education of South Nias and other people who could find and read this thesis, as source of significant knowledge about writing.

To Next Researcher Above all subjects who are advantaged from the finding of this research, next researchers, who want to conduct a related research to this research would be more advantaged, since a very significant reference is provided and offered through the result of this research.

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