ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL ON THE USE OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE IN RECOUNT TEXT AT SMA N 1 TONDANO

Astrid T. Saluman, Mister G. Maru, Deisyi A. Batunan
Email: gidionmaru@unima.ac.id

Abstract

The objective of this research was to analyze students' writing skill on the use of simple past tense in recount text . The design of this research was qualitative research. The participants of this research were 20 students of the eleventh grade of SMA N 1 Tondano. The data were gathered from the students' writing texts and interview. The data were coded using grounded theory by Straus and Corbin (1990). The findings showed that students' ability on writing recount text is considered low. There were five problems faced by students in writing in terms of grammar, diction, spelling, ideas development and text structure. All the problems are generaly caused by the lack of practice and motivation in writing activities. From the result, the researcher concluded that students' ability in writing skill on the use of simple past tense in recount text needs to be improved.

Keywords: *Writing, Recount Text, Students' Ability, Grounded Theory*

Introduction

English as an international language of communication is used in every country including Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is regarded as a foreign language and has been included in schools' curriculum. The 2013 curriculum in English competences is designed as a tool of communication for expressing ideas and knowledge, developing good reading habit and understanding the meaning of the text. The students also get used in summarizing and presenting a text with their own ideas and arranging a text, and knowing the rules of the text (Kemendikbud, 2013 in Maru, 2014).

In English there are four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and language areas i.e. vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar that should be mastered by students. But in school teaching context, the students still shows unsatisfactory result on that four language skills and some language areas (Hismanoglu, 2005 in Maru, 2009). English teacher has a responsibility to equip the students with the skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

English has been taught in Indonesia's schools for several decades from primary level till university level but the level of English competence still far from expected output to use English language in communication properly (Maru, 2009). The problems as highlighted by Maru (2009: 2) he found out that there are some factors contributes the output skill such as big class, the low total number of English meeting per week, students' behavioral problems, lack of learning resources, equipments and materials, lack of government and parents support, teacher skill, and curriculum design that meets only the scoring system or other purpose. Writing as the output language skill is one of the most difficult language skills. In writing, learners need to know how to combine a lot of components to make a good writing, starting with the goal, the ideas, the contents and the rules of grammar and vocabulary. Rivers (1981) describes writing is a process

of the way people gives an information or express their own ideas in a successive way in written form.

There are many text types of writing for example descriptive, procedure, recount and narrative. In this research, the researcher focused on recount text. In school teaching context, writing recount text has been taught at Junior and Senior High school. So, students are expected to be able to write recount text well at Senior High school. But, every time students have writing tasks, they feel it is difficult to do and they commonly have a little enthusiasm for their writing tasks. Indonesia and English language have some different rules in writing system. As a result, the students make errors or mistakes in writing because they often write a text by translating Indonesian sentences into English not by transferring the meaning from Indonesian into English. Some research showed that students' ability in writing recount text was categorized poor. The most students' common problems are grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. A study conducted by Andayani (2013) revealed that students still have weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization in writing.

Considering the issue above the researcher is interested in will focus on analyzing students' writing skill on recount text.

Review of Literature
The Definition of Writing

Harmer (2004) stated that writing can produce a real product that can be touchable, readable, and keep able for long time. Both in education and daily life writing is very important language skill; we can share information, ideas, opinion, and feelings in written from. Maru and Liando (2016, p.1) explained that "writing involves the ability to express ideas and knowledge, and to make them meaningful". From the definition above it can be concluded that writing is focuses on how to produce and process the language and ideas. Writing can be said as a communication in the form of letters and symbols because it is sending certain information to others.

Definition of Recount Text

According to Anderson (1997:49) "Recount text is a piece of text which retells past events in chronological order". In recount text, it tells about something that already happened. The purpose of recount text is to give information or description of what happened and when it happened. Hyland (2004) stated that the social function of recount text is to retell the past events to in inform and entertain. Wignell (1994) found that recount text has generic structure: first, orientation tells who was involved, what happened, where the events took place, and when it happened. Second, events tells what happened and in what sequence. Third, re-orientation tells the conclusion of the events or feeling, and suggestion.

Grammar

Grammar is the important part in writing. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994: 2) grammar is "a theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works". Harmer (2002: 12) states that "grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that

language". Articles, parts of speech, tenses, are some topics of grammar that cannot be ignored.

Simple Past Tense

Simple past tense describes actions and states that began and ended at a specific time in the past. Parrott (2000:185) states that "simple past tense is a tense that refer to completed events, states, or actions." Thomson, A.J. and A.V. martinet (1986: 116) stated that there are some forms of simple past tense:

1. Regular verb

    Regular verbs is formed by adding ed for example; walk-walked, clean-cleaned when a simple verbs ending with –e, it is only necessary to add -d for example; close-closed. For the negative of regular and irregular verbs is formed with did not (didn't) and the infinitive for example; I did not/ didn't work, you did not/ didn't work. For the interrogative of regular and irregular verbs is formed with did + subject + infinitive for example; Did I work?, Did you work? and the negative interrogative for example; Did you not/ didn't you work?.

1. Irregular verb

    For example; to eat- ate, to leave-left, to see-saw, to speak-spoke

2. Time Signal

    For example, just now, last Monday, this morning, last week/month/year, yesterday, three days ago, last night, many years ago, etc.

Research Methods

The design of this research is a qualitative research. According to Strauss and Corbin (2003), qualitative research is a designed research that does not produce a statistic procedure or arithmetic. The data were conducted at SMA N 1 Tondano. The participants of this research were 20 students of the eleventh grade. In collecting the data, the researcher used students' recount text and interview. The students' text was used to know students' ability in writing recount text. The interview was given after the test to explore and verify students' problems and difficulties in writing recount text particularly for students that could not be able to develop ideas and apply the text structure as required which is 16 out of 20 students. There were five questions that related to the issues. The researcher, then, applied in depth interview. The semi structured interview was selected for conducting this study. The duration of the interview took 40 minutes. The researcher interviewed the participants until reached the objective.

Data Analysis

In analyzing obtained data, the researcher used grounded theory. GT theory "refers to a product of a research process as well as to the research process itself, in which both the process and the product have been thoroughly grounded in data by GT methods while being informed by existing research literature and theoretical frameworks" (Thorberg, 2012 in Maru, 2014, p. 5). The researcher follows the procedures of research in grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 57):

● Open Coding,   the   process   of   open   coding   are   examining,   comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data. After the researcher collected the data, the

researcher began to analyze the data and performed the open coding. In open coding the researcher read the students' writing text line by line in order to identify students' ability in writing recount texts. The interview was used to get more information from the students. For the interview the researcher only used the topics that were identified from the students' writing text. This gives the interviewer more freedom to explore the objective of this research.

● Axial Coding is a set of procedures where data are reassembled in new ways after open coding by linking the categories. This is done by using a coding paradigm with conditions, context, actions or strategies. In axial coding the researchers tried to elaborate the concepts and categories that found in students' writing text and interview.

● Selective Coding is the process of choosing the core category systematically relating to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories. In selective coding the researcher validate the relationships between each category and choose the category. This results in the discussion as presented in analysis section.

Findings

Having collected and analyzed the data using grounded theory, the researcher came up with some core categories. There were Grammar, Diction, Spelling, Ideas Developments and Text Structure. Below the researcher describes each of the core categories.

Grammar

Every language has different language structures. The different language structures between different languages may consider as the main problem especially in Indonesia (Rahayu, 2015). The different language structures lead students to make grammatical mistakes in process of writing because most of the students tend to translate their ideas from Indonesia language to English language using their own language structure. The same problem also found when the researcher conducted the research. The students still use the structure of the Indonesian language so that their sentences are difficult to interpret. The grammatical problems that students faced when doing the task are the use of verb forms, countable nouns, prepositions, article and punctuation.

   a. **Using Tenses**

Recount text uses past tense. Simple past tense is one of the elements in language feature in recount text. According to Azar (1992:25), "simple past tense is used to talk about activities or situations that began and ended in the past." There are two kinds of verb: regular and irregular.

● **Regular Verb**

S6: *There we also **follow** a lot of competitions*. It should be **There, we also followed a lot of competitions**

S8: *We **prepare** everything before went to Soputan*. It should be **We prepared everything before went to Soputan.**

S8:*We **cook** the food*. It should be **We cooked the food**

S13: *I **celebrate** the holiday with family*. It should be **I celebrated the holiday with family.**

- **Irregular Verb**

  S1: *Last year I and my friend go to beach.* It should be **Last year, I and my friend went to beach.**

  S1: *I and my friend go to exercise.* It should be **I and my friend went to exercise.**

  S5: *There we make fried rice.* It should be **There, we made fried rice.**

  S5: *In the afternoon I take a picture.* It should be **In the afternoon, I took a picture.**

  S6*: We get the most memorable thing about togetherness.* It should be **We got the most memorable thing about togetherness**

  S7: *my friends and I go to the tourist attractions.* It should be **my friends and I went to the tourist attractions**

  S7: And the next day, after coming home from golden lake. It should be **And the next day, after came home from Golden Lake.**

  S7: *I was invited by my friend go to the tourist attractions in Ketama to take photos and once to see friends who are playing the band.* It should be **I was invited by my friend went to the tourist attractions in Ketama** to take photos and once to see friends who were playing the band.

  S9: *Last month I go to the munth.* It should be **Last month, I went to the mount**

  S10: *Last friday I go to cinema with some of my friends.* It should be **Last Friday, I went to a cinema with some of my friends**

  S10: *After that we go to shopping.* It should be **After that, we went shopping.**

  S11: *I did not went anywhere.* It should be **I did not go anywhere.**

  S13: *We do activites such as recreations.* It should be **We did many activites such as recreations**

  S14: *We take picture together.* It should be **We took picture together**

  S15: *We see beautiful landscape from above, we feel happy. We also eat fried banana there.* It should be **We saw beautiful landscape from above, we felt happy. We also ate fried banana there.**

- **To be**

  S16: *I am happy because I can meet with my friend.* It should be **I was happy because I was able to meet with my friend.**

  S17: It *is* one of the best day for me. It should be **It was one of the best days for me.**

  S20: *it's amazing.* It should be **it was amazing** (S20)

  From the data above it can be seen that most of the students didn't use the right tense. The data showed that they still used present tense for the past tense. Those data were also supported by the result of interview. From interview it is found that most of the students faced difficulty in using tenses in writing especially in recount text. Even though they already learnt about recount text it seemed they still confused and made mistake.

b. **Using Countable Nouns**

  Countable nouns are for things we can count using numbers. They have a singular and a plural form. According to Danesi (2006) "noun typically inflect

for number (singular and plural) and case (plain or genitive). Singular is referring to one person, thing, and so on. Plural is referring to more than one.

S6: *We get the most memorable **thing** about togetherness, the camaraderie, mutual respect and cooperation.* It should be **We got the most memorable things about togetherness, the camaraderie, mutual respect and cooperation.**

S8: *We brought **some** food.* It should be **We brought some foods.**

S10: *Last Friday, I go to cinema with **some** of my friend.* It should be **Last Friday, I went to the cinema with some of my friends.**

S17: *It is one of the best **day** for me.* It should be **It was one of the best days for me.**

The data showed that some students still used singular when they have to use plural forms. A final –s or es is added to a noun to make a noun plural.

c. Using Prepositions

The next problem that students faced was how to use the proposition. According to Wren and Martin (1999: 108) "preposition can be classified into four categories; simple preposition are words like *in, on, at,* and *for.* Compound preposition like *about, along, around,* or by double in a preposition like *outside of, within,* and *without.* Participle preposition are words such as *concerning* and *pending.* Phrase preposition are words such as *because of, in case of* and *in order to.*"

S12: ***At** there, we joined speech contest and many others*. It should be **There, we joined speech contest and many others**

S13: ***On** the one day, I celebrate the holiday with family*. It should be **One day, I celebrated the holiday with family**

S19: *we won the 1st place **at** the enforcement level*. It should be **we won the 1st place in the enforcement level**

From the interview, one of the students stated, "I'm very confused when to use in and on because in Indonesia it is the same meaning which means *di.*" (August 28, 2018, BS). From the data, it seems that the students applied the preposition the way Indonesia used to English. It means that they still affected by the structure of the Indonesian language.

d. Using Articles

Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific.(www.grammarly.com).The and a/an are articles. The word *the* refers to an identified noun and the word *a/an* refers to an unidentified noun. (Krohn, 1986)

S9: *Last month I go to **Soputan** month*. It should be **Last month, I went to the Soputan mount.**

S10: *Last Friday I go to **cinema** with some of my friends.* It should be **Last Friday, I went to a cinema with some of my friends**

e. Using Punctuation

The problems in punctuation are also found in students' text. Hansen, et al (1998) stated that "the punctuation is a part of teaching writing mechanic. It has a big influence on sentences of a written text."

● **Using periods and commas**

S5: *In the afternoon I take picture*. It should be **In the afternoon, I took picture**

S9: *Last month I go to Soputan month*. It should be **Last month, I went to the Soputan mount.**

S10: *Last Friday I go to cinema*. It should be **Last Friday, I went to a cinema**

S10: *After that we go to shopping*. It should be **After that, I went shopping.**

S14: *Last Saturday, I went to Linau lake with my family In Linau lake we had cofee and fried bannanas.* It should be **Last Saturday, I went to Linau lake with my family. In Linau lake we had coffee and fried bananas.**

S15: *Last week I and my friend went to Urongo*. It should be **Last week, I and my friend went to Urongo**.

- **Using Capitalization**

  S13: *after we have done all recreation activities and then the afternoon before the night we got bathe in the beach.* It should be **After we have done all recreation activities and then the afternoon before the night we swam at the beach.**

  S18: and certainly proud of the hero who had made Indonesia **Independent.** It should be **and certainly proud of the hero who had made Indonesia independent.**

Punctuation plays an important role in a sentence. When punctuation is well organized it would be easy for readers to understand the meaning of text otherwise it would be difficult for the reader to understand the meaning of the sentence in the text. The data showed that students sometimes did not use punctuation and kept using small letters after a period.

Grammar seems to be the most problem that students face in writing especially in using tenses and punctuation. It can be seen from the data above that most students made mistake in tenses and punctuation.

Diction

According to Norish (1983) "a good writing or composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabularies used along with proper grammar and varied range of sentence structure."

S2: We took home trophies, and award plague and **cash-cash.** It should be **We took home trophies, award plague and money.**

S2: *As an enemy from SMA N 1 Tondano*. It should be **as a participant from SMA N 1 Tondano**

S2: *And Praise our Lord who brought two messenger to get 1st and 3rd place.* It should be *And Praise our Lord who brought two participants to get 1st and 3rd place.*

S18: *I held a race*. It should be **I followed a race**

S20: *We see some attraction likes marching band, the parade of flowers, etc.* It should be **We saw some attractions such as marching band, the parade of flowers, etc.**

Word choice plays an important role in making the sentences clear and understandable. Choosing the appropriate words could determine whether the reader will understand or not. But the data showed that the students made mistakes in choosing the words. They seemed difficult in choosing suitable words for their writing text. The choosing inappropriate words made the meaning confused.

The researcher also found out, in the processed of making the text there are some students were asked their friend about some words that actually it is common used in their daily activity. For example, pemandangan, bulanlalu, minggulalu. It means that the students lack of vocabulary. From the questionnaire most of the students stated that they often found difficulty in vocabulary. It means that students lack of vocabulary.

Spelling

According to Hornby (1974:108) "spelling is defined as the act of forming words correctly from individual letter."

S9: *Last month I go to the **munth**. It should be Last month, I went to the **mount.**
S9: *I go **togeder**. It should be I went **together**
S10*: We go to **shoping**. It should be **We went shopping.**
S14: *We had **cofee** and **bannana**. It should be **We had coffee and banana**
S15:*Beautiful **landschape**. It should be **Beautiful landscape**

The data showed that some of the students make spelling mistakes. They sometimes added a letter or missed letters in a word. It caused because they lack of vocabulary as already explained above.

Ideas Developments

The researcher gave few minutes for the students gathered what they wanted to write about. The researcher gave them Pre-write Activity to let them choosing their ideas. However, after the researcher asked them to start making the text the challenging one that students faced were they still seemed difficult to develop their ideas into a written form. Some students still confused about what they want to write. Some of them were confused because there are many ideas arose in their minds. One of the students said, "I had so many ideas in my mind but I still didn't find what a story that I will write" (August 28, 2018, SP).

The difficulty in developing their ideas made them unable to produce more words. In academic writing, paragraphs usually consist of 100 – 200 words (Burns, 2002). While in students text it was found that some of them unable to write more than 100 words in one paragraph. They seemed cannot share and explain their own ideas or information. Some of the students said "when we studied English, we usually write based to the topic that already provided" (August 28, 2018, SP). "We only wrote based on book given by the teacher" (August 28, 2018, YK).

From the interview, it is found that most of the students faced difficulty in developing their ideas in writing. One of the students stated "I only wrote some sentences because I could not able to explain more about the experience that happened to me, it was difficult" (August 28, 2018, KM). From 20 participants there only 2 students stated that they were often doing writing activities. One of the students stated, "I usually write some sentences in English and upload on my social media" (August 28, 2018, TA). On the other hand, most of the students stated that they were seldom doing

writing activities. Some students stated it is boring and they afraid to make mistakes. It means that most of the students lack of practice and motivation in writing. According to Davis (1998:25), "writing is essentially creative process and good writers must learn to communicate their ideas clearly to an unseen audience. This takes a lot of practice". Davis (1998:25) thinks that learners will be encouraged to write if writing task motivate them and keep them interested.

Text Structure

In recount text, there are generic structure as already explained on chapter two which is orientation that tells who was involved, what happened, where the events took place, and when it happened; events that tells what happened and in what sequence; and re-orientation that tells the conclusion of the events or feeling, and suggestion Wignell (1994). The problem in text structure found in students' texts. Most of the students only wrote one paragraph on their texts.

From the interview, most of the students stated that they had problems in text structure. One of the students said, "I refer to my personal experience but when I want to write I face some difficulties, for example how I can connect the first sentences into the second sentences and how to start the next paragraph" (August 28, 2018, SA). Other student stated, "it was difficult for me because I forget about the text structure of recount text". (August 28, 2018, JR).The statement could inform that the students faced difficulty in making the structure of the text. Even though they already learnt the structure of recount text, but they were unable to construct a good recount text. The difficulty in combining each sentence makes them unable to produce length paragraphs and lead the students face in cohesion. Cohesion has been defined as "joining a text together with reference words (e.g. he, theirs, the former) and conjunctions (e.g. but, then) so that the whole text is clear and readable" (Bailey, 2011:115).

However, the positive one that the researcher found out that most of them was able to start the recount text with orientation. They could introduce the participants, place, and time. But, when it comes to the event it is seemed that they got stuck to elaborate the event even though it was their personal experience.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that students' writing ability in recount texts is considered low. It is based on the analysis of all categories from the findings. On the analysis of students' writing texts it is found some problems faced by students. There are grammar, diction, spelling, ideas developments and text structure. The data showed that grammar seemed to be the main problem faced by the students in writing. Especially in using the verb form, the students still used verb one in writing recount text. From the interview as the supporting data, the students' statement indicated that the difficulties in writing recount text were caused from the structure of the text and ideas development. From the interview, most of the students stated that they seldom doing writing activity. It means that most of the students' lack of practice and motivation in writing activities and that is making them unable to write a recount text in English well.

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