

PROBLEMS STUDENTS ENCOUNTERED IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the writing problems of the fourth semester of the English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty Muhammadiyah University Palu. This study applied a descriptive method. The subject was the fourth semester of the English Education Study Program of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu, with eight students taken from one class using a total sampling technique. Research data were collected by carrying out the interview and documentation. The result of the study indicates that the students faced problems which include: (1) they were lack of vocabulary, (2) they had problems with grammar, and (3) they could not use spelling and punctuation well.

Keywords: Problems, writing and recount text.

BACKGROUND

A language is a tool of communication. It is the way a language has a system of communication consisting of a set of sounds and written symbols that people use—writing and speaking as the way for people to communicate with each other through written and oral language.

English is one of the international languages that is used in many countries. In Indonesia, English has been chosen as one of the compulsory subjects that students taught in Junior High School, Senior High School, and University level should be mastered. In Education, teaching English to students is focused on four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of the critical skills that students should master. It means that students can express ideas and opinions and share any information with others with an understanding of the functional structure in writing short essay text in report, descriptive, narrative and recount text.

A recount text is a text that tells or explains a story that happened in the past.

This text is related to our life. Recount text explains what happened, who was involved, and when and where the event occurred. The purpose is to entertain the reader with a story, action or activity. Recount text can be factual information such as a news story, procedural information and personal information.

In the English Study Program of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu, the writing I subject course is given in the second semester, Writing II is given in the third semester, Writing III in the fourth semester, while Writing IV in the fifth semester. In writing subjects, students learn how to write in English to increase their skills in writing and develop and express their ideas in written form. In the fourth-semester English Education Study Program, students learned to write recount text. Considering the explanation above, the researchers want to analyse the problems in writing recount text.

The researchers investigate the problems encountered by the fourth-

semester students of Muhammadiyah University. Based on the background, the researchers formulated a research question as follows:

What are the problems encountered by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in writing recount text?

The objective is to find out the problems encountered by the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in writing recount text.

Previously, studies about students' problems in writing recount text have been conducted by some researchers. Hikmah (2014) conducted a study entitled *An Analysis of Student's Problem in Writing Recount Text at the First Grade of MAN 1 Kebumen*. This research focused on students' problems in writing recount text. The result shows that the students have difficulties producing longer paragraphs, organising, lack vocabulary, and having problems in grammar and mechanics.

The Second reserach was conducted by Hasna (2016) with the title *The Analysis of Students' Problems in Writing Recount Text at The Tenth Grade of MAN 2 Banjarmasin*. She aims to find out students' problems in writing recount text. The result of her research is that the students made mistakes in grammatical, developing ideas, and organising and also, students have a lack of vocabulary.

Both of these studies investigated the same area as the current study. But teh subject is different. Therefore, it is worth conducted to find out whether the students in the fourth-semester of Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu have the similar problem or less/more than the problems listed in both previous research.

The Nature of Writing

Learning English means learning the four skills: listening, reading, speaking and

writing. Among these skills, writing is considered the most challenging skill to be mastered by students. According to Yulianawati (2019), writing is more complicated than other abilities because it requires more than just grammatical and lexical knowledge. It is one of the productive skills besides speaking.

Experts state definitions of writing. According to Sapkota (2012:70), writing is an activity that gives information to the reader through written form. It means that through writing, many people can communicate with others. This character is similar to speaking skills which also give information to others. However, of course, these two skills are different.

In writing, the writers create plans, prepare the content, revise, edit and publish. However, they need more time to think about what they want to write. This reason is why sentences need to be correct. It is supported by many experts from time to time, like Arapoff (1967), Brown (2001), and Lawrence (1997) and also emphasised by Mintz (2021) that writing is a thinking process. Writing involves more than just clearly conveying already-held beliefs. It is the method by which concepts are developed and improved. It means that for the first when the students write something down, they have been thinking about what they will write and how they will write it. For the explanation above, writing is a skill or ability to express ideas, feeling and opinions to order people through communication which needs a thinking process. People can express or convey their messages in written form longer than when they speak.

The curriculum of writing at the State University of New York states the purposes of writing. They are to express oneself, provide information, persuade, or create a literary work (Online Writing Resource Center, 2018). *To express ideas* means a writer expresses his feeling, expressions, personality, likes, and dislikes in his writing in order to make readers understand

something within the materials. *To provide information* means to give information and explain it. This purpose is to focus on the materials being discussed. *To persuade readers* means to convince readers about a matter of opinion. It also focuses on the readers' point of view. While *to create literary work* means a work based on one's point of view, opinion, attitude, and observation of other matters occurring in one's environment. When the communication receiver is not physically present, writing is used.

Components of Writing

Writing is not only displaying ideas through writing, but there are essential components that need to be in the text written. Ampa & Quraisy (2018) list five components of writing: structure, vocabulary, content, organisation, and mechanics. Students should understand these components before they start writing to produce good writing.

The first component is *structure*. The students must use language effectively in simple or complex sentence construction and make only a few grammar mistakes. Every language has grammar because grammar is a set of rules for generating logical communication. Language is the ability to produce and comprehend both spoken and written words.

The second component, *vocabulary*, is an essential part of language learning. Maskor & Baharudin (2016) state that a person's vocabulary measures writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Without vocabulary, not a single skill can be mastered by a language learner. In writing, vocabulary and its choosing become part of a sentence, a paragraph, or even a text being written.

The third is *content*. It refers to the topic and its explanation, discussion, evaluation, and conclusion. It should be clear, specific, and relevant. The excellent content had to fulfil the criteria such as being full of

information, substantive, making a clear thesis development and being relevant to the problem. It includes the thesis statement, related ideas, development of ideas, and develop ideas through personal experience, illustration, facts, and opinions.

As the fourth component, *organisation* means how students organise their idea, whether each paragraph is organised well or not. Wali & Madani (2020) explain that a paragraph is a collection of phrases that form a single thought. Multiple topics cannot be discussed in a single paragraph. Therefore this organisation matter raises in a paragraph. The text's organisation consists of parts such as expressing and revealing ideas, good organisation, logic sequence, and cohesion. The organisation in writing is how ideas are presented. It means that the students should be able to write well to explain or arrange the ideas into written form. It is because organisation typically refers to the structure's significant or first elements.

The last is *mechanics*. The norms guiding the technical elements of writing, such as capitalisation, punctuation, and spelling, are known as writing mechanics in composition. Sandrawati (2019) states that writing mechanics is one of the essential components for producing good writing. A construction without mechanics will not deliver a good message to its reader.

Writing Recount Text

The most basic text type is recount text. The recount text is a legal term for a document that titles rather than lists a series of events. It is a genre or text that first-graders in senior high school have been exposed to. Unless referencing actual dialogue, recounts and anecdotes are usually written in the past tense. Recount text opens by providing the reader with information about the participants, what happened, where it happened, and when it happened (Ramli, 2013). This text tells about an experience that has already occurred.

Recount has an orientation, much like other stories. The orientation may be as brief as one sentence in simple recounting. There must be characters, a time and a location in a recount. Ramli (2013) explains that the location or orientation, the events, and the conclusion make up the generic framework of a recount. The context, also known as orientation, provides a situation of who, when, where, and why.

Additionally, this is where students outline the subject of their essays. Students write about events, which are things that happened and are categorised and chronologically documented. Additionally, the ending offers a viewpoint on the narrated events.h

Problems in Writing Recount Text

Students who become language learners face problems in writing recount text occasionally. Za'in (2017) finds that some problems in writing recount text are: problems in grammar, problems in articles, developing ideas, and lack of vocabulary and mechanics.

- Problem with grammar
In writing, grammar is a system or structure of language. Many make grammar mistakes, such as using present, past and future articles and connectors.
- Developing ideas
Talking about developing ideas, the learners need to prepare any information to support their content, exploring ideas and thoughts to communicate with others.
- Lack of vocabulary.
Several learners lack vocabulary. They are creating more variety in paragraphs and sentences with vocabulary words which keep their reader interested in their content, for the learner need to increase their vocabulary.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The descriptive method was employed in this study to investigate students' writing difficulties. The researchers gathered the

data and performed a descriptive analysis of it. The students enrolled in the fourth semester of the 2020–2021 academic year at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu serve as the study's subjects.

To get the data, the researchers used two instruments. Interviews and documentation were involved. Students provide the documentation. The data from the students' writing assignments served as the study's primary source of information. The researchers can use it to analyse how the students struggle with recount text. The researchers then examine the students' problems to determine what prevents them from writing recount texts. The instructor of the fourth semester of the English Education Study Programs at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu was given an interview as the second research instrument by the researchers. Eight questions are asked during the interviews. It is about the students' difficulties in creating recount texts and how they are doing in class.

Accurate data must be gathered using specific methods for this study to succeed. The researchers, as research documentation, first gathered the students' recount text. The researchers explain the reason to the students before collecting their written texts. Second, the researchers conduct interviews with a lecturer who instructs writing courses. The lecturer was questioned on eight points about problems that students were having in the classroom. With the help of the students' written reflections, the lecturer's interview response provided an answer.

A descriptive analysis was done on the information gathered from the interview and the documentation. In this method of data analysis, the researchers primarily discuss the problems in writing recount texts that the fourth-semester English Education Study Program students at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu encountered.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding from Documentations

a. Students' problems with grammar

The students have a problem with grammar. They made mistakes in using past tense (v2). For example: *Meanwhile, my family prepare the vehicle that we will use.* "prepare" – "prepared".

Table 1. Students' problems with grammar

Participants Number	Uncorrected sentence	Correct sentence
P1	On Sundays to be precise at 08.00 am.	On Sunday to be precise at 08.00 am.
	My family prepare the vehicle that we will use.	My family prepared the vehicle that we used.
P2	I walk down to the beach	I walked down the beach
	As we arrived there	When we arrived there
P3	We also learn Balinese	We also learnt Balinese
	The people were kindly	The people were kind
P4	We prepare go there for buy some vegetables	We prepared to go there for buying some vegetables
	Many people watched us	Many people were watching us
	I and my friend want to go to the market	My friend and I wanted to go to the market
P5	We prepare all of things to go camping	We prepared all things to go camping
	We walk for about one and a half hour from the parking	We walked for about one hour and a half from the parking
	We sing together	We sang together
P6	I and my cousins went to Tanjung Karang Beach	My cousin and I went to Tanjung Karang Beach

	to spent our weekend	to spend our weekend
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b. Students lack vocabulary

Some of the students lack vocabulary. This information is supported by the lecturer's response, who teaches the subject of writing. When the students start to write the recount text, they use the same expression because they have limited vocabulary.

Title: My funny story with my friend.

One day I and my friend want to go to the market. We prepare go there to buy some vegetables, rice and all we need. We use motorcycle, for a walked and then suddenly, in the middle of the road my motorcycle broke. I and my friend laughed in the road we remove ashamed because many people are watched us.

c. Students' problem with spelling and punctuation

Lastly, the students have problems with spelling and punctuation. The students make mistakes in using spelling and punctuation well. In the student's recount text, the researchers found that the name of a place and country need to be changed by a capital letter and pay attention to recheck the spelling of some words.

Table 2. Students' problem with spelling and punctuation

Participants Number	Uncorrected sentence	Correct sentence
P1	My family and I went on <i>vocation</i> to pink beach.	My family and I went on <i>vacation</i> to Pink Beach.
	<i>Daring</i> the trip	<i>During</i> the trip.
	This beach is about 82 kilometers from <i>mataram</i> city center.	This beach is about 82 kilometres from <i>Mataram</i> city centre.

Findings from Interview

The researchers interviewed the lecturer to get accurate data to support this study. The interview was conducted in the English Department of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu. The interview consists of 8 questions.

Table 3. Interview Report

No.	Question	Answer
1.	What did you do before teaching writing subject?	I explained what recount text is and provided with some examples.
2.	What strategy did you use?	I gave them some topics, and they must choose to develop them into written form.
3.	Did the students understand the recount text?	Yes. They understood.
4.	Did the students have difficulties in learning recount text?	Yes. They have difficulties in learning to write recount text during the class.
5.	What kind of difficulties did the students usually have during the writing class?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing idea. • Limited vocabulary. • The problem in grammar (v2) • Spelling and punctuation.
6.	What did you do when the students get difficulties understanding the recount text?	I provide examples near them and tell them how to organise their ideas.
7.	Have you given them motivation?	Yes. I have.
8.	What was the main problem usually found by your students in writing class?	a. Lack of vocabulary. b. The problem in grammar. c. The problem in spelling and punctuation.

For the strategy of teaching writing subjects, the lecturer said that she gave some topics, and then the students chose one. Before that, the students develop the topic into a paragraph. It means it can help the students prepare the content. Next, the lecture explains how to write recount text and provides examples from their story experiences. For example, the students can express their stories in the past.

From the investigation conducted using two instruments, the students faced three common problems. Vocabulary was the first area where students struggled when composing recount texts. Some of the students, the lecturer said, lack writing vocabulary. When students write their stories, they use sentences to describe their ideas or to discuss any information they have and then build those ideas into paragraphs. The first line and the final line are identical. It indicates that the students have a small vocabulary. According to the lecture, the students must give examples to back up their written work. It implies that the student's vocabulary has to be improved. Grammar issues are the second issue that pupils encounter. If pupils begin to write about the subject, it becomes a severe problem. According to the lecture, students are having trouble utilising V2. The third is a spelling and punctuation error. The students struggled with spelling and punctuation. They must therefore double-check their use of capital letters, punctuation, and spelling words.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigates the problems encountered by the fourth students of the English education study program at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu in writing recount text. The result indicates that the students faced problems that are (1) they have a problem in grammar, (2) they have lack of vocabulary, and (3) spelling and punctuation.

Some recommendations are made for the lecture and students in the fourth semester. Firstly, the lecturer should find a proper technique in teaching writing so the students will be more active in learning writing. Second, the lecturer should still be patient and lead them to solve the students' problem in writing recount text. The students should understand the importance of writing skills as motivation in learning.

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