

Writing Report Texts: A Challenge for Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the difficulties faced by ninth-grade students of SMPN 31 Palembang in writing report text. It outlines the qualitative research approach, specifically a case study design, used to explore the difficulties faced by ninth-grade students in writing report text. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants from the ninth-grade class, four students were selected as participants who have the low score in writing report text. Data collection involved documentation analysis and interviews. Thematic analysis technique was used in analyzing the data. The result of this study showed that students encountered difficulties when writing report text such as, difficulties with the generic structure, have limited knowledge for the topic, difficulties in vocabulary usage, difficulties in grammar or language use, and difficulties in using the right punctuation. Teachers' explicit guidance and students' proactive efforts will contribute to enhanced writing skills and solve students' difficulties in writing report text.

Keywords: *Students' difficulties, writing, report text.*

A. Introduction

English is the global language that many people use English in their daily activities and English has a special role in every country. According to Crystal (2003), a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognize in every country. When talking about English as the global language, people be connected with one another. Any use of English by L1 speakers for whom it is their preferred and frequently only language of communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). As a result, people from a different country or different L1 often use English to connect.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are skills that must be mastered by students in order to master English (Sukur, 2008). According to Goodwyn and Branson (2005), English is very essential and is often considered as the most important of all school courses, because to the fact that writing, reading, speaking, and listening are required in every school subject and life to varying degrees. As a result, English is very important because English is written and oral communication in the world, and it is important for students need to learn in school.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. Indonesia's government makes a curriculum and conducts an English in syllabus for students to learn in school. The criteria comply with Regulation No. 37 of 2018 by the Minister of Education and Culture, which mandates that students should possess a high level of proficiency in both spoken and written language skills (Kemendikbud, 2018). Indonesia's students learn English from Elementary school to the University level. According to Napituli and Kisno (2014), in Indonesia English is learn only at schools and people do not speak the language in society. This means that students in Indonesia primarily learn English in classrooms as part of their formal education and English is not widely used as a means of communication among the general population in Indonesia.

According to Widodo (2020), in English, writing is one of the skills that need to be improved, especially in terms of academics because complex skills such as ideas, vocabulary variations, and also the need to use good and correct grammar are needed in English. Writing well is a difficult cognitive exercise that requires a lot of effort as well (saddler, 2004). Many students' difficulties with writing fluency were caused by handwriting issues rather than spelling issues (Berninger, Abbott, and Whitaker 1997). Furthermore, some classroom writing assignments may be culturally incorrect for some students and may make them uncomfortable (Peterson, 2008). Writing skills are difficult for students to do but it also can measure students' success in learning English. Writing helps student to develop their ability in English,

for example, they can be expressing about what they think and feel. Additionally, Brown (2007) remarked that writing is a difficult task since many factors need to be taken into account, including what one wants to say, how to say it, and how to put those ideas into words in a way that is understandable to others. Furthermore, there are some previous studies related to the students' difficulties in writing. First, Pestaria et al., (2014) aimed to understand the students difficulties when writing report. In their studies, the students struggled to employ the appropriate tense. They used both the simple present tense and the simple past tense when composing their report. The students were then unable to construct the statements in the basic present tense. Second, Duha (2022) investigated the students challenges when writing descriptive text. In her studies, the students had issues with spelling, textual language (reference and tense), syntactical language (clause pattern, subject-verb agreement, plurals, and punctuation), and generic aspects (genre, theme, structure, and vocabulary).

By examining the students' descriptive text writing, the challenges with the students were identified. Based on the previous explanation and the previous research, the researcher aimed to investigate the difficulties faced by ninth-grade students of SMPN 31 Palembang in writing report text.

B. Research Method

Research Design

This research was used qualitative method research. Qualitative research is a type of research that involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, such as words, images, and sounds. The goal of qualitative research is to gain a deep understanding of a subject through an exploration of the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of the people involved. According to Cresswell (2014), qualitative research is a type of inquiry that seeks to understand the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups. It is a way of studying social phenomena that is focused on the subjective experiences and interpretations of participants, rather than on objective measurements and statistics. In this study, this research was

used a case study. According to Creswell (2014), a case study is a qualitative research design that entails the researcher conducting an in-depth investigation of a program, event, activity, process, or individual(s).

Participants of the study

In this study, the participants were the ninth-grade students of SMPN 31 Palembang in the academic years 2022-2023. There were nine classes in the ninth-grade students that consisted of IX.1-IX.9. Purposive sampling was used for this research. Etikan et al., (2016) state that purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of a participant based on the attributes the individual possesses. Based on the statements provided, it can be concluded that purposive sampling is a type of sampling method in which the researcher intentionally selects participants for the study based on specific characteristics or attributes that they possess. The researcher chooses purposive sampling because purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on specific characteristics, it can be an effective way to gather detailed, in-depth information about a particular topic or issue. The sample of this research is the class of IX.8 students because the teacher mention that IX.8 class students have the low achievement in writing among the other ninth class. There were 4 students of the XI.8 class who were participants of the study based on their low score in writing report text as suggested by the teacher. The reason why the researcher chose these students was that they had an English subject that learned about report text. Afterward, based on the teachers interview, because the class IX.8 students had low level of achievement in writing English. So, the teacher gave the recommendation to do the research in that class.

Technique for collecting the data

The interview and documentation were used for collecting the data for this study. According to Creswell (2002), an interview is a research method that involves collecting data through face-to-face or telephone conversations with individuals. In an interview, the researcher asks the interviewee a series of questions to gather information about a particular topic or issue. Documentation analysis is a

research method that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of written or recorded materials, such as documents, transcripts, records, or artifacts. This method is often used to gather data for qualitative research studies, and can be an effective way to gain insights and understandings about a particular topic or issue. Creswell (2002) stated that the documentation that is collected in qualitative research can be used to support and contextualize the findings of the study, and can provide a rich source of information for future researchers or practitioners. The documentary analysis used as the source of the data was the students' result of writing a report text. The documentation was in the form of the students' worksheets, the researcher took the students worksheets in writing report text from the teacher. The documentation was to verify the accuracy of the interview data.

Technique for analyzing the data

In this study, the researcher employed a method known as thematic analysis. According to Creswell (2009), the six steps involve in this analysis approach include: gathering and organizing the data, thoroughly reading the data, breaking down the data through coding, summarizing the data, interpreting the analyzed information, and finally presenting the findings of the analysis.

Firstly, the researcher gathered information from documentation and interviews and write notes on the interview material. Secondly, the researcher read through all the data to gain a comprehensive understanding. Thirdly, researcher was conduct a detailed analysis by categorizing and labeling the data using coding. Fourth, the researcher organize the coded data into themes. Fifth, the researcher summarize the analyze data and make connections to the research questions. Finally, the researcher interpret the findings and make conclusions about the students' difficulties in writing report text.

Establishment of Trustworthiness

Triangulation technique is use for this study. Cresswell (2002) stated that Triangulation is a research technique that involves using multiple methods or sources of data in order to increase the credibility of the findings. The idea behind

triangulation is that by using multiple perspectives or sources of data, writer can gain a more complete and accurate understanding of the research topic. To achieve triangulation, researchers may use multiple sources of data, such as combining data from interviews with data from documents.

C. Findings and discussion

Findings

The Students' Difficulties in Writing Report Text

After analyzing the data from the students' worksheets and interviews, the researcher found some difficulties faced by students' in writing report text at SMPN 31 Palembang. There are some themes and codes were listed from the analysis of qualitative data shown in Table 1. below:

Table 1. Themes and codes of the problems in students' difficulties in writing report text at SMPN 31 Palembang

Themes	Codes
1. Difficulties in generic structure of report text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Some of students stated they had difficulties when composing the tittle for the report text. b. Some of students stated they had difficulties when composing the general statement for the report text. c. Some of students stated they had difficulties when composing the description for the report text. d. Some of students stated they did not know the differences between general statement and description. e. Some of students stated they cannot distinguish the differences between report text and descriptive text.
2. Limited knowledge for the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Some of students stated they had limited knowledge for the object they have written.
3. Difficulties in vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Some of students stated they had limited vocabulary. b. Some of students stated they did not know how to write the vocabulary correctly.
4. Difficulties in grammar /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Some of students stated they did not know

language use	the specific structure of language use/grammar for report text.
	b. Some of students did not know the differences between present tense and past tense in writing report text.
5. Difficulties in punctuation	a. Some of students stated they confused in placing the punctuation marks correctly in writing report text.
	b. Some of students still made mistake in using period, comma, and quotation mark in writing report text.

According to Table 1. themes and codes obtained from the qualitative data described the difficulties in writing report text at SMPN 31 Palembang. It was divided into five problems such as: The difficulties with the generic structure; limited knowledge of the topic; the difficulties in vocabulary usage; the difficulties in grammar/language use in writing report text; the difficulties in using the right punctuation.

Discussion

The first difficulty faced by students was the difficulties in with the generic structure in writing report text. This study showed that students had difficulties with the generic structure, such as students still confused in choosing the title for their report text, they have to arrange the general statement well because they are confused to differentiate between the general statement and description and students do not know about the differences between report text and descriptive text. According to Friska et al., (2014) the students still have difficulties in the organization of the report text, some of the students are still not able to write the report text based on the generic structure of the report text. Situmorang et al., (2022), when writing report text, the students still have difficulties in choosing title and not writing the general statement well and the students are still confused to distinguish descriptive text and report text. Prasetyaningrum et al., (2022), when writing report text, students' difficulties were influential to organize ideas smoothly The ideas are not logically developed and are not organized rationally. As a result, These difficulties include confusion in choosing appropriate titles for their report texts,

struggles in arranging the general statement coherently, and a lack of understanding regarding the distinctions between general statement and description in report text. Additionally, the studies indicate that students encounter issues in smoothly developing and organizing their ideas in a logical and rational manner.

The second difficulty is students had limited background of the topic of report text. The limited background was a difficulty that students have to face when they are writing the report text. This study collectively indicates that the students' limited knowledge about the subject matter poses a significant challenge when it comes to organizing the information correctly in their report texts. Their lack of understanding and familiarity with the topic makes it difficult for them to generate relevant content and structure their writing effectively. According to Situmorang et al., (2022), the students are still not able to write the content for report text. They lack of the information that they have to write in report text. Batubara et al., (2021) state that students were challenging in writing report text because they have limited background knowledge about the object that they write in the report text. Prasetyaningrum et al., (2022) also state that students' score in writing content for report text are low. Therefore, limited knowledge of the topic of report text poses a significant challenge in organizing information correctly within the report texts. Students' insufficient understanding of the subject matter makes it challenging for them to generate relevant content and structure their writing effectively.

The third difficulty is students have difficulty in vocabulary. The difficulty experienced by students was difficulty in choosing vocabulary in their report text. Some students had problems with their vocabulary knowledge, which makes them find it difficult to write report text. This study showed that the students' limited vocabulary poses a significant obstacle when it comes to writing report texts. Their lack of familiarity with a wide range of vocabulary limits their ability to express ideas effectively, resulting in repetitive and monotonous writing. According to Prasetyaningrum et al., (2022), the significant problem of students in writing report text is vocabulary. Batubara et al., (2021), the common problem in writing report text is vocabulary, the students have to master vocabulary, it can influence the

students when writing report text. As a result, vocabulary was the student's problem when they wrote report text.

The fourth difficulty faced by students in writing report text was language use/grammar problems. Language use/ grammar was a difficulty that needs attention because it indicated that students experience language use/grammar difficulties found in writing report text. This study showed that the students face challenges in using grammar effectively and adhering to the appropriate language use when writing report texts. Their lack of knowledge and understanding of grammar rules hinder their ability to express their ideas accurately and coherently. According to Liasari et al., (2017), when writing report text, students still have problem with language use. Therefore, students found that language use/grammar was their difficulty when they wrote report text and they felt that language use/grammar affects their fluency in writing report text.

The last difficulty faced by students in writing report text was punctuation problems. Students confuse in using the right punctuation for their report text because they do not know where to place the marks correctly. This study showed that students encounter difficulties in using proper punctuation in their report texts. Their lack of understanding about punctuation rules hinders their ability to convey meaning effectively and can impact the clarity and coherence of their writing. According to Situmorang et al., (2022) state that when students writing report text, they have difficulties in using punctuation especially in using periods and commas. Prayuda (2020), students punctuation error is the serious part in writing report text, students do not know about the use of correct punctuation in specific sentence. It can concluded that, punctuation was the problem for students when they were writing the report text. they confuse in using the appropriate punctuation for their report text.

In conclusion, the researcher found similarities of students' difficulties in writing report text at SMPN 31 Palembang, namely generic structure, limited knowledge, vocabulary, language use/grammar, and punctuation. Thus, this research succeeded in investigating students' difficulties in writing report text.

D. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions presented in Chapter IV, it can be concluded that students at SMPN 31 Palembang face several difficulties in writing report text. These difficulties can be categorized into five main difficulties: struggle with the generic structure, limited knowledge of the topic, difficulties in vocabulary usage, problems with grammar, and challenges in using the right punctuation.

Firstly, students struggle with generic structure of report text, including difficulties in composing the title, general statement, and description. They often find it difficult to come up with appropriate titles, differentiate between general statements and descriptions, and distinguish report text from descriptive text.

Secondly, students have limited knowledge about the topics they write in their report text. This lack of background knowledge makes it difficult for them to organize information accurately and effectively in their writing.

Thirdly, students encounter difficulties in vocabulary usage for their report text. They have limited vocabulary knowledge and struggle with spelling and understanding the words they need to use. As a result, their writing may become monotonous and repetitive.

Fourthly, students face challenges with grammar and language use when writing report text. They have difficulties in structuring sentences and following grammar rules, resulting in unclear and poorly constructed sentences.

Lastly, students find it challenging to use the right punctuation in their report text. They often struggle with placing punctuation marks correctly and using appropriate punctuation in their writing.

Suggestion

Based on difficulties identified in writing report text, the following suggestions are recommended for both students and teacher.

1. English teachers:
 - a. Offer explicit teaching and guidance on the generic structure of report text, ensuring students understand the components and purpose of each section.

- b. Incorporate activities that foster students' background knowledge on various topics, such as reading relevant texts, watching educational videos, and engaging in discussions.
 - c. Implement vocabulary-building exercises and strategies, including word lists, context-based activities, and regular vocabulary assessments.
 - d. Integrate explicit grammar instruction into the curriculum, focusing on sentence structure or grammatical concepts relevant to writing report text.
 - e. teach students about how to place and use punctuation marks correctly.
2. Students: To enhance their knowledge and skills in writing report texts, students should dedicate more effort to studying this particular form of writing. Increasing their understanding about generic structure, read more for their knowledge, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation knowledge can be achieved by reading more frequently, which is highly beneficial.

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