THE PROBLEMS OF WRITING RECOUNT ENCOUNTERED BY STUDENTS OF THE STATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 2 PURWOREJO IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

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Abstract

Writing is a skill for the students to express their ideas in written form that involves the mastery of all elements in the target language: as grammar, content, organization, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and mechanics. It needs a complex process. Consequently, the students may have difficulties to do so. The objectives of my study are to find out how the communicative purpose of a recount text written by the students is achieved, how recount texts written in terms of functional stages, the features of lexico grammatical problems, and to explain why the students write recount text in the way they do. The problems of the study are therefore: how is the communicative purpose of recount texts written by the students of "SMP N "2 Purworejo?; how are recount texts written in terms of functional stages?; what are the features of lexico - grammatical problems faced by the students?; and, why do the students write recount texts in the way they do? The approach used in this study is qualitative. This study primarily deals with the communicative purpose, functional stages and grammatical problems on writing recount made by the students of "SMP N "2 Purworejo. The analysis result proved that the communicative purpose is to retell their past experience and they could write the functional stages on writing recount well. Based on the data and the interview, I conclude that the 8th graders of "SMP N" 2 Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010 had lexico-grammatical problems in writing recount. Those problems occurred because most of them made overgeneralization errors and they had limited vocabulary.

Keywords: recount, writing, lexico-grammatical, functional stages

I. Introduction

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English is used as an international language which many people use. They also use it as a means of communication either in written or spoken. Moreover, it has a very important role in politics, international trade and industry, commerce, science and technology, education, the media and information technology.

Because of English importance in many areas as stated above and to face the globalization today, English is taught in Junior and Senior High School as a compulsory subject in Indonesia. The 1989 Law, Chapter IX, Section 39, Verse 3, gives English a place as the first foreign language and makes it one of compulsory subjects to be taught at the secondary levels. It is also supported by Government Regulation (Peraturan *Pemerintah*), Number 28, 1990, which states that English is to be taught from the first year of Junior High School.

Now teaching English in Junior High School applies School based curriculum or "Kurikilum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan" (KTSP) 2006. This curriculum is an operational curriculum that the school arranges and applies based on the situation and condition of the school itself. It consists of the school education goal and the contents of school curriculum, the academic calendar and the syllabus.

The Students of Junior High School not only develop the knowledge of language structure, grammar, and pronunciation but also how to use the language. Besides, they are expected to be successful in learning English through mastering both language skills and language components which should be in line with text based curriculum. It means that now they learn English through texts. One of the ways to learn them is by creating kinds of texts which are important to be analyzed what problems faced by the students.

Considering my experience during teaching and learning process in "SMP N" 2 Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010, the students still have problems in creating a good text like recount text. It is difficult for them to write recount text—especially in matters such as vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation although they have learned it for two semesters.

Dealing with the problems above, therefore, the objectives of my study are to find out how communicative purpose of recount text is achieved, how recount texts are written in terms of functional stages, the features of lexico-grammatical problems faced by the students, and to explain why the eighth graders of "SMP N" 2 Purworejo wr recount texts in the way they do.

II. Method of research

In this research, I used descriptive qualitative approach. This approach is used since the data of the research are the students' recount writings of the eight graders of SMP N 2 Purworejo which used as population in my research. And, the sampling of the research was one class. I took the students' writing randomly. I just chose thirty six texts.

In conducting the research, the source of data is the sentences used in students' recount writing of the eighth graders of "SMP N" 2 Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010. Those texts can represent how the students write the schematic structure and lexico-grammatical pattern in recount writing

Gathering the data is the most important thing in doing a research. First, I asked the students to write a recount text dealing with their past experience. Then, I took the students' writing randomly. I just chose thirty six texts (one class).

Another technique I used to collect data was by interviewing the thirty-six students of "SMP N"2 Purworejo. The purpose of the interview was to elicit information about the reasons why the students face the problems in recount writing, to find out the efforts to face them and to explain why the students write recount texts in the way they do.

In my study I focus on the functional stages written in recount text and lexico grammatical problems faced by the eighth graders of "SMP N 2" Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010. Lexico grammatical problem included six elements: specific participant, verbs, tense, adverb, conjunction and adjective.

In conducting this study, I used two kinds of instruments, the schematic/generic structure of the students' recount writing and lexico-grammar. To support valid data, I also interviewed all students in one class. Hopefully, I got more valid information what problems the students faced and how they improve recount writing.

To analyze data, the steps were identifying the students' recount writing in terms of communicative purpose functional stages of recount text. Then, the theory of Jeremy Harmer (2004) is used to analyze lexico-grammatical problems.

In this study, I use symbols to analyze the features of lexico-grammatical problems made by the eighth graders of SMP N 2 Purworejo in their recount writing.

Based on the theories above the functional stages or generic structure and lexicogrammatical problems (specific participants, past tense, action verbs, adjectives, circumstances of time and place, and conjunctions) will be analyzed; the results will be described and interpreted. At last conclusion from the analysis will be drawn. In this research, interview is used to get more information the reasons why the students face the problem and explain why they write their recount writing in the way they do. From the result of interview, I described and explained them. At last I drew the conclusion.

That is the method I used to analyze the lexico-grammatical problem in recount writing faced by the eighth graders of "SMP N " 2 Purworejo the academic year 2009/2010.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 The communicative purpose analysis of recount texts

The communicative purpose of recount is to retell events for the purposes of informing or entertaining. In order to achieve this communicative purpose, some purposes are employed, i. e 1) to orient the readers in respect to place, time and people in the text, 2) to present a series of events about given field. In this study, all recount texts belong to personal recount texts which the purposes are to retell events that the writer has been personally involved in. From 36 recount texts, the students could write personal recounts texts of which their communicative purposes are to retell their past experience about health.

3.2 Functional Stage Analysis

To find the second objective of my study, I analyzed the functional stages from 36 students' works. Here, I analyzed whether the students wrote functional stages completely or not. The functional stages analysis could be seen in this table below:

Table 1 Functional stages analysis

No	TEXTS	ORIENTATION	Number of Events	RE-ORIENTATION
1	TEXT 1	7	2	4
2	TEXT 2	1	6	4
3	TEXT 3	1	4	4
4	TEXT 4	1	11	4
5	TEXT 5	1	4	4
6	Техт 6	1	3	 √_
7	TEXT 7	1	5	4
8	TEXT 8	1	9	4
9	TEXT 9	4	7	4
10	TEXT 10	1	8	4
11	TEXT 11	1	4	4
12	TEXT 12	1	9	1
13	TEXT 13	1	7	.

14	TEXT 14	٧ -	4	1
15	TEXT 15	1	9	1
16	TEXT 16	1	3	4
17	TEXT 17	4	8	4
18	TEXT 18	4	3	7
19	TEXT 19	4	6	4
20	TEXT 20	1	3	4
21	TEXT 21	4	9	4
22	TEXT 22	4	7	4
23	TEXT 23	1	5	4
24	TEXT 24	4	9	4
25	TEXT 25	1	6	4
26	Техт 26	4	6	4
27	TEXT 27	1	7	4
28	TEXT 28	1	3	1
29	TEXT 29	1	4	1
30	TEXT 30	4	4	4
31	TEXT 31	1	6	4
32	TEXT 32	4	5	4
33	TEXT 33	1	7	1
34	TEXT 34	1	6	1
35	TEXT 35	1	10	4
36	TEXT 36	4	10	1
T	OTALITY	36	36	36
PE	RCENTAGE	100 %	100 %	100 %

1) Interpretation of Orientation Analysis

Based on the result table above, the orientation analysis result of students' works on recount writing was 100%. It means that they know that at the beginning of a recount they should provide an introduction by introducing the participants and setting of the past experience. The implication is that the students could achieve to write one of the stages successfully. It was effective because it could convey ideas well. It can be seen from the example below:

1

"4 years ago, I and my parents went to hospital. We went there because I was sick. We went to hospital by motorcycle." (text 10). These sentences refer to a background of information about who, what, when, and where the past experiences happened. The "who" is clearly written in this sentence that "I and my parents or we". It tells about was involved in the text. Then, the words "went there because I was sick" tell about what the text is. The word "4 years ago" tells about when it happened. And the last the word "to hospital" tells about where it happened.

2). Interpretation of Events Analysis

Based on the result table above, the records of events result was 100%. It means that 36 recount writing texts made by the students have series of events. They could

achieve the second functional stage successfully and could retell series of events which happened in the past .The students' works have at least 2 events. It refers to the one of language features of recount in which the use of words that showed order in which the events in the text happened. So, it could convey the ideas of meanings in the texts. I provide some examples below:

"......After arrived, I waited in waiting room. Then, the nurse called me. I entered the doctor's room with my mother. There, the doctor checked me with stethoscope. and he gave me prescription. After that, we came out and walked to the pharmacy. Then, my father bought medicine to me. "(Text 10).

In the first sentence there are two events told; arriving and waiting. The conjunction after is used appropriately since arriving happened previously before waiting. In the second sentence there is only one event showed by the word *called* which belongs to action verb and is indicated by temporal conjunction *then*. In sentence 3 there are also two events told checking and giving. To combine those events, the student could use the appropriate conjunction *and*. Then, in the fourth sentence series of events are referred to the action verbs *came out and walked*. The last **event** is *my father bought medicine to me*. The bold typed means that the last event happened in the text.

3) Interpretation of Re-orientation Analysis

The last functional stage is re-orientation. Re- orientation analysis results of the students' recount texts was 100%. It means that all students used re- orientation. They could use it to make their writing texts better and could achieve all functional stages completely. Although it is an optional stage which the student may not use it in their recount writing. From 36 texts, I provide some examples of reorientation taken from some texts as follows:

- 1. "......At night, I felt nice. I was very happy but I must stay in home" .(text26)
- 2. ".....I was very happy because I already healthy again ".(text 8)

The examples above, there are some sentences written to show re-orientation which is used like conclusion that might include a personal comment or closure of events, but it was optional not always necessary.

3.3 Lexico-grammatical problem analysis

In this step, I analyzed lexico-grammatical problems which were made by the students on recount texts. The result of lexico-grammatical analysis was based on six elements, they are: specific participants, action verbs, past tense, conjunction, adverb of time and place, and adjective. We can see the result and average in this table below.

Table 2
Lexico-grammatical problem analysis

No 1 2 3 4 5 6	TEXTS TEXT 1 TEXT 2 TEXT 3 TEXT 4 TEXT 5 TEXT 6 TEXT 7	SP 0 6 1 1	WAC 1 0 3 5	WT 8 1 2	CM 1 0	3 0	WA 2
2 3 4 5	TEXT 2 TEXT 3 TEXT 4 TEXT 5 TEXT 6	6 1 1 0	0 3 5	1 2	0		
3 4 5	TEXT 3 TEXT 4 TEXT 5 TEXT 6	1 1 0	3 5	2		0	1
5	TEXT 4 TEXT 5 TEXT 6	1 0	5		Λ		_
5	TEXT 5 TEXT 6	0			V	0	1
	TEXT 6			0	0	1	1
6			3	8	0	0	1
	TEXT 7	0	2	4	0	2	2
7	~~	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	Техт 8	0	0	5	0	0	2
9	TEXT 9	1	4	6	0	1	1
10	TEXT 10	0	2	3	0	0	0
11	TEXT 11	1	1	4	0	0	1
12	TEXT 12	0	8	8	0	2	0
13	TEXT 13	1	0	2	0	2	1
14	TEXT 14	0	1	7	0	1	2
15	TEXT 15	0	1	3	0	0	1
16	TEXT 16	0	1	2	0	1	0
17	TEXT 17	0	6	2	0	0	1
18	TEXT 18	0	2	5	1	1	2
19	Text 19	2	4	5	4	1	1
20	TEXT 20	7	2	6	1	1	1
21	TEXT 21	1	5	5	0	1	2
22	TEXT 22	0	1	1	0	2	1
23	TEXT 23	0	1	1	0	1	0
24	TEXT 24	0	5	3	0	0	0
25	TEXT 25	1	3	4	0	2	3
26	TEXT 26	1	1	3	0	0	0
27	TEXT 27	0	3	1	0	0	0
28	TEXT 28	0	2	6	0	2	0
29	TEXT 29	0	0	1	0	7	1
30	TEXT 30	4	1	0	0	2	1
31	TEXT 31	0	1	3	0	1	0
32	TEXT 32	0	2	2	1	2	2
33	TEXT 33	0	1	2	0	1	1
34	TEXT 34	1	2	4	2	2	1
35	TEXT 35	0	1	3	0	0	0
36	TEXT 36	0	0	4	0	0	0
TO	TALITY	31	77	124	4	40	38
PER	CENTAGE	6.10%	15.16%	24.41%	0.79%	7.87%	7.48%

SP : Specific Participant CM : Conjunction Mistake

WAC: Wrong Action Verbs ATP: Adverb of time and place mistake

WT: Wrong Tense/Past Tense WA: Wrong Adjective

From table above, I explained them as follows:

a) Specific Participant Problems

The first element of lexico-grammatical analysis was specific participant. Here, I analyzed it based on the quantity of the specific participant problems made by the students. From table above, it was found that 31 problems made by the students.

Firstly, the specific participant problem made by the students was the use of pronoun I. They forgot writing pronoun I with the capital letter, for instances: "......Then my parents and i went to the hospital.There the doctor examined me and told that i got thypus....... After eating, i drank medicine and took a rest. I had to take a rest for a week. I got better and healty again after one week. I was very happy because, i could play with my friends again. (taken from text 2)

All the pronouns I are written with small letter. They should have written it with the capital letter. The students assumed that if pronouns I were written in the middle of sentence like "After eating, i drank medicine and took a rest "she always wrote them with small letter. On the other hand, she wrote them well if they were used in the early sentence like I had to take a rest for a week, I was very happy, etc. So, the sentences should have been:

"......Then my parents and I went to the hospital.There the doctor examined me and told that I got thypus....... After eating, I drank medicine and took a rest. I had to take a rest for a week. I got better and healty again after one week. I was very happy because, I could play with my friends again."

b) Action Verb Problems

Based on the table above, the problems of action verbs made by the students was 77 verbs. It means that they still made errors in constructing recount texts using action verbs. Because they didn't understand how to use action verbs well such as irregular verbs, regular, diction, etc. Action verbs refer to series of events which happened in the text. When the students wrote action verbs, they failed to recognize irregular verbs well, for instances:

- 1. Then, I payed and took medicine in pharmacy (text 35).
- 2. The doctor give me medicine (text 30).

From the first example above, the students could not identify whether the verb pay is irregular verb or not because it was not easy for them to remember many verbs without opening a dictionary. They assumed that verb pay was only added "ed". The one should be written without adding "ed". Then, in sentences 2 the students failed to figure out the past forms. They should be in the form of past tense (S + verb2 + O). They didn't have a clear understanding about it. So, from the explanation above, the sentences should have been

- 1. Then, I paid and took medicine in pharmacy.
- 2. The doctor *gave* me medicine.

c) Past Tense

The third element was past tense which had 124 problems. It means that it had 24.41 % problems. The problem in this case was related to the use of to be, was /were, auxiliary verbs, regular, irregular verbs, etc.

The following examples of past tense problem are the ones in bold typed taken from some texts, for instances:

- 1. And doctor said my temperature is very high but I felt cold(text 6).
- 2. I was very happy because *I already healthy* again. (text 8).

All sentences above, the students failed to recognize the use of to be in their sentences. They should have used 'was' after subject because they should have been used the form of s+ to be + adjective like I have explained above. Furthermore, in the second sentence the student was confused to differ from to be present tense and past tense .So, the sentences should have been:

- 1. And doctor said my temperature was very high but I felt cold
- 2. I was very happy because I was already healthy again.

d) Conjunction Problems

Conjunctions are used to connect words. They connect not only words, but also phrases and clauses. Based on the result table above, the problem of conjunction was 4 words or 0, 79 %. It means that they only had the fewest problems among the other grammatical features. In this case they failed to recognize the spelling such as:

- 1. Than, she went to hospital for checking her body. (taken text 18).
- 2. Finnaly, I was very happy because I was health. (taken from text 32)

In the sentences above, they were confused to write the right spelling of conjunctions. They wrote 'than' which has very different meaning with 'then'. In sentence 2, the conjunction finally should not have added n. So, the sentences should have been:

- 1. Then, she went to hospital for checking her body.
- 2. Finally, I was very happy because I was health.

e) Adverbs of Time and Place

The quantity result of adverbs of time and place problems was 40 adverbs. It means that they had problems 7.87 %. It was found that the students still used wrong preposition when they wrote adverbs of place, for examples;

- 1. I went to school at Monday. (text 6)
- 2. In the home, my mother saw me in the pale condition. (text 23)

In writing recount texts the students were often confused to differ *in*, *on* and *at*. In the first sentence it is not appropriate preposition. The student should have used preposition on. Then in sentence 2 the student should have used preposition *at*. The sentences should have been:

- 1. I went to school on Monday.
- 2. At home, my mother saw me in the pale condition.

f) Adjective/Noun Problem

The last element is adjective words. In this element, I not only analyzed the adjective problems but also noun problem because it was related to noun phrase which involved adjective to arrange it. From the table above, the quantity result of adjective problem was 38 words. It means they still found problems with adjective 7.48 %. The adjective problems in the text can be seen from the following examples:

- 1. I was very hapy (text 21).
- 2. I got better and healty again

In two sentences above, they didn't write the right spelling in those words. They still had limited vocabulary and they often found problem when they wrote certain words if they didn't open their dictionary. The sentences should have been:

1. I was very happy.

2. I got better and healthy again.

4.4. The causes of the students' recount writing problems

To explain the reasons why the students write recount text in the way they do, I analyzed the error sources. Furthermore, I described and explained them based on Rod Ellis' theory (1994: 56). The following table is the result of analysis.

Table 3
Error Analysis

NO	Category	Number	Percentage
1	Omissions	34	6.69 %
2	Additions	24	4.72%
3	Misinformations	200	39.37%
4	Misorderings	5	0.98%

From table above, I described them as follows:

1) Omissions

Based on the table above, the problem of omissions made by the students was 34 errors. It means that they still made 6.69 % errors in constructing recount texts which they omitted items that must appear in a sentence such as:" My head very sick "(text 5). In this sentence, the students omitted to be was which should be written after subject My head. The other examples can be seen in the previous part.

2) Additions

The second category is additions which the students made 24 errors or 4.72%. It means that they added an item which the presence of that must not appear in a sentence, for instance:" When I will took a bath I felt my head was dizzy" (text 27). In that sentence, the student added modal will where in English allows "When I took a bath".

3) Misinformation

In this case, the students made 199 errors. It means that they made 39.17% errors in the incorrect placement of morpheme or group of morphemes in a sentence such as:" Three years ago, I was cough and headache "(text 35). In the sentence, the student wrote to be was after subject which should have been changed into the verb had.

4) Misordering

The last category is misordering which the students made 6 errors or 1.18%. It means they didn't order the words in appropriate sentences such as: "I often late to ate".

(text 3). In that sentence, the verb *ate* is not written in the last sentence but it should have been written after adverb *often* and the word *to* is omitted.

After describing four types of errors above, I explained some causes of errors made by the students. In my study, I only focused on three causes of errors; transfer, lexical and overgeneralization errors. The following table is the result of analysis.

Table 4
The causes of errors

No	Causes of errors	Number	Percentage	
1	Transfer errors	65	12.60%	
2	Lexical errors	46	9.06%	
3	Overgenralization errors	161	31.89%	

I explained them as follows:

1) Transfer Errors

Transfer errors are the errors caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue. The students made 65 transfer errors or 12.60%, for example; "She in hospital for 7 days. (text 18). From the example, it is clear that the way Indonesian sentences formed is different from the English way. Indonesian does not have tenses like English. In the first above, the students omitted to be was after Subject because they assumed that after S is not necessary to use was.

2) Lexical Errors

The second cause of error is lexical error. The students made 46 lexical errors or 9.06%. It means that the students failed to recognize the correct spelling of the words written. The following example is the one which the students didn't write the correct form of the verb such as: "After that I toke a nap". (text 33). According to the level of language, those errors are called lexical errors because they occur when the students do not understand those words lexically. In that sentence, the verb toke should have been changed into took

3) Overgeneralization errors

The last cause of error is overgeneralization which included 161 errors or 31.89%. Those errors arise when the students create a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language. It involves the creations of one deviant structure in place of two target language structures, for examples:

1. After five days in hospital, I can came back to home. (text 21)

2. I can went to school. (text 6)

The causes of those errors occur because the students generalize the use of modal can into simple past tense. In sentence 1 and 2, the students added modal can where in English the use of modal can is used as auxiliary verb in future tense. Those errors are called overgeneralization errors. It means that the errors arise when the students create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of other structures in the target language.

3.5 Interview result

To find the last objective of my study, I also did interview. When I made interview nine group in one class, the students said that they could answer questions which were related to kinds of text. They could mention four texts that were learnt such as descriptive, procedure, narrative and recount text. Besides, they had good understanding about functional stages of recount texts. They could mention three functional stages of recount text; orientation, events and reorientation.

IV. Conclusion and Suggestion

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the finding of the analysis, I conclude that the communicative purpose on writing recount texts of the eighth graders of 'SMP N '2 Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010 is to retell their past experience. Besides, they could write functional stages on writing recount well. It can be seen from the average percentage of each stage

Based on the data and the interview, I also conclude that the 8th graders of "SMP N "2 Purworejo in the academic year 2009/2010 had lexico-grammatical problems on writing recount. They write recount texts in the way they do because they made errors in omissions, additions, misinformations and misorderings. Those errors occurred because they made transfer, lexical and overgeneralization errors. Besides, they were confused in making appropriate grammatical sentences and they had limited vocabulary. At least that is what they said in the interview

4.2 Suggestion

The suggestions for the readers and the English teachers are as follows:

1) In teaching English related to its grammar, the teacher should give understandable explanation to make the students more interested in learning English.

2) The teacher teaches the grammar elements through the texts adequately.

Finally, I expect that this article brings new views for all the readers, especially for English teachers because a good teacher should not only understand the students' problem faced but also should understand how to face them and how to solve them so the students can create texts well.

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