

An Analysis of Students' Writing Ability in Narrative Texts at the SMA N 4 Tanjungpinang

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Abstract

This study aims to describe students' ability in writing narrative texts and identify common mistakes that are often found in their writing. This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with 31 students of class 11.1 SMA Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang as the subjects. Data were collected through narrative text writing assignments and analyzed using an assessment rubric based on five aspects: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

The results showed that 16% of students had excellent writing ability, 45% were in the good category, and 39% were fair. The most dominant mistakes were found in the aspects of grammar and mechanics, such as inappropriate use of tenses, punctuation and spelling mistakes. Meanwhile, the content and organization aspects showed better results, indicating that most students were able to understand the basic structure of the narrative text.

This finding is expected to provide an illustration for teachers to focus more on improving students' grammar and mechanics aspects in learning to write.

Keywords: *writing ability, narrative text, writing mistakes, writing assessment, senior high school*

Introduction

English is a universal language that is crucial to both worldwide communication and education. In addition to making it easier for pupils to comprehend academic texts, having a strong command of English opens up more career and higher education options. Additionally, publishing science publications, journals, or articles about knowledge and technology, as well as communicating with people from foreign nations, frequently uses English. Thus, speaking English is a skill that needs to be acquired at a young age, particularly in senior high school (Maulidiansyah, 2017).

One of the things that high school kids need to learn is how to write. Because students must first examine and assess knowledge before putting it in paper, writing allows them to communicate ideas, convey information, and develop critical thinking abilities. According to Harmer (2004), as quoted in Hukom (2023), writing is a means of generating language and expressing thoughts, emotions, and viewpoints. Instead of the components that must be included in learning activities, genre limits frequently have an impact on the writing process.

Writing abilities are another crucial component of studying English that students must become proficient in. A narrative text is one type of writing that is frequently taught

in English classes. In addition to improving language proficiency, narrative texts teach students learn to write compelling stories. However, a lack of knowledge about story structure and a lack of creativity in concept development cause many students to struggle while creating narrative texts. "Many high school students, especially in countries where English is a foreign language, such as Indonesia, have difficulties in writing," according to research by Indrawati (2016). This problem is frequently brought on by challenges with grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to characterize students' narrative text writing abilities and identify typical mistakes that students commonly make. This study intends to help teachers better teach writing and help students overcome writing obstacles by gaining knowledge of these factors. The results of this analysis are solely focused on the written products of students in class 11.1 at SMA Negeri 4 Tanjungpinang, but the primary focus of this research is on student work and engages the instructor to observe the learning process.

The Oxford Dictionary defines writing as a set of letters, words, or symbols that are inscribed on a surface. Then, writing is the process of putting thoughts, opinions, and meaningful letter combinations into written form. Writing is the expression of language in textual form through the use of certain signs or symbols. To put it another way, writing is an expression of an idea or viewpoint.

According to Alifia Seftiana (2017), writing skills are one of the productive skills that function as a means of communication. Ideas can be shared and expressed through writing. This ability is crucial for the growth of communication proficiency, particularly while learning a language.

Writing is more than just putting words and sentences together. Students must be able to organize words and phrases correctly and logically in order to produce quality writing. Writing is a process that entails transforming ideas into words, which typically have a higher truth value than the facts that have been conveyed, according to Maulidiansyah (2017), who quotes Nunan (2003). According to Robert Todd Carroll, who is cited by Alifia Seftiana (2017), writing enables us to communicate with both our current and future generations. It enables us to communicate with people from both the recent and distant past. Furthermore, a lot of students are never forced to acquire proper grammar or spelling. These underprivileged pupils believe that writing and "English" are just about grammar and spelling. They see writing as an unavoidable failure.

Therefore, writing is a very important skill to teach. Writing is closely related to improving academic performance in all subjects and is also a productive skill that can be used to express thoughts, ideas and everything in the form of written text.

Writing ability is the capacity of a learner to use appropriate grammar, vocabulary, structure, and organization to effectively communicate ideas, thoughts, and experiences in writing. It requires the ability to organize ideas clearly, create information logically, and use writing norms according to the genre or style of text being produced.

According to Lestari (2023), the capacity to write enables pupils to organize their thoughts and create paragraphs that are appropriate for a given writing genre through controlled exercises like guided questions and replies. She underlined that writing is a process that involves clarity, coherence, and proper mechanics in addition to just putting ideas into words.

Accordingly, writing ability is described by Aini et al. (2022) as a complicated skill that involves a variety of elements, including content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. According to their research, students must become proficient in these

areas in order to write essays that are coherent and to overcome problems like poor word choice, grammatical mistakes, and lack of coherence.

Thus, writing ability can be viewed as an integration of multiple sub-skills that reflect not only linguistic proficiency but also the cognitive and organizational capabilities required to produce meaningful and effective written communication, particularly in academic settings.

Narrative texts are one of the texts utilized in the eleventh grade of Senior High School, according to the Kurikulum Merdeka. Kemendikbud defines a narrative text as a type of literature that tells a story together with certain relevant historical events in order to keep the reader interested or entertained. Rebecca (2003) in Defrioka (2014) defines a narrative text as one that describes a series of historically and logically related events that are caused or experienced by multiple causes. They continue by saying that comprehension of a story requires knowledge of the plot, subject, characters, events, and their connections. Anderson defines a narrative text as one that tells a tale while entertaining or educating the reader or listener (Magfiroh & Dwika Herdiawan, 2021). Put otherwise, a narrative text narrates a story in chronological order, starting with the characters' and the story's essential elements' introduction and ending with the story's conclusion. This information is meant to entertain or educate the reader or listener. The purpose of this paragraph is to entertain or educate the listener or reader about the story.

As previously said, narrative texts, like all written texts, serve a purpose. The purpose of a narrative text is to entertain or tell a story. Barbara claims that the purpose of narrative texts is to inform, amuse, evoke feelings, and sway readers. It can also respond in a number of ways to various or real-life occurrences. According to Anderson and Anderson (2003), the purpose of narrative texts is to offer the listener or reader an amusing or instructive viewpoint on the world. The narrative text's secondary goal of sharing experiences and expressing emotions then informs and persuades the reader (Magfiroh & Dwika Herdiawan, 2021).

According to Wahyuni et al. (2019), narrative texts also contain particular linguistic elements that aid in structuring the story and drawing readers in. These elements include the use of action verbs, the past tense, specific characters and locations, direct and indirect speech, descriptive language, time connectives and conjunctions, first or third person, figurative language, adverbs, and adverbial phrases. Additionally, narrative writings can take many different forms based on their content, structure, and goal.

Folktales, fables, fairy tales, legends, myths, short stories, science fiction, horror, adventure, historical narrative, and romance are a few of the most prevalent forms of narrative literature. Using regional folktales is one way that narrative texts are applied in ELT. Pradipta Agustina et al., (2023) claim that using Penyengat Island's Jangoi folklore in English classes has improved student involvement and contextual knowledge, making it a narrative resource that is culturally relevant.

Several previous studies have explored students' writing skills, particularly narrative texts. The results of these studies serve an important purpose in understanding the general pattern of students' difficulties in writing.

According to Utami Mulyaningsih (2013), most students were in the moderate category in writing narrative texts. Common mistakes found include inconsistent use of tenses, incomplete text structure, and limited vocabulary.

Meanwhile, according to Prihandani (2023), the cause of common mistakes when writing is grammatical errors. This is due to two different sources, namely interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer, so that students feel that writing is very difficult, frustrating and tiring. The difficulties experienced by students in writing can be

categorized into three, namely psychological difficulties, cognitive difficulties, and linguistic difficulties, which certainly greatly affect students' writing activities, especially in writing narrative texts.

From the two studies above, it can be concluded that mistakes in writing narrative texts are still a common problem among high school students. Therefore, this study was conducted to enrich the previous studies by analyzing the writing of students at SMA N 4 Tanjungpinang, focusing on the ability and common mistakes that appear in their narrative texts.

Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method that aims to analyze students' writing competence by collecting and analyzing data based on the writing assessment rubric. Students in the 11.1 grade at SMA N 4 Tanjungpinang make up the study's samples. Purposive sampling was the method used to choose the sample, which was chosen because it fit the researcher's selection criteria.

The research data comes from student writing findings; 31 narrative texts were produced and evaluated using the writing evaluation rubric. Based on the evaluation categories defined in the rubric, the findings of the subsequent test will be utilized to characterize the general degree of students' writing proficiency. Additionally, experts will describe the common mistakes that students make in their writing.

The researchers employed a rubric taken from Brown (2007), which was referenced in a thesis by Sari Yulanda (2018), to evaluate the writing of the students. The rubric incorporates a number of evaluation criteria, including substance (30%), organization (20%), grammar (20%), vocabulary (15%), and mechanics (15%). A predefined algorithm will then be used to calculate the results, and the interpretation score that emerges from this computation will indicate the overall degree of the student's writing proficiency.

Table 1. Score Interpretation

No.	Test Scores	Description
1	91-100	Excellent
2	71-90	Good
3	51-70	Fair
4	31-50	Mediocre
5	1-30	Very Poor

Results

The researchers developed a student score table to ascertain the test results, which attempts to characterize the narrative text writing ability of the students in class 11.1 at SMA N 4 Tanjungpinang. Data were collected from narrative text writing assignments that were analyzed using a scoring rubric based on five aspects: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Score Categories

Category	Score Range	Total Number Of Students	Percentage
Excellent	91- 100	5	16%
Good	71-90	14	45%
Fair	51-70	12	39%
Mediocre	31-50	-	0%
Very Poor	1-30	-	0%
Total		31	100%

Discussion

Based on the results obtained, it can be seen that students' abilities in writing narrative texts are mostly in the good and fair categories, with proportions of 45% and 39%, respectively. A total of 16% of students showed excellent ability, which means they were able to compose narrative texts completely, logically, and with minimal linguistic mistakes.

The most common mistakes were in the areas of grammar and mechanics, including irregular punctuation, spelling, and tense usage. However, the organization and substance tend to be better, demonstrating that pupils comprehend the fundamental elements of narrative text structure (direction, intricacy, resolution).

Thus, our research indicates that students' primary difficulties when producing narrative texts are related to grammar and mechanics. This is consistent with a study by Brown (2007), which shows that grammatical structure is frequently the biggest barrier for second language learners when learning to write. Sari Yulanda (2018) also discovered that the most frequent causes of errors in high school students' narrative writing are vocabulary, subject-verb agreement, and tense.

The dominant grammar mistakes in this study include tense mistakes which should use past tense but still use present tense such as: "*come*" which should be '*came*', "*never came back*" which should be "*never came back*", then the sentence mistake "*The gods didn't want to see him sad...*", the use of past tense followed by the next sentence: "*They helped the farmer...*" which should be "*They helped the farmer*".

Meanwhile, in the mechanics aspect, there are many spelling mistakes such as "*boild*" which should be "*built*", "*step mother*" which should be '*stepmother*' and "*How ever*" which should be "*However*". Then capitalization is often wrong such as capitalization in "*my dear crow...*" which should be "*My dear crow...*". Then there are also mistakes such as no comma before a direct quote, such as in the section "She cried and prayed to god, saying' *oh god,...*" which should be: God, saying, "*Oh God, ...*"

Based on the results that have been analyzed, this analysis shows that the main weakness in students' narrative writing abilities lies in their mastery of grammar and mechanics, which reflects a lack of mastery of technical language structures and a weak emphasis on learning the fundamental elements of academic writing (Brown, 2007; Yulanda, 2018).

Conclusion

According to the findings of the examination of the narrative text writing ability of the students in class 11.1 at SMA Negeri 4 Tanjung Pinang, the average score of 75.03 indicates that the students' abilities are generally in the "Good" range. Out of the 31 kids who were examined, 16% demonstrated exceptional skills, 45% fell into the good category, and 39% fell into the fair group. No students in the low category (mediocre or very bad) were identified in this study, indicating that students generally comprehend and can write narrative texts in an organized way.

The findings indicate that most of the students at SMA Negeri 4 Tanjung Pinang have a rudimentary understanding of narrative text structure. It demonstrates that student writing performance is comparatively constant in terms of substance and organization. This indicates that students have a solid mental grasp of the narrative text's structure.

However, it was found that the most dominant mistakes in students' writing are in the aspects of grammar and mechanics. and common grammatical mistakes include such as inconsistent use of tense, especially mistakes in the application of Past tense which should be the main characteristic of narrative text. mistakes such as "came" which should be 'came' as well as "They helped the farmer" should be "They helped the farmer" this is the most frequent finding. Meanwhile, mechanical mistakes such as incorrect spelling in student writing, such as "Boild" which should be "built", and capitalization and punctuation mistakes are also significant problems.

This finding reinforces the results of previous research, which states that grammar and mechanics are the biggest challenges in writing narrative texts for learners of English as a foreign language. Therefore, improving competence in both aspects needs to be a major focus in student writing learning, with special emphasis on practicing the use of tenses, sentence structure, as well as improving spelling and punctuation.

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