

# A Study of the Tenth Grade Students' Narrative Writing Achievement at SMAN 2 Jember

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**Abstract:** This research was intended to describe the tenth grade students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 2 Jember. The area and subjects of this research were chosen purposively by using purposive method. The research design was descriptive study. The research data were obtained by test, interview, and documentation. Based on the research finding dealing with the result of the tenth grade students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 2 Jember, it was found that there were 2 students (5,13%) who were categorized as excellent, 13 students (33,33%) who were categorized very good, 12 students (30,77%) who were categorized good, 12 students (30,77%) who were categorized as average, and no student (0%) who were categorized fair, poor, and very poor. This means that the tenth grade students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 2 Jember was categorized good.

**Keywords:** descriptive study, tenth grade students, narrative writing achievement.

Writing is one of the human language skills other than listening, speaking and reading. It is the language students' need that cannot be separated from their study. They write and take notes in classes while listening to their teachers, or even compose an article. Such a skill deals with not only how the students can produce words, phrases, and sentences but also an artistic side in arranging and developing the content; hence the readers of the students' texts might be able to understand what they need to inform the readers. Therefore, writing can be concluded as a complex activity in which it starts with the decisions of how much information, the type of information, the progress to organize the information, and finally the decisions about how the whole thing will be linguistically expressed (Koutsoubou, 2005: 165).

Writing needs not only the mastery of grammatical structure and rhetorical devices, but also the understanding of conceptual and judgement elements. As a writer, the students need to provide supporting details and specific evidence to make the reader understand about the content of our writing. It is supported by (Langan, 2010) who states that we need to support our ideas with specific reasons and details. Besides, writing has five important aspects that must be included in conducting a good writing, i.e.: language use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic skills, and judgement skills (Heaton, 1990: 135). Beside that, the writing process has four stages in order to make a good piece of writing, i.e.: 1) planning; 2) drafting; 3) editing (reflecting and revising); 4) final version.

In Indonesia, writing English is taught alongside with the other skills, namely listening, speaking, and reading as a foreign language in compulsory subject. English is taught in junior high school, senior high school, and university level. Moreover, the government uses Kurikulum 2013 for junior high school and senior high school level. However, this research focused only on senior high school level since the researcher wanted to investigate the tenth grade students' narrative writing. Before conducting this research, a preliminary study was held in order to get additional information about the tenth grade students at SMAN 2 Jember.

Based on the preliminary study that had been conducted at SMAN 2 Jember on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 by interviewing the tenth grade English teacher, it was known that the school used Kurikulum 2013 in the teaching and learning process. The teacher informed that based on the Kurikulum 2013, the teaching and learning process should be held in an integrated way. Therefore, the teacher tested the students' English achievement by integrating all of the language skill, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This means that the students were never

tested specifically about their writing achievement. As a result, the teacher did not know about the students' writing achievement specifically. Therefore, the researcher needed to conduct this research to get to know about the students' writing achievement. Moreover, this research focused only on narrative text. Narrative text was chosen because it is one of the genres of functional texts that has been taught in the tenth grade level. As stated in the Kurikulum 2013, there are five kinds of functional text for the tenth grade students, such as recount text, procedure text, narrative text, descriptive text, and news item text. Another reason why the researcher chose narrative text was because the students were familiar to this genre of text. Carino (1991: 96) states that people narrate stories since their childhood. Considering those reasons, the researcher decided that narrative text was suitable for conducting this research.

Some previous research findings of the students' narrative writing achievement state that most of students' narrative writing achievement was relatively poor or fair. For example, Khasanah (2011) notes that the eight grade students' narrative writing achievement at MTs. Wahid Hasyim Kunir Jember was categorized poor. Similarly, Rahayu (2014) notes that the students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 1 Glagah was categorized fair. These findings show that it is still necessary to conduct the similar research design but in the different level of school. This includes this research on "A Study of the Tenth Grade Students' Narrative Writing Achievement at SMAN 2 Jember".

## **Research Methods**

The research design that was applied in this research was descriptive study. Zuriah (2006: 47) states that descriptive research is a research that has a purpose to give information about the characteristics of a particular object. In line with this,

Arikunto (2010: 3) explains that descriptive research is a research that is intended to investigate situation or condition which the result of the investigation will be described in the form of research analysis. In other words, a decriptive research is a research that investigates a particular object for its situation or condition which is intended to give information factually. In this research, the descriptive research design was chosen because it was intended to describe the tenth grade students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 2 Jember in academic year 2014/2015 in which it covers five aspects of writing, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, contents, and organization.

Dealing with the chosen research design, there were some steps that had to be done in conducting this research. The steps were: 1) Selecting the research problems and determining the research design; 2) Determining the research area purposively; 3) Doing a preliminary study by conducting an interview with the tenth grade English teacher at SMAN 2 Jember; 4) Formulating the research problem; 5) Determining the research respondent by using random sampling method; 6) Constructing the research instrument in the form of writing test to collect the primary data of the research; 7) Consulting the research instrument to the consultants and the English teacher to know whether the writing test is appropriate for the students or not; 8) Giving a test to respondent in the form of narrative writing test; 9) Scoring the result of the writing test by using analytic scoring method. In this scoring method, each writing aspect will be scored separately based on the rubric scoring before summing up all of the scores; 10) Classifying the students' scores into the classification of scoring; 11) Drawing a conclusion from the result of the research.

There are two kinds of data in this research, primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected from the scores of the achievement test on the students'

narrative writing test and the supporting data was collected by using interview, and documentation. The first data was writing test. Writing test is a type of test that is administered to the testees in the form of writing to describe the testees' writing ability (Zuriah, 2006: 184). In other words, the tenth grade students had to do the test in the form of writing and their scores were analyzed by the researcher. Furthermore, the given writing test was used to measure the students' achievement in narrative writing by considering five aspects of writing, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, contents, and organization. The type of the test was a subjective test which requires the students to show their ability in writing a narrative text. The students were asked to write a narrative text based on the topic given related to Indonesian Legends that consisted of 150 – 250 words within 90 minutes. The researcher gave the instructions in order to make the students understood what they had to do. Beside that, the researcher also included some information in dealing with the five aspects that they should have included in their writing. The subjective test was chosen because it was suitable to measure the students' writing achievement.

Analytic scoring rubric was used to analyze the students' narrative writing achievement. Analytic scoring is a method of scoring which requires a separate score for each of a number of aspects of a task (Hughes, 2003: 100). The analytic scoring rubric used in this research was adapted from Jacob et al. (in Hughes, 2003: 105). The researcher made two adjustments in the analytic scoring rubric, they were in the terms of the weight of scoring and in the total number of errors. The first adjustment was the weight of scoring to the students' level. The weight of scoring in the aspect of language use or grammar was the highest score because this aspect was considered to be most important in writing based on the information from the English teacher. She stated that the tenth grade students tended to make some errors

frequently in the aspect of grammar. For that reason, grammar was considered as the most important aspect in writing. After language use or grammar, the following order from the higher to the lower is vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization. The second adjustment was the researcher decided to limit the total number of errors in each aspect in the criteria of scoring. The reason was to make the scoring process easier to the raters. Beside that, it was used as a guide in giving score in each classification criteria to the students.

In order to make the scoring process easier for both scorers, a list of coding guide which represent each aspect of writing was used. For example, when one of the students made an error in the aspect of language use or grammar, then the researcher underlined the error and put mark 'G' above the underlined error. Another example was when one of the students made an error in the aspect of vocabulary, then the researcher underlined the error and put mark 'V' above the underlined error. Besides, two different markers in the scoring process were used in order to differentiate the scores between the two scorers, they were red marker for the first scorer and blue marker for the second scorer.

Furthermore, the percentage formulae was used in analyzing the data in order to know the percentage of the students' achievement in narrative writing. Each students' narrative writing score was illustrated as 100%; hence the researcher decided to divide into 5 parts in order to know the students' achievement in each aspect, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization. Resmini (2013) states that each writing aspect can be given equal percentage or can be adjusted as its priority in the scoring process. each writing aspect was given different percentage since it was intended to differentiate the aspect which had the greatest weight to the least weight. They were grammar (30% of the student's

score), vocabulary (25% of the student's score), mechanics (20% of the student's score), content (15% of the student's score), and organization (10% of the student's score). Therefore, the total percentage of the five aspects was 100%. After getting the scores of the students' narrative writing, the students' achievement in writing narrative texts was classified into seven different levels: excellent, very good, good, average, fair, poor and very poor.

### **Research results**

Based on the data analysis of the students' narrative writing explained above, it was known that there were 2 students (5.13%) who were categorized as excellent, 13 students (33.33%) who were categorized very good, 12 students (30.77%) who were categorized good, 12 students (30.77%) who were categorized as average, and no student (0%) who were categorized fair, poor, and very poor. The research results were concerned with the students' achievement in general and the five aspect of writing, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization.

Dealing with the students' narrative writing achievement in the five aspect of writing, it was found that the aspect of content was the greatest percentage among the other aspects. This shows that there were 33 students (12.7%) who were categorized excellent. It was the greatest amount who achieved excellent category among the other aspects. From the analysis of the students' narrative writing result, it was found that the students did not have any difficulties in writing a narrative text based on the topic given. The students were able to develop the ideas in writing a narrative text related to Indonesian legends.

Meanwhile, the aspect of mechanics was found as the least percentage among the other aspects. There were only 3 students (1.54%) who were categorized as

excellent in this aspect. On the contrary, there were 8 students (4.1%) who were categorized as very poor. It means that mechanics was the most difficult aspect for the tenth grade students at SMAN 2 Jember among the other aspects. The students made errors mostly in capitalization and spelling. Most of the students ignored the use of capitalization in writing names of person and names of places. Another problem was that the students made some errors in writing certain words in correct spelling.

The fact that many students' problems in the aspect of mechanics show that this aspect was difficult in writing. Although Heaton (1991:135) states that the mechanical skill can help readers to understand a piece of writing more easily, it does not mean that the students cannot ignore the fact that it is important to apply mechanics aspect correctly. It is suggested to the English teacher to emphasize the importance of the use of capitalization and spelling in writing and to practice more on mechanics aspect.

## **Discussion**

There were two previous researchers, Khasanah (2011) and Rahayu (2014) who also conducted a research on the students' narrative writing. Their research findings showed that the students experienced problems in grammar. In this research, most of the students had a problem in applying simple past tenses in the correct form. They tended to use simple present tense in writing narrative texts. The other problem was the use of inappropriate prepositions and pronouns. This research compared the results to know whether there were similarities or differences in the research findings. The comparison covered the five aspects of writing, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization. In the aspect of grammar, the researcher found that most of the students got scores in the category



of very good. However, there were some students who experienced difficulties in this aspect.

In the aspect of vocabulary, the researcher found that most of the students got scores in the category of very good. This was similar with the research finding conducted by Rahayu (2014) who found that the ability of the students in the aspect of vocabulary was good. This means that most of the students in the present research and Rahayu's research did not have any difficulties in vocabulary aspect. In contrast, Khasanah (2011) found that most of the students got scores in the category of poor. The students had problem in choosing the correct words and using the appropriate words based on the context.

In the aspect of mechanics, most of the students had problems in applying correct capitalization, using punctuation, and writing words in correct spelling. It had similar results with the two previous research findings conducted by Khasanah (2011) and Rahayu (2014). Most of the students made errors in applying capital letters for the first word in a sentence, names of persons, and names of particular places. They tended to use small letters in their writing or even used capital letters to the words which was unnecessarily capitalized. The other problems were the use of punctuation and the correct spelling of words. Some of the students did not use period or coma. as the result their writing was not clearly readable.

In the aspect of content, there was a difference between the present research and the previous research conducted by Khasanah (2011). She did not include the aspect of content since the students were asked only to write a paragraph based on the topic given. Meanwhile, the present research and the previous research conducted by Rahayu (2014) had similarities in the research findings. Both of the researchers

found that most of the students could write the story well based on the topic given. However, there were few students who had problems in developing ideas and writing some irrelevant sentences in the story.

In the aspect of organization, the researcher found that the students did not have any problems in generating their ideas into the narrative text. This condition was the opposite of the two previous research findings. Khasanah (2011) and Rahayu (2014) found that the students had problems in this aspect which resulted that their scores was in the category poor and fair. The students had problems in generating ideas into a good paragraph and using inappropriate conjunctions or transitional words to connect between sentences. Some of the students could not provide enough supporting details to support their story.

Related to the previous research findings about narrative writing by Khasanah (2011) and Rahayu (2014), it shows that the two previous researchers found that most of the students got the lowest score in the aspect of mechanics. The first researcher conducted the research in the level of junior high school, meanwhile the second researcher conducted the research in the level of senior high school. The previous research findings were similar to this research since the researcher also found that the students got the lowest score in the aspect of mechanics.

In addition, both the research conducted by Khasanah (2011) and Rahayu (2014) found that the highest score was in the aspect of vocabulary. Meanwhile, this research found that the students got the highest score in the aspect of content. It could happen since the respondents of this research were different from the previous research. Hence, the students' achievement in narrative writing are different from one school to the other schools. The other difference between the previous research

and this research was on the way the researcher took the students' scores. The previous researcher (Khasanah, 2011) took the students' score individually on four aspects of writing, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanic. Meanwhile, the present researcher took the students' whole score which consists of five aspects of writing, i.e.: grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, contents, and organization. Beside that, the writing test that she conducted was to make a simple narrative paragraph whereas the researcher asked the students to make a simple narrative text based on the topic given. Meanwhile, the difference from previous research conducted by Rahayu (2014) was the respondents determination area. In her research, it was known that the respondents were the students of the eleventh grade of XI Science 2. Meanwhile, the present researcher chose the respondents from the whole of the tenth grade students of SMAN 2 Jember by using random sampling method. Therefore, the differences in the result of the students' narrative writing mean that ways to solve the students' problem dealing with narrative writing were more important.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the above research findings, the tenth grade students' narrative writing achievement at SMAN 2 Jember was categorized good since 27 of 39 students were categorized above average. Of the five aspects of writing, the aspect of content showed the students' greatest achievement and the aspect of mechanics showed the least achievement. This means that the students did not have any problems in developing their ideas about the story since most of the students' achievement was categorized as excellent in the aspect of content. However the students experienced difficulties in the aspect of mechanics.

Therefore, the English teachers should provide writing exercises to the students, especially about narrative writing by focusing on their weaknesses in the writing aspects. Besides, the teachers are expected to help the students to overcome their problems in the aspect of mechanics. The teacher should give the students more practice about the aspect of mechanics and emphasize the importance of using correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in writing. The future researchers are suggested to conduct a further researcher dealing with the students' narrative writing achievement in a different research design.

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