

Descriptive Study on Students' Grammar Ability in Writing Recount Text

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Abstrak

The objective of this research is to identify the students' grammar ability in writing recount text. The grammar is limited on the use of past tense, especially in using past verb. The Subjects of this research are the students in class X IPA 3 of SMA NEGERI 1 GORONTALO that consist of 20 students. The method of this research is qualitative method. The result of this research presents the students' correct verb in using past verb in recount text. As the result, the total of students' correct verbs is 157 with percentage 61% and the total of students incorrect verbs are 101 with percentage 39%. Therefore, the percentage of students' ability is 61% and can be classified into high level in intensity 61% - 80%. Hence, it is suggested that the school and teachers should provide the appropriate method or strategy which can support the learning process to improve students' motivation and interest in writing recount text.

Key words: *Students' ability, Past verb, Recount text.*

Background of study

Writing is one of language skills that is very important to be mastered by student in school. Writing is an ability or skill to share some information of the writers' opinion in written form. Through writing, the writers can express what people think and feel about something. The writers do not only write what they feel and think, but also they must give clear explanation to make the readers understand about their writing (Siahaan, 2008:2). One of important elements in writing is grammar. Therefore, grammar is very important to be mastered by students.

The pre-observation proves that the students sometimes make problems in grammar, especially in using verb in past tense. Many kinds of mistake arise when the learners do not master the English structure well, especially when they try to arrange sentences or use tenses in their writing. As a result, they write sentences ungrammatically. Actually, ungrammatical sentences have great influence when the learners are writing sentences and paragraph.

In writing, students are expected to be able to express many written meanings that have purposes in communication, text structure and etc. They can develop their writing in the forms of genre (kinds of text) such as: narrative, report, descriptive, recount, procedure, etc as a means of communications. One of the genre texts that becomes the focus of this research is recount text. Recount text is a kind of text that tells the past time. The purpose of this text is to tell the readers about the event in past time chronologically, for example someone's experience. According to Aguestin et al (2004,p,1), recount is writing form that writes about proper experiences, and it is a kind of text by chronological order to tell a story.

To make a good composition, the students must be able to master and apply the structure correctly, especially about using tense. In this case, the recount text uses simple past tense. If they cannot do that, of course, problem will arise. Automatically their writing will cause misunderstanding for the readers, because the readers cannot receive the message or expression of their idea well. Most of the students still find problem in using it, because of their limited

comprehension in using simple past tense especially in using verbs. This research is aimed to identity the students grammar ability in writing recount text. The grammar is limited on the use of past tense, especially in using past verb.

Theoretical Bases

Recount Text

Recount text is a kind of text that tells an event chronologically and what happened in the past. Arini et,al (2005:201) states that "recount text is a text that tells someone's past experience in a chronological order." In addition, Priyana (2008:18) states that "a recount text is a text that tells us about a part of experience. A recount text has an orientation, a series of event in chronological order, personal remarks on the events, and a reorientation that "rounds off" the sequence of events."

Past tense

According Manurung (2011, p.107) past tense is used to express past action when a definite point of time in the past is given, a past habit, and in conditional sentence. Riyanto (2002, P.53) defined that past tense is used to denote the existence of or to give information about a person or a thing happened in the past. Past tense is the form of language used to refer to an event, transaction, or occurrence which happened or an object that existed before. Past tenses consist of simple past tense, past continuous tense, past perfect tense, and past perfect continuous tense. According Riyanto (2002, p.60) simple past tense is used to express that something happened, took place, or was finished at some time in the past. For example: *I visited Rome last holiday*. While past continuous tense is used for an action that was going on at the past time. Riyanto (2002, p.57) states that past continuous tense is rarely used by itself. It is usually used to describe an action that was taking place when another activity happened in the past: *They were watching television at nine o'clock last night*. Furthermore, past perfect tense is used to express an action which has been completed before other action in definite time in the past: *I had already eaten before I went to campus*. The last form of past tense is past perfect continuous tense which indicates a continuous action that was completed at some point in the past: *George had been*

painting his house for weeks, but he finally gave up.

Verb and Its Types

Verb is a word that shows an action. Verbs can give clear explanation for us to know what was happening in the text. According to murthy (2005:86) "a verb describe as a word which is used to indicate an action, a state of being exist or possession." Decapua (2008:124) divides verbs into three major categories; they are action verbs, helping verbs, and linking verbs (auxiliary verbs). Actions verbs are the verbs that express an action. Action verbs are the kinds of verbs that can stand alone and do not need to be accompanied by any other verb. For example sing, swim, run, and come. Furthermore, helping verbs as the way its name is used to help the verbs in sentence. It means that helping verbs are used before action verb or linking verb to convey additional information regarding aspects of possibility (e.g. Will, would) or time (e.g. Was, did, has, and etc). While linking verbs connect the subject of a sentence to a noun or adjective that renames or describes it. The noun or adjective in this sentence called subject complement. To be (am, is, are, was, and, were) is the most common linking verb. These verbs are also used as helping verb. The other common linking verb (except to be am, is, are, was, and were) are to become, to seem, to appear, to taste, and etc.

Methodology

Method of research

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative is method that does not examine the hypothesis, it only describes about the variable, indicator or situation. This research identifies the students' ability in writing recount text, especially in using past verbs.

Site and participant

The participants of this research are students at the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo in 2015-2016 academic years. This research takes class X IPA 3 as the sample, which consists of 20 students. The participants are chosen based on the result of pre-observation. The students had learned about simple past tense, verb, and

recount text. Thus, it was necessary to test and identify their ability in writing recount text.

The technique of collecting the data

The data are collected through written test. In this case, the participants are asked to write recount text by considering the use of past verbs as one of language features of recount text. The topic is about experiences. The results of writing are taken as the data of this research.

The technique of analyzing the data

There are some steps conducted in analyzing the data of research. The first is Identifying the use of verbs in students' writing, the second is classifying the students' results of writing into the percentage categories, and the last step is analyzing the students' writing,

Problem evaluation

In calculating the frequency of students problems, it is used the following formula by Arikunto (2005:284):
$$X = \frac{\sum Xi \times 100\%}{N}$$

Where

X = the average of students correct verb

$\sum Xi$ =the total correct verbs

N =the total verbs

No	Classification	Category
1	Highest	81 - 100%
2	High	61 - 80%
3	Medium	41 - 60%
4	Low	21 - 40%
5	Lowest	0 - 20%

Arikunto states that the results of the percentage are classified into five classifications; highest, high, medium, low, and lowest.

The classifications are:

If the students correct verb between 81% - 100%, it was the highest ability in using past verb.

If the students correct verb is between 61% - 80%, it was high ability in using past verb.

If the students correct verb is between 41% - 60%, it was medium ability in using past verb.

If the students correct verb is between 21% - 40%, it was low ability in using past verb.

If the students correct verb is between 0% - 20%, it was lowest ability in using past verb.

Chapter IV

Findings

The students' Ability in Using Verbs at Recount text

The following data are presented based on the classification of percentage categories.

The highest (81 - 100%)

In this classification, the participants get around 81 -100% correct verbs. Here is one of the data taken from student 10.

Student 10:

The result of student's ability in using past verbs in writing recount text can be classified into the highest levels with intensity between 81 - 100%. In fact, the total verbs are 15 consist of. 14 correct verbs with percentage 94% and 1 incorrect verb with percentage 6%. The example student's incorrect verb is:

We prepared that all shift that we will use

In student's writing above, there is one incorrect verbs that the student used in his writing. It is the use of modal will. Student 10 is almost perfect in terms of writing recount text. It is only 1 incorrect verb which concerns with the use of modal auxiliary verb. In fact, the use of modal auxiliary *will* is only for future marker, not past tense.

High (61 - 80%)

In this category, participants get around 61 -80% correct verbs from the highest to lowest of the

total verbs in their writing. Here is the data taken from students' 2

Student 2:

Prior analysis classified this student in high level with the intensity between 61 - 80%. In fact the total verbs are 13, that Consist of 10 correct verbs with percentage 77% and 3 incorrect verbs with percentage 33%. This is the example student's writing:

We eat together yesterday, and we enjoy our talk.

In the sample of sentences above, there are 2 incorrect verbs that the student used in his writing, those are eat and enjoy. In this case, some words such as eat and enjoy are forms of presents. Student should use the past form, for example eat should be changed into ate and enjoy into enjoyed.

Medium (41 - 60%)

There are six students included into this category. They get around 41 -60% correct verbs from the highest to the lowest of the total verbs in their writing.

Student 7

This student's writing is classified into medium levels with the intensity 41 - 60%. The total verb is 12. Correct verbs are 7 with percentage 42% and the total of student's incorrect verbs are 5 verbs with percentage 58%. This is the example of student's writing:

I go to the beach last month. I see the beautiful sunset and many people there.

In the example of writing above, there are two incorrect verbs that the students used in his writing, they are go and see. There are no correct past verb found in that student's writing.

Low (21 - 40%)

In low category, the students' total verbs are 10 verbs. The correct verb are 4 verb with percentage 23% and the total of students incorrect verbs are 6 verb with percentage 77%. This is the student's writing

It is about 07:00 pm, and I am just alone in my house and I am watching tv. Suddenly I am

shocked because something happens in my house, and I run out of my house

The data showed that, there are 4 incorrect verbs, they are is, am, happens, and run. Is is a present auxiliary verb, thus student must use was as a marker of past tense. Some words such as run and happen are forms of present, so student should change it into past form.

Lowest (0 - 20%)

There are four students included into this category. Here is an example of data taken from student 18. This student is classified in lowest level with the intensity between 0 - 20%. The total verb are 12 consist of 1 correct verb with percentage 9% and 11 incorrect verbs with percentage 91%. This is the example the student's writing

When I go to school, I am late and when I arrived, the gate is closed. Finally I am waiting while play my games in my handphone.

Based on example of data, there are three incorrect verbs that students used in his writing. They are go, am, and play.

Discussion

The result of data analysis obtained shows that the students' ability in writing recount text is categorized into high level with percentage 61%. Furthermore, the students' ability is classified in five levels; highest, high, medium, low, lowest (Arikunto, 2005). The students in highest level (81% - 100%) are 6 students' with percentage 30%. The students in high level (61% - 80%) are 4 students' with percentage 20%, it shows that several students can use the verbs correctly. The students in medium level (41-60%) are 6 students with percentage 30%. It shows that the students are still confused in using past verb. Students in low level (21-40%) are 2 students with percentage 10% and the students in lowest level (0-20%) are 2 students with percentage 10%.

It can be summed up that the students did not understand the way of how to use past verb. In writing the recount text, students must concern on the use of simple past tense that consist of simple past tense, past continuous

tense, past perfect, and past perfect continuous tense. Based on the result of data analysis, it is found that students mostly use the simple past tense in their writing. While the use of past perfect and past perfect continuous tense are only found in some of students' writing. Moreover, the use of past perfect continuous tense is not found at all in students' writing.

So, it can be seen clearly that the students are still getting lack of knowledge about how to use the past perfect continuous tense in writing recount text, or in some cases of students' writings, it is found that there were no need to use past perfect continuous tense. Furthermore, because most of the tense used in students' writings is simple past tense, so most of the incorrect verbs are found in the use of verb II. Besides, students also make mistake in using auxiliary verbs was and were and modal verb such as could, would, had to, etc.

It has been explained in chapter I that most of students still make mistakes in using past verbs in their writing. This problem is mostly caused by the lack the learners competence. The students usually do not realize whether or not they are incorrect in using verbs, especially at recount text. When students have already finished that lesson, they will sometimes forget the rules of what they have learned in that lesson, especially about recount text, simple past tense and verbs. Beside that, the learners who still learn foreign language will make incorrect verb because English has different rule or language system with Indonesian language.

Furthermore in analyzing the students writing, it is found that most of students have idea about what they are going to write, but they do not know how to express their idea in written forms. This fact can be identified from students' result of writing that they do not use variety of verbs in expressing idea, they even make some repetition in using verbs.

Besides, most of students' ability is also classified into medium to lowest level. It means that most of them still have low ability in grammar, especially in the use of verbs in past tense. To overcome this problem, teacher should use more effective strategies or method in teaching grammar to students, also give them many practices of writing, and then give them

the feedback in order that they know their grammatical mistakes in writing. This might be helpful for the teacher to improve students ability in writing.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the students ability in using past verb in writing recount text can be classified into "high" level. The total verb of the

students correct verbs is 157 with percentage 61% and the total incorrect verb is 101 with percentage 39%.

The students in level 81% - 100% is 6 students' with percentage 30%,

the students in high level (61% - 80%) is 4 students with percentage 20%,

the student in medium level is 6 students with percentage 30%, and students in low level is 2 students with percentage 10% and the students in lowest level is 2 students with percentage 10%.

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