

## **THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES AND THEIR ABILITY IN RECOUNT TEXT WRITING**

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### **Abstract**

Junior high school students got many difficulties in recount text writing. They were difficult to tell past events or their experience in a good writing. Numbers of their experiences might support their recount-text writing. This research aimed to study if the numbers of the students' experiences are correlated to their writing achievement. Because the term 'experience' has a very general concept, the writer limited it into remarkable experiences. An experience turns to be a remarkable one if it gets a significance of notice and attention from the sensor. This research was conducted to one group, which represented the grade-eight students of SMPN 20 Bandar Lampung. The group was selected with Cluster Sampling Technique. Data were collected with a questionnaire and writing test. Then, they were analyzed with r-Product Moment. Based on the computation,  $r_{xy}$ : 0,618 was greater than the r-table in 1%: 0,449 and 5%: 0,349. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted, while the null hypothesis ( $H_o$ ) was rejected. The writer concluded that there was a correlation between students' remarkable experience and their ability in writing recount text.

*Keywords:* remarkable experience, writing achievement, recount text

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In Indonesia, unfortunately, English is not a mother tongue of any group. Indonesians learn it as their foreign language. They get defectively exposed to real English communication because there is almost no natural space to use English in Indonesia. They commonly learn and practice English in classrooms.

Furthermore, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Indonesia aims to improve students' language competences in both oral and written communication. The competence basically involves four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students ought to master these skills if they want to effectively communicate in their target language.

Writing is considered the most complex language skill. It entails four aspects which require the students to have outstanding comprehension. To produce a good writing, students have to combine and construct their ideas, and to choose appropriate words and arrange them into a good structure (Tribble, 1996).

Based on the writer's teaching experience at SMPN 20 Bandar Lampung, the grade-eight students got difficulties in expressing their ideas, feelings, and expressions of past experience or happening. They wasted much time in writing preparations and process. They were hard to find what they are going to write and tell, how to start the story, how to develop and organize their ideas, and how to make the ideas in a good writing; whereas these difficulties are in recount text writing.

Basically, recount text is a text genre which is used to retell a series of events or experiences in the past for the purpose of informing or entertaining (Purwanti, 2013). Because the students have to tell the past event or their experience, the numbers of students' experiences support their achievement in writing recount text. The assumption is that students with more experience have more ideas to be told, consequently they might stand out in the writing activity.

Experience is comprehension which human gets by doing and sensing something (Canadian Senior Dictionary, 1979). Experience, here, means everything that happened to students or they did in the past time.

However, not all events in the students' past could become a remarkable experience, which is stored in long term memory. Actions or phenomenon which are identified by their sensory devices, require attention and frequency to be stored in the long-term memory. The actions or phenomenon need to mark as remarkable to be stored more permanently in the brain (Field, 2003).

## 2. THE CORRELATION BETWEEN REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES AND RECOUNT TEXT WRITING ABILITY

Experience is knowledge or skill gained by doing and seeing (Oxford Dictionary, 2008). It suggests that experience is an accumulation of knowledge which gained from human actions and behavior.

Knowledge can be defined as an individual's own stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, and memories (Moreover, Alexander, Schallert & Hare in Hailikari, 2009). Every person has different knowledge.

Considering the discussed theories, in the context of teaching and learning process, experience is any knowledge which is gotten in and out of a class room. Students may receive the same information and experience the same thing in the class room. While out of the class room, they may receive different additional information. It may be from electronic media, private teachers, and family. Therefore, the writer argues that different information makes different knowledge and achievement. Moreover, the students' experience has a positive contribution in their achievement on what subject they lean in the class.

Basically, experience is constructed from the five senses of human being, which are eyes, ears, nose, hands, and tongue (Eggen and Kauchak, 2012). Those senses produce perception from sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Humans use those senses in every action. Through those senses they are able to get knowledge and understand their experience.

The sense of sight helps students to recognize other beings and learns colours, motion and distance. Then, the sense of hearing helps people to identify their world through audio and speech signals. Then, the sense of touch helps them to learn the world with feeling size, texture and shape of a thing. They are able to enjoy fine scents and know an unsafe condition by smelling. The sense of taste helps the people to differentiate sweet, hot, sour and bitter taste. These five senses mutually construct the their experience of the world. The following figure illustrates how experience is created.

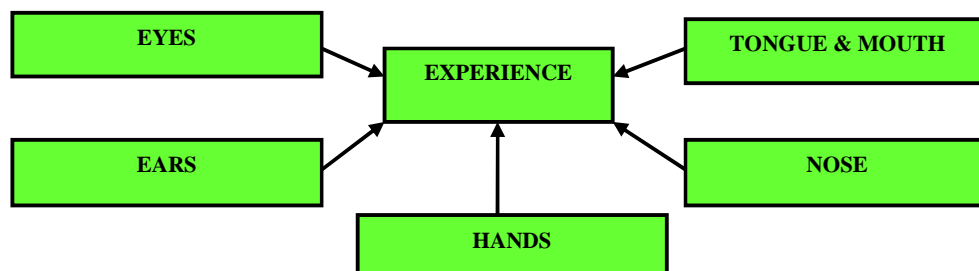


Figure 1. Experience Construction

Experiences are stored in human memory either temporally or permanently. Human memory is divided into two components, which are working and long term memory (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012). Working memory is short term memory (STM). It offers temporary memory for immediate past experience and some means to mentally represent the immediate environment and manipulate continually update the contents of that mental representation. It also supports the acquisition of new knowledge, problem solving and decision making (Logie and Gilhooly in Field, 2003). Working memory is the memory which is used to comprehend and to construct an understanding of experience. All conscious thoughts occur in working memory. What has to be considered is that the capacity of working memory is limited. Then, long term memory is a shed of human permanent information. The information which is stored well in human memory will be recalled from the memory if there is the information that relates to the previous information.

The process of storing experience in human memory includes stimulus, sensory tools, perception, short term memory and long term memory (Field, 2003). The following figure illustrates the relation of those elements.

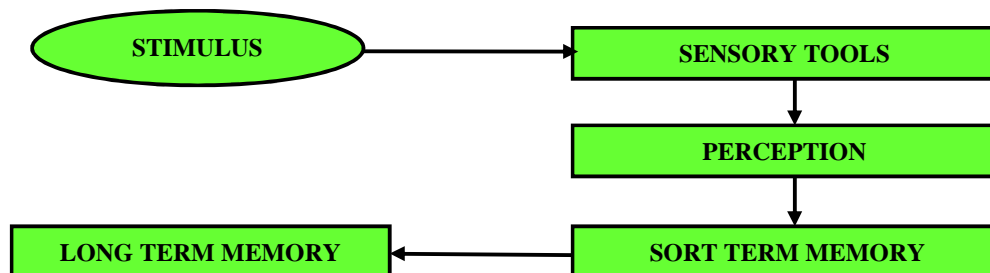


Figure 2. Process of Storing Experience in Human Brain

Figure 2. illustrates the storing process experience in human brain from a stimulus to long term memory. Stimulus is external events which received by sensory tools. Then, sensory tools are also called by sensory memory. They consist of memory subsystems. While, perception is what finally stored in short term memory (STM) and long term memory (LTM).

Remarkable is a worthy of notice or attention (Oxford dictionary, 2008). The term “remarkable” means quality of attention. An experience turns to be a remarkable one if it gets a significance of notice and attention from the sensor. Therefore, it becomes distinctive.

Students cannot take any benefit of their experiences if they do not give attention to them (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012). It means that the students’ attention is very important to understand well about subject which is taught by teacher.

In addition, the students must particularly give a perception to their experience. Perception is a process of posting meaning to the stimulus (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012). The students’ perception constructs their understanding on a stimulus, before it is stored in the memory.

All in all, remarkable experience is a worthy experience which is stored in human memory. Attention and perception are important to construct understanding of an experience. The more attention and perception which the students give to an experience, the more it is marked as a distinctive one.

Learning from experience as a reflection, cognitive activity is typically conceptualized as a cyclical or phase-like process (Dirkx and Lavin, 2003). Students’ experiences determine their cognitive development. Moreover, the students’ experiences influence their achievement in learning.

Furthermore, recount text is a kind of text which reports events or a person’s experiences (Djuharie, 2009). The goal of writing recount text is to tell and share the students’ own experiences. Recount text is also used to list and describe past experiences by telling events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining the audience.

In writing recount text, students have to pay attention on generic structure. Generic structure is elements of a text which match its purpose (Paltridge, 2000). Different purpose is represented by different generic structure.

Generic structure of recount text is divided into orientation, events, and reorientation (Purwanti, 2012). Orientation is an introduction or opening paragraph which introduces the characters, time, and place. Events are also called by supporting paragraphs which tell a series of past events and person’s experiences. Reorientation is paragraph that used to reemphasize characters/ time/ place/ events/ experience.

Besides, students also have to pay attention language features of recount text. Every text genre has different language features. Language feature is the language which is used to structure the text and achieve the purpose of text. Language feature of recount text writing consists of noun, past tense, conjunction, action verbs, and adverbs (Government of South Africa, 2012).

Noun consists of people’s name such as *Setiawan*, *Echa*, and *Djuhari*. It also focuses on individual participant such as *I* and *we*. Then, past tense is indicated by the use of V2 such as *went*, *run* and *ate*. In instance, conjunctions which are used in a recount text are *after*, *before*, and *soon*. While, the example of action verbs are *stayed*, *climbed*, and *killed*. Furthermore, adverbs used in recount text are *yesterday*, *slowly* and *well*. It also consists of phase adverbs such as *at home*, *at school* and *at bank* (Djuhari, 2012).

The best way to test students’ writing ability is to get them to write (Hughes, 1989). Moreover, by seeing their writing, the writer is able to assess their writing ability. From the score which they have in test, the writer will know whether the students’ ability in writing recount test is high or low.

Tribble (1996) divides an assessment for written works into five aspects namely content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics. Each aspect has five categorises. They are excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor, very poor and inadequate.

### 3. METHOD

Correlation method was used to find out the correlation between students' remarkable experience and their ability in writing recount text. There were 34 SMPN 20 Bandar Lampung students as the research sample taken by cluster sampling technique.

In this study, the writer used a questionnaire and writing. Questionnaire is widely used to collect required information in a scientific research. A good questionnaire allows the writer to get the same types of information of factual data which will be analyzed quantitatively and systematically from a large number of people in the same way (Leung, 2001).

In this research, questionnaire was used to measure the quantity of students' remarkable experience. The questionnaire had 50 questions with multiple choices. The students chose the best answer based on their own experiences.

To design the questionnaire, the writer adopted the ideas of a questionnaire which was designed by Pace and Kuh (1998) and used to observe the Indiana University students' behaviour. She replicated the questionnaire design to obtain the data on the SMPN 20 Bandar Lampung students' remarkable experience. Moreover, the questionnaire was designed along with the understanding that experience is constructed by human with his five sensory devices. Each question addressed to the sensory devices. Then, the questionnaire was designed with regard to an interview. Because the writer had to interview the student one by one to get the information accurately, it conducted two times. The interview was used to understand the students' behaviour and achievement in their school.

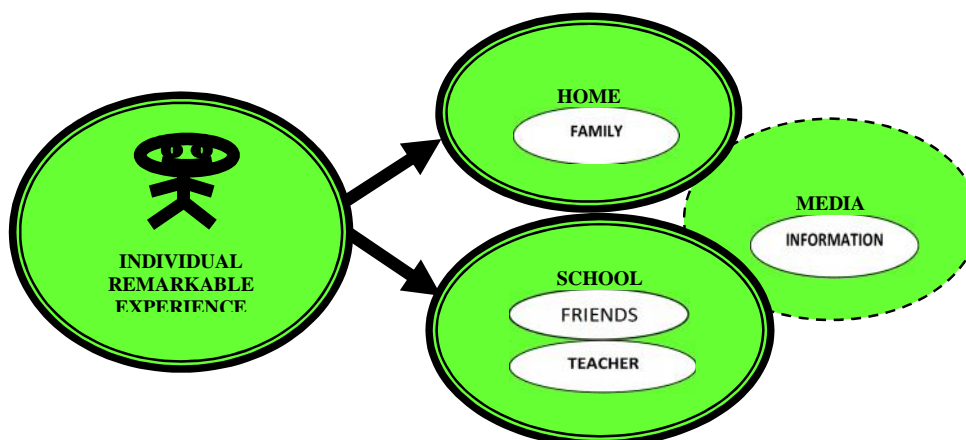


Figure 3. Scopes of Students' Experience

Based on the interview, the questions in the interview was categorised into three scopes, namely home, school, and electronic media. Home was the place where a student got many experiences. He did many interactions with his family. Those interactions constructed his experiences. Then, school was the place where a student got academic experiences. The academic experiences were constructed from any interactions with his friends and teachers. Furthermore, electronic media was a media which gave a wide range of experiences. He was able to get many experiences from TV, radio, tape recorder, and internet. With media, he was able to see the extensive life and did interaction with more people.

Writing test was given to the students in order to measure students' ability in recount text writing. The students were asked to write a recount text. They had to choose one of the following topics: education, love, fashion, and technology. The test was administered in 60 minutes. The students have to write minimum 100 words. The scoring system applied to score the students' writing is designed by Tribble (1996). The system includes five aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics.

The equation of r-Product Moment was applied to analyse the students' scores in the questioners and the writing text. The equation of r-Product Moment is presented as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \cdot \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{(N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

df = N - 2

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the statistic analysis using r-Product Moment, it was obtained that  $r_{xy}$  was 0.618. Then,  $df$  was 33. The critical value or  $r$ -table with  $df$  32 in the 5% significant level was 0.349 and in the 1% significant level was 0.449. Therefore, the writer concluded that  $r_{xy}$  was greater than the critical value both in the 5% and 1% significant level. On the other words, 0.618 was greater than 0.349 and 0.449. Moreover, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_o$ ) was rejected.

The writer took some students to be illustrated in the table. She chose three students who got the highest score from the questionnaire, got the highest score in writing test too. Then, she chose three students who got the lowest score from the questionnaire, got the lowest score in writing test too. Those scores can be seen clearly in the following table.

Table 1: Sample of Students' Score of Questionnaire and Writing Test

Students' Name	Students' Score of Remarkable Experience (X)	Students' Score of Writing Recount Text Ability (Y)
Angela Putri T.N	65	80
Rizky Zulian P	63	80
M. Andhika	62	70
Bayu Kuswanto	33	40
Yoga Andriansyah	37	40
Tia Lestari	38	50

From the table above, it can be seen that Angela Putri T.N, Rizky Zulian. P, and M. Andhika got the high score in remarkable experience test and they got the high score in writing test too. Then, Bayu Kuswanto, Yoga Andriansyah, and Tia Lestari got the low score in remarkable experience test and they got the low score in writing test too. Based on those scores, the writer was confident that numbers of students' experiences support their achievement in writing recount text.

Experience is everything that happened to students or they did in the past time (Canadian Senior Dictionary, 1979). So many events were in the students' past life. However, not all events in their past could become an experience which is stored for a long time in their memory. Actions or phenomenon which are identified by their sensory devices, require attention and frequency to be stored in the long-term memory. The actions or phenomenon need to mark as remarkable to be stored more permanently in the brain (Field, 2003).

Recount text is a text which tells a series of past events or experience for the purpose of informing or entertaining (Purwanti, 2013). To write a recount text, the students have to recall their prior knowledge and experiences first. Then, they compose them into a good text.

However, not all experiences could be recalled while the students were writing. The experiences which could be recalled by the student were only the remarkable ones, which were stored permanently in the long-term memory. Therefore, the students with many remarkable experiences had a lot of ideas to write. Then, their writing content could be developed better than the students with less remarkable experiences. If the remarkable experiences were related to the academic field, they gave better mental cognition. The students had an ability to construct their writing with a good content, organization, vocabulary, language and mechanic (Dirk and Lavin, 2003).

The writer suggested that the students' remarkable experience gave a positive contribution in their ability recount text writing. The more remarkable experience a student gets, the better ability in recount text writing he has. The lesser remarkable experience a student gets, the worse ability in writing recount text he has.

#### 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the data which had been collected and analyzed, the writer concluded that there was a correlation between the students' remarkable experience and their ability in writing recount text of grade eight of SMPN 20 Bandar Lampung. The conclusion was taken based on three considerations. The considerations were the average score of the students' remarkable experiences, the average score of the students' recount text writing ability, the statistic analysis of the correlation between the students' remarkable experiences and their ability in writing recount text which was applied to the sample.

Based on the result of the study, the writer has some recommendations for English teachers, students and further researcher. There are three recommendations given for English teachers. First, it is essential for English teachers to know that one of the factors of students' recount text ability is students' remarkable experience. Second, they should motivate their students to learn from their own experience to improve

their ability to write recount text. Third, it is important for the English teacher to motivate their students to pay more attention on teaching and learning process, therefore they are able to take benefits from their experience on it.

To improve students' recount text writing ability, the writer gives two recommendations for them. First, they should practice their writing everyday by retelling past events or their experience to improve their ability in recount text writing. Second, they may practice recount text writing at school and home, or they may use social media to improve their ability in writing.

To make a better one related to this research, the writer has three recommendations for further researchers. First, the writer realise that this research still has some weakness in designing research instruments both writing test and questionnaire. She did not use the simple sentences in writing test instruction. Therefore, students did not understand what they should do and asked the writer to explain it. Moreover, the writer recommends further researchers to design writing test by using the simple instruction, so the students are able to understand it easily. Second, because the limitation of time, the writer did not does validity test for her questionnaire, she recommends further researchers to do validity test for their questionnaire. Third, this research is used to find out the correlation between the students' remarkable experience and their ability to write recount text. Therefore, the writer only focused on the quantity of the students' remarkable experiences. For further researchers, she recommends to observe the effect of quality of students' experience on their writing ability in writing recount text.

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