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A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP N 21 PEKANBARU IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXTS

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Abstract

Writing ability is defined as the level of skill or competence in writing. Since writing is more permanent than speaking, the writer should more careful and pay attention to the aspects of writing. Commonly, writing among students takes less attention in the process of its activities. They tend to take a long process and unorganized result. This descriptive research was supposed to study the ability of the second year students of SMP N 21 Pekanbaru in writing recount text. This study also aimed to identify the most difficult and easiest aspects of recount text for the students. The subjects of this study were 40 students from VIII. 5 class at SMP N 21 Pekanbaru. The data was collected by giving a written test to the students individually. The students were asked to write a good paragraph in term of recount text. Before doing the test, the students were given a model of recount text to remember them about a good form of recount text. There were five aspects that being assessed in this test, they are grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization and fluency. The data were scored by three raters. In analyzing the data, the rater used analytical scoring system that assesses five aspects of writing. The analysis found that the most difficult aspect of writing recount text for the students is organization, and the easiest aspect is mechanics. And finally, based on the data finding, the writer found that the students writing ability is on the moderate level.

Keyword : *Writing Ability, Recount Text.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complex process that allows the writers to explore thoughts, ideas or feeling, and make them visible and concrete. Writing encourages thinking and learning for it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed. As Braine and May (1996:60) has stated that writing clear sentences requires us to learn the rules of English grammar and mechanics such as the correct use of verbs and pronouns, as well as such of punctuations.

Writing skill is more unique than other skills. It means that we develop our idea, thoughts and emotions concerning in certain issue through such words. Since writing is more permanent than speaking, we should more careful in expressing our ideas, thoughts and experiences. So that, there are many aspects that should be paid attention in writing. Effective writing involves careful choice of words, their organization in correct order in sentences formation as well as cohesive composition of sentences. Grammar and spelling also should be paid attention. In addition, punctuations are one of the aspects that very affected in writing. All of the sentences will be nonsense without punctuation.

All of the writing aspects are necessary to help us to write. We will produce good writing when we use all of the writing aspects in the correct form and order. Writing activity helps us to think effectively. While writing, we keep our purpose in mind, and think about how to organize those facts in a coherent fashion. As Angelo (1980:5) states that writing is a form of thinking more actively and clearly. Petty (1980:362) defines writing as the mental which have physical act of forming letters and words. Furthermore, it also put words into sentences and sentences into paragraph.

In addition, writing a paragraph is the first step that should be mastered in order to write a good writing. Oshima (1999:16) in Yanti (2009:7), describes that a paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing, in which a group of related sentences develop one main idea. As Folse and friends (2001:3) describe the relationship of the writing terms. They are letter, word, sentence, paragraph and essay. Letters can be combined into a word. Words can be combined into a sentence. Sentences can be combined into a paragraph. Finally, paragraphs can be combined into an essay. According to Folse and friends (2001:49), a paragraph has four features. They are topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence and indentation.

The first is topic sentence. A paragraph has a topic sentence that states main idea. The topic sentence is the most general and important sentence in the paragraph. It can be at the beginning, in the middle or at the end, but it is usually at the beginning.

The second is supporting sentences. Good supporting sentences are related to the topic sentence and its controlling ideas. They give information that supports and explains the topic of the paragraph. They answer questions (who? what? where? when? and how?) and give details. Supporting sentences develop the topic sentence by giving reasons, examples, facts, statistics and quotations.

The third is concluding sentence. The concluding sentence is the last sentence of the paragraph. Its job is to bring the paragraph to a logical conclusion. There are many different kinds of concluding sentences. Two of them are restate the main idea and make a prediction.

The fourth is indentation. The first line of a paragraph is indented. This is easy to do. Just move the first line in about a half inch. On a typewriter or a word processor, this is about six spaces or the first tab stop position.

Furthermore, there are many aspects should be considered in writing. According to Hughes (1989:91), there are five aspects of making a good writing, they are: (1) Grammar. It is important to be mastered because it is the basic to understand a language. The basic grammar helps us to compose a text. In this case, we will discuss about recount text, so that the tense that is used is past tense. Not only about tenses but we also use linking word and action verb. (2) Vocabulary. Vocabulary is also one aspect that should be mastered before writing in order to write well. We should master to choose and use appropriate vocabulary. So, we can explore more deeply about what ideas we want to express. (3) Mechanics. Mechanics include matters such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Spelling is important in order to make a meaningful writing. The meaning will be changed if a word is misspelled. Punctuation is a command for the reader to raise his voice or drop his speed and stop reading. Punctuation also helps to convey clear meaning. If the writer misses it, the meaning will be changed. (4) Fluency. A paragraph is said fluent when the choice of structure and vocabulary consistently appropriate. (5) Form (organization). It is important for a paragraph to have form (organization), which means that all of the sentences in a paragraph discuss only one main idea. If the sentences in the paragraph are not related to the main idea, the paragraph cannot be said as a good paragraph because it has bad form.

In the KTSP curriculum 2006 for Junior High School, proves that writing become one of the components to measure students competence in English subject. Furthermore, Junior high school students are introduced to Genre or Text Types in learning English as the means of communication and information. If we want to write within a certain genre, we need to consider a number of different factors.

In junior high school, the students are expected to be able to write a text based on four genres of English texts, they are: descriptive, narrative, procedure and recount. However, not all of the texts are learned by the second year students of SMP N 21 Pekanbaru. They only focused on the kind of narrative, descriptive, and recount. Each genre is not only different in language features and generic structures, but also in social functions. Furthermore, the students have to write a text based on the genre components. So, they have to consider some aspects before writing a text. They also should be paid attention to vocabulary, spelling, fluency, grammar, and also punctuations of their writing.

The second year students have to master some kind of genres. One of the genres is Recount text. Recount is a text which retells events or experiences in the past. Its purpose is either to inform or to entertain the audience. There is no complication among the participants. However, recount is genre of text that writer will focus on. Recount text has complicated features such as social function, language features and generic structure. We should be comprehended about all of features because it can make us easy to write a recount text.

In this study the writer decided to use recount text as the test. The choice of this text is based on the syllabus of the second year students of junior high school. In addition, the writer believes that it is not too easy or too hard for the second year students. Moreover, the specific objective of this research was to find out the students' writing ability. In this study the recount text is limited to the students' past experiences.

Recount is a text which is retells events or experiences in the past. Its purpose is either to inform or to entertain the audience or reader. Recount text belongs to the non-fiction types

of text. Recount text is a text which list and describe past experience by retelling events in the order in which they happened (chronological order). The story can be in chronological order, but it can also switch from past to present. However, the purpose of recount text is to retell something that happened in the past and to tell a series of past event.

Actually, there are three different types of recount text: personal recount, factual recount and imaginative recount. (1) Personal recount is recounting an experience in which the author has been directly involved. (2) Factual recount is retelling an event or incident such as a newspaper, report, or accident report. (3) Imaginative recount is talking on a fictitious role and relating imaginary events, e.g.: a day in the life of pencil.

The features of recount text are: purpose, organizational structure/ generic structure and language features. The first is purpose. The main purpose of a recount text is to retell something that happened in the past and to tell a series of past event in the order in which it happened (chronological order). Recounts are written form to tell events with the purpose of either informing or entertaining their audience. Recount can be written, such as accounts of projects and field trips, science experiments, diaries, journals, magazine articles, etc.

The second is organizational structure/ generic structure. There are three part of recount text, they are: orientation, series of events and reorientation. The first part of the story provides an orientation. This is also called the setting. In orientation, the writer at least introduces the main character, the location and the time. It is also a background of information that can answer Who? When? Where? and Why? It gives explanation about who are the main characters in the story, when and where the story takes place and what sort of people they are.

Series of event is the second part of the story that contain the events that are identified and described in chronological order (tell what happened and in what sequence), usually in the past tense. The focus should be on the important participants in the event. Detail and personal responses included to add to the readers' or listeners' interest. It begins from the first event, followed by the second event to the last event. The sums of events depend on the creativity of the writer.

The last part of the story is reorientation. In reorientation, the writer draws a conclusion or gives comment about the story. Not all recount text closed by reorientation. It is optional.

The last feature of recount text is language features. The language features of recount text is introducing personal participant (I, my group, etc.), using chronological connection (then, first, etc.), using action verb (walk, read, etc.), and using simple past tense. In recount text, we do not find conflicts. The events happened smoothly. Recount applies series of event as the basic structure.

As written on the School Based Curriculum (KTSP 2006), the students required to mastery recount text both oral and written in the form of interactional and monolog by using the generic structures and language features of recount text acceptably. They also emphasized to comprehend the characteristics of recount text.

As one of the four skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing, writing also can be used for a variety of purposes. According to Harmer (2004:31-34), he divides it into two purposes. The first one is writing-for-learning, that role where students write predominantly to augment their learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language. The second one is

‘writing-for-writing’, where students directed to learn and write in various genres using different registers. In this study, writing means the students express their ideas about their personal experiences in written form, especially in form of recount text.

According to Huges (1998: 75), we have to set writing tasks that are properly representative of the population of tasks that we should expect the students to be able to perform. In addition, based on the syllabus of the junior high school students, they are expected to be able to write a simple recount text. So that, the writer gave a writing test to the sample students. They were asked to write a good paragraph in term of recount text based on the given topics.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research which is conducted to explain a condition in the present time including case, survey, development and correlation research which are done by observing or interviewing (Ruseffendi, 1994:30). He also explained that instruments are used to collect the data that will be used to answer the hypothesis.

This study consist of one variable since the writer wants to find out the ability of the second year students of SMP N 21 Pekanbaru in writing recount texts. Since the number of the population of this study was quite large, and have same characteristics, the writer took a sample using clustering sample. So that, the sample was 40 students from VIII. 5 class at SMP N 21 Pekanbaru.

In this study, the writer use written test to collect the data. In setting the test, the writer adjusted it with the syllabus of the second year students of junior high school. The students were asked to write a good paragraph in term of recount text based on the topics given. Event just one paragraph, they must write it based on the language features and generic structure of recount text. So, one paragraph representatives a good recount text. Their time is 30 minutes.

Before asking the students to do the test, the writer gave them a model of recount text first. The theme was an experience which telling about students’ school holiday experience. Then, the raters scored the students writing test based on components of writing, where the features of a recount text include there. They have generic structure in form/organization and language features in grammar, fluency and vocabulary.

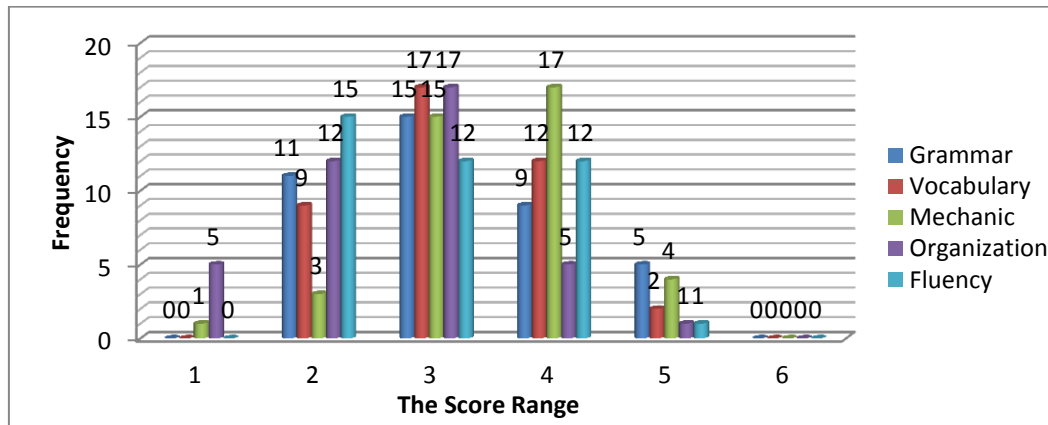
In scoring the students composition, the writer used the analytical scoring system which was quote from Huges (1993:91-93). There are five aspects that must be scored based on this system. They are grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization and fluency.

In this test, the writer assessed the language features and generic structure of recount text. In analyzing the language features, we can see from the score of vocabulary, fluency and grammar aspects. The used of personal pronoun and action verb can be included in vocabulary aspect. Furthermore, the used of time connective can be included in fluency aspect, and the used of simple past tense can be included in grammar aspect. In addition, the generic structure of the recount text can be included in organization aspect.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After getting the score of the students from each rater, the writer classified the students' score based on each rater as shown in the following chart:

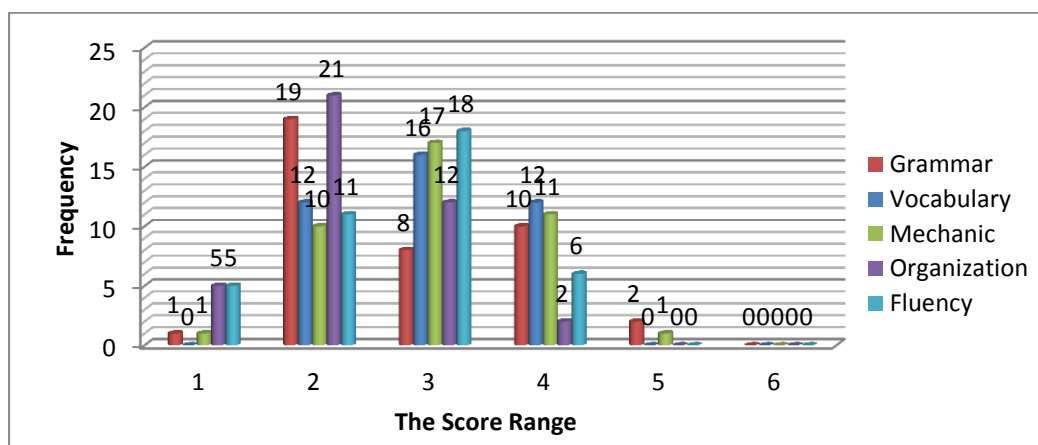
Chart 1
The Students' Score for Each Aspect of Writing Based on Rater 1



By looking at the result from rater 1, there are 40 students who took the writing test. We can see the students' score in each aspect of writing. None of the students got highest score.

After calculating the score in the graph above, we can conclude that the highest score got by the students is on mechanic. It means that the students have understood about the mechanic in writing, especially in writing recount text. They have understood about the punctuation, capitalization, and also spelling. On the other hand, the lowest score got by the students is organization. It means that the students have some problems in organizing their idea into written form. In recount text, the organization well known as schematic or generic structure where the organization of the text are divided into three areas. They are orientation, events and reorientation. In this case, the students have some problems in organize their writing into a good form of a recount text. Finally, the score range that many students achieved are 3.

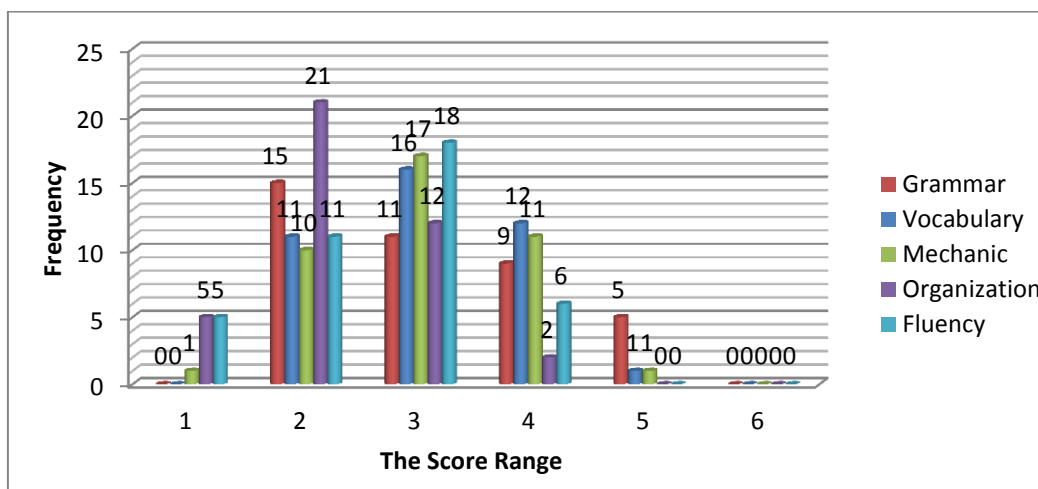
Chart 2
The Student's Score for Each Aspect of Writing Based on Rater 2



From the chart above, we can see that none of the students got the range score 6 and there are some students that got score range 1. From those score, we can say the highest score was got by the students is mechanic and the lowest score is organization. It means that the students have understood about the mechanic in writing recount text but they still have problem about the organization in writing recount text. They have understood about the usage of punctuations and capitalization and also about the spelling of words. So that, they got high score in mechanic. On the other hand, they not really understand about the organization or generic structure of recount text. They tend to write everything in their mind without consider about the correct organization or generic structure of recount text.

Chart 3

The Student's Score for Each Aspect of Writing Based on Rater 3

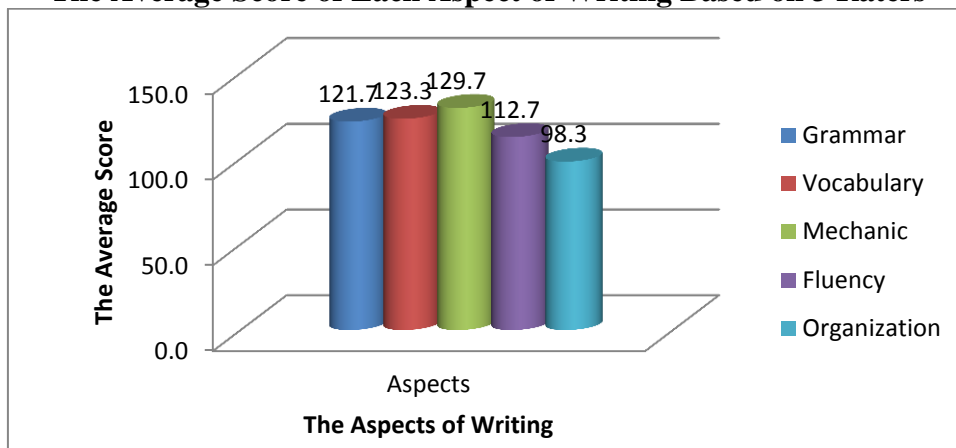


By looking at the chart above, we can see that none of the 40 students got score range 6. From the three charts above we can conclude that the students have problem in organize their idea into written form. They not really understand about a good form or organization of a paragraph. In fact, it is important for a paragraph to have organization, which means that all of the sentences in a paragraph discuss only one main idea. In this study, the organization is related to the organization of a recount text which well known as generic structure. So, it can be conclude that the students do not understand yet about the generic structure of recount text. They do not really understand about what they should write in the orientation, events and reorientation.

Furthermore, the students got good score in mechanics which is consist of punctuations, capitalization and spelling. It is very good for the students to have a good score in mechanics because without good mechanic, their writing will be nonsense.

Besides, the writer also presented the data according to the five aspects of writing. This data is the average score of each aspect of writing based on the three raters as can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 4
The Average Score of Each Aspect of Writing Based on 3 Raters



From the chart above, we can see the average score of each aspect of writing based on the three raters. We can analyze each aspect that was assessed in this research in writing recount text. The aspects that were assessed are language features and generic structure of recount text. The language features are about personal pronoun, action verb, time connective and simple past tense. The generic structure is about the organization of the recount text.

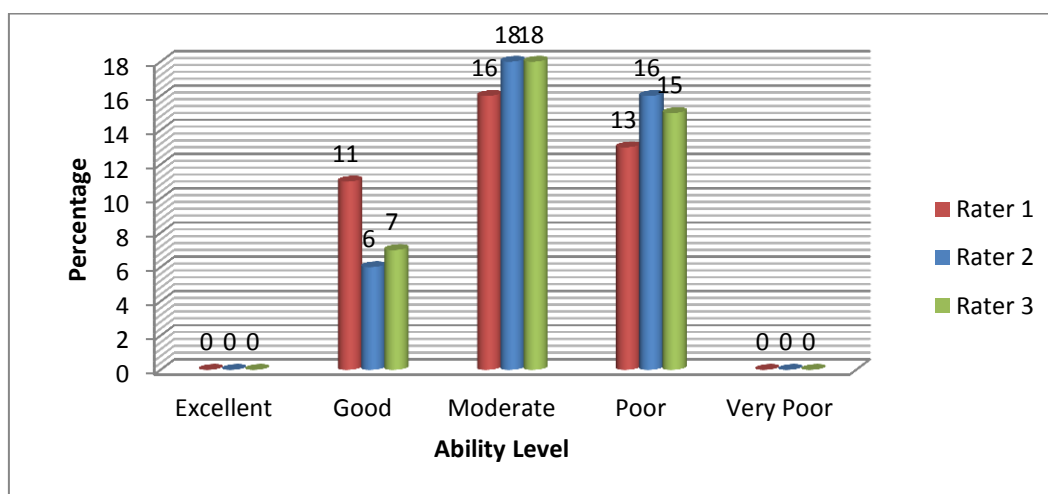
In analyzing the language feature, we can see from the score of vocabulary, fluency and grammar aspects. The used of personal pronoun and action verb can be included in vocabulary aspect. Furthermore, the used of time connective can be included in fluency aspect, and the used of simple past tense can be concluded in grammar aspect. In addition, the generic structure of the recount text can be included in organization aspect.

Finally, we can conclude that the students still have problem in understanding the generic structure of recount text. It is proven by the average score of organization aspect (98.3). On the other hand, the students have understood about the used of personal pronoun and action verb in writing recount text. It is proven by the average score of vocabulary aspect (123.3). Moreover, the students have comprehended in using time connective in writing recount text. They know how to use time connective in their writing, so that their writing have a good fluency aspect (112.7). In addition, they have comprehended in using simple past tense in writing recount text. So that, they got good score in grammar aspect (121.7). Finally, the students got highest score in mechanic aspect (129.7). It means that they have good comprehension in using punctuation and capitalization in their writing. Not only that, but they also have good spelling.

After analyzing the data, the writer made a percentage of students' ability in writing a recount text as follows:

Chart 5

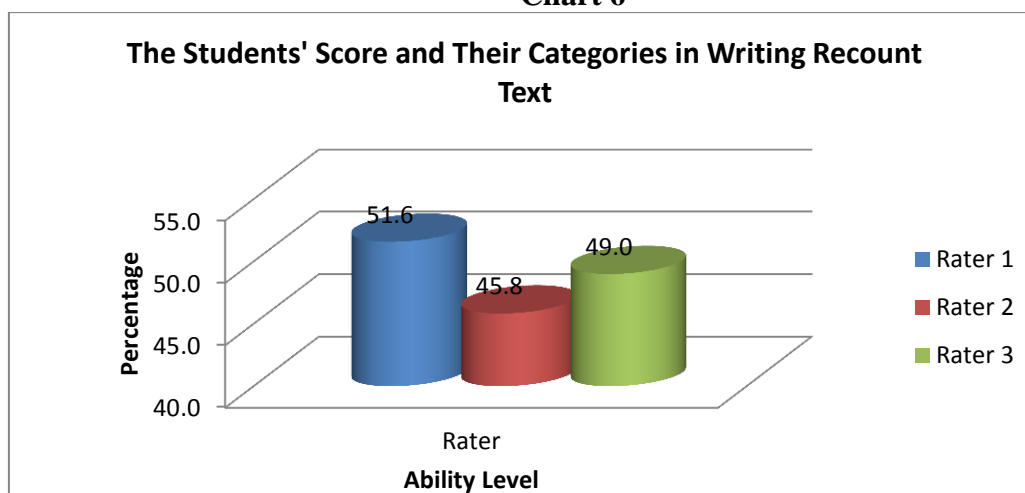
The Percentage of Students' Ability in Writing Test



From the chart above, we could see the students' writing ability based on each rater. None of the 40 students reached level of 'Excellent' and 'very poor'. Many students can reach moderate level. After calculating the data by each rater above, below is the students' writing ability according to the three raters:

Chart 6

The Students' Score and Their Categories in Writing Recount Text



From the chart above, we can see that the students' score and the ability level in writing recount text based on the three raters. In the table, it is shown that the average score of the students based on the first raters is 51.6, which is considered as moderate level. Next, the average score of the students based on the second rater is 45.8, which is also classified into moderate level. And the average score based on the third writer is 49.0 which is also considered as moderate level. After calculating the average score of the three raters, the

writer found the mean score of the students, which is 48.8 and considered to be moderate level.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to know the students' ability in writing recount text and to find out the aspects of a recount text which is the most difficult and the easiest for the students in writing a recount text. In this research, the students are provided with three topics and they are free to choose one topic in writing a recount text. After taking the data and analyzing it, the writer found that the students' ability in writing recount text and the most difficult and easiest aspects of writing for students.

Finally, based on the data findings and the presentation of the data above, the writer found that the ability of the second year students of SMP N 21 Pekanbaru in writing recount text is at moderate level. It is proven by the mean score of the students' ability on the real score of the three raters that is 48.8, which is considered as moderate level. In addition, the writing aspect that is the most difficult for the students is organization aspect and the easiest aspect for the students is mechanic aspect.

SUGGESTION

The conclusion above is the description of the second year students' ability in writing recount text at SMP N 21 Pekanbaru in academic year 2012/2013. Most of them just reached poor and moderate level, and only some of them that reached good level in writing a recount text. So, the writer would like to give some suggestions.

For the students, they have to develop their skill in grammar, vocabulary and organization, because those are important factors in learning English especially in writing which is more permanent than speaking. In addition, they should motivate themselves in writing and be active in the class and they also have to keep practicing in writing frequently in order to produce a good writing.

Furthermore, for the teachers, they need to motivate and improve students' proficiency in English. So, they can more interest to studying English. Finally, this research can be guidance for other writers to conduct an action research about students' writing ability in order to improve the student's ability that have been found in this research.

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