

## **Students' Difficulties in Writing Report Text at Grade IX of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai**

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**Abstract:** This paper is about the students' difficulties in writing report text. Report text means a text which can be written out with descriptive technique. The elements of report text are generic structure and significant lexicogrammatical features. The methodology used in this paper was qualitative research. It was used to identify the generic structure and the significant lexicogrammatical features which were conducted in student's writing report text. The subjects were the students of the IX-1 class of SMP N 5 Tanjungbalai. The data were collected by the observation. Then, they were analyzed by identifying, and classifying the generic structure and lexicogrammatical features of students' writing. The researcher found out that the students in the IX-1 class still had the problems in writing significant lexicogrammatical features. However, they were able to write generic structure. They had difficulty in determining the tense and the attribute of a topic in report text. In short, the students of the IX-1 class did not know how to write the report text well. The researcher suggests the teachers to take the main role in explaining the report text by using the generic structure and significant lexicogrammatical features making the students easier to understand.

**Key Words:** students' difficulties, report text, writing

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### **I. Introduction**

English has become an important device that takes important roles in communication. Now, we are entering the global information where every nation in the world shares information in English. For this reason, English should be mastered well by every body. There are four major aspects in English, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of the four skills that have always formed part of the syllabus in teaching English. Writing is a product which is influenced by some elements such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary. In the third year of Junior High School, the basic competency that should be achieved in the writing English subject is the students should have the competence to develop and produce short functional text about procedure, report, and narrative text.

However, based on the researcher's experience in teaching English in Junior High School, the researcher found that the students were not interested in writing. They felt bored to write a paragraph or a text. In fact, the students always find many difficulties in writing a paragraph. Most of their difficulties are in recognizing the vocabularies, grammar, spelling and punctuations that are related to the paragraph. It means that the teachers should be able to improve students' competence in writing all genres of writing, especially in writing a report text. If the students want to write, he/she should plan the topic to be discussed and plan the sentences, which are aimed to develop and explain the topic such as topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences.

Since writing is important for the students, the teacher should continue developing some techniques for teaching writing so that they can help students to improve and master their writing competence. Many efforts have been done in improving writing competence of the students. One of them is teaching writing by using generic structure and lexicogrammatical features.

In this case, the researcher focuses on generic structure and lexicogrammatical features in students' difficulties in writing report text at grade IX of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai. Generic structure and lexicogrammatical features are needed to guide the students in improving their writing. What the researcher wants to analyze from the research is the student's difficulties in writing report text. Therefore, the research question raised by the researcher is: "What are the students' difficulties in writing report text at grade IX of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai?"

### **II. Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Writing**

Writing skills are complex and difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgment elements. The following analysis attempts to many group and varied skill necessary for good prose into four main areas such as the following: a) grammatical skills, it is the

ability to write correct sentences, b) Stylistic skills, it is the ability to manipulate sentences, and use of language effectively, c) Mechanical skills, it is the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language, example: punctuation, spelling. d) Judgment skills, it is the ability to write an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information (Heaton, 1975:138). The ability to write for a particular audience using the most appropriate kind of language is essential for students. The usage of correct word becomes an important skill at advanced levels of writing. The important thing in writing production items is to give the maximum context in a short item. In other words, in order to make sure that the student will produce the words that contain the problems, which are given as clear a set of clues as can be packed into the item (Lado, 1964:90). In relation to this research, writing means a process of communication that convey idea or opinion in the writing form which is done by students and having the purpose to help the students to establish, to entertain, to inform and to explain a particular register.

## **2.2 Text**

Richards and Schmidt (2002:549) defines text as a segment of spoken or written language that has the following characteristics:

1. It is normally made up of several sentences that together create a structure or unit, such as a letter, a report, or an essay (however one word texts also occur, such as DANGER on a warning sign).
2. It has distinctive structural and discourse characteristics
3. It has a particular communicative function or purpose
4. It can often only be fully understood in relation to the context in which it occurs.

While Delahunty and Garvey (2010:6) states that when people communicate, they produce texts. A text always occurs in some medium, which may be auditory, visual, tactile, or some combination of these. Texts also always occur in some channel, that is, the environment through which the medium travels from the text's procedure(s) to its receiver(s) and it may incorporate non-linguistic elements such as pictures, diagrams, music, and etc.

## **2.3 Genre**

The notions 'genre' and 'grammar' are closely linked. In the materials being produced about genres and their teaching, at least those written by systemic linguists, characteristic lexicogrammatical features of genres are provided. These are neither incidental nor accidental, nor optional extras. Lexicogrammatical features of various genres are integral to those genres, for it is through the lexicogrammatical choices that meaning is built up in a text. Different genres deploy the resources for meaning making through the grammar in different ways. For example, Report, which describes the way things in the world, and intends to use relational processes and generic participants (example: kangaroos are marsupial mammals; they have pouches and the young is born highly immature). Students are taught these features and a language for talking about language (a metal language) in the context of learning how these features contribute to the overall meaning of texts they are reading or writing. They do recognize, however, that some genres are more valued than others in the context of schooling. To give all students access to the valued genres is therefore a matter of equity. Genres represent potentials, within which individual creativity. There are fourteen of genres in writing, they are: Spoof, Recount, Report, Analytical Exposition, News Items, Anecdote, Narrative, Procedure, Description, Hortatory Exposition, Explanation, Discussion, Reviews, Commentary (Gerot and Wignell, 1994:192-223).

## **2.4 Report Text**

Report is a text which can be written out with a descriptive technique. It describes an object to the readers. The length of the text depends on the specific details of the object being described. A report may be defined to describe the way things are, with reference to a range of natural, man-made and social phenomena in our environment (Gerot and Wignell, 1994:196).

A report text has some elements, they are: Generic Structure and Significant lexicon grammatical feature.

Generic Structure of Report Text

1. General Classification: tells what the phenomenon under discussion is
2. Description : tells what the phenomenon under discussion is like in terms of :  
Part (and their functions)  
Qualities  
Habits or behaviours, if living: uses, if non-natural.

Significant lexicogrammatical features

1. Focus on generic participants

2. Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is. These relational processes have largely been written about abstractly and even metaphorically, however, rather than in terms of specific exchanges at the local level of the interaction, such as: be, feel, become, remain, turn into, grow into, seem, appear, look, measure, function as, mean, make, include, form, express, consider, have/has, need, consists of (Halliday&Matthiessen, 2004).
3. Use of simple present tense
4. No temporal sequence.

#### Example of Report Text

##### **Whales**

Whales are sea living mammals. They therefore breathe air but cannot survive on land. Some species are very large indeed and the blue whale, which can exceeds 30 m in length, is the largest animal to have lived on earth. Superficially, the whale looks rather like a fish, but there are important differences in its external structure; Its tail consists of a pair of broad, flat, horizontal paddles (the tail of a fish is vertical) and it has a single nostril on top of its large, broad head. The skin is smooth and shiny and beneath, it lays a layer of flat (blubber). This is up to 30 cm in thickness and serves to conserve het and body fluids.

(Gerot and Wignell, 1994:197)

#### Generic Structure analysis:

- General Classification** : Whales are sea living mammals.  
**Behavior** : They therefore breathe air but cannot survive on land.  
**Quality** : Some species are very large indeed and the blue whale, which can exceeds 30 m in length, is the largest animal to have lived on earth. Superficially, the whale looks rather like a fish, but there are important differences in its external structure.  
**Parts** : Its tail consists of a pair of broad, flat, horizontal paddles (the tail of a fish is vertical) and it has a single nostril on top of its large, broad head. The skin is smooth and shiny and beneath, it lies a layer of flat (blubber). This is up to 30 cm in thickness and serves to conserve het and body fluids.

#### Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

- Focus on generic participants** : Whales, sea living mammals, they, some species, the blue whale, the whale, its, tail, the tails of a fish, it, the skin, a layer of fat, this, heat and body fluids.  
**Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : Exceed, looks, consists of, has, is.  
**Use of simple present tense** : Breathe, survive, exceeds, looks, consists of, has, lies, serves, to conserve.  
**No temporal sequence**

### **III. Methods**

The research applied qualitative methods. The researcher obtained the data bycollecting the data from students after they had written their report text. Then, the researcherread the students' writing,identified, classified the generic structure and the lexicogrammatical features of the students' writing. The researcher uses primary data for the research. The data deals with what happen in teaching-learning activities. The researcherobserved directlythe teaching learning classroom realities for taking the data. The data were taken from the students' writing report text about "Computer" topic inIX-1 class of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai.

### **IV. Data Analysis**

#### **4.1Data 1**

##### Computer

A computer is an electronic device that manipulates information, or "data." It had the ability to store, retrieve, and process data. You can use a computer to type documents, send email, and browse the internet. You can also use it to handle spreadsheets, accounting, database management, presentations, games, and more. There was four parts of computer, they are: Monitor, Keyboard, Mouse, and CPU. The function as monitor was to show us what work the computer carries out. This has a power (on/off) switch, turning the monitor off does not turn off the computer. There may also be other buttons to be used for adjusting the image. Otherwise, Keyboard's function is to make of several small buttons called 'keys'. Each key corresponds to a number or a letter or some special function. Just as you use a pencil to write on a paper, the computer needs a keyboard to

tell it what to do. The mouse's function is a pointing device that controls the movement of a pointer on the screen. It can have one to three buttons that can be clicked to perform actions on the computer. CPU (Central Processing Unit) is the brain of the computer. It controls all the different parts of the body and makes them work together, controls all other parts of the computer and makes them work together.

Generic structure analysis:

- General Classification** : Computer is an electronic device that manipulates information, or "data."
- Behavior** : It had the ability to store, retrieve, and process data. You can use a computer to type documents, send email, and browse the internet.
- Quality** : You can also use it to handle spreadsheets, accounting, database management, presentations, games, and more.
- Parts** : There was four parts of computer, they are: Monitor, Keyboard, Mouse, and CPU. The function as monitor is to show us what work the computer carries out. This has a power (on/off) switch, turning the monitor off does not turn off the computer. There may also be other buttons to be used for adjusting the image. Otherwise, Keyboard's function is to make of several small buttons called 'keys'. Each key corresponds to a number or a letter or some special function. Just as you use a pencil to write on a paper, the computer needs a keyboard to tell it what to do. The mouse's function is a pointing device that controls the movement of a pointer on the screen. It can have one to three buttons that can be clicked to perform actions on the computer. And the last is, CPU (Central Processing Unit) is the brain of the computer. It controls all the different parts of the body and makes them work together, controls all other parts of the computer and makes them work together.

Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

- Focus on generic participants** : A computer, it, you, the computer.
- Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : is, had, has, was, function as, needs, makes.
- Use of simple present tense** : manipulates, store, retrieve, process, use, type, send, browse, handle, show, carries out, has, make, corresponds, needs, tell, do, controls, have, perform, controls, makes.

From the analysis of generic structure the student has written the general classification, behavior, quality and part of the computer. Otherwise, based on the lexicogrammatical features, the student also has written the generic participant, relational process and using simple present tense. But, in using tenses, the student still confused and did not understand the rules of tenses, which are used in writing report text. The student wrote the text by using simple past tense. Such as: It **had** the ability to store, retrieve, and process data. There **was** four parts of computer. The function of monitor **was** to show us what work the computer carries out. Otherwise, based on the rules of writing report text, the student should write the text by using Simple Present Tense, not with the other tense.

#### **4.2 Data 2**

##### **Computer**

A computer is an electronic machine. It operates under the control of instructions stored in its own memory that can accept data, manipulates the data according to specified rules, produce results, and store the results for future use. Computers process data to create information. Data is a collection of raw unprocessed facts, figures, and symbols. To process data into information, a computer uses hardware and software. Hardware is the electric, electronic, and mechanical equipment that makes up a computer. Software is the series of instructions that tells the hardware how to perform tasks.

Generic structure analysis:

- General Classification** : A computer is an electronic machine.
- Behavior** : It operates under the control of instructions stored in its own memory that can accept data, manipulates the data according to specified rules, produce results, and store the results for future use.
- Quality** : Computers process data to create information. Data is a collection of raw

unprocessed facts, figures, and symbols. To process data into information, a computer uses hardware and software. Hardware is the electric, electronic, and mechanical equipment that makes up a computer. Software is the series of instructions that tells the hardware how to perform tasks.

**Parts** : -

Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

**Focus on generic participants** : A Computer, It, Computers, Data, Hardware, Software.

**Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : Is, makes.

**Use of simple present tense** : Operates, accept, manipulates, produce, store, process, create, uses, makes up, tells, performs.

From the analysis of generic structure, the student has written the general classification, behavior, and the quality of the computer. But here, the student did not write the part of the computer. Otherwise, in Lexicogrammatical features, the student also has written the generic participant, relational process and using simple present tense well in writing the report text.

### 4.3 Data 3

#### Computer

A computer is a programmable machine. The two principal characteristics of a computer are: it respond to a specific set of instruction in a well-defined manner and it can execute a prerecorded list of instructions (a program). A computer is really a system of many parts working together. The physical parts, you can see and touch, are collectively called hardware. (Software, on the other hand, refers to the instructions, or programs, that tell the hardware what to do). A computer system consisted of mainly four basic units; namely monitor, keyboard, mouse and central processing unit. There were some functions of computer, the functions as: to accepts data or instructions as input, to processes data, and to gives results in the form of output.

Generic structure analysis:

**General Classification** : A computer is a programmable machine.

**Behavior** : The two principal characteristics of a computer are: it respond to a specific set of instruction in a well-defined manner and it can execute a prerecorded list of instructions (a program).

**Quality** : A computer is really a system of many parts working together. The physical parts, you can see and touch, are collectively called hardware. (Software, on the other hand, refers to the instructions, or programs, that tell the hardware what to do).

**Parts** : A computer system consisted of mainly four basic units; namely monitor, keyboard, mouse and central processing unit.

Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

**Focus on generic participants** : A computer, Characteristics of a computer, It, The physical parts computer system.

**Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : Is, are, consisted of, function as.

**Use of simple present tense** : respond, execute, see, touch, tell, do, accepts, processes, gives.

From the analysis of generic structure, the student has written the general classification, behavior, quality, and parts of computer. In lexicogrammatical features the student wrote the generic participant and relational process. But, the student did not write the sentences by using simple present tense well. Such as: **It respond** to a specific set of instruction in a well-defined manner. There **were** some functions of computer, they are: to accepts data or instructions as input, to processes data, and to gives results in the form of output. A computer system **consisted** of mainly four basic units; namely monitor, keyboard, mouse and central Processing unit.

The student did not write the rules of report text well. Such as the sentences "**It respond**" should be changed into "**It responds**". The rules of present tense, if the subject is the third singular person, the verb should be added with "s" or "es" in the last of the verb. Then, the student was also still confused of using tense in

his/her writing report text. The student used two tenses in his/her writing; they were simple present tense and simple past tense. Other wise, in writing the report text, the tense which should be used is Present Tense.

#### **4.4 Data 4**

##### **Computer**

A computer is a powerful tool. It able to perform the information processing cycle operations (input, process, output, and storage) with amazing speed, reliability, and accuracy; store huge amounts of data and information; and communicate with other computers. Computers allow users to generate correct information quickly, hold the information so it available at any time and share the information with other computer users. There are two categories of computer software: system software and operating system. System software consists of the programs that control the operations of a computer and its devices. Operating system (OS) coordinates all activities among hardware devices and contains instructions that allow you to run application software. There are also the important parts in Computer, they are CPU, Monitor, Keyboard and Mouse.

Generic structure analysis:

- General Classification** : A computer is a powerful tool.
- Behavior** : It able to perform the information processing cycle operations (input, process, output, and storage) with amazing speed, reliability, and accuracy; store huge amounts of data and information; and communicate with other computers.
- Quality** : Computers allow users to generate correct information quickly, hold the information so it available at any time and share the information with other computer users.
- Parts** : There are also the important parts in Computer; they are CPU, Monitor, Keyboard and Mouse.

Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

- Focus on generic participants** : A computer, system software, operating system, it.
- Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : is, are, consists of, contains.
- Use of simple present tense** : perform, store, communicate, allow, generate, hold, share, consists, coordinates, devices, contain, run.

From the analysis of generic structure, the student has written well the general classification, behavior, quality, and parts. In Lexicon grammatical features, the student has also written the generic participant, relational process and Using Simple Present Tense. But, the researcher has some difficulty in using simple present tense such as: It able to perform the information processing cycle operations (input, process, output, and storage). It available at any time. The sentences “**It able** to perform the information processing cycle operations (input, process, output, and storage)” should be changed into “**It is able** to perform the information processing cycle operations (input, process, output, and storage)” and “**It available** at any time” should be changed into “**It is available** at any time”. In the rules of Present Tense, if there is not verb, it should be made the auxiliary verb such as (is, are, etc) to change the position of verb in the sentences.

#### **4.5 Data 5**

##### **Computer**

A computer was a system for processing information. There were four important parts in computer, they are: Central Processing Unit (CPU), Monitor, Keyboard and Mouse. Computer received data from various sources and combined it with instructions to produce the desired results. With the more powerful processors available today, you can add other items to expand the computer's functionality. The functions as: Connecting to networks and the Internet, receiving process and sending information in many different ways.

Generic structure analysis:

- General Classification** : A computer was a system for processing information.
- Behavior** : Computer received data from various sources and combines it with instructions to produce the desired results.
- Quality** : With the more powerful processors available today, you can add other items to expand the computer's functionality. The functions as: Connecting to networks and the Internet, receiving process and sending information in many different

ways.  
**Parts** : There were four important parts in computer, they are: Central Processing Unit (CPU), Monitor, Keyboard and Mouse.

Lexicogrammatical features analysis:

**Focus on generic participants** : A Computer, Computer, it, you.

**Use of relational process to state what is and that which it is** : was, were, function as.

**Use of simple present tense** : produce, add, expand, receive.

From the analysis of generic structure the student has written the general classification, behavior, quality and parts. Next, based on the lexicon grammatical features, the student wrote the generic participants, relation process and using simple present tense. But, in using simple present tense, the student doesn't write it well, such as: A computer **was** a system for processing information. There **were** four important parts in computer. Computer **received** data from various sources and combined it with instructions to produce the desired results.

Based on the rules of simple present tense, the sentences "A computer **was** a system for processing information" should be changed into "A computer **is** a system for processing information" and the sentences "There **were** four important parts in computer" should be changed into "There **are** four important parts in computer". Then, the sentences "Computer **received** data from various sources and combined it with instructions to produce the desired results" also should be changed into "Computer **receives** data from various sources and combined it with instructions to produce the desired results". It means that, it should use simple present verb in writing the report text.

## V. Conclusion

Having analyzed all the data, the researcher comes to the conclusion, they are:

1. Based on the general classification of the report texts written by the students, it can be concluded the third year students of SMP Negeri 5 Tanjungbalai are able to write report text. However, there is one student who is not able to write it based on the generic structure.
2. Based on the lexicogrammatical features of the report texts written by the students, it can be concluded that the students have difficulty in using the correct tense. They used simple present tense, but they also used simple past tense in their writing report text. Then, they could not write the sentences by using simple present tense grammatically.

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