

## THE EFFECT OF APPLYING DIARY-WRITING ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

Ihsan Tanama Sitio

Universitas Sumatera Utara: Magister Bahasa Inggris,  
Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Medan, Indonesia  
ihsantsitio@gmail.com

Article History	Abstract
<p>Submitted date: 2021-11-27 Accepted date: 2021-12-04 Published date: 2021-21-28</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> diary-writing;; recount text; writing</p>	<p>This study aims at examining and finding out the effect of applying Diary-Writing on EFL learners' achievement in writing Recount text at grade nine of SMP Negeri 2 Siantar. The study was designed as a quantitative method with quasi-experimental design. Forty students of IX 5 and 4 were selected as the participants. The experimental class was treated using Diary-Writing while the control class was not treated using Diary-Writing. The data were gained from pretest, treatment and post-test. The pre-test was conducted in order to identify the students' basic ability and value before giving treatment. Temporarily, the post-test was conducted in order to identify the learners' achievement and significant effect after they were taught using Diary-Writing. The data shows that the difference or the improvement as the whole learners achieved in post-test from experimental to control class is 445 or 12,71 points of its average. The score of t-test (3,31) is higher than t-table (1,68) at the level of significance 5% of two tailed test. Hence, Null Hypothesis is deniable and Alternative Hypothesis is acceptable.</p>
<p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> menulis diari; menulis; text recount</p>	<p><b>Abstrak</b></p> <p>Pengaruh dari Penerapan Menulis Diari Terhadap Capaian Belajar Siswa SMP dalam Menulis Teks Recount Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji dan mengetahui pengaruh dari penerapan menulis diari terhadap capaian pembelajaran siswa SMP non penutur asing dalam menulis teks Recount pada kelas sembilan di SMP Negeri 2 Siantar. Penelitian ini dirancang sebagai metode kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen. Empat puluh siswa IX 5 dan 4 terpilih sebagai peserta. Kelas eksperimen diajar menggunakan strategi menulis diari sedangkan kelas kontrol tidak diajar dengan menerapkan menulis diari. Data diperoleh melalui pre-test, treatment dan post-test. Pre-test dilakukan untuk mengetahui kemampuan dasar dan nilai siswa sebelum diberikan treatment. Sementara, post-test dilakukan untuk mengetahui capaian dan pengaruh signifikan siswa setelah mereka diajar dengan menerapkan menulis diari. Data menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan atau peningkatan yang dicapai siswa secara keseluruhan pada post test dari kelas eksperimen ke kelas kontrol adalah 445 atau rata-rata 12,71 poin. Nilai t-test (3,31) lebih tinggi dari t-tabel (1,68) pada taraf signifikansi 5% untuk uji dua sisi. Oleh karena itu, Hipotesis Null ditolak dan Hipotesis Alternatif diterima.</p>

### Introduction

Since English as a foreign language in Indonesia has an important role in the improvement of almost any aspect of life, then writing is an essential skill to master. It channelizes one's knowledge and brain to the point of value. However, it is complex because one needs to pay attention to the rules and organization. Meyers (2005) said that writing is an activity, a process of establishing and organizing your thoughts, laying them down on paper and correcting as well as revising them. Moreover, Bitchener (2008) also said that in order to be capable in proper writing, one needs to master all elements related to it involving vocabulary mastery, grammatical knowledge, and the mechanics of writing. Nevertheless, learning to write entails

being able to communicate and convey thoughts and messages meaningfully. More and more learners write, the more their writing skills develop.

In relation to writing performance, there were some problems observed during teaching writing skill to the grade nine junior high school EFL learners at SMP Negeri 2 Siantar. Most of them, in fact, still had low motivation in writing. Speaking of problems in writing, Maharani (2017) found that junior high school learners often lack ideas and had limitations in knowledge on something new and even they found little enthusiasm to write. In support of that, Toba, Noor & Sanu (2019) noted that learners had difficulties in exploring and developing relevant ideas and they lack the transition of words, inconsistency of whole-to-whole and point-by-point structural composition as well. Similarly, Amalia, Abdullah, & Fatimah (2021) faced the same problems in teaching writing to junior high school EFL learners. They said that learners had the inability to generate new concepts for writing English passages and inadequate knowledge of English vocabulary. Those three findings represent the problems faced while teaching grade nine junior high school EFL learners at SMP Negeri 2 Siantar. Demotivation in writing, difficulties in constructing ideas, as well as the loss of best moments to put into writing were the main problems faced when teaching the learners.

Departing from the phenomenon above, Diary-writing, as a significant and perhaps most interesting process of writing, enables learners to write freely and continuously (Taqi et. al., 2015). Fulwiler (1982) argued that this manner of expressing feelings and uncovering eagerness to write helps learners enjoy the interaction with the process of writing so they devote themselves to writing class. In addition, Kosasih (2005) defined that a diary is a book containing the records of an individual nature, such activities will channel memorable experiences every day in the form of outpouring minds and hearts. Brown, Kristine & Hood (1989) added that diaries can be like a record of daily events, a holiday or a journey, a record of what has been learned, life issues, and a reminder note. Thus, diary is particularly related to Recount text. Recounting itself is an activity of telling people about something which has happened in someone's life (Mutslihah, 2016). It might be about what happened during the whole weekend or fascinating things that happened during holiday from the previous year or else. Moreover, Anderson and Anderson (2003) added that a Recount text is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the sequence in which they happened. By writing a diary, in which the date and events are chronologically constructed, one has implicitly written a Recount text as well, because both texts are basically identical with the events told chronologically from the beginning until the end.

Moreover, when it comes to free writing and self-exploration, Diary-writing is the best choice. It allows us to make notes of what we have in mind and put it into a piece of writing. Arslan (2014) also mentioned that this kind of writing gives many writers a lot of satisfaction. Writing a diary is excellent because in a diary someone will be able to acknowledge who we are. It is also important to keep track of what happens in our lives, both the exciting and routine events, as well as our thoughts and feelings about both.

Recount text, like all good English texts, has its own schematic structures. Anderson and Anderson (2003) pointed out three schematic structures of a Recount text, namely: orientation, series of events, and reorientation. The 'orientation' part provides all the necessary background information of what happened, who was involved, when and where the events happened, and why it happened. In 'series of events' part, the author tells how the characters react to the complication. The events can be told either chronologically or with flashbacks. In the end of the text, 'reorientation' part concludes the recount by summarizing the results of the events, evaluating the importance of the topic, and suggesting personal comment or opinion. Besides the three schematic structures, Recount text, added by Gerot and Wignell (1995) and supported by Anderson and Anderson (2003), has several linguistic features as well. They are namely;

specific participants, first person, material process, circumstance of time and place, additive conjunction, and past tenses.

By looking at the structures and elements above, it is obvious that a diary can be applied as a teaching strategy in order to teach Recount text to EFL learners in junior high school level. Both of them are basically and physically similar. Many related researches have been conducted recently by several researchers such as Barjestes et. al. (2011) who assumed that Diary-writing as a productive and creative writing activity for a writing classroom. Taqi et. al. (2015) pointed out that Diary-writing can be considered as one of the effective ways to increase learners' writing skills, it was useful to enable them to work in a free, unmonitored situation. Similar to them, Fauziah and Lestiono (2015) said that after applying Diary-writing learners were able to expand their ideas due to Diary-writing focused on their own experiences. In support of the previous studies, Baene, Harapan & Irmayana (2021) stated that Diary-writing can give significant improvement on EFL learners' writing ability because their research finding showed 'very good' results after applying Diary-writing.

The urgency of conducting the current study lies upon the importance of capability to write properly for junior high school EFL learners. It was found out that the more learners express their thoughts and ideas into writings, the better their knowledge gained. Luo (2019) supported the statement by saying that a large number of comprehensible language input can improve learners' selective attention and activate their cognitive process at the same time. Hence, the study covers the following research question: "*What is the effect of applying Diary-writing on the achievement of grade nine junior high school EFL learners' in writing Recount text?*". Thus, in connection to the research question, the objective of the study is to examine and find out the effect of applying Diary-writing on the grade nine junior high school EFL learners' achievement in writing Recount text.

## Method

This study used quantitative design. According to Creswell (2008), quantitative research is a method in purpose to test the validity of theories by examining the correlation among variables. In turn, these variables can be quantified, particularly on instruments, so that the numbered data can be analyzed through statistical procedures. Meanwhile, the data were obtained through experimental design. Ary, Jacob & Sorensen (2010) explained that experimental research deals with systematic manipulation of one or more variables which is examined to see what influence it has on another variable. The manipulated variable is called the independent variable or the experimental treatment. While the variable being observed and measured is called the dependent variable.

Table 1. Research Design

CLASS	PRE-TEST	TREATMENT	POST TEST
Experimental	X1	E	X2
Control	Y1	C	Y2

Note:

- X1 & X2 : Pre and Post-Test in experimental class
- Y1 & Y2 : Pre and Post-Test in control class
- E : Teaching by applying Diary-Writing in experimental class
- C : Teaching by applying conventional strategy in control class

## Population and Sample

Population and sample are two connected terms in research. They are required as the step and part in conducting the research. Population is all members of well-defined class of events or objects, meanwhile, sample is a portion of population (Ary, Jacob, & Sorensen, 2010). The population in this study is 188 junior high school English as a foreign language (EFL) learners of SMP Negeri 2 Siantar, Simalungun regency.

As for the sample was chosen by occupying purposive sampling. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2000) said, in purposive sampling, the cases are handpicked by the researchers to be included in the sample on the principle of the judgement of their typicality. The purposive sampling was used because the study aimed to give an improvement to the class whose learners' writing achievement and ability were low. The class then became the experimental one. Learners of IX-5 were as experimental class and learners of IX-4 were as control class. Each consisted of 20 students.

## Data Collection and Analysis

The data were obtained through a test. The test was to write and construct a Recount text which was held two times. The first was applied as a pre-test and the second was applied as a post-test. After the data were completely obtained, they were then analyzed through a statistical analysis following the theory of Hatch & Farhady (1982):

Finding mean score of each class:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

$\bar{X}$	= the average score
$\sum fx$	= sum of the raw score
$N$	= number of students

Finding standard deviation of each class:

$$S = \frac{\sqrt{\sum d^2}}{N-1}$$

$S$	= standard deviation
$\sum d^2$	= sum of mean deviation
$N$	= number of students
$1$	= constant number

Finding standard error of difference of mean:

$$SE (\chi^e - \chi^c) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{se}{\sqrt{N1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{sc}{\sqrt{N2}}\right)^2}$$

$SE (\chi^e - \chi^c)$	= standard error
$se$	= standard deviation of experimental
$sc$	= standard deviation of control
$N1$	= number of students of experimental
$N2$	= number of students of control

Testing hypothesis:

$$t_{test} = \frac{\bar{X}_e - \bar{X}_c}{SE (\chi^e - \chi^c)}$$

$\bar{X}_e$	= Mean of Post Test in Experimental
$\bar{X}_c$	= Mean of Post Test in Control
$SE (\chi^e - \chi^c)$	= standard error

## Results and Discussion

### Total Score of Pre and Post-Tests

The total score in the pretest of the experimental class was 1301. Here, it can be calculated that the score (mean) achieved by the learners was 65,5 on average. Then, in post-test, the total score they achieved was 1844 where the score (mean) was 92,2 in average. While the total score in the pretest of the control class was 1348. Here, it can be calculated that the score (mean) achieved by the learners was 67,4 on average. Then, the total score they achieved in post-test was 1586 where the score (mean) was 79,3 in average.

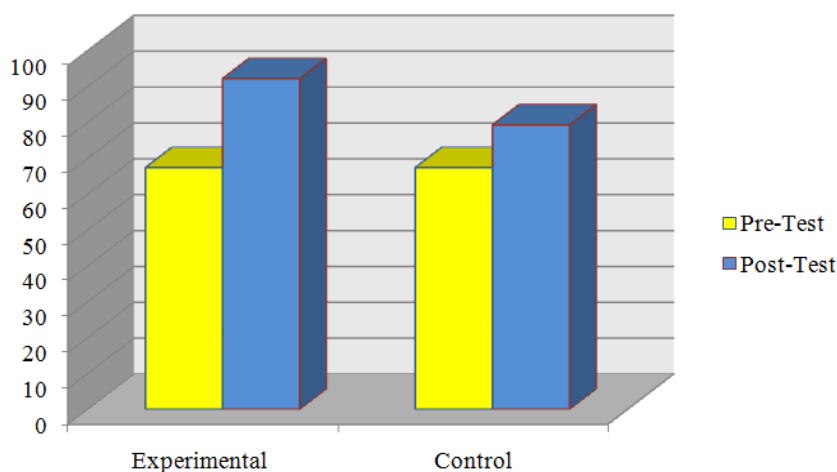


Figure 1. Chart of Progress of Students after Treatment

### Experimental and Control Class: Difference of Post-Test Score

The total value achieved by the learners in experimental class was 1844 and the average value was 92,2. In control class, the total value achieved by the learners was 1586 and the average value was 79,3. The modification or the improvement as the whole learners is achieved in post-test from experimental to control class with 302 or 15,1 points on average.

### Experimental and Control Class: Variance and Standard Deviation

The total sum of the respondents in applying the post-test were administered in the experimental class was 845,2 points. The points were necessarily involved in order to define the standard variation for post-test in experimental class which was compared in turn with the similar data at post-test in control class. The following was the standard deviation of post-test in experimental group:

$$\begin{aligned}
 S^e &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N - 1}} \\
 S^e &= \sqrt{\frac{845,2}{20 - 1}} \\
 S^e &= \sqrt{\frac{845,2}{19}} \\
 S^e &= \sqrt{44,48} \\
 S^e &= 6,66
 \end{aligned}$$

While the total sum squares of the respondents at the time of the post-test were administered in control class was 5.046,55 points. The points were necessarily entailed in order to settle the standard variation for post-test session in control class which was, in turn, compared to the similar data at post-test in experimental group. Here was the standard deviation in the post test of control class:

$$\begin{aligned}
 S^c &= \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N-1}} \\
 S^c &= \sqrt{\frac{5.046,55}{20-1}} \\
 S^c &= \sqrt{\frac{5.046,55}{19}} \\
 S^c &= \sqrt{265,61} \\
 S^c &= 16,29
 \end{aligned}$$

### Testing Hypothesis

Standard Error of the Difference of Mean:

$$\begin{aligned}
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= \sqrt{\left(\frac{se}{\sqrt{N1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{sc}{\sqrt{N2}}\right)^2} \\
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= \sqrt{\left(\frac{6,66}{\sqrt{20}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{16,29}{\sqrt{20}}\right)^2} \\
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= \sqrt{\left(\frac{6,66}{\sqrt{4,47}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{16,29}{\sqrt{4,47}}\right)^2} \\
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= \sqrt{(1,48)^2 + (3,64)^2} \\
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= \sqrt{15,43} \\
 SE(\chi_e - \chi_c) &= 2,14
 \end{aligned}$$

### Finding out T-Test

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_{test} &= \frac{\bar{X}_e - \bar{X}_c}{SE(\chi_e - \chi_c)} \\
 t_{test} &= \frac{92,2 - 79,3}{3,92} \\
 t_{test} &= \frac{12,9}{3,92} \\
 t_{test} &= 3,31
 \end{aligned}$$

### Finding out Degree of Freedom

$$\begin{aligned}
 df &: (N_e - 1) + (N_c - 1) \\
 &: (20 - 1) + (20 - 1) \\
 &: 19 + 19 \\
 &: 38
 \end{aligned}$$

T-table at 5% of level of significance is **1,68**

In accord with the hypothesis formula designed before, Null Hypothesis is excluded on the condition that the t-test was higher than t-table. Concerning with this phenomenon, the hypothesis can be constructed as below:

t-test > t-table of 5%

3,31 > 1,68

Since the score of t-test (3,31) is higher than t-table (1,68) at the level of significance 5% for two tailed tests, Null Hypothesis would be excluded and Alternative Hypothesis is recognised.

### **Discussion**

Following conducting research at SMP Negeri 2 Siantar, it can be shown that there was a considerable difference in learners' achievement in writing Recount text between those who were taught by the application of Diary-Writing and those who were taught by applying conventional teaching strategy. The finding of the research points out that the learners taught by applying Diary-Writing have better achievement on their abilities in constructing their own Recount texts than the learners taught by applying conventional teaching strategy. After applying Diary-writing, there were some things that EFL teachers needed to pay more attention to. First, most learners have difficulties to develop the content (Sadeq, 2015; Anggraini, 2018). They got confused about what story they would write. Secondly, learners could not express what they have experienced and felt (Februansyah et.al, 2020). They hardly chose the best moments to write. Last but not least, learners had no interest in English subjects and often got bored in the writing process. In those cases, it is the obligation of teachers to always remind them that learning English is basically fun and essential for them. Teachers should encourage them to get completely involved in the writing process and learners' perception on English should be enlightened well.

### **Conclusion**

The study found that the average value (mean) in the pre-test of the experimental class presents satisfactorily good with the score: 71,28. Thenceforth, the average value (mean) in the pre-test of the experimental class turns into a 'very good' result as the value or score is 92,85. It can imply that the average values are upgraded to 21,57 points. Therefore, it can be evaluated from the case that the learners' writing achievement in the experimental class is improved. The average values (mean) in the pretest of the control class show that the result is sufficiently 'good' as well and the score is 75,57. Later, the average values in the post-test shows that the result is 'good' with the score: 80,14. It resulted in the average values being increased to 4,57 points. Thenceforth, it could also be concluded that the learners' achievement in control class is improved in near minimum after training. The average result in the post-test presents that the experimental class could be higher than that of the control class with the score: 92,85 in the experimental class and 80,14 in the control class. Then, the difference or the improvement as the whole learners got from both experimental and control class is 445 or 12,71 points on average. It can be concluded that the hypothesis alternative (Ha), "there is a significant effect of applying Diary-Writing on the grade nine learners of SMP Negeri 2 Siantar's achievement in writing Recount text" is accepted. The process in applying Diary-writing can help encourage the learners' habit of writing. It is useful for them to memorize every moment as well as help them focus on their personal goals. The more they express their thoughts and ideas into writing, the better their knowledge gained. Thus, Diary-writing can improve junior high EFL learners' achievement and ability in writing Recount text especially the grade nine learners of SMP Negeri 2 Siantar, Simalungun regency, North Sumatera and it is suggested for EFL teachers to apply the strategy in teaching Recount text not only to junior high school level but also the senior high school one.

## References

- Amalia, H., Abdullah, F., & Fatimah, A.S. (2021). Teaching writing to junior high school students: A focus on challenges and solutions. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. 17(2) 794-810 <http://dx.doi.org/10.17263/jlls.904066>
- Anderson, M., and Anderson, K. (2003). *Text Types in English*. Australia: Macmillan Publisher.
- Arslan, R.S. (2014). Integrating feedback into prospective English teachers' writing process via blogs & portfolios. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 13(1), pp. 131-150. <https://www.researchgate.net/journal/Turkish-Online-Journal-of-Educational-Technology-2146-7242>
- Ary, D., Jacob, L., Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education*. 8<sup>th</sup>. Edition. USA: WARDSWORTH Cengage Learning.
- Baene, T.L, Harapan, R.A.M., & Irmayana, A. (2021). The Effect of Diary Writing Technique on Students' Writing Recount Text (A Study at the Ninth Grade of SMP Katolik Fatima 2 Sarudik 2020-2021 Academic Year). *JURNAL LINER (Language Intelligence and Educational Research)*, 4 (2), pp. 27-36. <https://journal.ipts.ac.id/index.php/LINER/article/view/2477>
- Barjesteh H., Vaseghi, R., and Gholami R. (2011). The Effect of Diary Writing on EFL College Students' Writing Improvement and Attitudes. *International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics (IPEDR)*. Vol.26 pp. 143-147. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/>
- Bitchener, J. (2008). Evidence in Support of Written Corrective Feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, Vol.17, 102-118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.11.004>
- Brown, Kristine, and Hood, S. (1989). *Writing Matters: Writing Skills and Strategies for Students of English*. Australia: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. 5<sup>th</sup>. Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Fauziah, E. and Lestiono, R. (2015). The Use of Diary Writing to Improve Eight Grade Students' Writing Skill at SMPN 3 Malang. *Erudio Journal of Educational Innovation*. Vol. 3 (1), pp. 24-31 <https://doi.org/>
- Febriansyah, V., Nugraha, I., Fajriah, Y.N (2020) An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Texts. *EEAL Journal (English Education and Applied Linguistics Journal)* <https://doi.org/10.31980/eeal%20journal.v3i2.1099>
- Fulwiler, T. (1982). *Journal Writing and Its Benefits in an Upper Intermediate EFL Class*. Columbia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- Gerot, L. and Wignell, P. (1995). *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Australia: An Introductory Workbook.
- Hatch, E.M., Farhady, H. (1982). *Research Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Heaton.
- Kosasih, E. (2005). *Intisari Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia untuk SMP kelas 1,2, dan 3*. Bandung: Bina Cipta
- Luo, N. (2019). Research on the Reading and Writing Integrated Teaching Model of College English Based on Critical Thinking. *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Culture, Education and Economic Development of Modern Society (ICCESE)*, Vol. 310, pp. 1031-1034 <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/iccese-19.2019.227>
- Maharani, M.M. (2017). Improving Students' Writing Through Diary Writing. *Proceedings The 1<sup>st</sup> · Education and Language International Conference*, Vol.1 (1), pp.473-478 <http://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/ELIC/article/view/1263>
- Mutsliah, N.M. (2016). *The Effectiveness of Diary Writing on Students' Writing of Recount Text*. Skripsi. Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah.



- Meyers, A. (2005). *Getaways to Academic Writing*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Inc.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sadeq, T. M. (2015). *EFL Writing Student's perception of the effect of Diary Writing*. The English Department, The college of Basic Education, Ardhya, Kuwait
- Taqi, H.A., Akbar, R.S., Al-Nouh, N.A., & Dashti A.A. (2015). The Effect of Diary Writing on EFL Students' Writing and Language Abilities. *British Journal of Education*. Vol.3, (2), 75-91 <http://www.eajournals.org/>
- Toba, R., Noor, W.N., & Sanu, L.O. (2019). The Current Issues of Indonesian EFL Students' Writing Skills: Ability, Problem, and Reason in Writing Comparison and Contrast Essay. *Jurnal Dinamika Ilmu*, Vol. 19(1), pp. 57-73 <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v19i1.1506>