

**A STUDY ON STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT AT XI  
GRADE OF SMK N 2 PEKANBARU**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to investigate the students' ability in writing narrative text at the XI grade of SMK N 2 Pekanbaru. Writing is a complex skill that requires learners to express ideas coherently while applying accurate linguistic features, and narrative text is one of the key genres taught in senior high school. A descriptive quantitative design was employed in this research. The population consisted of 856 students from all XI grade classes, and one class comprising 39 students was selected as the sample through purposive sampling. The instrument used was a writing test in which students were required to compose a narrative text based on a given topic. The students' writing products were assessed by three raters using five components of writing: content, organization, grammatical function, language use, and generic structure. To ensure scoring consistency, inter-rater reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a very high coefficient. The result revealed that the overall writing ability of the students fell into the average to good category. Specifically, five students were categorized as good to excellent, eighteen students were categorized as average to good, fourteen students were categorized as poor to average, and two students were categorized as poor. The findings indicate that while some students are capable of producing well-structured narrative texts, many still face difficulties in grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, and organizing ideas coherently. Based on these outcomes, the study suggests the need for more guided writing practice, explicit instruction, and continuous feedback to help students improve their narrative writing performance.*

*Keywords: writing ability, narrative text, students' performance, public vocational high school, descriptive quantitative research*

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks naratif pada kelas XI SMK N 2 Pekanbaru. Menulis merupakan keterampilan yang kompleks karena menuntut siswa untuk mampu menyampaikan gagasan secara koheren serta menggunakan unsur kebahasaan yang tepat. Teks naratif menjadi salah satu genre penting yang diajarkan di jenjang sekolah menengah karena

melatih kreativitas, ketepatan bahasa, dan kemampuan mengembangkan alur cerita. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kuantitatif. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 856 siswa dari seluruh kelas XI, dan satu kelas yang terdiri atas 39 siswa dipilih sebagai sampel melalui teknik purposive sampling. Instrument penelitian berupa tes menulis, di mana siswa diminta untuk menghasilkan sebuah teks naratif berdasarkan topic yang diberikan. Hasil tulisan siswa dinilai oleh tiga penilai menggunakan lima komponen penilaian, yaitu isi, organisasi, fungsi tata bahasa, penggunaan bahasa, dan struktur generik.. Untuk memastikan konsistensi penilaian, uji reliabilitas antarpenilai dilakukan menggunakan Cronbach's Alpha dan menghasilkan koefisien sangat tinggi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan menulis siswa berada pada kategori sedang hingga baik. Secara rinci, lima siswa termasuk kategori baik hingga sangat baik, delapan belas siswa termasuk kategori sedang hingga baik, empat belas siswa termasuk kategori rendah hingga sedang, dan dua siswa termasuk kategori rendah. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun beberapa siswa mampu menghasilkan teks naratif yang terstruktur dengan baik, banyak siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam penggunaan tata bahasa, pemilihan kosakata, serta penyusunan ide secara koheren. Berdasarkan hasil tersebut, penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya latihan menulis terpandu, pengajaran eksplisit, dan umpan balik berkelanjutan agar kemampuan menulis naratif siswa dapat meningkat.

Kata Kunci: kemampuan menulis, teks naratif, kinerja siswa, sekolah menengah kejuruan negeri, penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif

### **A. Introduction**

Writing is one of the most important language skills in English language learning because it enables students to express ideas, organize thoughts, and communicate meaning through written language. At the vocational high school level, writing plays an important role in preparing students to use English for both academic and practical purposes. Among the genres taught in the English curriculum, narrative text is considered fundamental because it

trains students to develop creativity, language accuracy, and coherent storytelling.

However, many students encounter difficulties in writing narrative texts. Based on preliminary observations at SMK N 2 Pekanbaru, several issues emerged: students often struggled to generate ideas, construct sentences correctly, use appropriate vocabulary, and arrange the narrative structure (orientation, complication, and resolution) coherently. These problems affect the

overall quality of their writing and suggest the need for a detailed analysis of their writing ability.

Narrative writing also requires the use of past tense verb forms, proper sequencing, and logical flow. According to Nunan (2003), writing is a complex cognitive process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. This supports the idea that writing is not an easy skill for learners at the vocational level.

Based on this conditions, this research was conducted to investigate the students' ability in writing narrative text at XI grade of SMK N 2 Pekanbaru. The study specifically analyzes students' performance in five main components: content, organization, grammatical function, language use, and generic structure. The results of this research are expected to provide insights that will help design more effective writing instruction in the classroom.

## **B. Research Method**

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to describe and analyze students' ability in writing narrative text through numerical data obtained from a writing test. The descriptive

approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to portray learners' actual performance without manipulating variables, making it suitable for assessing language skills in a natural context. The population consisted of 856 XI-grade students of SMK N 2 Pekanbaru, and due to the large size, purposive sampling was applied to select one representative class with 39 students. The instrument of the study was a narrative writing test in which students were required to compose a text based on a predetermined topic, allowing them to demonstrate their skills in expressing ideas, applying narrative structure, selecting vocabulary, and constructing sentences. The test was administered in one meeting with a 90 minutes time allocation to ensure independent performance under controlled conditions.

Students' writing products were scored by three independent raters using a rubric adapted from Brown (2004), assessing five components: content, organization, grammatical function, language use, and generic structure. Each rater scored the work independently, and the final score for each student was obtained by averaging the three scores to enhance

objectivity and minimize scoring bias. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.975, indicating excellent consistency among raters. After finalizing the scores, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean. Students' abilities were then categorized into four levels – poor, poor-to-average, average-to-good, and good-to-excellent – and the findings were interpreted to identify common strengths and weaknesses in students' narrative writing performances.

### **C. Results and Discussions**

The result of this study present a comprehensive analysis of the students' performance in writing narrative text based on the writing test administered to 39 students. The students' works were evaluated by three raters using a rubric consisting of content, organization, grammatical function, language use, and generic structure. After collecting all the ratings, the scores were averaged to determine each student's final score. These final scores serve as the primary data to describe the students'

writing ability and the overall distribution of proficiency levels in the class.

To illustrate the complete performance of all students, their individual final scores are presented below. This table provides a detailed record of each students' writing achievement and forms the basis for further statistical interpretation.

**Table 1 Final Score Result from the three raters**

<b>Cate- gory</b>	<b>Freq u- ency</b>	<b>Perc e-nt</b>	<b>Cumulativ e Percent</b>
Poor	2	5.1%	5.1%
Poor to Average	14	35.9 %	41.0%
Average to Good	18	46.2 %	87.2%
Good to Excellen t	5	12.8 %	100.0%
Total	39	100.0 %	

Based on the final scores presented above, it can be seen that the students show varying levels of narrative writing proficiency. Some students achieved high scores, demonstrating strong mastery of narrative elements, while others

received much lower scores, indicating difficulties in several aspects of writing. However, to provide a clearer and more systematic interpretation of the class's overall performance, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to calculate the mean, median, mode standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores. These statistical measures help to better understand the general trend of the data and the distribution of the students' abilities.

Maximu	4.00
m	
Sum	104.00

As shown in the descriptive statistics, the mean score of 2.6667 indicates that the overall writing ability of the class falls within the average category. The median score confirms that the central tendency remains consistent with the mean, suggesting that most students performed at a moderate level. Meanwhile, the standard deviation reflects the variability of the students' scores, showing that although some students performed well, a significant number demonstrated weaker writing skills. This distribution highlights that writing proficiency within the class is uneven, with considerable differences between higher-performance and lower-performance students.

**Table 2 Descriptive of the Final Score**

N	Valid	39
	Missin	0
g		
Mean	2.6667	
Std.	0.1236	
Error of mean	7	
Median	3.0000	
Mode	3.00	
Std. Deviatio	0.7723	
n	3	
Minimu	1.00	
m		

Further analysis of the students' narrative texts reveals several common patterns. Students who received higher scores were generally able to present a clear narrative structure, including orientation, complication, and resolution. They also used appropriate vocabulary and showed a reasonable level of grammatical accuracy, making their

writing coherent and easy to follow. These students demonstrated the ability to develop ideas logically and apply narrative conventions effectively.

On the other hand, many students struggles with several fundamental aspects of writing. One of the most frequent issues was grammatical inaccuracy, especially in the use of past tense verbs, sentence construction, and overall syntactic control. Vocabulary limitations also affected the clarity and expressiveness of their writing, as repetitive or inappropriate word choices reduced the quality of their narratives. In addition, organizational problems were evident in many compositions, where events were arranged in an unclear sequence, and some essential narrative components – particularly complication and resolution – were missing or incomplete.

These findings support the view expressed by Nunan (2003), who explains that writing is one of the most language skills because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and organizational skills. The students' difficulties in integrating these aspects

are reflected in the variability of the scores and the relatively low mean value.

Despite the challenges observed, the results also show that improvement is attainable with appropriate instructional strategies. The performance of the higher-scoring students indicates that when students receive adequate guidance and practice, they are able to produce coherent and well-structured narrative texts. Therefore, teaching approaches that provide explicit instruction, guided writing exercises, and consistent feedback are essential for helping students enhance their writing abilities. Continuous practice and exposure to narrative texts are also needed to strengthen their understanding of narrative structure and to expand their vocabulary.

Overall, the results suggest that although the students possess a basic understanding of narrative writing, many of them require further support to improve grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, and text organization. The findings highlight the importance of structured writing activities, focused grammar instruction, and sustained feedback to

help students gradually develop stronger writing skills in narrative text.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the overall ability of the XI grade students of SMK N 2 Pekanbaru in writing narrative text falls within the average to good category. Although a small number of students were able to produce well-structured narratives with clear ideas, appropriate vocabulary, and relatively accurate grammar, the majority demonstrated only moderate proficiency, as reflected in the mean score of 2.6667 and in the distribution showing nearly half categorized as average to good and more than one-third as poor to average. The analysis further indicates that while students generally understand the basic elements of narrative text, they still experience difficulties in grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, and coherence of ideas, with common issues including tense errors, limited lexical choices, and incomplete narrative structures. These findings underline the need for English teachers to provide more explicit instruction, guided practice, and structured writing activities

focused on grammar improvement, vocabulary enrichment, and organizational clarity, along with consistent feedback to help students recognize and address their weaknesses. Overall, the study highlights that developing writing proficiency is a gradual process requiring targeted instructional support to help students achieve higher competence in writing narrative texts.

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