



Students' Literacy Skills in Comprehending Recount Texts

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Date of Submission: 05-06-2026

Date of Acceptance: 15-06-2026

ABSTRACT: This research aimed to analyze the tenth-grade students' reading literacy skills in comprehending recount texts at Senior High School (SMAN) 17 Padang West Sumatera, consisting the comprehending the idea of the generic structure like orientation, events, and re-orientation. This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to describe students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts. The population of this research consisted of 145 tenth-grade students of SMAN 17 Padang, and the sample was selected by using cluster random sampling technique, by which class E2 that consisted of 34 students was chosen as the sample. The valid and reliable instrument used to collect the data was a multiple-choice reading comprehension test consisting of 35 items covering questions related to the content of generic structure of recount texts: orientation, event and reorientation. The students' literacy skills in comprehending recount text is classified based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC=79) at SMAN 17 Padang. The findings indicated that the students' overall literacy skills in reading recount texts was categorized as low(71% students) and high (29%students).In detail, the students' literacy skills in comprehending the orientation, events, and reorientation was also categorized as low, in which 56% students have low literacy skills in comprehending orientation, 79% students have low literacy skills in comprehending event, and 74% students have low literacy skills in comprehending re-orientation. Based on the finding it is suggested to the English teacher and students to improve students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts by designing and applying the appropriate strategy.

KEYWORDS: Reading, Literacy, Comprehending Recount Text, Senior High School

I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy skill is the ability to read, write, understand and communicate effectively in a

language. It is more than just recognizing words- it includes making meaning from texts and expressing ideas clearly (Clay, 1991). Literacy skills is the ability to read and write in order to understand and communicate meaning in a variety of context (Street, 1984).

Burton (2007) argues that literacy is not just the ability to read and write, but a social practice. This means that literacy is shaped by how people use language in real-life situations, within their communities and cultures. According to him, people develop literacy through everyday activities such as reading emails, writing messages, or engaging with texts in different contexts

Literacy skills are important because they enable individuals to participate in global communication, help people use language meaningfully in real life, support participation in social and global context, and develop through every day practices, not only formal education. English, as an international language, is widely used in education, media, and professional settings. Therefore, being literate in English allows people to access information, interact with others worldwide, and function effectively in different social environments (Gee,1996).

There are multiple literacy, not just one. For example, academic literacy, digital literacy, and workplace literacy all require different skills. Mastering literacy in English helps individuals adapt to these different contexts more easily (Clay, 1991).

Dealing with reading comprehension, it is one of the essential skills in learning English as a foreign language (Budi and Zuhro, 2023:28). Along with listening, speaking, and writing, reading enables the students to acquire new information, expand their vocabulary, and understand various language structures (Farhana and Rohani, 2019:15). According to Grabe and Stoller (2002:9), reading is a complex cognitive process of constructing meaning from written symbols and plays a crucial role in second



language acquisition. Reading comprehension plays an important role in enabling the students to understand ideas, information, and text structure in written materials (Farhana and Rohani, 2019:15; Budi and Zuhro, 2023:28; Naniwarsih, Andriani, 2018:34), and Nunan D (2003). There are many kinds of reading text; they are descriptive, narrative, procedure, report, and recount texts (Cahyono & Widyawati, 2018).

Recount texts frequently appear in various reading materials and contribute significantly to the development of students' reading skills (Sayukti & Kurniawan, 2017). According to Gerot and Wignell (1994), recount texts are organized systematically through orientation, events, and reorientation to retell past experiences

Recount text is a type of text that aims to retell past events or personal experiences in a clear and chronological order (Anderson & Anderson, 2005:48). This text is important because it helps students develop the ability to recount past experiences coherently, practice the use of past tense forms, and understand its generic structure, which consists of orientation, events, and re-orientation (Hyland, 2023:12, Knapp & Watkins, 2003:223).

II. METHOD

This research applied a quantitative descriptive method to accurately represent phenomena that already exist (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, (2010)). According to Refnita (2018:12) the descriptive method is a research method that entails gathering data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current status of the subject of investigation. This research described about students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts at the tenth-grade of SMAN 17 Padang

According to Refnita (2018:74) and Gay & Airasian (2012) the population is the wider group for which the researcher wants to generalize the results of the study, and the sample is the subset of the population. Moreover, Sugiyono (2010:117) and Arikunto, S. (2015), add that population is a generalized area consisting of object or subject that have certain qualities and characteristics set by researcher to be studied and then to which conclusions are drawn. In this research, the population is the tenth-grade students at SMAN 17 Padang. The tenth-grade students at SMAN 17 Padang was chosen as population because they had studied recount texts. Therefore, it is assumed that they have literacy skills to comprehend recount texts. The number of

population was 145 students and they were distributed into four groups (E1, E2, E3, E4). Considering that the population was relatively large, the sample was chosen through cluster random sampling technique, and Class E2 that consisted of 34 students became the sample.

The research instrument refers to the tool used by the researcher to collect the required data. According to Refnita (2018:90) a research instrument is the equipment used in research to obtain data. One kind of instruments is reading test (Alqahtani, 2020 and Brown, 2020). So, a reading test was used as the research instrument to measure students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts. There are two kinds of test, they are tryout test and real test. Tryout test consists of 50 items and the real test has 35 items. The test is in a kind of multiple-choice test, and the material of the test includes the content of generic structure of the text (orientation, event, and reorientation). The tryout was conducted to analyse the validity and reliability of the test as well as to analyse the quality of the test items (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:159, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018:246).

The real test has 35 items got from the result of analyzing validity, reliability and item analysis of tryout test. The reliability index was found through a split-half technique using Pearson Product Moment formula and it has high index (0.68).

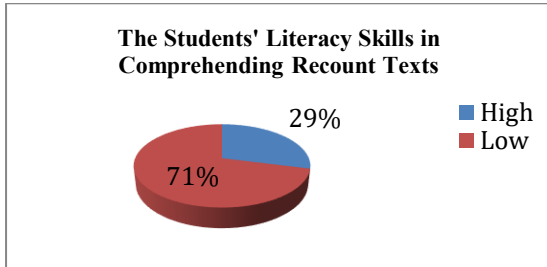
In analyzing data, the students' literacy skills in comprehending recount text was classified into high and low literacy skills based on the Minimum Mastery Criterion (MMC=79) used at SMAN 17 Padang.

III. FINDINGS

The findings were classified into four classifications, they are the students' literacy skills in comprehending recount text as the whole, comprehending orientation, comprehending event, and comprehending reorientation of recount text. In terms of the student's literacy in comprehending recount text as the whole, it was found that the students' highest score was 97.14 and the lowest score was 51.43. By using MMC, there were 10 students (29%) who had high literacy skills in comprehending recount text and 24 students (71%) who had low literacy skills in comprehending of recount text. It can be seen on the Chart 1 below.



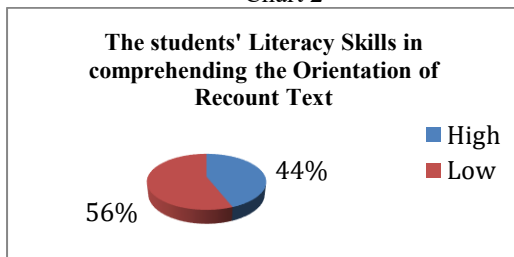
Chart 1



Based on the chart above, it can be concluded that the tenth grade students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts was low.

In the aspect of student's literacy in comprehending the orientation of recount text, it was found out that the highest score was 100 and the lowest score was 50. Referring to MMC, there were 15 students (44%) who had high literacy skills in comprehending the orientation of recount text, and 19 students (56%) who had low literacy skills in comprehending the orientation of recount text. It can be seen in the following Chart 2.

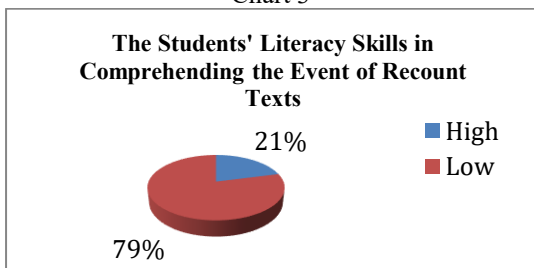
Chart 2



Referring to the chart above, it can be said that the students' literacy skills in comprehending the orientation of recount text was low

Dealing with the aspect of students' literacy skills' in comprehending the event of recount text, it was found out that the highest student's score was 100 and the lowest score was 47.37. Using MMC, there were 7 students (21%) who had high literacy skills and 27 students (79%) who had low literacy skills in comprehending the event of recount text. Chart 3 below shows the finding.

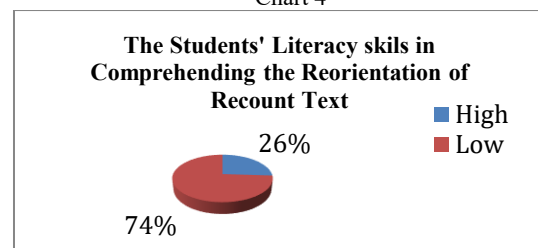
Chart 3



Dealing with the chart above, it can be said that the students' literacy skills in comprehending the event of recount text was low

For the aspect of students' literacy in comprehending the reorientation of recount text, it was found out that the highest score of students was 100 and the lowest score was 25. By considering MMC, there were 9 students (26%) who had high literacy skills and 25 students (74%) who had low literacy skills in comprehending the reorientation of recount text. It can be showed in Chart 4 below.

Chart 4



It can be said from the chart above, the students' literacy skills in comprehending re-orientation of recount text was low

IV. DISCUSSION

The discussion of the findings will be divided into four sub headings such as students' literacy skills in comprehending recount texts as the whole, comprehending orientation, event and re-orientation of recount text.

The Students' Literacy Skills in Comprehending Recount Texts

The finding showing that the students' literacy skills in comprehending recount text was low indicates that the students still did not comprehend recount texts well. It can be analyzed from the students' answer sheets. The fact that they had low comprehension on orientation was indicated by the test item number 19, on event was pointed by the test item number 13, and on reorientation was shown by the test item number 18. Each item will be discussed later.

The Students' Literacy skills in Comprehending the Orientation of Recount Texts

Referring to the second finding, it is said that the students' reading literacy in comprehending the orientation of recount text was low. This shows that students made many wrong answers in orientation questions. It means that the students still did not understand the idea of the orientation of recount text well. Apart from that, students also did not know to identify the background of recount text (orientation). It can be



identified from one of the students' answer for one of the test items (item test number 19) as follow:

19. What made the mosque unable to accommodate all worshippers?
- A. The mosque was underrenovation
 - B. The prayer started late
 - C. Too many people came**
 - D. Bad weather

The correct answer for number 19 is C. However, there were 20 students who chose option A, some chose option B, and some other chose option D. From question number 19 above, it can be interpreted that students did not know to identify the background of recount text in the orientation of recount text. They should have answered the question correctly because they have learnt it. So, it can be said that it is caused by their low literacy skills in comprehending orientation of recount text. This finding is supported by other researchers (Putri, 2019:47, Sari, 2018:52, Pratama, 2016:59, and Aminah, 2019) who have found that students' ability in comprehending the orientation of recount text is low.

The Students' Literacy Skills in Comprehending the Event of Recount Text

The next finding showed that the students' literacy skills in comprehending the event of recount text was low. This shows that the students still did not comprehend about what happened and how the events of recount text well. Apart from that, students also could not identify what happened and how the events of recount text took place. It can be proven by the students' answer in one of items, such as item number 13 as follow:

13. How did the writer prepare for the Eid prayer?
- A. By cleaning the house
 - B. By cooking food
 - C. By taking a bath and wearing new clothes**
 - D. By visiting relatives

The correct answer for number 13 is C. However, there were 24 students who chose option A, some chose option B, and some other chose option D. Based on the answer to question number 13 above, it can be stated that students had low literacy skills to identify what happened and how the events of recount text took place. This result is in line with what Nurohmah (2016:38), Wulandari (2017:45), and Widyawati (2018:63) found in their research that the students' ability in comprehending the content of generic structure, such as the event of recount text was low.

The Students' Literacy Skills in Comprehending the Reorientation of Recount Text

Due to the last finding, the students' literacy skills in comprehending re-orientation of recount text was low. This means that the students still could not comprehend about personal comment or reflection in the reorientation of recount text well. In addition, students also did not understand the conclusion in the reorientation of recount text. It can be showed by the students' answer for item number 18 as follow:

18. What was the best conclusion of the text?
- A. Eid celebration is tiring
 - B. The writer dislikes family gatherings
 - C. The celebration left a lasting memory**
 - D. Eid should be celebrated simply

The correct answer for number 18 is C. Some students chose option A, B, and some chose option D. Based on the answer to question number 18 above, it can be said that students had trouble in comprehending personal comment or reflection in the reorientation of recount text. This finding is in line with the research results by Lestari (2021:70), Saputra (2019:54), Yuliana (2015:42), Firmansyah (2021:68), Dewi (2020:73), and Hidayat (2018:58). They found that students' comprehension on the content of generic structure like the reorientation of recount text was low.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

There are four conclusions that can be drawn from the research findings. First, the tenth-grade students of SMAN 17 Padang, West Sumatera had low literacy skills in comprehending recount texts. There are some possibilities that may cause their low literacy skills: 1) The students might face difficulties in identifying the main ideas and in understanding detailed information related to the orientation, the sequence of events, and re-orientation presented in the recount text; 2) They also might struggle to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and connect the information within the text to gain a complete understanding of the text. Consequently, many students were unable to answer comprehension questions accurately and effectively.

Second, the students had low literacy skills in understanding the orientation part of recount texts. Many students might have trouble in identifying the background information provided at the beginning of the text, such as the setting, characters, time, and place of the events. They often failed to recognize the purpose of the



orientation, which is to introduce readers to the context of the story before the sequence of events is explained. In addition, students tended to have limited vocabulary and insufficient reading comprehension skills, making it difficult for them to interpret the information presented in the orientation section accurately. Some students were also unable to connect the introductory details with the events that follow in the text, resulting in incomplete understanding of the recount text as a whole. This problem indicates that students still have lack of the ability to analyse and comprehend important information in the early part of a text. In addition, several factors may contribute to this low literacy in comprehending the orientation of the text, such as limited reading practice, low interest in reading English texts, and the lack of effective teaching strategies in developing reading comprehension. Students often more focused on translating words individually rather than understanding the meaning and context of the text. Therefore, teachers need to provide more guidance and interactive activities that focus on understanding the structure of recount texts, especially the orientation section. Through intensive reading practice and appropriate literacy strategies, students are expected to improve their comprehension and become more confident in comprehending orientation of recount texts.

Third, the students' literacy skills in comprehending the event of recount text is low. Many students faced difficulties in identifying and understanding the sequence of events presented in the text. They often struggled to determine the order of events, recognize important information, and understand the relationship between one event and another. As a result, they were unable to fully comprehend the storyline and the message conveyed in the recount text. The students also had limited vocabularies, their reading comprehension was weak, and their focus was only on translating individual words without understanding the overall meaning and context of the events described in the text. This conditions makes it difficult for them to interpret actions, situations, and chronological details accurately. Besides, they also found trouble to distinguish between main events and supporting details within the recount text.

Fourth, the students' literacy skills in comprehending the reorientation of recount text was low. They had difficulty in identifying the concluding part of the text, where the writer usually gives personal comments, feelings, opinions, or reflections about the events that happened. They

often failed to distinguish the background (orientation) and event of the text, so they could not draw the reorientation or conclusion of the story. In addition, limited vocabulary mastery and weak reading comprehension skills made it difficult for them to interpret the meaning conveyed in the reorientation section. They frequently focused only on literal meanings and were unable to understand implied messages, emotions, or the writer's personal response toward the events. As a result, they struggled to comprehend the overall meaning and closure of the recount text. Another factor contributing to this problem is the lack of students' familiarity with the generic structure of recount texts. Many students were not adequately trained to recognize each part of the text, including orientation, events, and reorientation. Furthermore, low reading interest and limited exposure to English texts reduce students' opportunities to practice comprehension skills and develop critical thinking in reading activities.

Based on the conclusions, it is suggested that students' literacy skills in comprehending text need significant improvement, particularly in the area of recount texts, which require readers (students) to understand chronological events and past experiences. The low level of literacy may be influenced by several factors, such as limited reading habits, lack of vocabulary mastery, insufficient motivation to read, and ineffective teaching strategies used in the classroom. Furthermore, students tend to rely heavily on translation rather than applying reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, and predicting meaning from context.

The teachers are encouraged to implement more interactive and engaging learning methods to improve students' literacy skills. Providing students with regular reading practice, introducing varied and interesting reading materials, and applying collaborative learning activities can help students become more active readers. In addition, the integration of literacy-based learning strategies is expected to enhance students' comprehension, critical thinking, and overall understanding of recount texts. The students are suggested to be proactive to improve their literacy skills in comprehending recount text, by implementing various reading strategies.

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