

## **An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Using Personal Pronouns in Recount Text**

**Jihan Alifah**

**State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten**

[jhnlfh@gmail.com](mailto:jhnlfh@gmail.com)

**Tatu Siti Rohbiah**

**State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten**

[tatu.siti.rohbiah@uinbanten.ac.id](mailto:tatu.siti.rohbiah@uinbanten.ac.id)

**Rohman**

**State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten**

[rohman.bantani@uinbanten.ac.id](mailto:rohman.bantani@uinbanten.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

This study is aimed to measure the students' difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text and to find out the causes of students' difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text at the eighth grade of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon. The methodology used in this study is a case study. The data collected by test and interview. Based on the result of the test, the most difficulties faced by students are on object pronouns, it can be seen that the percentage of students' difficulties in using personal pronouns as object pronouns in recount text are 56.10%, while in using personal pronouns as subject pronouns in recount text are 26.82%. Based on the result of the interview, the writer concluded that the reason why students faced the difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text are by internal factors and external factors. Internal factors such as the students' talent, interest and motivation in learning English are low. While the external factors, the way teachers explain the material are not clearly enough and they do not make sure that students have understood or not the material that has been explain, moreover, the environment that does not support students to learn English also very influential. In addition, limited facilities can also be the cause of students not being able to study properly.

**Keywords:** *Pronouns; Personal Pronouns; Recount Text*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English is a global language that many people use as their first or second language. Despite not being a second language, English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Because of this, the government has made English one of the subjects included in the curriculum of education in Indonesia at all levels, including elementary school, high school, and even university. The goal of English language subject is to provide students proficiency and assurance in using English. Due of this, a lot of people are now attempting to learn English by enrolling in classes or asking private English teachers into their home.

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four language skills that are taught in English classes. (Jones, D.S & Quinn, 2014) One of the skills that students should learn when learning English is writing because it is a different form of communication from speaking. To maximize their individual communication potential in English, junior high or senior high school students need to be proficient writers in addition to good speakers. They require this talent in order to help their academic advancement.

Students can communicate their thoughts by writing activity. Students are required to be able to comprehend and produce a variety of texts while they are writing.

Grammar is one of the subskills that students should be able to master when learning English. Grammar is a description of how words and phrases, which make up linguistic units, are joined to form sentences in a language (Jones, D.S & Quinn, 2014).

Grammar mastery is crucial for writing. Without a firm grasp of grammar, a writer will struggle to apply it effectively, which will prevent readers from understanding the writer's point of view. Grammar is a description of how words and phrases, which make up linguistic units, are joined to form sentences in a language (Hodgson, 2020).

Parts of speech are one of the topics covered when students study English, particularly grammar. There are eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, adjective, verb, adverb and interjections (Jones, D.S & Quinn, 2014). The primary concern in this study is English pronouns.

A pronoun is a term that stands in for a proper or common noun (Anne Seaton, 2007). Pronoun can be used as a subject and object in a sentence called subjective and objective pronouns, also they can be used as an adjective to modify some nouns called possessive adjective and can also be used to substitute for a noun phrase called a possessive pronoun. Personal pronoun is important to learn because it is used for efficiency in writing sentence, text, paragraph or message. The use of personal pronouns allows the writer to avoid repeating the same person's name or other nouns in the text.

Personal pronoun usage in writing is important. If students write with wrong personal pronouns, it will be complicated. But occasionally, the way personal pronouns are spelled helps students use them correctly. In truth, acquiring personal pronouns in English grammar is challenging, as Mumeera Muftar said. In the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), grammar is regarded as the most important and challenging concept for non-native learners to fully understand (Muftah & Rafic-Galea, 2013).

Based on observation that the writer conducted at MTS Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon, she found that many students that still got difficulties in understanding the meaning and function of personal pronouns and students still got difficulties in using personal pronouns correctly because they confuse how to distinguish the types of pronouns. Therefore, the students just knew the pronouns is only replace the of people or things, because of that, the students find it difficult to use pronouns in recount text.

This study aims to explore further about the difficulties of Junior high school students in using personal pronouns in recount text. Furthermore, the writer also aims to determine the difficulties faced by students in the learning process, especially material related to English Pronouns.

Based on the phenomena described above, the writer is interested in investigating the problem of research with the title "An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Using Personal Pronouns in Recount Text".

## METHODS

The research method in this research is qualitative as a case study. As Creswell said, a case study is an in-depth analysis of a case (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A case study is research to analyze an issue or problem.

Moreover, the purpose of qualitative is to help the researcher find the solution to the issue happened in society by doing investigation to the object research. Based on the purpose of this research, the writer intended to use qualitative research as a case study to complete the objectives of study.

In this research, the source of the data is the eighth grade of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon academic year 2022/2023. This research only took class VIII F which consists of 22 students, with 15 female students and 7 male students. The teacher recommends VIII F as participants because the class has an average grade among other classes. The data of the research is a test of recount text and the transcript of recording of the students' statements in interview.

To collect the data, the researcher gave the test and interview the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon.

### 1. Test

Students take a written test from the writer to complete the blanks in the recount text. The test consisted of 20 items. Ten items on the test use personal pronouns as the subject and ten items use them as the object. It measures how well students use personal pronouns in recount texts.

### 2. Interview

After giving a test, the writer interviewed the students to get information about the causes of students' difficulties in using personal pronouns in writing recount text.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data

### 1. Test

The eighth-grade students who participated in the study were given the test. To determine whether students are making mistakes. It's also important to understand what mistakes students typically make. The inability of the learner to utilize personal pronouns, whether as the subject or the object, is identified and assessed. The next step in tabulating an error is to count the errors, organize them into a table based on their classification, and then calculate the percentages using the formula below:

(Bluman, 2012)

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Explanation:

P: The total percentage

F: Frequency

N: Number of students

After having percentage and frequency, next is calculating the mean. To get the mean of score by using pattern bellow:

$$P = \frac{f}{N \times n} \times 100$$

Explanation:

P: The total percentage

F: Frequency

N: Number of students

n: Number of item test

Furthermore, the level students' score are classified into five levels. The classification can be seen in this following table:

**Table 3. 1 Students' classification test score**

Score	Criteria
80% - <100%	Very Good
60% - <80%	Good
40% - <60%	Enough
20% - <40%	Low
0% - <20%	Very Low

## 2. Interview

This research also use interview to see the causes of the students' difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text. There are several procedures to analyze the data with interview as proposed by: (Sugiyono, 2013)

### a. Data collection

The writer collected the data through interview.

b. Data reduction

After collected the data, the writer resumed the data and focus on the research aspects and unnecessary aspects were reduced.

c. Data display

After the data being reduced, then the writer made the result of the research about the causes of students' difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text.

d. Conclusion

Last, the writer concluded the result of the finding.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Test

Based on a test, the writer examined how students were dealing with applying personal pronouns in recount texts. The test consisted of 20 items. Ten personal pronouns are used as the subject and ten personal pronouns are used as the object in the test items. The writer placed the item below in an apparently random way:

**Table 4. 1 Personal pronouns and each item**

No	Personal Pronouns area	Number of items
1.	Subject Pronoun	1, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20
2.	Object Pronoun	2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18

The writer can see the result of the students' difficulties on the use of personal pronouns, the writer calculated and elaborated the frequency of the students score of the test.

**Table 4. 2 Students' score of test result**

Students number	Score	Students number	Score
1. AA	35	12. MR	65
2. ARM	50	13. NM	65
3. FF	35	14. NR	55
4. FS	55	15. RM	75
5. HK	30	16. RAW	90
6. HA	70	17. RRN	65

7. MM	40	18. RAF	60
8. MPR	65	19. STN	60
9. MRP	35	20. SB	80
10. ME	70	21. SK	50
11. MI	60	22. VMA	50
Total		1235	

According to the test result, the category of students' difficulties in using personal pronouns of the eighth students of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon, can be seen on the following table:

**Table 4. 3 Students' category difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text based on the test result**

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very good	2	9%
2.	Good	10	45%
3.	Enough	4	19%
4.	Low	6	27%
5.	Very low	-	-
Total		22	100%

The table above shows students in using personal pronouns in recount text based on its category. There are 2 students are in very good category, 10 students are in good category, 5 students are in enough category, 5 students are in low category and no students in very low category.

The data shows that students' difficulties in using personal pronouns of the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon mostly in good category by the highest score 45%.

## 1) Subject Pronouns

**Table 4. 4 The Frequency of Students’ Difficulty in Using Personal Pronouns as Subject Pronouns in Recount Text**

Personal pronouns area	Item number	Frequency of difficulties	Percents of difficulties
Subject pronouns	1	9	15%
	5	2	3.3%
	6	4	6.6%
	9	8	13.3%
	11	3	5%
	13	7	11.6%
	14	8	13.3%
	15	6	10.6%
	19	8	13.3%
	20	5	8%
Total	10 items	60	100%

In order to find the average of total frequency difficulties made by students in subject pronouns, the writer are using formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N \times n} \times 100$$

$$P = \frac{60}{22 \times 10} \times 100$$

$$P = 27.28\%$$

According to the data above, there are 60 frequency of difficulties among the 10 items, and the percentage of these difficulties is 100%. Of these, there are 9 students or 15% find difficulties with item number 1; there are 2 students or 3.5% find difficulties with item number 5; there are 4 students or 6.6% find difficulties with item number 6; there are 8 students or 13.3% find difficulties with item number 9; there are 3 students or 5% find difficulties with item number 11; there are 7 students or 11.6% find difficulties with item number 13; there are 8 students or 13.3% find difficulties with item number 14; there are 6 students or 10.6% find difficulties with item number 15; there are 8 students or 13.3% find difficulties with item number 19; and there are 5 students find difficulties with item number 20 with percentage 8%.

The highest difficulty is in item number 1 which the frequency of difficulties is 9 with the frequency in percentages is 15%. the lowest difficulty is in item number 5 the

frequency of difficulties is 2 with the frequency in percentages is 3.3%.

From the total of frequency difficulties made by students in using personal pronouns as object pronouns in recount text reaches 100% with the average is 27.28%.

## 2) Object pronouns

**Table 4. 5 The Frequency of Students' Difficulty in Using Personal Pronouns as Object Pronouns in Recount Text**

Personal pronouns area	Item number	Frequency of difficulties	Percents of difficulties
Object pronouns	2	14	11%
	3	18	14.18%
	4	13	10.3%
	7	9	7%
	8	11	8.7%
	10	12	9.5%
	12	15	11.8%
	16	17	13.4%
	17	12	9.4%
	18	6	4.72%
Total	10	127	100%

In order to find the average of total frequency difficulties made by students in subject pronouns, the writer are using formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N \times n} \times 100\%$$

$$P = \frac{127}{22 \times 10} \times 100\%$$

$$P = 57.73\%$$

According to the data above, which shows that there are 10 items number with 127 frequency of difficulties, there are 14 students have difficulties with item number 2 with percentage of 11%; there are 18 student have difficulties in item 3 with percentage of 14.18%; there are 13 students have difficulties with item 4 with percentage of 13%; there are 9 students have difficulties with item 7 with percentage of 7%; there are 11 students have difficulties with item 8 with percentage of 8.7%; there are 12 students have difficulties with item 10 with percentage of 9.5%; there are



15 students have difficulties with item 12 with percentage of 11.8%; there are 17 students have difficulties with item 16 with percentage of 13.4%; there are 12 students have difficulties with item number 17 with percentage of 9.4%; there are 6 students have difficulties with item 18 with percentage of 4.72%.

The highest difficulty is in item number 3 which the frequency of difficulties is 18 and the frequency in percentages is 14.18%, the lowest difficulties is in item number 18 which the frequency is 6 and the frequency in percentages is 4.72%.

From the total of frequency difficulties made by students in using personal pronouns as object pronouns in recount text reaches 100% with the average is 57.73%.

## 2. Interview

This research not only focus on the percentages of students' difficulties but also on the causes of difficulties in using personal pronouns in recount text, so the writer did an interview to the students to know the causes that made them difficult to using personal pronouns.

From the interview that has been conducted, the writer can take a conclusion that there are two factors that influence students in using personal pronouns, they are: internal factors and external factors.

### 1) Internal factors

#### a. Talent

Most of the students already understand the meaning, general structure and language feature of recount text, but there are some of them that still don't understand the material about recount text. As students said:

*"I have, but I don't really understand it yet". (Student 1)*

*"Yes, I have. The recount text explains the events that have occurred". (Student 2)*

*"I have, but I still don't understand. What I know is that recount text is like a holiday story". (Student 3)*

*"I studied before, but I don't remember". (Student 6)*

*"Yes, recount text is a text that retells experiences that have happened before". (Student 9)*

Some of the students find difficulties in learning personal pronouns because they do not understand them, either the meaning also the function of personal pronouns. Some of students do not know the types of personal pronouns. In English, personal pronouns consist of subject pronouns and object pronouns.

*"It's not too difficult for pronouns". (Student 1)*

*"It's a bit difficult to tell the difference because there are so many examples". (Student 2)*

*"Because there are so many examples, that's why you get confused, which is the subject and which is the object". (Student 3)*

*"There are many types, so I don't remember the meaning". (Students 4)*

Students know and have studied about subject pronouns and object pronouns, but they do not know that subject and object are included in the type of personal pronouns. As students said:

*"I don't know about the personal pronouns". (Student 2)*

*"I think same as subject and object pronouns". (Student 10)*

Some of students do not know examples of personal pronouns. There are several types of personal pronouns in English and they have various position and rules as the first person is used as a subject "he" and used as object "me", while in Indonesia first person "Saya" is used in any position in sentence and does not change, that's what makes them difficult to understand and remember the types of personal pronouns. They are quite familiar with subject pronouns but not with object pronouns. As some students said:

*"I, me, my, mine, you, yours, we, us, our, ours, they, them, it, its, he, his, her, him". (Students 1)*

*"I, you, we, they, she, he, it is the subject. Object she, he, it". (Students 2)*

*"The subject is "I", while the object is "me", "you" is the subject, while the object is "yours". (Students 3)*

*"I, you, they, we, she, he, it's a subject, and the object doesn't know". (Students 4)*

*"the subject is I, you, we, they, she, he, it. The object is me, you, us, they, her, it". (Student 9)*

Some students still struggle to use pronouns correctly because they are unable to distinguish between the subject and object, as in the cases of "they," "them," and "she," where they are unable to differentiate between which pronouns refer to the subject and which to the object. As the students said:

*"I" is the subject it is used for people, "me" is the object it is used for things". (Student 1).*

*"I don't know how to tell the difference because I don't know the different types of pronouns". (Student 4)*

*"the subject is for first and second person pronouns, don't know about the subject". (Student 3)*

*"I don't know its function and I don't know how to tell the difference between an object and a subject". (Student 6)*

Some students struggle with using pronouns correctly in recount texts because they become confused by lengthy sentences, some of which they may not understand the meaning of the sentences. As some students said:

*"The pronouns are easy, what makes it difficult is because I don't really know the meaning of the sentences in the recount text". (Student 1)*

*"I don't understand the recount text sentences like that, the paragraphs are long.*

*Then there are objects and subjects that make me confused, afraid of being swapped".*  
(Student 3)

*"Just how to differentiate it, because I know what it means, sometimes I don't know, then in the recount text there are a lot of sentences that I don't know the meaning of".* (Student 4)

*"It's hard to choose the pronouns. I still often get it mixed up, between her, she, his, and he".* (Student 5)

#### b. Interest

Some of students does not like English subject because they find it difficult to understand and remind the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia. As the students said:

*"...It's really fun. But it's difficult because there's a lot of material, so it's hard to understand what that means".* (Student 8)

Meanwhile, even though students feel that learning English is fun even though they don't know the meaning they find it very difficult to memorize the meaning of words in English.

*"...it makes me dizzy, I just like to memorize it but sometimes I forget the meaning"*  
(Student 6)

#### c. Motivation

Some of students have no motivation in learning English, so they do not pay attention to explanation given by teacher, and they are too afraid to ask the teacher if they do not understand. Some of the students said:

*"The teacher explains the material clearly, often tells the meaning, sometimes they are given questions. But because the material is difficult so I'm lazy to study".*  
(Student 3)

*"Usually explain the material only from the book then give examples and then give questions".* (Student 4)

*"The teacher doesn't explain things clearly, sometimes they don't understand. The problem is explaining it from books sometimes I don't understand. But if I don't understand the material, I'm afraid to ask the teacher"* (Student 5)

### 2) External factors

#### a. Environment

The teacher has a good ability to explain the material, but sometimes the teacher does not explain the material clearly so students do not understand the material. During the learning process, the teacher does not ensure that students understood or not the material that has been taught. The environment that does not support students to get used to learning English. One of the students said:

*"The teacher doesn't explain things clearly, sometimes they don't understand. The problem is explaining it from books sometimes I don't understand. But if I don't*

*understand the material, I'm afraid to ask the teacher”. (Student 5)*

b. Non-environment

Students have problem in learning process, because of limited school facilitates that do not support them in a better learning process.

*“The teacher usually explain the material only from the book then give examples and then give questions”. (Student 4).*

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the students of MTs Negeri 2 Kota Cilegon still have difficulties in using personal pronoun in recount text. The most difficulty faced by students are on object pronouns, it can be seen from the total frequency difficulties made by students in using personal pronouns as object pronouns in recount text are 57.73%, while in using personal pronouns as subject pronouns in recount text are 27.28%. Most of students have not understood about the meaning and function of personal pronouns, they still confuse how to distinguish them because the change of personal pronouns form has different function.

Based on the interview, the writer concluded that both internal factors and external factors contributed to students' difficulties in using personal pronouns. Internal factors such as the students' abilities for learning English, their lack of interest in the subject, the fact that there are numerous varieties of pronouns, and their level of desire can all affect how well students learn the language. In addition to these external influences, teachers often fail to explain concepts effectively and do not check to see if students have comprehended what they have been taught. They also frequently create an environment that discourages students from learning English.

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