

The Effect Of Scrambled Text Technique On Students' Mastery Of Recount Text Structure

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effect of the **Scrambled Text Technique** on students' ability to identify the **generic structure of recount text**. The research was conducted at **SMK Negeri 1 Siantar**, with the students of **Class X TJKT 3** as the research sample. This study used a one-group pretest–posttest pre-experimental design. Although suitable for measuring changes after treatment, it is limited by internal validity threats and lacks a control group. Short instructional periods and consistent materials were applied to reduce these threats, with future research recommended to use a control group. The instrument used in this research was a test in the form of recount text tasks that required students to identify the generic structure of the text. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test, and the results were analyzed by comparing students' scores before and after the treatment. The findings revealed that the students' mean score increased from 48.40 in the pre-test to 69.00 in the post-test, with a mean gain score of 21.00 after the implementation of the Scrambled Text Technique. The gain score analysis also revealed that all students experienced improvement, with no decrease in scores. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Scrambled Text Technique has a positive effect on students' understanding of the generic structure of recount text. These findings provide empirical support for the use of the Scrambled Text Technique as an effective instructional approach in enhancing students' mastery of recount text generic structure in vocational high school contexts.

Introduction

English is one of the compulsory subjects taught in Indonesian schools, including at the senior high school and vocational school levels. One of the competencies that students must master in the English curriculum is the ability to understand various types of texts. Among these text types, recount text plays an important role because it appears frequently in English learning materials and examinations. According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), recount text is a genre that retells past events and consists of three main components: orientation, events, and re-orientation. Mastery of these components enables students to understand the chronological order of events and construct the overall meaning of the text. Contemporary research in text-based and genre-focused EFL instruction (e.g., Nguyen,

2020; Sari & Fitriani, 2021; Haerazi & Irawan, 2019) emphasizes that engaging learners in tasks such as scrambled text or text reordering facilitates active cognitive processing. According to cognitive processing theory, reordering tasks require students to make inferences, link ideas, and reconstruct meaning, thereby promoting deeper comprehension. Moreover, integrating scrambled text within a genre-based pedagogy and task-based learning framework allows learners to explicitly recognize text structure, sequence events, and apply critical thinking skills, aligning practical classroom strategies with contemporary theoretical perspectives in EFL education.

However, in reality, many students still face difficulties in identifying the generic structure of recount text. Gerot and Wignell (1994) explain that students often struggle because they lack awareness of how texts are organized, making it difficult for them to differentiate between parts of the text. Students often cannot differentiate between the orientation and the sequence of events, and they frequently misinterpret the re-orientation part. In addition, students tend to struggle in arranging ideas based on the chronological order given in the text. These difficulties indicate that students do not yet fully understand how a recount text is organized. Another problem found in the classroom is that the media used by teachers are often limited to textbooks and conventional explanations. This is consistent with Sadiman et al. (2014), who emphasize that media that lack variation tend to reduce student engagement and motivation.

Learning media play a crucial role in helping students understand text structure. When teachers use varied and interactive media, students are more likely to participate actively and understand the material better. “The Scrambled Text Technique is an effective media to enhance students’ comprehension of recount text structure, particularly in vocational high school, while promoting active learning and text-based understanding in EFL classrooms.”

a learning activity in which the paragraphs or sentences of a text are deliberately arranged in the wrong order. Nation (2009) states that scrambled text activities encourage learners to analyze textual clues and reconstruct meaning, which strengthens comprehension. Similarly, Previous research suggests that reordering or scrambled text tasks support students’ understanding of text coherence and structure (Harmer, 2007; Nguyen, 2020; Sari & Fitriani, 2021). However, existing studies have paid limited attention to the application of this technique in improving students’ mastery of recount text generic structure in vocational high school contexts. This gap underlines the need for the present study. Applying scrambled text is considered beneficial because it directly trains students to recognize orientation, organize events chronologically, and identify the closing part of the recount text. By reconstructing the text, students become more aware of how each part contributes to the overall meaning. Moreover, this media encourages active learning and makes the lesson more engaging for students. Heinich et al. (2005) also stress that instructional media should create active involvement to maximize learning outcomes, which aligns with the purpose of using scrambled text in the classroom.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of scrambled text or reordering tasks in improving students’ reading comprehension and general understanding of text organization (Harmer, 2007; Nguyen, 2020; Sari & Fitriani, 2021), limited attention has been given to their application in enhancing students’ mastery of recount text generic structure, particularly in vocational high school contexts. Most existing studies were conducted in general senior high schools or focused on broader reading skills, rather than on specific genre-based outcomes. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining

the effect of the Scrambled Text Technique on students' mastery of recount text generic structure in a vocational high school setting.

Many students at Class X of SMK Negeri 1 Siantar still struggle to identify the generic structure of recount texts, including orientation, events, and re-orientation, as well as arranging text parts chronologically. This difficulty is exacerbated by the use of less engaging learning media, highlighting the need for more interactive and effective instructional strategies. This study focuses on examining the effect of using scrambled text as a learning medium to improve students' comprehension of recount text structure. The research is limited to Class X students and specifically targets orientation, events, and re-orientation components. The main research question asks whether the use of scrambled text significantly affects students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount texts. The study aims to provide benefits for students by enhancing their understanding, for teachers by offering alternative instructional media, for the school by improving English learning quality, and for future researchers as a reference for further studies in text comprehension and teaching media.

Method

This chapter describes the methodological framework used in this study. It explains the research design, participants, research instrument, data collection, and data analysis procedures, and the steps taken during the research. These components guide the researcher in examining the effect of scrambled text on students' understanding of the generic structure of recount texts. The present study employed a quantitative research method because the main objective of the research was to measure the effect of using scrambled text on students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text by analyzing numerical data obtained through testing. Creswell (2012) states that quantitative research is a method of inquiry that focuses on examining relationships among variables by using measurable data and statistical procedures. In the context of this study, the variable being measured was the students' competence in identifying the orientation, events, and re-orientation of recount text. This competence was evaluated through the administration of pretest and posttest instruments, allowing the researcher to determine the students' progress objectively.

This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design. Although this design is useful for examining changes before and after treatment, it is susceptible to internal validity threats, including history, maturation, and testing effects. To reduce these threats, the pre-test and post-test were conducted within a short instructional period with consistent learning materials. However, the lack of a control group limits causal interpretation, and future research is suggested to apply a quasi-experimental design with a control group.

This study employed a one-group pretest–posttest design, which involves testing a single group before and after treatment without a control group (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The pretest measured students' initial comprehension of recount text structure. The treatment used scrambled text, where paragraphs or sentences were randomly arranged, and students reconstructed them to identify orientation, events, and re-

orientation, promoting deeper comprehension and critical thinking (Harmer, 2007). Posttest results were then compared to determine the effect of the treatment. This design was chosen for its practicality, given the availability of only one class, and its suitability for examining causal relationships between the learning media and students' understanding of recount text structure (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The population of this study included all Grade X students at SMK Negeri 1 Siantar, who shared similar experiences with recount texts (Sugiyono, 2018). The sample consisted of 25 students from Class X TJKT 3, selected purposively based on their exposure to recount text and relevance to the research focus (Arikunto, 2010). Using a one-group pretest–posttest design, a single class was considered sufficient to examine the effect of scrambled text (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The instruments were pretest and posttest tasks designed to measure students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount texts, including orientation, events, and re-orientation. Both tests used a scrambled text format, requiring students to reconstruct the text in the correct order. Each test included one or two recount texts, with approximately 10–15 items. The instrument was validated through content validity, which involved expert judgment by two English teachers and one English education expert to ensure its relevance to the learning objectives and the generic structure of recount text. However, the reliability of the instrument was not statistically measured using coefficients such as Cronbach's alpha due to the use of holistic scoring, which is acknowledged as a limitation of this study.

Data were collected using pretest and posttest to measure 25 students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text (orientation, events, and re-orientation) through scrambled text tasks. The procedure involved pretest, treatment, and posttest, with answers scored per component and recorded in written and digital form. Time allocation was 30–40 minutes for tests and 45–60 minutes for the scrambled text activity. This procedure is relevant to the research objectives, as it allows the researcher to evaluate the effect of scrambled text on students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text by analyzing the difference between pre-test and post-test scores using a paired-sample t-test, which examined the statistical significance of the difference between students' scores. The Scrambled Text Technique is an effective media to enhance students' comprehension of recount text structure, particularly in vocational high school, while promoting active learning and text-based understanding in EFL classrooms. The table shows individual scores of students before and after the implementation of the Scrambled Text Technique, along with the gain scores obtained by calculating the difference between post-test and pre-test results. The pre-test data indicate that most students achieved relatively low scores, with several students scoring below the minimum expected level. These results suggest that, prior to the treatment, students had limited ability to identify the generic structure of recount text, particularly in distinguishing orientation, events, and re-orientation in the correct order.

After the treatment was applied, the post-test results demonstrate a clear improvement in students' performance. The majority of students obtained higher scores compared to their pre-test results, as shown in the table. The increase in scores reflects students' improved understanding of the structure of recount texts and their ability to organize scrambled text into a coherent sequence. The post-test scores are more evenly distributed at higher levels,

indicating that students benefited from the instructional technique used during the treatment phase.

Furthermore, the gain scores presented in the table confirm that all students experienced positive score improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. The gain scores range from low to high improvement, with most students showing moderate to significant increases. No negative gain scores were found, which means that none of the students experienced a decline in performance. This consistent improvement across students indicates that the Scrambled Text Technique had a positive and measurable impact on students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text.

Results and Discussion

The results show that the mean score of the pre-test was 48.40 (SD = 14.77), with scores ranging from 15 to 70. After the implementation of the Scrambled Text Technique, the mean post-test score increased to 69.00 (SD = 11.46), with scores ranging from 50 to 90. These findings indicate an overall improvement in students' mastery of recount text generic structure.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	25	48.40	14.77	15	70
Post-test	25	69.00	11.46	50	90

This study investigated the effect of the Scrambled Text Technique on Class X TJKT 3 students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text, revealing a significant improvement in understanding orientation, events, and re-orientation. The pre-test results indicate that students initially had limited understanding of the generic structure of recount text. This finding aligns with genre-based learning theory, which suggests that students often experience difficulties in identifying text organization when explicit instruction is not provided (Hyland, 2019; Emilia, 2022). Similar findings have been reported by Nguyen (2020) and Sari and Fitriani (2021), who found that EFL learners tend to struggle with text structure prior to the implementation of instructional strategies that emphasize text sequencing and organization. Before the treatment, most students of Class X TJKT 3 struggled to identify the generic structure of recount texts and arrange events chronologically, focusing mainly on surface-level comprehension. After implementing the Scrambled Text Technique, students showed significant improvement in understanding orientation, events, and re-orientation, as reflected in higher post-test scores and positive gain scores across all students. The technique promoted active engagement, critical thinking, and analysis of text structure, benefiting both lower- and higher-achieving students. Its effectiveness stems from aligning with the characteristics of recount texts, emphasizing logical sequencing and cohesion. Overall, the Scrambled Text Technique proved to be an effective instructional strategy for vocational high school students, enhancing both comprehension and analytical skills, and is recommended for integration into English instruction, with future studies suggested to explore other text types or contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that the Scrambled Text Technique has a significant positive effect on students' ability to identify the generic structure of recount text. This research, conducted with students of Class X TJKT 3 at SMK Negeri 1 Siantar, showed that students initially had limited understanding of recount text structure, particularly in identifying orientation, events, and re-orientation, as reflected in their low pre-test scores.

After the implementation of the Scrambled Text Technique, students demonstrated a clear improvement in their post-test performance. The improvement in students' scores suggests that the Scrambled Text Technique supports learners' understanding of recount text organization by engaging them in active text reconstruction. From a theoretical perspective, this finding reinforces genre-based pedagogy, which emphasizes explicit awareness of text structure and sequencing as a foundation for developing genre competence in EFL contexts.

The use of scrambled text activities encouraged students to analyze the logical flow of events and recognize the function of each part of the text, which contributed to better learning outcomes. Moreover, the gain score analysis confirmed that all students experienced improvement from the pre-test to the post-test, with no students showing a decrease in scores. This result indicates that the Scrambled Text Technique was effective for students with different levels of initial ability and provided equal learning opportunities for all participants. The technique promoted active learning, critical thinking, and student engagement during the learning process, which are essential factors in effective language instruction. In line with the research title "the effect of scrambled text technique on students' mastery of recount text generic structure: an experimental study"

this study concludes that the Scrambled Text Technique is an effective instructional strategy for teaching recount texts at the vocational high school level. Practically, the findings suggest that English teachers can integrate the Scrambled Text Technique as an instructional strategy to explicitly teach text organization and generic structure in recount text lessons. For future research, it is recommended that researchers employ quasi-experimental designs with control groups, explore the use of this technique in other text genres, or apply it in different educational contexts to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, future researchers may explore the application of the Scrambled Text Technique with other text types or in different educational settings to further support and strengthen the findings of this study.

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