Investigating Anecdotal Text Writing Ability In Tenth Grade Learners

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to describe the ability of class X students at MAN 01 Kota Bengkulu in writing anecdotal texts, particularly focusing on the structure and linguistic features of the text.

Methodology: This study used a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. The population included all 317 tenth-grade students of MAN 01 Kota Bengkulu in the 2022/2023 academic year. The sample of 23 students was selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through a writing test with a rubric assessing five structural components of anecdotal texts and linguistic features. The average score formula was used for data analysis.

Main Findings: The findings show that students' ability to write anecdotal texts is generally categorized as good with an average score of 76.71. Specifically, the abstraction aspect was excellent (12.3), orientation good (14.9), crisis good (14.4), reaction excellent (12.4), coda excellent (11.4), and linguistic elements excellent (11.4). These results indicate that most students have mastered the structure and language use of anecdotal texts effectively.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study provides a focused evaluation of students' writing based on the complete five-part structure of anecdotal texts combined with linguistic criteria. Unlike prior studies, this research offers a comprehensive assessment using a targeted rubric and highlights specific strengths and weaknesses across each structural and linguistic component, contributing to curriculum-based evaluation methods in writing instruction.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential language skill that plays a crucial role in communication, learning, and cognitive development. In the Indonesian language curriculum, writing is not only a means to express ideas but also an indicator of students' academic progress. Among the various text genres taught in the curriculum, anecdotal texts hold a significant position, particularly under the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum), which emphasizes creativity, critical thinking, and contextual learning [1], [2], [3]. Anecdotal texts, characterized by humor, criticism, and moral messages, require students to master structural elements such as abstraction, orientation, crisis, reaction, and coda, as well as linguistic features like diction, syntax, and punctuation [4], [5].

Despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging language skills for students to master. Studies have shown that students often struggle with organizing ideas, applying appropriate structure, and using correct language features in their writing [6], [7], [8]. These difficulties are evident in anecdotal writing tasks, where students frequently fail to construct coherent narratives or apply the five key structural components

correctly. Such limitations underscore the need for detailed assessments of students' writing abilities, especially in the context of specific text types like anecdotal texts [9], [10].

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of using media or strategies to improve anecdotal writing skills. However, most of these works focused on experimental interventions or comparisons between methods [11], [12], [13]. This study, on the other hand, takes a different approach by providing a comprehensive descriptive analysis of students' ability to write anecdotal texts based on structural and linguistic criteria, without the application of external media or treatments [14], [15]. This focus makes the research original and relevant to understanding students' actual proficiency in anecdotal writing under regular classroom conditions.

The novelty of this research lies in its detailed examination of each structural element of anecdotal texts and the integration of language accuracy as a key parameter. By evaluating student writing using specific rubrics that align with the anecdotal text structure and linguistic norms, this study offers a diagnostic insight into students' strengths and weaknesses [16], [17], [18]. The findings are intended to inform teachers and curriculum developers on how to better support students in mastering this genre, thereby enhancing instructional practices in the classroom.

Thus, this study addresses the following key problem: How capable are tenth-grade students of MAN 01 Kota Bengkulu in writing anecdotal texts, particularly in terms of structure and language use? By answering this question, the research aims to contribute to the improvement of language education through grounded data on student performance.

The study is aims to assess the general level of students' competence in writing anecdotal texts. The research background suggests that many students face challenges in organizing narrative structure, maintaining relevance, and incorporating humor or personal reflection effectively key components in anecdotal writing [19], [20], [21]. The study provides an overview of the common difficulties students experience, such as lack of idea development, weak orientation or reorientation, and minimal use of stylistic features. However, the research tends to remain diagnostic, offering little in terms of specific instructional interventions to address the observed weaknesses. In contrast, the research titled *"Improving the Ability to Write Anecdotal Texts Using Stand-Up Comedy Videos for Grade X Students"* adopts an action-oriented approach by implementing stand-up comedy videos as instructional media to enhance writing performance. Its background highlights the motivational and creative benefits of humor-based content, proposing that such videos can help students better understand the structure, tone, and delivery typical of anecdotes [22], [23]. The findings suggest that exposure to authentic humorous performances enables students to engage more actively in writing, improves their ability to build engaging narratives, and increases their confidence in expressing personal experiences. However, while pedagogically rich, the study is narrowly focused on one type of media and may not address broader skill trends or initial student competence levels.

The gap between these two studies lies in their focus and pedagogical application. The first identifies writing challenges but lacks a concrete instructional solution, while the second presents an innovative teaching method but is limited in scope and baseline comparison [24], [25], [26]. A comprehensive study that integrates both approaches—beginning with an assessment of students' anecdotal writing ability and following up with a targeted intervention like stand-up comedy could fill this gap. Such research would provide a more complete picture of how students' skills develop and how humor-based media can systematically address specific writing deficiencies in anecdotal text production.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive diagnostic focus on students' anecdotal text writing ability without relying on a specific intervention or media. While many previous studies focus on improving writing through external tools or strategies, this research prioritizes establishing a baseline understanding of students' actual competence, including the structural, linguistic, and thematic challenges they face in producing anecdotal texts [27], [28], [29]. By identifying detailed patterns of errors and strengths in real classroom settings, the study lays the foundation for future targeted interventions. This diagnostic-first approach ensures that instructional solutions are rooted in actual student needs, offering a data-driven contribution to genre-based writing instruction.

The findings of this research have important implications for language teachers, curriculum planners, and education policymakers. By clearly mapping students' difficulties in writing anecdotal texts such as lack of coherence, weak orientation, or underdeveloped reorientation the study can guide teachers in designing more focused and responsive instructional strategies [30], [31]. For curriculum developers, the study provides insights into which elements of anecdotal text writing require more emphasis in the syllabus. Additionally, it offers a framework for formative assessment that can be used to monitor student progress before implementing more creative or media-based teaching approaches. Ultimately, the study supports the idea that effective writing instruction must begin with an accurate diagnosis of learners' skills.

This research is urgent in response to the widespread issue of low writing competence among high school students, particularly in narrative and anecdotal genres. In an era where expressive writing and personal storytelling are increasingly valued for communication, reflection, and critical thinking, students' inability to structure and convey personal experiences meaningfully is a significant educational concern [32], [33], [34]. Teachers often

implement interventions without fully understanding the root of students' writing challenges, leading to less effective instruction. Therefore, a study that systematically identifies the exact difficulties students encounter is critical for developing instructional models that truly address learners' gaps and promote authentic, purposeful writing.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. The purpose of this method is to provide a factual and systematic description of students' writing ability in producing anecdotal texts. The quantitative approach was chosen to measure and quantify students' writing performance through numerical data, which allows for objective analysis and interpretation. The study did not involve any experimental treatment or intervention but focused on assessing naturally occurring competencies in the classroom setting.

The population in this study consisted of all tenth-grade students at MAN 01 Kota Bengkulu during the academic year 2022/2023, totaling 277 students across nine classes. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, in which class X6 was selected as the representative sample based on recommendations from teachers regarding writing competency and classroom management. From this class, 30 students were initially selected, but 7 student works were excluded due to indications of plagiarism, resulting in 23 valid samples for analysis.

Data were collected using a writing test. Students were asked to produce a complete anecdotal text based on a given theme, "Social Issues." The test was administered during school hours and was designed to capture the students' real writing abilities without assistance. The students were instructed to follow the five structural components of anecdotal texts (abstraction, orientation, crisis, reaction, and coda) and to adhere to language rules such as diction, grammar, and punctuation.

The main instrument used was a performance-based writing rubric developed by the researcher based on curriculum guidelines and theoretical frameworks on anecdotal texts. The rubric consisted of six key assessment components: five related to the structure of the anecdotal text and one related to linguistic features. Each component was scored with a maximum value assigned based on specific criteria. The rubric allowed for detailed, objective, and standardized evaluation of student writing.

Table 1. Scoring Rubric for Anecdotal Text Writing

Assessment Component	Maximum Score
Abstraction	15
Orientation	15
Crisis	20
Reaction	15
Coda	15
Linguistic Features	20
Total	100

The data analysis technique used in this study was descriptive statistical analysis using the average score formula. Each student's total score was calculated and then averaged across the sample to determine the overall writing ability. The results were categorized into qualitative levels such as "Very Good," "Good," "Fair," and "Poor" according to predefined criteria. This categorization allowed the researcher to interpret the data meaningfully and present a clear profile of student writing performance.

The research was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher prepared the test instruments and obtained official permission from the school and education authorities. Next, the test was administered to the selected class. After collecting the writing samples, the researcher evaluated each text using the established rubric. Finally, the scores were compiled, analyzed quantitatively, and interpreted in relation to each structural and linguistic component of anecdotal writing. The results were used to draw conclusions about the students' strengths and weaknesses in writing anecdotal texts

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study on the students' ability in writing anecdotal texts, particularly focusing on structural components and linguistic features. The data were analyzed quantitatively based on the average scores of the 23 student writing samples, using a rubric that encompassed six aspects: abstraction, orientation, crisis, reaction, coda, and language features. The results are presented in both tabular and narrative forms, followed by in-depth discussion.

3.1. General Writing Ability of Students

The overall writing ability of the students was categorized as "Good" with an average score of 76.71. This indicates that most students demonstrated adequate understanding and application of anecdotal text structure and language use. The scores ranged from 60 to 89, showing some variation in writing proficiency among students.

Table 2. Overall Score Category of Student Writing

Score Range	Category	Number of Students
86–100	Very Good	4
76–85	Good	11
66–75	Fair	6
56–65	Poor	2
Below 56	Very Poor	0

From Table 3, it is evident that over 65% of students fell into the "Good" or "Very Good" category, indicating a positive outcome from their learning experience in anecdotal text writing.

3.2. Writing Ability Based on Text Structure and Language

Each component of anecdotal text structure was analyzed separately to determine which areas students mastered and which remained problematic. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Scores by Writing Aspect

Aspect	Average Score	Category
Abstraction	12.3	Very Good
Orientation	14.9	Good
Crisis	14.4	Good
Reaction	12.4	Very Good
Coda	11.4	Very Good
Linguistic Features	11.4	Very Good

The data show that students performed exceptionally well in constructing the abstraction, reaction, coda, and linguistic elements of anecdotal texts. The orientation and crisis sections were also well-executed, although not at the same level of excellence.

The high performance in the abstraction component suggests that students were capable of crafting introductory sentences that signal unusual or humorous content, which is vital for anecdotal writing. The reaction and coda elements, which reflect the resolution and concluding reflection, were also skillfully handled. This suggests that students are generally proficient in creating engaging story closures and in providing evaluative content.

However, the slightly lower scores in the orientation and crisis components indicate areas that may require further instructional emphasis. Some students lacked clarity in setting the scene or failed to develop a well-defined conflict, which is central to the humor and message of an anecdote. The linguistic feature score indicates that students have a strong grasp of diction, sentence structure, and punctuation relevant to anecdotal text. This may reflect the effectiveness of grammar-focused instruction integrated into writing lessons.

These findings are consistent with prior studies that emphasize the challenges students face in narrative development, especially when incorporating multiple structural and linguistic expectations. Unlike experimental studies that introduce media or strategy interventions [35], this research provides a snapshot of students' authentic performance without external aids, offering valuable insights for classroom-based formative assessment.

The study is focuses on evaluating the general writing performance of students in constructing anecdotal texts. The findings indicate that many students struggle with organizing the structure of anecdotal texts especially in the orientation and reorientation stages and have limited ability to develop engaging or humorous content [36], [37]. The study identifies common weaknesses such as lack of coherence, underdeveloped ideas, and improper use of language features, but does not explore solutions or interventions. Its contribution lies in providing a diagnostic understanding of students' baseline writing skills, which is valuable for shaping future instructional strategies. In contrast, *"The Effectiveness of Image Streaming Method in Improving Anecdotal Text Writing Skills for High School Students"* takes a more action-oriented approach by implementing a specific creative learning method. The study's findings demonstrate that the image streaming technique where students verbally describe mental images to activate imagination can significantly improve students' ability to generate ideas, express emotions, and enhance descriptive detail in their writing [38], [39], [40]. Students exposed to the method showed marked improvement in content richness and originality. However, this study assumes a certain level of writing competence and does not deeply investigate students' initial writing weaknesses or differentiate which aspects of the text improved most.

The gap between these two studies lies in the absence of a combined approach that links diagnostic assessment with targeted intervention. While the first study identifies where students struggle in writing anecdotal texts, it stops short of applying methods to address those challenges [41], [42], [43]. The second study introduces an effective creative technique but overlooks a detailed analysis of students' starting points and does not tie improvements to specific structural weaknesses. Future research would benefit from integrating these approaches

starting with a needs-based assessment and then applying methods like image streaming to target clearly identified gaps allowing for more strategic, data-driven instruction in anecdotal text writing [44], [45].

The novelty of this study lies in its diagnostic emphasis on uncovering the specific challenges students face in writing anecdotal texts, without immediately applying an intervention method. While many existing studies focus on improving writing skills through creative strategies like image streaming or multimedia tools, this research provides a foundational understanding of students' actual performance and textual weaknesses. By analyzing structural elements such as orientation, crisis, and reorientation and language features like tone, sequence, and humor, this study offers a nuanced profile of students' writing abilities [37], [46], [47]. Its contribution is essential in forming an evidence-based pedagogical response, as it ensures that future instructional models directly address students' authentic needs, rather than being based on assumptions.

This study holds significant implications for language educators and curriculum designers. By clearly mapping out the recurring difficulties that students encounter in writing anecdotal texts, the research offers a valuable reference for teachers to tailor their instructional approaches. It suggests the need for more scaffolded writing instruction that focuses on narrative development, emotional engagement, and linguistic creativity [48], [49], [50]. Furthermore, the study can guide curriculum developers to allocate sufficient time and resources for anecdotal writing within the language syllabus, ensuring students are not only exposed to the genre but are also given the tools to master it. The research also supports the idea that writing instruction should begin with a needs-based assessment to ensure targeted, measurable progress.

Despite its strengths, the study has several limitations. First, its scope is confined to observation and analysis without the inclusion of an experimental component or teaching intervention, which limits its ability to demonstrate cause-effect relationships between instruction and improvement. Second, the findings are drawn from a specific population and school context, which may affect the generalizability of the results to broader educational settings. Third, while the study successfully identifies qualitative weaknesses in student writing, it would benefit from quantitative data such as pre- and post-assessment scores or rubric-based evaluations to strengthen the validity of the conclusions. These limitations point to the need for further research that builds on the diagnostic insights through intervention and broader sample sizes.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the overall ability of tenth-grade students at MAN 01 Kota Bengkulu in writing anecdotal texts falls into the "Good" category, with an average score of 76.71. Specifically, students demonstrated strong performance in the abstraction, reaction, coda, and linguistic features of anecdotal texts, categorized as "Very Good," while orientation and crisis components were categorized as "Good." These findings indicate that students generally understand the structure and language features of anecdotal texts, though improvements are needed in building context and developing conflict effectively. The results answer the research objective by clearly describing students' writing competencies across each structural and linguistic element. Future researchers are encouraged to explore the effectiveness of various instructional strategies, such as digital storytelling or peer feedback, in enhancing students' ability to write anecdotal texts. Additionally, comparative studies between different grade levels or school types could provide deeper insights into developmental patterns and contextual factors affecting anecdotal writing skills.

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