

## Capitalization and Punctuation Used in Writing Narrative Text

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**Abstract:** The aims of this study are to describe how capitalization and punctuation are used by students of the tenth grade level in writing narrative text and to find out the students' difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation at SMA Negeri 4 Purworejo. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The researcher used a writing test and a questionnaire to collect data. The data was collected in SMA Negeri 4 Purworejo on April 8 and 11, 2022. The researcher used 102 students as study subjects. The results of the test showed that most of the students mastered the use of capitalization more than punctuation. The researcher found that there were 3314 correct answers for capitalization (58%) and 2572 correct answers of punctuation (41%). Meanwhile, the results of the questionnaire revealed that the students struggled with capitalization and punctuation. In capitalization, there were 62 students who did not understand the rules of capitalization correctly (61%). In punctuation, there were 50 students who had difficulty in using periods (49%), 62 students who had difficulty in using commas (61%), 57 students who had difficulty in using question marks (56%), 56 students who had difficulty in using apostrophes (55%), and 68 students who had difficulty in using exclamation points (67%). Most of the students had difficulties in punctuation used, especially in exclamation points. The researcher suggests that the teacher give his or her students more practice in order to enhance their writing ability, particularly in the correct use of capitalization and punctuation.

**Keywords:** Capitalization, Punctuation, Narrative text

### 1. Introduction

Communication is a means of expressing emotions in our minds to interact and giving information to other people [1]. Talking, soothing, laughing, and telling jokes are examples of communication of human language. Language is always used by people to communicate with each other. Nowadays, English language has been used by people around the world because of the progress of time and advances in technology [2]–[4]. English is tool to think so that makes important thing in the world of education [5], [6]. When it comes to learning English, learners must master four abilities that are speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Many English learners consider writing is a difficult skill because it requires more attention and accuracy [7], [8]. Understanding how to write fluently in English is far more difficult for many English learners than learning to speak fluently [9]. Good writers should master not only the vocabulary but also should master the structure and grammatical content of their writing form. It is impossible to learn to write well only once. Because English is not their mother tongue, they must become accustomed to practicing it [10]. Writers should consider five factors: content, vocabulary, organization, language, and mechanism. Writing is a very important ability to be mastered, there are some reasons why writing ability is very necessary: First and foremost, writing skill is a fundamental requirement for English learners in order to achieve academic success [11]–[13]. Learners are frequently asked to complete tasks, and their writing demonstrates their English proficiency. Second, English writing skill is required to help people advance in their careers. As a result, people should learn to write in English [14]. Writing is a necessary skill to build when learning English. Furthermore, it is required in everyday life, for example, in handwritten writings, app notes, texts, and so on. Even if people are unable to meet in person, writing can help them communicate. Besides that,

writing also has some purpose such as, to educate the readers, persuade the readers, and amuse the readers [15]

Capitalization and punctuation are important aspects that students need to keep in mind in order to write a good essay because the correct use of capitalization and punctuation can create good communication between writer and reader. Using wrong capitalization and wrong punctuation, it can create misunderstanding between writer and reader. Readers, who are reading with wrong capitalization and punctuation, the readers will be perplexed by the writers' intended meaning. Writing rules, especially capitalization and punctuation can be found in several types of text. Students can learn the use of capitalization and punctuation through several types of text.

Text can be descriptive, narrative, recount, report, procedure, explanation, news item, and so on. A fictional story is told in a narrative text. It usually uses simple past tense because the text is about past events. There are many kinds of narrative texts in English subject, such as legends, fairytales, fables, mites, folktales, etc. They are all elements of narrative text. Students should be aware of this when learning English.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***Writing***

Writing is a way to convey emotions, insights, wishes, arguments, and feelings using words in sentences. The writer can deliver wishes and thoughts easily through his/her writing in order for the reader to capture the meaning of each sentence [16]. Writing can be defined as the act of making verbal marks on paper or another substance, as well as the outcome [16]. Writing helps students consolidate their knowledge, revise, and remember new language items [17]. Writing is an essential skill that must be mastered. As the author, she or he should understand how to expand the sentence into a well structure. [18]. However, some people or students think that writing English is a difficult task. The writer must focus on how to use grammar and structure correctly, think about the topic wants to write about, create good ideas for the articles, and think about the appropriate vocabulary. Writing refers to the act of expressing thoughts, concepts, perspectives, personal stories, occasions, and backgrounds through letter writing and note writing. [19].

Considering the definitions, it is possible to conclude that writing is an activity of pouring ideas, opinions, thoughts, or experiences through the form of words. In the process of writing, writers should pay attention in the use of grammar, structure, and vocabulary to create good writing. There are four elements of the writing process: Planning, Drafting, Editing, and Publishing [20]. There were five elements of good writing: the purpose of writing, the audience, clarity, unity, and coherence [15]. Meanwhile audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation are the consideration of writing product [21].

### ***Narrative Text***

Narrative refresh to retelling a story that happened in the past using chronological order and sequences of events to entertain readers [22]. In various ways, narrative text is presented to entertain readers with imagined or actual experiences. [23]. The purpose of a narrative, other than providing entertainment, it can be to make readers think about an issue, stimulate their emotions, and to teach them a lesson [24].

Narrative texts can be categorized into fiction narrative and nonfiction narrative [22]. Fiction narrative presents an imaginary story that takes place in an imaginary world, e.g. legends, fables, myths, fairy tales, folk tales, short stories, novels and comics. Besides that, there is nonfiction narrative. It presents the real life story of a person. Examples: news and magazine articles, diaries, biographies, and textbooks that tell about history of a person.

There were generic structures and language features in narrative text. Complication, orientation, resolution, and reorientation are narrative text generic structures [25]. This opinion was in line with Koilara et al, they said that there were some generic structures in narrative text, such as Orientation, Complications, Resolutions, and Reorientation/Coda [26]. Meanwhile, narrative text language features include the use of noun phrases, time and place adverbial phrases, and the simple past tense. [23].

### ***Capitalization and Punctuation in Writing***

The practice of writing a word or phrase with the first letter in uppercase and the remaining letters in lowercase is known as capitalization. [27]. Capitalization refers to the peculiarity of the English language,

where some words are written in capital letters, and the other words are written in small letters [28]. He also said that capitalization helps to communicate clearly, effectively, and impressively by giving a standard text and a distinctive look. Capitalization is used to differentiate between proper and common nouns and to draw the attention of readers to the specific information that the writers want to convey through their writing. Common nouns are words that refer to general types of people, places, things, and ideas [27]. They are not capitalized. Meanwhile, proper nouns mean words with the first letter capitalized that are used to identify specific people, places, or things (John, New York). Therefore, capitalization is a fundamental thing in writing process to make any differences between common and specific things. In other hand, the use of capitalization correctly can be essential to create a good communication between writers and readers.

Punctuation is a complex system of cues in which the writers give signs to their readers how to move through prose with ease [29]. Based on Mary K. and McCaskill, in text, punctuation is used to analyze the text and make communication easier. Punctuation marks serve four purposes: they differentiate (a period differentiates sentences), they group or enclose (parentheses enclose extraneous information), they link up (a hyphen connects a unit modifier), and they impart purpose. [30]. Used correctly, punctuation helps writers achieve clarity and emphasis. Punctuation has been used to avoid misunderstanding of written language [31]. A punctuation mark's function serves as the basis for the rules that govern its application and should be used to determine. In addition, punctuation also helps writers create rhythm when they are reading text. So, punctuation is symbols in the writing text which the readers can be easier to read and understand the meaning.

### **Related Research**

The first previous study that related to this research was an article with the title *An Analysis of Students' Ability in Using Punctuation Marks in Descriptive Paragraph Writing* conducted by [18]. He investigated the students' competence to use punctuation in descriptive paragraph writing at FKIP UNIKA Medan during the Academic Year 2017/2018, which included the second, fourth, and sixth semesters. Meanwhile this research investigated the students' used of capitalization and punctuation in writing narrative text at the tenth grade of SMA Negeri 4 Purworejo. This research used narrative text because the text was learned by the tenth grade level in Senior High School.

The second previous study was a thesis entitled *An Analysis of Capitalization and Punctuation Used in Writing Essay by the Fifth Semester Students of English Education Department of IAIN Bukittinggi 2015/2016* conducted by Rahmi [32]. The study was investigated about the use of capitalization and punctuation in essay writing by the students in fifth semester of English Education Department of IAIN Bukittinggi. She analyzed the data using the descriptive qualitative method. She completed documentation in order to obtain the data. The second previous study looked at how students use capitalization and punctuation when writing essays. She discovered that while the majority of the students correctly capitalized their sentences, they made mistakes in punctuation and were still unsure which punctuation to use in the sentences. Furthermore, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish each function of punctuation.

The third previous study was also a thesis entitled *Error Analysis of Students in Spelling, Capitalization, and Punctuation Marks in Writing Descriptive Text Encountered at Lintasan Imajinasi Bahasa Mahasiswa (LIBAM) of IAIN Parepare* conducted by Handayani [33]. She analyzed the data using the descriptive qualitative method. It means that her research used words or descriptions to describe the outcome. She looked into the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors of IAIN Parepare students. She took the members of LIBAM IAIN Parepare, a group of 60 people who participated in the Quarantine and Training of Trainer 2020. Those members have a variety of majors, including English and non-English. She discovered that the most common errors were in capitalization, which had 186 errors, and spelling, which had 117 errors.

### **3. Methods**

This This research was classified as qualitative. Qualitative research is research that focuses on the quality or most important aspect of a product or service [34]. It means that this study did not use treatment to collect the data to get findings. The researcher described the students' use of capitalization and punctuation in narrative text. and to found out the students' difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation in writing narrative text at SMA Negeri 4 Purworejo.

This study was carried out at April, 8<sup>th</sup> until April, 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 in SMA Negeri 4 Purworejo. There were 102 students from three classes: X Natural Science 1,2, and 3 as the participants of this study. To collect the data, the researcher used writing test and questionnaire as instruments. Writing test is used to identify the students' understanding of capitalization and punctuation in narrative text. Meanwhile, the questionnaire is used to know the students' difficulties in the use of capitalization and punctuation in writing narrative text. The researcher used *Google Form* as a media to make it easier for students to fill out the questionnaire.

The most important task in the research steps is data collection, especially if researcher uses a method that is prone to the inclusion of the subjective element of the researcher. That is why the data collection process in research needs to be monitored so that the data obtained can be maintained level of validity and reliability[35]. The researcher took some steps to collect data: made instrument of the writing test to students, consulted instrument of the writing test to students, gave instrument of the writing test to students, considered the writing test to make the questionnaire, made instrument of the questionnaire to students, consulted the instrument of the questionnaire, and gave the instrument of the questionnaire to students. Meanwhile, to analyse data, the researcher also did some steps: identified the data, categorized the data, calculated the data, discussed the data, then drew conclusion and suggestion.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### *Findings*

The researcher used descriptive qualitative analysis to answer the problems of the study. In this part, the researcher was presented the analysis result of students' answers from writing tests and questionnaires.

#### 1. Students' Writing Test Result

Table 1. Students' Writing Test Results in Capitalization

Capitalization	Frequencies	Total Students	Total of Frequencies	Correct Answers	Percentage (%)
The title	4	102	408	375	92%
At the beginning of sentences	32	102	3264	1724	53%
Proper Nouns	16	102	1632	998	61%
In Complete Quotation	2	102	204	113	55%
Letter "I"	2	102	204	104	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>5712</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>58%</b>

The table above showed that 5 parts must be capitalized: 1) the title of the text, 2) at the beginning of sentences, 3) proper nouns, 4) in complete quotation marks, and 5) letter "I". The first part was in the title of the text. The total frequencies of *the title* were 408, whereas the correct answers from the students' answer sheets were 375 (92%). The second part was *at the beginning of the sentence*. The total frequencies of *the beginning of the sentence* were 3264, whereas the correct answers from the students' answer sheets were 1724 (53%). The third part was *proper nouns*. The total frequencies of *proper nouns* were 1632, whereas the correct answers from the students' answer sheets were 998 (61%). The fourth part was *in the complete quotation*. The total frequencies *in the complete quotation* are 408, whereas the correct answers from the students' answer sheets were 113 (55%). The fifth part was *the letter "I"*. The total frequencies of *letter "I"* were 408, whereas the correct answers from the students' answer sheets were 104 (51%). The total of students' correct answers was 3314 (58%) which the total of frequencies was 5712.

Table 2. Students' Writing Test Results in Punctuation

Punctuation	Frequencies	Total Students	Total of Frequencies	Correct Answers	Percentage (%)
Periods	31	102	3162	1725	55%
Commas	21	102	2142	494	23%
Quotation Marks	4	102	408	226	55%
Apostrophes	4	102	408	111	27%
Exclamation Points	2	102	204	16	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>6324</b>	<b>2572</b>	<b>41%</b>

The table above showed that 5 punctuations can be found in the students' writing test: 1) Periods, 2) Commas, 3) Quotation Marks, 4) Apostrophes, and 5) Exclamation Points. The first part was in *periods*. The total frequencies of *periods* were 3162, whereas the correct answers were 1725 (55%). The second part was *commas*. The total frequencies of *commas* were 2142, whereas the correct answers are 494 (23%). The third part was *quotation marks*. The total frequencies of *quotation marks* were 408, whereas the correct answers were 226 (55%). The fourth part was *apostrophes*. The total frequencies of *apostrophes* were 408, whereas the correct answers were 113 (27%). The fifth part was *exclamation points*. The total frequencies of *exclamation points* were 204, whereas the correct answers were 16 (8%). The total of students' correct answers was 2572 (41%) which the total of frequencies were 6324.

## 2. Students' Questionnaire Results

Table 3. The Students' Questionnaire Results

No	Statements	Students' Answers				Total Answers (Σ)
		SA	A	D	SD	
1.	I can learn narrative text well.	2	56	44	0	102
2.	I like reading narrative texts, such as legends, myths, and fables.	10	54	37	1	102
3.	The teacher teaches the narrative text material well.	6	72	23	1	102
4.	The class atmosphere is very conducive during learning narrative text.	0	64	36	2	102
5.	The teacher gives the opportunity for students to ask questions during learning narrative text material.	9	70	22	1	102
6.	The teacher gives assignments during learning narrative text material.	9	76	17	0	102
7.	The teacher teaches the use of capitalization and punctuation in English learning.	5	41	50	6	102
8.	I can understand well the rules of using capitalization in English.	3	35	62	2	102
9.	I can understand well the sentence structure in English.	4	32	63	3	102
10.	I can use periods (.) in English well.	3	47	50	2	102
11.	I can use commas (,) in English well.	3	36	62	1	102
12.	I can use question marks (?) in English well.	5	39	57	1	102
13.	I can use quotation marks ("—") in English well.	10	47	44	1	102
14.	I can use apostrophes (') in English well, such as, <i>it's, hadn't, couldn't, don't, etc.</i>	4	41	56	1	102
15.	I can use exclamation points (!) in English well.	2	28	68	4	102

According to the table, the researcher found the percentage of the questionnaire results of the students' difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation in writing narrative text. There were 15 positive statements and 4 response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). There were 102 students who participated in this study. The code  $\sum$  means the total of students' answers of the questionnaire. The table above shows that the students struggled with periods, commas, question marks, apostrophes, and exclamation points.

### **Discussion**

This study was investigated to describe the students' used in capitalization and punctuation in writing narrative text and to find out the students' difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation when writing narrative text.

From the findings of the study, many students could not use capitalization and punctuation correctly. In capitalization, the higher score was in the title. There was 375 (92%) correct answers for the title, while the lowest score was in letter "P". There was 104 (51%) correct answers for letter "P". Meanwhile, in punctuation, the higher score was in periods. There was 1725 (55%) correct answers for periods, while the lowest score was in exclamation points. There was only 16 (8%) correct answers for exclamation points.

From the results of questionnaire, the students had difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation, especially in understanding the rules of capitalization, the use of periods, commas, question marks, quotation marks, apostrophes, and exclamation points. From the table, the researcher used 15 positive statements. Most of the students chose disagree in their questionnaire. It means that most of the students gave signs that they had difficulties in using capitalization and punctuation when writing narrative text. the higher score of disagreement was in exclamation points. There were 68 (67%) students who had difficulties in using exclamation points, while the lowest score of disagreement of using capitalization and punctuation was in periods. There were 50 (49%) students who had difficulties in using periods.

### **5. Conclusion**

From the findings and discussion, the researcher concluded that almost of the students mastered the use of capitalization more than punctuation in writing narrative text. Based on the table, there were 3314 (58%) correct answers for capitalization and there were 2572 (41%) correct answers for punctuation. Besides that, the students had struggle in using capitalization and punctuation. Based on the data, most of the students had difficulties in using punctuation, especially in the use of exclamation points.

From this research, the researcher suggest that the students must be aware that the use of capitalization and punctuation are important when writing texts. Students have to read a lot of text and more practice writing text to improve their writing skill. Besides that, the teacher also should give more practice to his/her students to write texts so that it can help them be more trained in writing text correctly, especially in the use of capitalization and punctuation.

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