

AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE STUDENTS' WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT VIII GRADE SMP NEGERI 2 LEIDONG

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze grammatical errors made by eighth-grade students in writing descriptive texts, with a particular focus on the use of the simple present tense. The research employed a descriptive qualitative design. The participants were students of SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a writing test in which students were required to compose a descriptive text in English. The students' written works were analyzed using surface strategy taxonomy, which classifies errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The analysis procedure involved identifying errors, categorizing them into the four types, and interpreting the results to determine dominant error patterns. The findings revealed that students produced various grammatical errors, with misformation and omission appearing as the most frequent types. These errors mainly occurred in subject-verb agreement, verb forms, and the use of auxiliary verbs in the simple present tense. The results indicate that students still have limited mastery of basic grammatical structures in descriptive writing. This study suggests that teachers should provide more focused grammar instruction and writing practice to help students reduce errors and improve their ability to write descriptive texts accurately.

Keywords: *error analysis, descriptive text, simple present tense, grammatical errors, writing skill.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is used to communicate between individuals and also brings them into contact with their environment. English is the international language used by most people around the world in their interactions. In learning English, we must understand the four basic skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing. Writing is one of the most important skills that must be learned by students used to provide factual, persuasive and entertaining information by expressing ideas, opinions that are arranged systematically and following certain rules. Errors in learning language can happen in any type of skill such as in reading, writing, or other language skills. It can be few or many. It cannot be ignored because it can cause trouble later, so it needs to be fixed. The same case in learning a foreign language, language learning as a second or foreign language is still regarded to be difficult for young students (Vidhiyasi & Haryani, 2020). Especially in writing English, is a general problem for learners, which is not separated between learning a foreign language and making errors. Blanchard and Root (1998) as cited in (Pratiwi et al., 2019), said that learning to write a new language is not always easy (Nurfidoh & Kareviati, 2021). It demands students to understand grammatical structures and appropriate vocabularies to write in the text. Therefore, it sometimes causes the problem such as students made errors in their writing.

Out of the four skills mentioned above, writing is the one that takes pupils the longest to master. One needs a large knowledge base and a creative cognitive process to develop words, phrases, and paragraphs with perfect English grammar. Writing requires a process that includes organising, planning, and revising to convey meaning in words or phrases, making it difficult to master. Palmer (1994:1) stated to be understood, writing requires the ability to mix and organise ideas into paragraphs and phrases that are cogent and coherent. Students must practise writing a lot in order to generate work that is both legible and noteworthy, despite the fact that it is not simple straight forward. Writing is an important skill which must be learnt besides listening, speaking and reading, because it is used to communicate, students must be able to communicate not only in oral form but also in written form. According to Ramli (2013) writing is a way to express feelings, ideas, arguments, willingness and thoughts in the form of words in sentences. It means that students should be able to express their idea in written form as the result of their understanding of the text that they read. Because of that, writing is important skill to be taught to the students. Writing is more difficult than the other three skills because it requires more than just

putting pen or pencil to paper. Writing is an activity that allows children to explore and express their thoughts as well as ask for whatever they learn, according to Palmer (2003:5). Writing can be viewed in a similar light as a work that is essential to both teaching and learning and that cannot be separated from student interaction. Grammar is difficult to learn by foreign language learners because each language has its own grammar rules. For example between Indonesian and English which have quite different grammar, in Indonesian it does not really regulate how verbs should be used. But in English there are many rules that must be considered, especially in the use of tenses, which are rules that indicate activities within a certain time. One such tense is simple present tense. Simple present tense is used when talking about general truths and permanent situations (Raymond Murphy:2003). In line with this definition, Betty (2002) explains that simple present is used to show something that always happens, in the past, present and future. Making errors is basically a human process when learning, so it is very possible to happen to foreign language learners. This is as expressed by James (1998) that error analysis is the process of determining the reason for language failure. Pateda (1989) said that error analysis is very useful for teachers in particular in order to find out what errors are most often done by learners, improve the system and learning methods. Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined grammar as the rules that directly control how words and phrases combine to make sentences. Since grammar is specifically created for the objectives of teaching or learning a foreign language or to become aware of the existence of a mother tongue, it is the area of language acquisition that garners the most attention.

Based on the writer's experience when doing teaching training practice at SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong, the writer also found some error in writing descriptive text. There were some cases about study tenses in SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong. The first, students have lack of understanding in the use of descriptive text grammar, namely simple present tense which makes it difficult for them to write proper descriptive text in simple present. The second students were confused in how to apply tenses in particular Simple Present Tense. Simple Present Tense is important as the basic rule for the students to make and to use into the sentences to communicate in daily life and write a descriptive text. The third, students did not understand especially in using subject-verb agreement. They could not use the subject-verb agreement, it was known that the ability of the students in using Simple Present Tense was low. It was found that many students often did not understand of why some sentences used auxiliaries *is*, *am*, and *are* instead of auxiliaries *do* and *does*. And the last, some students were confused in differentiating which subject used auxiliaries *do* or *does*. All the problems above arose since the students did not understand the right rule of Simple Present Tense.

Therefore, error analysis has an important role to help the teacher to reveal what kind of error that mostly the students do in writing and the causes of the error they make. By knowing the errors, the teacher could improve their method in teaching and would avoid the errors by giving the extensive materials about the errors in writing. The students also would have better understanding of what they were learning and would be able to write correctly and awarded with their previous error. There are some previous relevant researches this topic, finding: Setiyorini, Dewi, and Masykuri (2020) found that the most common types of grammatical errors were omission (34,06%), addition (7,25%), substitution (57,97%), and permutation. This study also showed that the intralingual transfer (61.39%), learning environment (5,94%) are the main causes of errors. Additionally, morphological faults (81.97%) and syntactic errors (18.03%) were the two primary forms of grammatical errors discovered by the four Preeyanuch Promsupa Patchara Varasarin Prapart Brudhiprabha-(2017). There were 32 different error sub-categories among the two primary ones. Singular/plural errors (30.43%), article errors (21.51%), and preposition errors (5.23%) were the three most often discovered errors.

Based on previous study of Ratna, Patuann, Budi (2013) showed that from the results of their research, students use simple present tense more correctly with a percentage of 73.81%. Compared to previous studies, research by Siti Himmatul (2017) showed that students still made many errors when using simple present tense on descriptive text. Those errors lie in misordering as much as 34% with the reason being that students not familiar with English grammar caused by differences in grammar rules between Indonesian and English. This is reinforced by research from Uswatun (2017) which said that students still made errors with a percentage of 50% on omission errors which are again caused by the dominance of Indonesian in their daily grammar. Therefore, the researcher tries to do study dealing with the problem and the study entitles *An Error Analysis On The Students' Writing Descriptive Text At VIII Grade SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong* because descriptive text is quite simple but students still often found difficult in writing descriptive text. By analyzing students' errors of using simple present in descriptive text, it is expected to improve teacher's teaching skill and overcome the students' error, especially in writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is one of the essential language skills that enables learners to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in written form, and it requires mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and text organization. In learning English as a foreign language, students often face difficulties in writing because they must simultaneously develop content and apply correct grammatical structures. Grammar plays a crucial role in producing meaningful sentences, and one of the most basic yet challenging grammatical aspects for junior high school students is the simple present tense. This tense is commonly used in descriptive text to express general truths and permanent conditions. Descriptive text itself aims to describe people, places, animals, or objects through identification and detailed description, typically using adjectives and the simple present tense. However, many students struggle with subject–verb agreement, verb forms, and the use of auxiliary verbs when writing descriptive texts. These difficulties frequently result in grammatical errors. Error analysis serves as a systematic approach to identify, classify, and explain such errors, which are considered a natural part of the language learning process. Using surface strategy taxonomy, students' errors can be categorized into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Previous studies have revealed that misformation and omission are the most dominant error types in students' descriptive writing, often caused by limited grammatical knowledge and interference from the first language. Therefore, conducting error analysis is important to help teachers understand students' learning problems and to improve teaching strategies, particularly in developing students' ability to write descriptive texts accurately.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze students' grammatical errors in writing descriptive texts. The participants were eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong, with one class selected as the research sample using purposive sampling. The primary instrument for data collection was a writing test in which students were asked to compose a descriptive text in English. The collected students' writings were analyzed to identify grammatical errors, particularly in the use of the simple present tense. The data were then classified based on surface strategy taxonomy, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The analysis procedure involved identifying errors, categorizing them into the four types, calculating their occurrences, and interpreting the results to determine the dominant error types. This method was applied to gain a clear understanding of students' difficulties in using grammatical structures and to provide insights for improving teaching and learning processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Table of Recapitulation of the Students' Types of Errors

Students	Error Classification			
	Omission (5 Students)	Misformation (11 Students)	Misordering (3 Students)	Addition (0 Students)
Students 1	2	-	-	-
Students 2	-	2	1	-
Students 3	-	4	2	-
Students 4	2	4	1	-
Students 5	-	2	-	-
Students 6	1	-	-	-
Students 7	-	-	-	-
Students 8	-	-	-	-
Students 9	-	-	-	-
Students 10	-	1	-	-
Students 11	-	2	-	-
Students 12	-	2	-	-
Students 13	-	-	-	-
Students 14	-	-	-	-
Students 15	-	-	-	-
Students 16	-	-	-	-
Students 17	2	7	-	-

Students	Error Classification			
	Omission (5 Students)	Misformation (11 Students)	Misordering (3 Students)	Addition (0 Students)
Students 18	-	3	-	-
Students 19	-	-	-	-
Students 20	1	4	-	-
Students 21	-	-	-	-
Students 22	-	3	-	-
Total	8	34	4	-
Total of Errors	46 errors			

Findings

No	Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage
1	Misformation	34	74.00%
2	Omission	8	17.39%
3	Misordering	4	8.69%
4	Addition	0	0%

Percentage of students' errors :

- Omission

$$P = \frac{8}{46} \times 100 = 17.39\%$$
- Misformation

$$P = \frac{34}{46} \times 100 = 74.00\%$$
- Misordering

$$P = \frac{4}{46} \times 100 = 8.69\%$$
- Addition

$$P = \frac{0}{46} \times 100 = 0\%$$

Based on the tables of students' errors, it can be stated that :

- Total error of Omission are 38 errors on percentage 17.39%.
- Total error of Misformation are 80 errors on percentage 74.00%.
- Total error of Misordering are 17 errors on percentage 8.69%.
- Total error of Addition are 0 errors on percentage 0%.

DISCUSSIONS

After classifying the items into area tested and analyzing the frequency of error in each item, the researcher formulated the sequence of types of errors on its high frequency to lowest frequency of error.

Table 2

No	Types of errors	Frequency Of errors	Percentage
1	Misformation	34	74.00%
2	Omission	8	17.39%
3	Misordering	4	8.69%
4	Addition	0	0%

In Table 4.2.1, most of the students made mistakes on the Misformation with an error Frequency of 74.00%. This is a very high frequency of errors because students may face difficulties choosing the wrong word.

With this frequency, teachers should pay more attention to this type of error. The second error rate is on Omission with a frequency of 17.39%. The frequency is high because most of them have made an error on the test regarding omission with some required elements. They omitted items that should appear in the sentence. Students also make mistakes on omitting spelling, for example : Her name Emmy Watson becomes Her name is Emmy Watson. The third error Addition with frequency 0%. The frequency is low because students understand some elements that are unnecessary or incorrect. This is because students have previously studied vocabulary and spelling, so they are able to analyze each word. However, both vocabulary have their own spelling, and this can make students analyze the words and there is no confusion for students, which then results in no mistakes. The last error is in Misordering with frequency 8.69%. The students have made errors on the test regarding the Misordering, it happened because of students put some element/word in wrong place. The students committed errors when they use adjective to describe a noun. Most of students also Mis-order word order of two use adjective to describe a noun. Most of students also Mis-order word order of two or more adjectives to describe a noun.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous study chapter, the researcher can draw some conclusion as follow:

1. The kinds of error on the use of simple present tense in writing descriptive by grade eight students at SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong are error of Misformation with 34 errors or 74.00%, error of Omission with 8 errors of 17.39%, error of Addition with 0 errors or 0% and error of Misordering with 4 error or 8.69%. Students made such error because they didn't know well the manner in using simple present tense.
2. Based on the findings, the dominant error that made by eight students at SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Leidong is error of Misformation with 34 errors or 74.00% of total errors. This error becomes the most difficult for students because many of them do not understand the use of verbs and tobe for third person singular subjects.

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