

**A STUDY ON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT MADE BY THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF
SMP ISLAM AS-SHOFA PEKANBARU**

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Abstract: *This research is aimed to find out the types of grammatical errors in writing descriptive text made by the first year students of SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru. This is quantitative descriptive research. The population of this research were the first year students of SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru. The sample of this research was 25 students of 7.5 class who have been selected using cluster-sampling technique. The data were collected by using writing test 1 and writing test 2. The data were analyzed by applying the rules of Corder (1974) through three raters. The findings of this study revealed that the students made 190 grammatical errors from the total frequency of writing test 1 and writing test 2. Those grammatical errors were classified into four types which belong to Surface Strategy Taxonomy, they are omission (28%), addition (13%), misformation (48%), and misordering (11%). The cause of errors are the presence of intralingual transfer and interlingual transfer. Based on the findings, there were several recommendations given to the students to minimize the errors that will occur such as improve their skills in writing English with do more practice to write a text and understand to the grammar used.*

Key Words: *Error, Writing, Descriptive Text*

PENELITIAN TENTANG KESALAHAN GRAMATIKAL DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPSI YANG DIBUAT OLEH SISWA TAHUN PERTAMA SMP ISLAM AS-SHOFA PEKANBARU

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan tipe kesalahan gramatikal dalam menulis teks deskripsi yang dibuat oleh siswa tahun pertama SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kuantitatif deskriptif. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa tahun pertama SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru tahun ajaran 2019/2020. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 25 siswa kelas 7.5 yang telah dipilih menggunakan teknik cluster sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan tes menulis 1 dan tes menulis 2. Data dianalisa dengan menggunakan aturan dari Corder(1974) melalui tiga orang penilai. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa melakukan 190 kesalahan gramatikal dari total keseluruhan frekuensi pada tes menulis 1 dan tes menulis 2. Kesalahan-kesalahan gramatikal tersebut diklasifikasikan dalam 4 tipe kesalahan pada teori Surface Strategy Taxonomy yaitu omission (28%), addition (13%), misformation (48%), dan misordering (11%). Penyebab terjadinya kesalahan tersebut adalah adanya faktor intralingual dan interlingual. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, ada beberapa rekomendasi yang diberikan kepada siswa agar mereka dapat mengurangi kesalahan yang akan terjadi seperti meningkatkan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris dengan lebih banyak latihan menulis teks dan memahami tata bahasa atau grammar.

Kata Kunci: Kesalahan, Menulis, Teks Deskripsi

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a process that is done not only once and will get progress related to the thought process of generating ideas using the acceptable form of language (Hedge, 2000). Writing is one of the productive skills that is used indirectly which people or language learners are required to have competence to produce written works in the form of sentence, paragraphs and text. The ability in writing is not only how students express their ideas, but students also required to consider the use of grammar rules, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling.

Based on the 2013 Curriculum, English subject in Junior High School which includes writing skills are functional text such as descriptive text, recount text, narrative text, procedure text, and report text. Based on the syllabus used in SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru, the first-year students are expected to be able to understand the meaning, arrange oral and written text critically through writing activities. For the first year students, activities of communicating in the topic of descriptive text, students are asked by the teacher to write and present the descriptive text. Through the topic of descriptive text students are trained to be more accustomed in writing because one of the skills taught in the descriptive text material is students' writing skills.

In the process of learning language skills especially in writing, it is common if the students or language learners have grammatical errors. Based on the writer's teaching practice experience in SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru, it has been found that some students still make errors in grammar rules especially in using simple present tense. When the writer had a conversation with one of the students in a short message via mobile phone, she still had errors in written form. For example "she know you want go to school", this sentence should be "she knows that you want to go to school". "its not deal" should be "it's not deal".

Grammar is one of the skills of writing that the language learners should learn. Grammar is the main element of every skills in English especially in writing skill (Taogo, 2013). Grammar is the basic element of knowledge to form an acceptable written work, therefore grammar must be learned by language learners because grammar is really needed to make writing paper. Grammar related to the rules in forming words and sentences. Grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select to combine words (Murcia, M., & Hilles s., 1995). The use of grammar especially in writing is the most difficult thing for students because there are many rules that should be learned. Therefore, the students still make grammatical error in their writing process.

When students make grammatical errors, it means they have not mastered the English rules. According to (Harmer, 2007), errors in writing especially for the grammatical errors are happened because the language learners can't correct their grammatical errors, thus, need explanation. Errors are breaking the rule, due to a lack of competence such as knowledge of the language, which may or may not be conscious (Corder, 1973). Errors that occur in the process of learning tend to be not self-correctable because of lack of competence in language rules. While mistakes refer to the learning of performance, caused by fatigue or less careful. It means that the learner is actually aware of the mistakes done and know the acceptable form of the mistake (can be self-corrected).

The writer decided to conduct a research by the title "A Study on Grammatical Errors in Writing Descriptive Text Made by the First-Year Students of SMP Islam As-

Shofa Pekanbaru. If the students made errors, the teacher should know what types of errors do the students made.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a quantitative descriptive method. According to (Subana, M., & Sudrajat, 2005), a descriptive quantitative research concludes fact, situation, variable, and phenomenon that happen at the time and present it reality. It means that in this research, the writer found out the data at the field based on the fact and phenomenon related to the variable of the research. The result of this quantitative method presented in the tables. Cluster sampling is used to determine the sample of the research, 7.5 class was chosen as the sample.

In conducting the research, The writer used writing test 1 and writing test 2 to collect the data online by using whatsapp group. The data were analyzed by three raters using the procedures adopted from Corder in Ellis and Barkuizhen (2008).

1. Collection sample of language learner

In the first step of analyzing the data, the writer asked the students to write a descriptive text with three topics given “My idol”, “My pet”, “My favorite place”. After the students finished their writing, the writer collected their writing to be checked by the three raters.

2. Identification of errors

The identification of errors involves a comparison between the sentences that students have produced and the sentence that should be in an acceptable grammatical form in the same context. After collected the data, the writer tried to find out the grammatical errors by underlying the errors and analyze the data as objective as possible.

3. Description of Errors

The next step is to describe the errors. In this step, the writer described and categorized the grammatical errors based on its types that have been found in the following categories of grammatical rules:

Tabel 1. The Description of Errors

Sentences (errors)	Types of grammatical errors				Acceptable form
	OM	AD	MF	MO	

OM: Omission; AD: Addition; MF: Mis-formation; MO: Mis-ordering

4. Explanation of Errors

In this explanation errors, the writer explained and calculating the grammatical errors made. The number of grammatical errors were counted based on the error classification of (Dulay, 1982), which are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. To get the quantitative result, the data were calculated and drew up in the table of percentage which the formula used based on (Hatch, 1982):

$$n = \frac{f(x)}{N} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

n = the percentage of errors

Fx = the total of frequency of the sub – categories errors

N = the total errors of all categories

5. Error evaluation

The last step of error analysis is error evaluation. In this step, the writer made the reconstruction or the correction of the grammatical errors. Reconstruction involves the sentence that appears in acceptable sentence form.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Grammatical errors made by the students have been presented in this research and classified into four types of error, they are: Omission, Addition, Mis-formation, and Mis-ordering. The errors were found from the writing test 1 and writing test 2, the total numbers of those errors are presented in table 3.

Tabel 1. The Total Percentage of Errors in Writing Test 1 and Writing Test 2

No	Types of Grammatical Errors	Total Errors WT 1	Total Errors WT 2	Total WT 1 & WT2	Percentage of Errors
1	Omission	19	35	54	28%
2	Addition	15	9	24	13%
3	Misformation	34	58	92	48%
4	Misordering	8	12	20	11%
	Total	76	114	190	100%

Based on the table above, it shows that there are four types of grammatical errors. The students of this research made 190 of grammatical errors which classified into 4 types from the total in writing test 1 and writing test 2 . The total errors of omission are 54 or 28%, there are 24 or 13% errors of addition, errors of misformation are 92 or 48% and errors of misordering are 20 (11%). Based on the data, the most frequent grammatical errors made by the first year students of SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru is misformation errors 48%, then followed by errors of omission 28%, errors of addition 13% and misordering errors 11%.

Description of Research Findings

1. Error of Omission

Error of omission is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. There were 54 errors of omission from writing test 1 and writing test 2. The examples of errors are:

- a. **Thats** a cozy place. It should be "That's a cozy place".
- b. She **like** to play a ball. It should be "She likes to play a ball".
- c. There are two **wardrobe**. It should be "There are two wardrobes".

2. Error of Addition

Error of addition is characterized by the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance. There were 24 errors of addition from writing test 1 and writing test 2. The examples of errors are:

- a. **It is** eats grass and carrots. It should be "It eats grass and carrots".
- b. I have a **pet** cat. It should be "I have a cat".
- c. **It is** has lovely orange eyes. It should be "It has lovely orange eyes".

3. Error of Misformation

Mis-formation is the most error that the students made in writing descriptive text, there were 92 errors of addition from writing test 1 and writing test 2. Misformation errors are characterized by the use of wrong form of the morpheme or structure. The examples of errors are:

- a. **It's** three **colour's**. It should be "It has three colours".
- b. She sleeps in **his** cage. It should be "She sleeps in her cage".
- c. He **wa** born **at** Juli 20th 1997 **at** Medan. It should be "He was born on Juli 20th, 1997 in Medan.

4. Error of Misordering

Misordering errors are categorized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morpheme in an utterance. In this research, there were 20 errors of mis-ordering. The examples of errors are:

- a. There is a **bed to soft**. It should be "There is a soft bed".
- b. **But** he doesn't eat mice. **But** he eats cat pallets. It should be "He doesn't eat mice, but he eats cat pallets".
- c. It's my pet so cute. It should be "My pet is so cute".

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research showed that the first year students in VII.5 class of SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru still made grammatical errors in their sentences. The total number of grammatical errors from writing test 1 and writing test 2 were 190. It is derived from 4 types of grammatical errors (omission, addition, mis-formation, and mis-ordering). It showed the most common error was mis-formation, there were 92 of mis-formation errors or 48% of the total errors found from writing test 1 and writing test 2.

1. From the mis-formation errors, the writer found that the students still have difficulties and made grammatical errors. There were 92 errors of mis-formation:
 - a. The first errors which are many appears are errors in differentiate the use of “it is/ it’s” (subject – to be) and “its” (possesive adjective) appropriately.
 - b. The second grammatical errors made by the students of this types were the unacceptable form of to be, in the singular/plural form.
 - c. The next common errors of misformation is in the use of contraction and apostrophe.
 - d. Errors in preposition (at,on,in) also appear in the sentences that students made in their writing test.
 - e. Another errors that also appear in students’ sentences are the use of vocabulary. The students still didn’t aware and put the wrong or incomplete word/vocabulary in their sentences.

2. From the omission errors, based on the results of the data analysis, it has been found there were 54 omission errors from writing test 1 and writing test 2.
 - a. The common errors of omission that appears in students’ sentences are the omission of be, students still did not understand about the use of be in nominal sentence.
 - b. Omission of s/es as third singular person aslo often appear in their sentences, the students still confused to use the subject (I, you, they, we) + verb1 and the subject (she, he, it) + verb (-s/es) for their sentences in simple present tense.
 - c. Then there were also appear the omission of plurality –s in students’ sentences, the students didn’t add –s for the plural noun.
 - d. Omission of article.
 - e. Omission of apostrophe ‘s, the students often omit the suffix ‘s (apostrophe s) to make the possessive form of a noun phrase (Krohn, 1986).

3. From the addition errors, based on the results of analyzing data, it showed the students still made grammatical errors. There were 24 errors of addition from writing test 1 and writing test 2. The most common error in addition error is double marking.

4. From the mis-ordering errors, based on the result of analyzing data, it can be seen the students still made grammatical errors. There were 20 errors of mis-ordering from writing test 1 and writing test 2. In mis-ordering errors, the student does not know how to use an adjective in a sentence.

In addition, the writer also compared the result of this research to previous research, it indicates that most of the students had errors in mis-formation and omission errors. (Muhsin, 2016) in his study, he found 143 total of grammatical errors consisting of 20 errors of omission, 10 errors of addition, 109 errors of misformation and 4 errors of misordering. From the results of the data, it can be seen that misformation error was the highest number of grammatical errors made by the students and lowest is misordering error.

From this present and some previous studies, it shows that the most common grammatical errors made by the students are misformation and omission. In this reserach also the most common grammatical error is misformation. Misformation

becomes the most common grammatical errors because one of the sources of error is *intralingual transfer*. This is in line with (Brown, 2000) statements that the intralingual factor is a major factor in learning foreign language. This error occurs due to the complexity of the English grammar system. Therefore, they made misformation errors due to they don't understand how to make an acceptable sentence in using a proper word or verb.

Meanwhile, another factor that caused error is *interlingual transfer* or L1 transfer. This errors occur because of a difference in the learners' first language system with the English grammar system. Therefore the learners directly translate the sentences from the first language to target language without notice any rules of the acceptable sentence. As stated by (Abbasi, M., & Karimnia, A, 2011) most errors that the students produced were interlingual errors, indicating the influence of mother tongue.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This research was conducted by the writer to know the grammatical errors in writing descriptive text made by the the first year students of SMP Islam As-Shofa Pekanbaru. From the results of analyzing data, this research showed the students still made errors in their sentences in writing descriptive text.

Based on the results of analyzing data, it has been found there were 190 grammatical errors from the total frequency of writing test 1 and writing test 2. The writer categorized the grammatical errors into four types of errors which belong to Surface Strategy Taxonomy, Error of misformation was the most error made by the students, there were 92 errors of misformation or 48% of the total errors found from writing test 1 and writing test 2, then followed by 54 errors of omission on percentage 28% , 24 or 13% errors of addition. The last is 20 or 11% errors of misordering.

Recommendation

The writer would like to give some recomendations for English teachers and for students.

For the English teachers, in order to make the students be aware with the grammatical rules, the teachers should be able to know and recognize the students' difficulties in writing. By knowing the students' difficulties, the teachers may know an interesting technique to teach the students about the rules of grammar in English subject appropriately. The teachers also should be a aware with the types of grammatical errors that students made in their writing, so that they can give the students some exercises and focus more attention to their weaknesses or their difficulties on certain grammar rules that the students don't understand.

For the students, to improve their skills in English, they are expected to always pay attention, more focus, and understand well what teachers taught in English subject. If the students do not understand with the material they learned in the learning process, they should be often to ask a question to the teacher. To improve their skills in writing,

they should do more practice to write a text and pay attention to the grammar and structure. The students also should be often to open their English dictionary or reading a book so they can enhance their vocabulary.

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