

## **An Analysis of Students' Errors in Writing Descriptive Text at Tenth Grade of SMAN 1 Tulungagung in Academic Year 2018/2019**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The students usually make error on the use of grammar when they produce an English writing, also in writing descriptive text. It is due to the difference between Indonesia and English grammatical system. This research aims to find out the types of grammatical errors based on (Caroline Mei Lin Ho, 2005) theory of taxonomy grammatical errors, the most frequently error occurred, and the causes of errors made by the tenth grade students of MIPA 4 at SMAN 1 Tulungagung. The researcher uses qualitative method in order to obtain valid findings from 25 participants of tenth grade students. Based on the error analysis conducted, the researcher found that errors regarding sentence structure are the most dominant errors, with the biggest number of errors are in incomplete or fragmented sentences (36,20%). Then it is followed by errors regarding verb and verb groups with the biggest number of errors are in omission of suffix -s, -es, -ed, and -ing (20,69%). Then, it is followed by errors regarding preposition with the biggest number of errors are in inappropriate selection or usage of preposition (6,03%). Last, the errors regarding noun and noun groups with the biggest number of errors are in inappropriate selection of quantifier, article, determiner (2,58%). The findings show that the students have difficulties in using correct sentence structure, especially in incomplete or fragmented sentences. This problem may occur due to their lack understanding of grammatical rules.

**Keywords:** Error Analysis, Grammatical Error, Writing

### **INTRODUCTION**

In learning English, there are two kinds of skills that have to be mastered by the English learners. One of those is writing skill. Writing is one of important and essential component that language learners need to learn not only for their academic practice but also for their professional life in the future. Sometimes, the students make error on the use of grammar when they produce an English writing. In this research, the researcher focuses on finding the types of errors, the most

frequently error occur, and the causes of error made by the tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Tulungagung.

In writing, students need active thinking throughout a continuous productive process in which thoughts and ideas are transferred into written communication. According to (Frazier, 2001) writing is an activity to think process, because in writing a writer needs to pour her/his idea into a paper to make thought or ideas into words and give them structure and coherent organization. Sometimes, the problem comes when the students do not understand well how to produce a written product with appropriate structure and coherent organization that will make their written product readable for the reader.

There are many types of writing such as narrative, descriptive, recount, report, explanation, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, procedure, and so on. According to (Kane, 2000) descriptive text is about sensory experience, visual experience, and also about perception how something looks, sounds, tastes. It is followed by the statement of (Noprianto, 2017) that process of writing descriptive text is included several activities such as telling characteristics clearly, starting from naming them, classifying them, and dealing with their attributes, behaviours, functions, and so on thus the reader can possibly imagine what the writer is writing about without seeing the object or person directly.

Most of the English learners still have difficulty in writing descriptive text. The matter comes from several differences between Bahasa and English such as structural and grammatical terms as well as styles. Not only that, the EFL students also get difficulty in transferring the meaning from Bahasa to English context in order the result of writing understandable by the reader (Ariyanti, 2016). That is what causes the students produce some error sentences in their writing descriptive text. This problem makes the researcher interested in analyzing the errors.

In learning English, making error is fundamentally human in learning process. It is possible for students to make errors unconsciously when they are writing. To solve this problem, one of the strategies widely used by linguist is using error analysis. (Azevedo & Corder, 1983) stated that errors are typically made by learners who have not mastered yet about the language system. They still

need deeper understanding about the material from the teacher. Even though errors are considered as bad things in learning English as a foreign language but error analysis is advantageous for both learners and teachers. For learners, error analysis is needed to show them in what aspect which is difficult for them, whereas for teachers, it is required to evaluate whether the learning method or cause that makes the error. In other word, it is possible for the students making errors because they do not know the English grammar well. The students think that they make the right English even though they do not because their language system says so. Corder in (Kearney & Ellis, 2006) suggests that there are five procedures of error analysis, those are; collection a sample of learners, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, evaluation of errors.

According to (Burt, 2006) grammatical error is an error that students made which is not suitable to the grammatical rules that may make writing become not good. Thus the written product which is not grammatically correct cannot be delivered well, as well as the writing can be easily understood by the readers. Grammar itself has been defined by some experts. According to (Murcia, 2006) grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select and combine words. While Nelson in (Putri, 2014) states that grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into sentences. Based on the explanation above, grammar is such a crucial thing to be learned especially to produce a good writing. This research focuses on taxonomy of grammatical error analysis.

According (Caroline Mei Lin Ho, 2005) there are four types of taxonomy grammatical errors that contain part of speech. First, in category errors regarding noun and noun groups consist of four categories. They are unnecessary insertion /overgeneralization of plural marker –s, omission of plural marker –s (under-marking of plural), inappropriate selection/usage of quantifier/ article/determiner, inappropriate combination of subject and verb. Second, the errors regarding verb and verb groups consist of nine categories; they are they are omission of suffix –s/ –es/ –ed/ –ing, omission of –ed participle after a form of the verb be, inappropriate

form after modal verb (unnecessary insertion/ overgeneralization of suffix –s, -ed, -ing, inappropriate form after modal verb (omission of suffix –ed, passive form), omission of direct object, omission of infinitives to, omission of –ing participle, omission of auxiliary verb, and inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format. Third, the errors regarding preposition consist of three categories; they are omission of preposition, unnecessary insertion of preposition, and inappropriate selection or usage of preposition. The last, the errors regarding sentence structure consist of eight categories; they are dangling modifier, squinting modifier, jumbled-up or illogical sentences, incomplete or fragmented sentences, run-on sentence, inappropriate coordinating conjunction, inappropriate subordinating conjunction, and inappropriate combination of conjunction.

There were some previous studies which have been conducted similar to this study. First, (Afifuddin, 2016) did a research about four types in taxonomy of grammatical error made by the students in English Study Program of STAIN Malikussaleh. By using classification of errors suggested by (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), he found 288 errors in students' descriptive writings. The errors occurred in all types of errors investigated. They are verb, tense, verb form, subject-verb agreement, plural, possessive inflection, definite article, indefinite article, word order, run-on, and fragment. And, the students made the most errors (77 occurrences or 26%) in fragment.

Second, the research was conducted by (Amalia, 2017) did a research about types of lexical error, syntactical errors, and discourse errors; explaining the frequency of each type of errors; describing the dominant type of errors; and identifying the sources of error in writing descriptive text at Smp Al Islam Kartasura. By using classification of errors suggested by (Burt, 2006), she found 291 errors in their composition which are classified into three categories of error based on the combination of linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy.

Third, the research was conducted by (Effendy, 2014) did a research about the types of lexical errors, syntactical errors, and discourse errors; classification the frequency of each type of errors; describes the dominant type of errors; and identifying the source of errors at Eighth Grade Students of Smp Al-Islam

Kartasura in 2013/2014 Academic Year. By using theory of errors suggested by (Richards, 1974), he found 137 errors in their compositions.

Fourth, the research was conducted by (Putri, 2014) did a research about the types of grammatical errors in writing descriptive text done by the Second Semester Students at the Diploma Program English Department in Airlangga University Surabaya. By using classification of errors suggested by (Caroline Mei Lin Ho, 2005), she found 209 errors in their composition which are classified into four types of errors. Those are error regarding noun and noun groups, error regarding verb and verb groups, error regarding prepositions, and error regarding sentence structure with the biggest number of errors regarding verb and verb group was in omission of suffix *-s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing* with 38 cases or (18.19 %).

Based on the previous study above, the researcher concluded that this research was almost the same with those previous studies. The research focused on finding types of error in writing. On the other hand, the difference came from the classification of error and the subject of the research.

## **METHOD**

In order to gain the purpose of the research, this study used qualitative descriptive method. The participants were the tenth grade students of MIPA 4 at SMAN 1 Tulungagung in academic year 2018/2019. The total numbers of the samples were 25 students. The specific analysis of the data was selected from all the 25 written English tasks of descriptive texts.

The researcher uses two instruments in this research. Those were interview sheet and documents from students' tasks of descriptive texts. The researcher used error analysis method of (Azevedo & Corder, 1983). In collecting the sample, the researcher used two kinds of instruments to obtain the data of error from the students, identifying the error by underlining the errors to know the incorrect sentence, classifying the error based on the theories, explaining the errors, counting the errors and identifying the dominant error.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were many grammatical errors occurred in the students' writing of descriptive texts analyzed by theory of grammatical errors taxonomy by (Caroline Mei Lin Ho, 2005). First, in category errors regarding noun and noun groups consist of four categories. They are unnecessary insertion /overgeneralization of plural marker -s, omission of plural marker -s (under-marking of plural), inappropriate selection/usage of quantifier/ article/determiner, inappropriate combination of subject and verb. Second, the errors regarding verb and verb groups consist of nine categories; they are they are omission of suffix -s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing, omission of -ed participle after a form of the verb be, inappropriate form after modal verb (unnecessary insertion/ overgeneralization of suffix -s, -ed, -ing, inappropriate form after modal verb (omission of suffix -ed, passive form), omission of direct object, omission of infinitives to, omission of -ing participle, omission of auxiliary verb, and inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format. Third, the errors regarding preposition consist of three categories; they are omission of preposition, unnecessary insertion of preposition, and inappropriate selection or usage of preposition. The last, the errors regarding sentence structure consist of eight categories; they are dangling modifier, squinting modifier, jumbled-up or illogical sentences, incomplete or fragmented sentences, run-on sentence, inappropriate coordinating conjunction, inappropriate subordinating conjunction, and inappropriate combination of conjunction.

Based on the findings above, the researcher found four types of grammatical errors which every types has sub errors that was made by the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Tulungagung. The researcher categorized the four types of grammatical errors includes the percentage according to Sudjiono's formula, as seen in the table below;

No	Types of Grammatical Errors	The Number of Cases (Percentage)
1	Errors Regarding Noun and Noun Groups	
	a. Unnecessary insertion /overgeneralization of plural marker -s	$\frac{1}{116} \times 100\% = 0,86\%$
	b. Inappropriate selection/usage of quantifier/article/determiner	$\frac{3}{116} \times 100\% = 2,59\%$

<b>2</b>	<b>Errors Regarding Verb and Verb Groups</b>	
	a. omission of suffix –s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing	$\frac{24}{116} \times 100\% = 20,69\%$
	b. inappropriate form after modal verb (unnecessary insertion/ overgeneralization of suffix –s, -ed, -ing)	$\frac{1}{116} \times 100\% = 0,86\%$
	c. omission of direct object	$\frac{1}{116} \times 100\% = 0,86\%$
<b>3</b>	<b>Errors Regarding Prepositions</b>	
	a. unnecessary insertion of preposition	$\frac{3}{116} \times 100\% = 2,58\%$
	b. inappropriate selection or usage of preposition	$\frac{7}{116} \times 100\% = 6,03\%$
<b>4</b>	<b>Errors Regarding Sentences Structure</b>	
	a. dangling modifier	$\frac{21}{116} \times 100\% = 18,10\%$
	b. squinting modifier	$\frac{3}{116} \times 100\% = 2,58\%$
	c. Jumbled-up or illogical sentences	$\frac{4}{116} \times 100\% = 3,44\%$
	d. Incomplete or fragmented sentences	$\frac{42}{116} \times 100\% = 36,20\%$
	e. run-on sentence	$\frac{6}{116} \times 100\% = 5,17\%$
<b>Total Number of Errors</b>		116 Cases

The table above shows the number of grammatical errors done by students in writing descriptive text. From 25 texts the writer used in this analysis, it can be seen that the total number of grammatical errors made by the students in writing descriptive text were 116 cases of errors. The total of errors according to (Caroline Mei Lin Ho, 2005) is 24 errors that have been mentioned above. According to the result of writing test in this research, the researcher found 12 types of errors with 116 cases from 25 participants.

The types of errors made by tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Tulunggung were unnecessary insertion or overgeneralization of plural marker –s with 1 case or 0,86%, inappropriate selection of quantifier, article, determiner with 3 cases or 2,58%, omission of suffix –s, -es, -ed, and -ing with 24 cases or 20,69%, inappropriate form after modal verb with 1 case or 0,86%, omission of direct object with 1 case or 0,86%, unnecessary insertion of preposition with 3 cases or 2,58%, inappropriate selection or usage of preposition with 7 cases or 6,03%, dangling modifier with 21 cases or 18,10%, squinting modifier with 3 cases or 2,58%, jumbled-up or illogical sentences with 4 cases or 3,44%, incomplete or

fragmented sentences with 42 cases or 36,20%, run-on sentence with 6 cases or 5,17%. With the most error occurred is in error regarding incomplete or fragmented sentences 42 cases or 36,20%.

The researcher concluded that students still lacked in grammatical usage especially in writing skill. It is the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner. In this stage, students are not familiar yet with the use of target language, so they use a previous experience when they learn it. In this case, most of students translate sentences from Bahasa into English without using correct grammatical system in English language. They are also confused to arrange word by word correctly that make the word misplaced and make the work unreadable.

Besides the research finding of types of grammatical errors, the researcher also found the factor causes grammatical errors in students' writing. Those were interlingual and interlingual errors, the students lack understanding of English grammar, the students' opinion that writing and all rules are difficult, so they were not interested to learn more, most of students prefer to use google translate to do the work which make the written product confusing, students' lack of desire to learn more grammatical, carelessness of writing in appropriate grammar.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In fact, the highest number of error regarding sentence structure was in incomplete or fragmented sentences with 42 cases or 36,20%. It can be indicated that the students got difficulties because In this stage, students are not familiar yet with the use of target language, so they use a previous experience when they learn it. In this case, most of students translate sentences from Bahasa into English without using correct grammatical system in English language. They are also confused to arrange word by word correctly that make the word misplaced and make the work unreadable. On the other hand, the error regarding noun and noun groups especially error in unnecessary insertion /overgeneralization of plural marker –s and error regarding verb and verb groups especially error in inappropriate form after modal verb (unnecessary insertion/ overgeneralization of



suffix –s, -ed, -ing) were the last dominant type of grammatical error done by the students with 1 case or 0,86%.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher would like to offer suggestions for the teacher and next researcher. First, the teacher should be more aware to students' error in writing regard to grammatical error. Regarding to the errors found by the researcher, the teacher is supposed to be able to evaluate whether the learning method or other causes that cause the grammatical error of students in writing descriptive text. Second, the next other researchers can analyze more deeply in the same topic on different focuses or different methodology such as by using quantitative to explore the fact.

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