

## ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT FIRST GRADE STUDENTS OF SMAN 5 KABUPATEN TANGERANG IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/2019

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### ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in order to find out what kinds of grammatical errors frequently committed by first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in Academic Year 2018/2019. The population of this research was the first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang. In selecting the sample, the writer used purposive sampling technique. The sample of this research was students of X MIPA 1 class which consisted of 36 students. In conducting this research, the writer used qualitative research method. Moreover, the instrument used for this research was an essay test which was about writing a descriptive text in order to collect the data of students' grammatical errors in writing descriptive text. The result of this research shows that the students committed some grammatical errors in writing descriptive text, especially in the use of adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, pronouns, preposition, and verbs. Based on the result, the error in use of verbs is the most common errors in students' descriptive text writing products.

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

### INTRODUCTION

As productive skill, writing plays an important role in academic purpose. In senior high school, students should be able to master their writing in order to complete their tasks which most of them must be completed in written form, such as writing report, essay, paper, project, article, and exam answer.

Moreover, based on curriculum 2013, students at first grade of senior high school should be able to write in many kinds of simple text which one of them is descriptive text. Descriptive text is defined as a text which describes about person, thing, and place. In short, the students should be able to write a descriptive text which describe about an object such as person, thing, and place in written form.

However, writing is not easy. As foreign language students, most of them think that writing is the most complex skill among the four major language skills.

Based on the writer's experience during *Program Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL)* on at SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2017/2018, there are several problems faced by first grade students in writing English text. The first problem is most of the students have some difficulties in developing ideas and composing paragraph. The second problem is most of the students have lack of vocabulary and basic grammar understanding. The other problem found is the students tend to apply Indonesian grammar rule in writing their English text.

Since the students have some difficulties in writing process, they may commit some errors in their writing. In learning language skill, especially writing skill, making errors is acceptable, because it is considered as an important part of language learning process (Kotsyuk, 2015). Therefore, the teachers should know about their students' difficulties in order to reduce errors made by students in

writing. Relating to this case, error analysis can help teachers to get an overall knowledge about errors made by the students (Xie & Jiang, 2007). In other words, an error analysis is necessary in order to identify students' difficulties which cause errors in their writing.

Based on the statements above, the writer is interested in conducting this research in order to analyze grammatical errors in students' descriptive text writing. The main reason for choosing this topic is to know what kind of errors mostly made by students in writing descriptive text, especially in grammatical errors made by first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang. Therefore, the writer would like to conduct the research under the title "*An Analysis of Students' Grammatical Errors in Writing Descriptive Text at the First Grade Students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in Academic Year 2018/2019*".

## **Writing**

When students learn to write in English, they not only learn how to convey their ideas in written form, but also learn how to arrange their writing in order to make it understandable. As stated by Nunan (2003), writing is included to mental and physical act. Furthermore, he explained that writing is not only about conveying ideas to some medium, but also about thinking how to express and organize them into paragraph that will be easy to understand by readers.

Therefore, writing is considered as the most difficult language skill because it takes a long process. As stated by Kane (2000), "writing is a complex activity" which means that writing is not a simple activity because it requires a long process. In the line with Kane, Oshima & Hogue (1997) stated that writing is a progressive activity which consists of several steps in its process.

It can be concluded that writing is an activity to convey ideas to some medium in written form which requires a long and thorough process in order to make it comprehensible.

## **Descriptive Text**

According to Husna, Zainil, & Rozimela (2013), "descriptive text is a text which a writer tries to picture what he is describing". It means that descriptive text is a text which describes in detail about what a writer imagine. A writer could describe something based on what it looks, feels, smells, and/or it sounds (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

Moreover, the primary purpose of descriptive text is to describe an object such as person, place or thing in such a way that it could be imagined by readers (Afifuddin, 2016).

## **Error**

Brown (2000) defined error as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of native speaker which reveals the competence of the learners in target language. In other words, errors are occurred because there is a deviation made by the students which reflects their competence in learning a target language.

In learning a language, making errors is acceptable, because it considered as a natural part of language learning process, even people cannot learn without making error. As stated by Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982), "error is the flawed side of learner speech or writing". It means that students may do some incorrect speech and writing in language learning. However, students' errors cannot be ignored, because it can help the students in understanding language learning.

## **Error Analysis**

There are different definitions of error analysis stated by experts. As defined by Khansir (2012), "error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors

learners make". It means that error analysis is a study that concerns and discusses about errors made by learners.

James (1998) also defined that, "error analysis is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language". It means that error analysis can be used in order to discover what causes of errors made by students in language learning.

From the statements before, it can be concluded that error analysis is a study of error made by students in language learning in order to find out causes of error itself.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two aims of this research. The first aim is to find out the grammatical errors, especially the use of adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, pronouns, preposition, and verbs in writing descriptive text made by first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2018/2019. Moreover, the second aim is to find out the grammatical errors mostly made by first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2018/2019. This research was conducted at SMAN Kabupaten Tangerang which is located on Salemban, Kosambi, Tangerang, Banten.

The writer is interested to conduct this research at SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang because of the students' problems in writing English text which the writer found during *Program Pengalaman Lapangan (PPL)*. In addition, the research was conducted for eight months started from January until August 2018.

In this research, the writer used descriptive research method. According to Atmowardoyo (2018), descriptive research is a research method which used to describe the existing phenomena as accurately as possible. Furthermore, he added the main aim of descriptive research is to describe the

existing phenomena under the study systematically. In conducting this research, the writer followed several procedural steps of error analysis according to Ellis (1994) which involves collection of a sample or data of learner language, identification of error description of error.

The population of this research was the first grade students at SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2018/2019. There were 12 classes which divided into two majors; science and social. Science class had five classes and Social class had seven classes. Each class of both majors consisted of 36 to 40 students.

In order to select the sample of this research, the writer took only one class as a sample of the research using purposive sampling technique. Arikunto (2013) defined purposive sampling as the process of selecting sample which not based on level or area, but it is based on particular purpose. In short, purposive sampling is a technique of selecting sample of the research based on the needs of the research itself. Therefore, based on the needs of this research and teacher's recommendation, the writer took X Science 1 class which consisted of 36 students as the sample of the research.

In this research, the writer used a test as the instrument of the research. Test is a formal, systematic, usually paper-and-pencil procedure in order to collect information about students' cognitive and affective characteristics (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Test is also considered as a method to measure a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain (Brown, 2004).

For collecting the data, the students were given an essay test about descriptive text. They were asked to write a descriptive text which describing about a tourism place in order to find out the students' error in writing descriptive text. After writing a descriptive text, students' writing products were collected and corrected. Then the writer categorized the

errors made by the students in their descriptive text writing into each type of error as categorized by James (1998); grammatical error, substance error, lexical error, syntactic error, and semantic error. However, the writer only focused on grammatical errors, especially the use of adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, pronouns, preposition, and verbs.

For data analysis, the writer used descriptive statistic. The writer used a formula in order to describe the data in table of percentage. According to Sudijono (2009), the formula is as follow:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

**Note:**

**P** : Percentage

**F** : Frequency of error

**N** : Number of sample which is observed

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

In conducting this research, the writer involved the students of X MIPA 1 class which consisted of 36 students as the sample of the research. However, there were only 35 students who participated in this research, because one of the students could not attend the class.

In order to collect the data of students' errors, the writer used an essay test. In this test, the students were asked to write a descriptive text which described about particular characteristics of a tourism place.

After collecting the data, the writer identified the errors made by the students in their descriptive text writing products. Then, the writer categorized the errors based on James's classification of errors; grammatical error, substance error, lexical error, syntactic error, and semantic error. In this research, the writer only focused on students' grammatical errors, especially in

the use of adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, pronouns, preposition, and verbs.

The writer found that there are 300 errors which divided into seven categories, such as the error in the use of adjectives, the error in the use of adverbs, the error in the use of articles, the error in the use of nouns, the error in the use of pronouns, the error in the use of preposition, and the error in the use of verbs. After classifying the errors into several categories and presenting the frequency of errors for each category, the writer would like to describe more about the errors made by the students in their descriptive text writing that have been collected.

**Error in the Use of Adjective**

According to Hogue (2008), adjective is one of grammar words which describes about a noun or pronoun. The writer found some of the students made some errors in the use of adjective. The first example is "...because this place has more relax place..." The underlined word before is an example of error in the use of adjective. Since the word „relax“ is used to describe a noun (place), it should be changed into adjective form. Therefore, the correct one is "...because this place has more relaxing place..." The second example is "...and good for selfie because has miniature beauty..." The underlined word before is another example of error in the use of adjective. The word „beauty“ (noun) should be „beautiful“ (adjective), because it is used to describe a noun (miniature). Moreover, it should be put before the word „miniature“. Therefore, the correct one is „...and good for selfie because has beautiful miniature..."

**Error in the Use of Adverb**

Adverb refers to describing a verb, adjective, or another adverb and telling about how, where or when (Hogue, 2008). From the students' descriptive text writing products, the writer found some of students made some errors in the use of adverb. The first example is "The

*playground is a play area, usually the children play in the playground.*” The writer found a repetition of using „the playground“. In the sentence above, „the playground“ refers to describe a place. In order to simplify the sentence, the underlined word above can be replaced with adverb „there“. Therefore, the sentence can be “*The playground is a play area, usually the children play there.*”

The second example is “*There too are many trees...*” Adverb „too“ is usually put on the last clause. Therefore, the correct sentence is “*There are many trees too...*”

### **Error in the Use of Article**

Hogue (2008) stated that article can be used to make a noun specific or general. She added that article can be „a“ or „an“ in order to make a noun general or it can be „the“ in order to make a noun specific. The writer found some of the students make some errors in the use of article. The first example is “*There is a statue of a large brown ship. There is a display of photos beside a statue.*” Since article „a“ is used to make a noun general, it should be replaced with article „the“ in order to make the noun „statue“ specific or linked to „a statue of a large brown ship“. Therefore, the correct one is “*There is a statue of a large brown ship. There is a display of photos beside the statue.*”

The other example is “*In this place there is a statue of a dancing person that attracts attention which colour is red.*” Before the word „colour“, it should be added article „the“ in order to refer the word „colour“ to „a statue of dancing person“. Therefore, the correct one is “*In this place there is a statue of a dancing person that attracts attention which the colour is red.*”

### **Error in the Use of Noun**

Noun can be used to name a person, place, or thing. Therefore, it can be used as a subject or as an object (Hogue,

2008). In using noun, some of students made some errors in their descriptive text writing products. The first example is “*Usually in this place childrens can play, sing, and laugh.*” Since the word „children“ is a plural form of the word „child“, it does not need to be ended with „s“ in order to make it as a plural noun. Therefore, the correct one is, “*Usually in this place children can play, sing, and laugh.*”

The other example is “*I don’t know what’s the mean of the colour and the design.*” The word „mean“ in the sentence above is a verb. Based on the meaning of this sentence, the word „mean“ should be changed into a noun form. The noun form of „mean“ is „meaning“. Therefore, the correct one is “*I don’t know what’s the meaning of the colour and the design.*”

### **Error in the Use of Pronoun**

Pronoun means replacing a noun which can be replaced by using „he“, „I“, „them“, „it“, „ours“, „yours“, „us“, „this“, or „that“ (Hogue, 2008). In using pronoun, the writer found that some of students made some errors in their descriptive text writing products. The first example is “*In this place we can picnic with us family.*” The underlined word before is a pronoun which usually used to replace an object. In order to indicate a possession of something, it can be replaced with possessive pronoun „our“. Therefore, the correct one is “*In this place we can picnic with our family.*”

The second example is “*The slide is blue and slide cover is green.*” The underlined word above can be replaced with a pronoun. Since the word „slide“ is a name of a thing, it can be replaced with pronoun „its“. Therefore, the correct sentence can be “*The slide is blue and its cover is green.*”

### **Error in the Use of Preposition**

Preposition shows direction, location, ownership, and so on (Hogue, 2008). From the students writing products, the writer of errors in the use of preposition. The first example is “*...but I know a*

*miniature Taman Potret is a miniature of a dancer.*” After the word „miniature“, it should be added with preposition „in“ in order to indicate a location of something.

The second example is “*Taman Potret also has a place to play children.*” Before the word „children“, it should be added with a preposition in order to indicate the purpose of something (a place in Taman Potret). Since the word „children“ is a noun, it can be added with preposition „for“. Therefore, the correct sentence can be “*Taman Potret also has a place to play for children*” or “*Taman Potret also has a place for children to play.*”

### **Error in the Use of Verb**

Another error found in the students’ descriptive text writing products is error in the use of verb. As stated Hogue (2008), verb tells action, feeling, condition, or links the subject with an adjective. Here are the examples of students’ error in the use of verb. The first example is “*I think that beautiful.*” Before the word „beautiful“, it should be added with a verb „is“ in order to link the subject with the word „beautiful“ which is an adjective. Therefore, the correct one is “*I think that is beautiful.*”

The second example is “*Many people see photos and the photos is very good.*” The correct one is “*Many people see photos and the photos are very good.*” Verb „is“ only can be used to link a singular subject with an adjective. Since the subject (the photos) is plural, the verb „is“ should be replaced by verb „are“ which link the plural subject (the photos) with the adjective (very good).

After explaining the errors made by the students in writing descriptive text., the writer analyzed and processed the data of students’ errors by using the certain formula in order to get the percentage of the data. In found that some of students make some this part, the writer will interpret the data of students’

therefore, the correct sentence can be “*...but I know a miniature in Taman Potret is a miniature of a dance*”

grammatical errors in writing descriptive text, as follow:

**Table 4.1 Percentage of Students’ Grammatical Errors in Writing Descriptive Text**

No	Type of Error	Frequency of Error	Percentage of Error
1	Adjective	11	3.7%
2	Adverb	11	3.7%
3	Article	29	9.7%
4	Preposition	62	20.7%
5	Pronoun	56	18.7%
6	Noun	64	21.3%
7	Verb	67	22.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the previous table and diagram, it can be seen that the total of grammatical errors found in the students’ descriptive text writing products are 300 errors which divided into seven types; adjective, adverb, article, noun, pronoun, preposition, and verb.

The first type of error found is the error in the use of adjective (11 errors or 3.7%). The second type is the error in the use of adverb (11 errors or 3.7%). The third type is the error in the use of article (29 errors or 9.7%). The fourth type is the error in the use of noun (62 errors or 20.7%). The fifth type is the error in the use of pronoun (56 errors or 18.7%). The next type is the error in the use of preposition (64 errors or 21.3%). The last type is the error in use of verb (67 errors or 22.3%).

From the explanation before, it can be concluded that the highest frequency of error goes to the error in the use of verb (67 errors or 22.3%) and the lowest frequency goes to the error in the use of adjective and adverb which have the same frequency (11 errors or 3.7%).

The result shows that the most common error appeared in the students’ writing products is the error in the use of verb. According to Brown (2000), there are four

main sources which cause students' errors; interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies. Since the most frequently errors appeared is the error in the use of verb, the writer assumed that the error may be occurred because of interlingual and intralingual transfer. Interlingual transfer refers to students' mother tongue or native language interference, while intralingual transfer refers to incorrect generalization of rules in the target language (Brown, 2000). In other words, the students' tend to commit the error because there are mother tongue interference and the lack of the students's basic grammar understanding, especially in the use of verb.

Furthermore, there are several researches which discuss about students's errors in the use of verb. The first research comes from Haded (1998) which discuss about errors made by Arabic students in Kuala Lumpur. The result shows that the students made some errors such as the omission of auxiliary verbs, incorrect verb formation, third-person singular verbs unmarked, wrong tense sequence, and miscellaneous which occurred due to interlingual and intralingual transfer. The second research comes from a research conducted by Karim, Fathema, & Hakim (2015) which discuss about Bangladeshi EFL learners' common errors on the usage of verbs. It shows that the learners committed errors of agreement with verb, missing of verbs, misusing verb tense, misusing past tense after infinitive and misusing "to have" verb which may be caused by mother tongue influence or interlingual transfer. In addition, the other research comes from Zhuang (2011) which discuss about verbs error committed by Chinese College Students in Taiwan. It shows that most of the verb voice and usage errors made by the students occurred because of their insufficient knowledge of English or intralingual transfer.

Based on the explanation before, it can be concluded that the first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2018/2019 committed some grammatical errors in writing descriptive text, especially in the use of verb which is the most frequently error appeared in their writing products. There are two sources or causes of errors which are responsible for the errors made by the students. The first cause is interlingual transfer which refers to the interference of students' mother tongue or native language, and the second cause is intralingual transfer which occurred because the students were not able to differentiate the verb use and changing.

## CONCLUSION

This research is conducted in order to find out what kinds of grammatical errors frequently committed by first grade students of SMAN 5 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2018/2019. Based on the result the writer found that the students of X MIPA 1 class who participated in this research as the sample of the research made some grammatical errors in writing descriptive text. Total of the errors are 300 errors which classified into 7 categories; adjectives, adverbs, articles, noun, pronoun, prepositions, and verbs.

The highest frequency of errors goes to the errors in the use of verb which consists of 67 errors (22.3%). It followed by the error in the use of preposition which consists of 64 errors (21.3%). Next, it followed by the error in the use of noun which consists of 62 errors (20.7%). Then, it followed by the error in the use of pronoun which consists of 56 errors (18.7%). In the next place, there is the error in the use of article which consists of 29 errors (9.7%). The last is the error in the use of adjective and adverb that have the same frequency which are 11 errors (3.7%). Therefore, it can be concluded that the error in the use of verb is kind of grammatical errors which mostly made by the students in writing descriptive text.

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