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**AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY STUDENTS
IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE THIRD YEAR
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IMAM
BONJOL PADANG**

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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. If the students are not able to use those aspects correctly, it would be worried that their writing which is good content and organization would not give good sense because the readers misunderstand the message conveyed.

The purpose of this study was to describe types of grammar errors made by the third year students in paragraph writing.

The population of this research was 68 students of the third year students of English State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang, which were divided into two classes: class A and B. The sample was 30 students by using cluster random sampling.

This research was done by giving some topics and students had to choose one of the topics given such as "My Daily Activities", "My Favorite Lecturer", and "My Best Friend in this Semester". The researcher uses qualitative method in order to obtain valid findings from 30 students of third year students of English.

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 verb and verb groups with the biggest number of errors are in addition verb (64,10%).

Then, it is followed by errors regarding nominal with the biggest number of errors are in inappropriate addition of nominal (35,90%). Last, the errors regarding pronoun with the biggest number of errors are in inappropriate selection pronoun (24,59%).

The findings show that the students have difficulties in using correct sentence structure, especially in omission verb. This problem may occur due to their lack understanding of grammatical rules.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Descriptive Text, Grammatical Errors

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I INTRODUCTION

English language education is a process where all skills of English (listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar) are interconnected. In improving learners writing proficiency, all language skills must be involved. Aiming at mastering those skills, students can learn quickly when they feel confident in expressing their ideas with one another. In fact, they find English rules are very complicated because some language features such as sentence construction, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and so forth in their mother tongue are different from those of the target language. These make them difficult to express themselves in a clear, correct and comprehensible manner of writing. In the process of teaching and studying English, writing ability is the most difficult language skill to be learned by almost all the students in every level of education.

Considering the importance of that skill, English Department of State Institute for Islamic Studies had prepared its students with writing course; Writing I. The aim of this course is to enable student to develop their writing ability, not only from the syllabus, but also in other field. However, the aim is not easily achieved.

According to syllable at English Department, writing in the third year students were taught into four kinds of texts: Recount, Narrative, Procedure, and Descriptive. Those four skills need grammar as a support for proper understanding of a language. So it would be impossible to learn language effectively without knowing the grammar, because grammar helps learners to identify grammatical forms, which serves to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning. And it is hard for students to describe and explain things such

as places, People, and animals without knowledge of descriptive text correctly and accurately.

In English Department lecturer constructively taught the descriptive text material, but when the tasks were given, the lecturer did not tighten up her eyes on the process of student's range of seeking for answer. The students were estimated to be comprehensively understood of teacher's instruction. In accordance, the students answer the tasks offhandedly. In fact, there were still many mistakes in grammar when the task given by the teacher.

Recently, there had been several studies about error analysis done by some experts. The first research was a research from Yosi Founisce Putri in 2013. The result was most of the students made errors of omission. The omission in her study consisted of omission of verb inflection (marker s/es), omission of auxiliary verbs (is, am, are) and other omission. Another research was a research from Komang Sri Wahyuni in 2016. The most

frequent error committed by students in writing descriptive texts was misformation. The error of misformation consisted of misformation of gerund, an article, personal pronoun, possessive pronoun, and words. Each of the previous research had different result. Errors are part of process of learning that the learners have done constantly. Brown (2000:215) said that an error as noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. He adds that the cause of errors can be divided into two categories, namely; inter lingual transfer that is influenced by the learner's mother tongue and intra lingual transfer. That

is influenced complicated system of the target language. Itself. It's means that errors are natural and unavoidable in learning process and it's caused by the lack of knowledge about the target language. Study of students 'error is that have observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners. According to Moqimipour & Shahrokhi (2015:124), errors can be seen as inadequate knowledge about foreign language rules which start the production of unacceptable written or oral linguistic items. As the result of errors, readers may create misinterpretation about the meaning that the writer wants to convey to readers

Furthermore, writing is a way to express feelings, ideas, arguments, willingness and thoughts in written form. In Wikipedia (2010: 1) stated that writing is a medium of human communication that involves the representation of a language with written symbols. Then, a paragraph is a group of words put together to form a group that is usually longer than a sentence. *Paragraphs* are made up of several sentences. There are usually between three and eight sentences (Wikipedia ,2010:1). In

addition, Zoel and Jhon (2020:8) a paragraph consists of topic sentence, support point and concluding sentence. He adds that there are three most common purposes of writing are to inform (to give information about subject), to persuade (to convince the reader to agree with the author's point of view a subject) and to entertain (to give the reader's senses and imagination (2020:10).

Moreover, descriptive text is a part of factual genres which to describe a particular thing, place or person. Descriptive paragraph uses a simple present because it's fact or truth about something or someone. Generally, simple present tense is a tense used in daily life interaction (Taslim, 2015:147). There are four bases description checklists: unity, support, coherence and sentence skills (Zoel and Jhon, 2020:194). So that, writing a descriptive paragraph have to clear and concrete. In writing descriptive, students using vivid nouns, verb, adjectives and adverbs. (Watson ,2005:4) In this research, writing descriptive paragraph was a media in teaching and learning process at the third year students of English state Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang. Many students felt difficulties in writing descriptive paragraph and do not understand well about the simple present tense. Then, Lailatul Husna (2017), She was found that the students faced some difficulties in organizing ideas and developing ideas. Some of the students were unable to develop the ideas well. It was also found in their second writing, there were no improvements on the developing ideas.

There are some studies related with error analysis in writing descriptive paragraph. Firstly, a research done by Siti Ratnaningsih , Azizah entitled "*error analysis in descriptive text writing of vocational high school students*". The writer used a descriptive qualitative method with the purpose of the research want to know students errors in writing the technique and the causative factor. The research shows that the typical mistakes students make in their writing: the highest place is capitalization with 60 errors (14.67%) and the lowest place is sentence 3 errors (0.73%). According to a typical error, the author found the source of the error. The highest place is transfer between languages with 172 errors (42.05%) and the lowest place is a communication strategy with 49 errors (11.98%). On the other hand, Hsu has his opinion about grammatical error. According to Hsu (2013:513), grammatical error is a deviation from learners in

applying certain language rules which consists of incorrect forms, semantics meaning, and uses of foreign language because of incomplete comprehension from learners about foreign language's rules. It means that error is a deviation because of low understanding about foreign language' rules. Foreign language has its own rules to be known by learners. The rules should be comprehended well before learners try to use foreign language. Applying foreign language may come to failure if learners have low knowledge about the rules of foreign language

Another study research was done by Erlangga, Suarnajaya, Juniarta, entitled "*An analysis of Grammatical Errors Made by the Seventh Grade Students of SMP Neeгри 2 Sukawati in Writing Descriptive Texts in the Academic Year 2018/2019*". The results of this study showed that there were five types of errors found in students' descriptive writing, namely: omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and spelling. The total number of errors was 541 errors. There were three causes error found in this study, namely: carelessness (40.67%), first language interference (53.42%), and translation (5,91 %). Then Diani Syahputri , Siti Masita with the research "*An Analysis of the Students Error in Writing Descriptive Text*". The objectives of this study were to find out the kinds of error made by students in writing descriptive text, and to find out the most dominant kinds of error made by students in writing descriptive text. The last study research was done by Natalina Margawati, entitled "*Error on Students' descriptive Writing (Case Study at the first grade of SMP PGRI 2 Ciputat)*", the writer used descriptive analysis in form qualitative. The purpose of the research was to know out the most type of common errors in descriptive writing. Where the causes of errors the students made in descriptive writing was because of the influence in the mother tongue with the highest error is in word-order is 28, 10%.

Based on the reason above the researcher is interested to research with an analyzing on how grammatical errors can be found in writing descriptive text. In this research, the researcher only uses descriptive text to be analyzed. Writing needs well knowledge and hard thinking when the students produce words, sentences, and paragraphs at the same time with correct English grammatical. English grammar is more complicated than Indonesian grammar. Some errors are made when the students do not

understand well about the English grammar. Johanna Klassen, Hubbard et al, in Novianti (2013) state “error is caused by lack of knowledge about the target language (English) or by incorrect hypothesis about it, and mistakes are caused by temporary lapses or memory, confusion, slips, of the tongue and so on”. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that error is systematic and the students cannot be self-corrected, because it reflects the student’s competence in the target language. On the contrary, a mistake is an error that students can be self-corrected, because it is only the result of the students’ performance. According to Burt and Kiparsky (in Putri & Dewanti, 2017:2), grammatical error is an error that violates grammatical rules in a language and it makes someone’s writing becomes not good to be seen by readers. It means that grammatical error is an

error that makes a written text of someone not appropriate enough to be read by reader because error breaks all grammatical rules in a language. In making a written text, a Many of the students commonly make grammar errors in their learning, especially in writing. But, sometimes the teacher did not aware about students’ errors. Then the students made their errors repeatedly because they do not have the correction and it was what we have called as an error. Referring to the examples above, the researcher thinks that an errors analysis plays an important role to know what kinds of error that students mostly do in writing paragraphs and the causes of the error they made. So, the lecturer knows about their problem in writing paragraphs and tries to overcome their problem.

II RESEARCH METHOD

The design of the research was a descriptive research. The population of this research was the third year students of English State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang in academic year 2005/2006. The writer chosen them because they had learned structure I up to structure III, English I up to III and writing I. The third year students consist of two classes, class A and class B. They were all about 68, because the number of item is too big, so the writer took 30 students as a sample. The writer used cluster random sampling technique to took sample and choose the sample based on the high, average and low scores in their writing I. The instrumentation that would be used to collect the data in this research was a writing test. In writing test, the writer asked the students to write paragraph based on the topic given. The topics were as follows: “My best friend in this semester, My daily activities, and My favorite lecturer”. The students had to choose one of the topic given. The technique to analyze the data, which consisted of collecting errors, identifying errors, describing errors, and explaining and evaluating the errors.

In analyzing data, the writers used the descriptive analysis. In this technique, there are

some steps that had been followed: The writers wrote all the language use in order to know the types grammar made by the students, classified the errors into grammar errors: Nominal Sentence, verbal sentence, pronoun and possessive adjective and the writers used the original structure of English and tried to find the correct ways in using the structure by using original material text about structure. The writer used percentage technique to know the number of each grammar errors made by the students. This analysis was to found out the types of grammar errors made by the students in writing based on the indicators as mention in previous chapter and then analyzed the errors and took conclusion. To develop the formulation of the problems, the writers used the same formula for each question. Yet, the definition of each item is different.

$$\text{The Formula: } P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

P = Percentage of the students

F = Frequency of the students

N = Number of the students’ errors

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Type of Grammar Errors Types of Grammar Errors in Using Nominal in Writing Descriptive

From the student's writing, it was found that there were several errors made by the students in using nominal for simple present tense. They were omission, addition and selection.

Table 1

Class of errors Degree of seriousness	Omission of Nominal	Addition of Nominal	Selection of Nominal	Total
1	29,09%			
2		35,90%		
3			26,23%	
4				100%

a. Omission of Nominal

The following are the data example of omission:

- I lazy to study
- There many activities

These sentences were written by the students (sample). From grammatical point of view those sentences are incorrect since those sentences did not use "nominal" for adjective or nominal (to be) in the form of simple present tense. Nominal (to be) or adjective in the form simple present tense should use "to be" (am, is,are) but the students activity omitted it. The correct forms from the sentences above are as follows:

- I am lazy to study
- There are many activities

The percentage of errors in using "nominal" for the category of omission in term frequency was 29,09%

b. Additional of "nominal"

The following are the data examples of addition:

- I am take a bath
- I am go to campus everyday

From grammatical point of view, those sentences are incorrect sentences. Actually, verbal sentence in the form of simple present tense did not use "to be" before the verb. From sentences above, the correct from as follows:

- I take a bath
- I go to campus everyday

The percentage of errors in using nominal for the category of addition in term of frequency was 35.90 %

c. Selection of "nominal"

The following are the data examples of selection:

- They is kind and funny
- Their name is Rowi and Kiki

The sentences above are some of the sentences written by the students in paragraph writing. Grammatically those sentences are incorrect since the verb "be"-are-is not used for a singular noun and singular pronoun. Subjects for the plural in the form of simple present tense should use to be (are). But in the example above, the students use "to be" is. The correct forms from the sentences above as follows:

- They are kind and funny
- Their name are Rowi and Kiki

The percentage of errors in using to be for the category of selection in term of frequency was 26, 23%.

Types of Grammar Using Verb in Paragraph Writing

After analyzing the data, it is found there were three types of Language Use/ Grammatical errors in suing verb for simple present tense. They were omission, addition and selection.

Table 2

Class of errors Degree of seriousness	Omission of s/es	Addition of s/es	Selection of Verb
1	40%		
2		64,10 %	
3			49,18 %

- a. Omission of "s/es" for the Third Singular Person

The following are the data examples of omission:

- He come from Riau
- He live in Padang

Grammatically, the sentences above are incorrect because as third singular person, the verb has to be followed by s/es at the end of verb. The correct forms from the sentences above are as follows:

- He comes from Riau
- He lives in Padang

The percentage of errors in using verb for the category of omission in term of frequency was 40%

- b. Addition of " s/es" for plural

The following are the data examples of addition:

- We goes to campus everyday
- They helps me

Grammatically, the sentences above are incorrect because as plural, the verb has not to be followed by the s/es at the end of verb. The correct forms from the sentences above are as follows:

- We go to campus everyday
- They help me

The percentage of errors in using verb for the category of addition in term of frequency was 64,10%.

- c. Selection of " verb"

The following are the data examples of selection

- I took a rest at moment
- I had lunch

The simple present tense use verb one. The sentences above are wrong because the verb is in

the past form. The correct forms from the sentences above are as follows:

- I take a rest at moment
- I have lunch

The percentage of errors in using verb for the category of selection in term of frequency was 49,18%.

Types of Grammar Errors in Using Pronoun in Paragraph Writing

Based on the data analysis, it is found that there was one type of grammatical found using pronoun for Simple Present Tense that is omission of pronoun.

Table 3

Class of errors Degree of seriousness	Omission of Pronoun	Selection of Possessive	Total
1	30,91%		
2		24,59%	
3			100 %

- a. Omission of " pronoun"

The following are the data examples of omission:

- Get dress then I do not forget do Subuh
- Have lunch then sleep

Two sentences above are incorrect in using of pronoun. Because they omit a subject in a sentence and it causes confusion in understanding of sentence and the reader did not know who is mean by writer. The correct forms from the sentences above are as follows:

- I get dress then I do not forget to do Subuh
- I have lunch then I sleep

The percentage of errors in using pronoun for the category of selection in term of frequency was 30,91%.

Type of Grammar Errors in Using Possessive in Paragraph Writing

After analyzing the data, it is found that was only one type of grammatical error in using Simple Present Tense that is selection of possessive:

Selection of possessive

The following is the data examples of selection

- He often makes hers laughs and smile

The sentence above is incorrect in using possessive. The students can not difference between possessive adjective and possessive pronoun. They do not understand how to use possessive adjective and possessive pronoun. The correct forms from above are as follows:

- He often makes her laugh and smile (possessive adjective)

The percentage of errors in using possessive for the category of selection in terms of frequency was 24,59%.

In general, the errors made by the students are caused by two factors. They are interlingual error and intralingual. The interlingual errors occur because the students are influenced by their native language system in learning foreign language. Meanwhile, the intralingual errors were happened because of theory abilities in applying the rule of the foreign language that they are learning. This problem happened because of misleading explanation from lecturers, faulty presentation of structure or work in book, a pattern that was rottenly memorized and a drill but not properly contextualized.

Errors in using “nominal” consisted of three categories. They were omission of nominal (29,09 %) addition, addition of nominal (35,90) and selection of nominal (26, 23%). Errors made by the students for the students for omission of “nominal) occured since by the students in the

addition of “nominal_ occurred because made over generalization. Errors made by the students in the category of selection “nominal” occurred because they got wrong in using animal.

Types of Grammar Errors in Using Verbal in Paragraph Writing

The category of errors made by the students using verb in simple present tense can be divides into three categories. They were omission of s/es for third singular person (40%), addition of s/es for the third singular person (64,10%) , and selection of verb (49,81%). The categories of omission s/es ending occurred because their native language did not use s/es ending for the verb. These errors are often found in learning second language. Besides, the students did not master how to use s/es ending. The category of selection of verb happen they misunderstanding in using verb I and verb II.

Types of Language Use Errors in Using Pronoun and Possessive in Paragraph Writing

The category of errors made by the students in using pronoun and possessive, was omission of pronoun (30,91 %) and selection of possessive (24,59 %). The errors in the category of omission pronoun occurred since the students did not know how to use them correctly. Errors in selection of possessive occurred due to the fact that the students could not differentiate between possessive adjective and possessive pronoun.

IV CONCLUSION

From research finding and discussion, it seemed that the errors made by the third year student of English Department of the Institute for English State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang in writing descriptive especially in grammar were nominal, verbal, pronoun and possessive adjective. Based on findings on this research, some conclusions can be drawn as follows: The first, there are three types of errors made by the students in using nominal, verbal, pronoun and possessive adjective. Errors in using verb are the most serious errors made by the students in writing descriptive (64,10%) and errors in using possessive (24,59%) are not serious because a few of students made errors.

Based on the conclusion above, the writer would like to propose some suggestions for the improvement in the future as follows: The first, the writer expert that the structure and writing lecturer will pay more attention to teach about grammar by using several indicators and their criteria, and the lecturer should give more exercises in order to make them familiar with grammar in paragraph writing. Second, for the students of English Department should pay more attention to the correctness in grammar especially in the use of nominal, verbal, pronoun and possessive adjective. And then, English students should pay more attention to use the original structure of English and try to find the

correct ways in using the structure by using original material texts about structure. Finally, to the researchers are suggested to continue and

‘hole’ more about the errors for the next investigation.

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