

AN ANALYSIS OF TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' ERRORS

IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

Siti Nur Cholifah

NIM 1710231010

Advisor I : Yeni Mardiyana Devanti, M.Pd

Advisor II : Kristi Nuraini, M.Pd

English Language Education Program
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
University of Muhammadiyah Jember
Jl. Karimata No. 49

cholifahs618@gmail.com

Abstract

English is a language that everybody nowadays needs to know. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four language skills that learners are required to master while studying English. Descriptive text is a material that students must learn at school. Learning Indonesian is not the same as learning English. Students find it difficult to write correctly because of the differences in writing structures between Indonesian and English. Therefore, it is important to do a research entitled "An Analysis of Tenth Grade Students' Errors in Writing Descriptive Text". Researchers want to conclude what are their errors, so that teachers can take the right action in overcoming them.

In this study, the problem is "what are the students' errors in writing descriptive texts?" and "what the causes of errors made by students in writing descriptive text?". The design of this research is descriptive qualitative. The subjects were tenth grade students consisting of 31 students in class X MIPA 5. The data was collected by observation, interviews and documentation.

From the results of the research that has been done, there are some students' errors in writing descriptive texts. The students made writing errors in category run on sentences, verb tense, subject verb agreement, singular & plural, pronoun, usage of article & preposition, spelling, and capitalization. The causes of these errors is that students still do not understand the material because English is difficult for them and they are lazy to read. With these results, teachers are expected to take action to correct them.

Key word : Students' errors, Writing, Descriptive text

English is a language that everybody in the twenty-first century needs to know. According to David Crystal (2000; 1), English is a global language. This assertion indicates that a nation uses English to communicate with other countries around the world. As a result, students in Indonesia are required to learn English. Along with elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools, to senior high schools, even Colleges, etc.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four language skills that learners are required to master while studying English. Writing skills are important to learn both in school and in real life as one of the language skills. Learning Indonesian is not the same as learning English. Students find it difficult to write correctly because of the differences in writing structures between Indonesian and English. Some of them are unsure how to use it in their writing; "sky blue" should be "blue sky," for example. When we write, we

have to notice on some components, such as vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar (Pratiwi et al, 2019). This demonstrates how difficult it is to learn writing skills.

The challenge of writing in the sense of second language learning is not only in the development and arrangement of ideas, but also in translating ideas into readable writing. Planning, arranging, punctuation, word selection, and other skills are required of students (Mohammed & Abdalhusein, 2015). Grammar, according to Lyons (1996), is one of the most difficult aspects of learning English for students. There are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored. There are articles, parts of speech, sentence patterns, tenses, nouns, etc.

Literally, an error means something that was done wrong. Making mistakes or errors, according to Ancker (2000:77), is a common part of learning and must be considered part of cognition. Olasahinde (2002:90) also

contends that errors are unavoidable for students. Errors are inevitable and a necessary part of the learning process, he said. It means that in the learning process, we will often encounter obstacles, which are typically encountered in order to learn specific knowledge, develop specific skills, and so on. According to Ellis (2002), second language learners may be unable to understand the use of the second language due to the influence of their first language. In Indonesia, when learners applied their first language structure to the second language, they face disturbance because of the differences between their mother tongue with native language (Amalia D.R, 2016).

There is research done by Ratnaningsih (2019). The result is students can make mistakes in writing descriptive text in its generic structure, the following are the errors: unclear meaning, run on sentences, sentences structure. Sadiah & Royani (2019), errors in grammar are: verb

tense, subject verb agreement, singular & plural, pronoun, usage of article & preposition, spelling, and capitalization. According to Syahputri & Masita (2018), there are three factors that can be classified as the causes of errors. They are: Interlingual interference, intralingual interferences, and carelessness.

According to the Indonesian education curriculum, descriptive text is one of the texts that students must study in senior high school. A descriptive text is one that explains something in detail so that the reader can imagine what the object is. Descriptive text is the text that describes something. It is used to tell what or who a person is, place, or thing (Kurnia & Kareviati, 2021). In writing descriptive texts, students must be able to master the general structure first. According to Sasmiasih (2014), there is generic structure of writing descriptive text, it comprises identification, description, and conclusion.

This study focuses on the students' errors in writing descriptive text, because the writer assumed that writing English text is complicated. Additionally, There are so many rules in writing. That is the reason why the researcher is interested in analyzing the students' errors and conducting research with the title "An Analysis of Tenth Grade Students' Errors in Writing Descriptive Text" and conduct the research at SMA Negeri Pakusari 2021/2022 Academic Year.

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative research design. According to Ary, et.al. (2010) Qualitative research is research that understands a phenomenon that focuses on the image rather than breaking it down into variables. While descriptive research is data that is collected in the form of words, sentences or pictures that have meaning (Nugrahani, 2014). The reason of using a qualitative descriptive design is to provide an overview of information from the

data obtained. It is suitable with the purpose of this research is to find out the students' errors and the causes of errors made by students in writing descriptive text in SMA Negeri Pakusari 2021/2022 Academic Year.

Data obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation of students, work of tenth grade at SMA Negeri Pakusari. The data is the result of observation, the students and teacher answers on the interviews, and the result of students' work. Then this data would be analyzed more deeply by selecting the data. The respondents of this study were 31 students of tenth grade and an English teacher of SMA Negeri Pakusari. In this research, the researcher chooses the data collecting technique that can be used. The researcher will use three techniques to gather the data. The techniques are observation, interview and documentation. People's thoughts, beliefs, and feelings regarding circumstances are gathered

through interviews in their own words. They are used to aid in the comprehension of people's experiences and the significance they assign to them.

In this research, the researchers will focus this observation on the students' activities in the descriptive text learning class. Observers will not just observe students, but also how the teacher teaches the topic. The observer will be a non-participant observer, which means that the observer will attend class but only to observe the events without taking part in the learning process. The observation will provide the data on how the students learn in the classroom and how the teacher teaches them.

Moleong (2007) defines an interview as a meeting between two people in which they exchange information and ideas through question and answer. Interviews are conducted in an indirect manner in this pandemic period to preserve social distance.

All questions and a semi-structured interview will be exchanged through a Google form. It will be provided following the completion of class observations. All will have one day to complete and submit the Google Form. It is less formal than structured interviews in practice. This interview is conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue. Interviewees are questioned about their thoughts and viewpoints.

Written documents may be used in qualitative research to acquire a better knowledge of the topic being studied. Documents refers to a wide range of written, physical, and visual items, including artifacts, as defined by various authors. Personal papers, such as autobiographies, diaries, and letters, official papers, such as files, reports, memos, documents of popular culture, such as books, films, and videos. The document of students' worksheets will be used as the data source.

The use of multiple sources of data, multiple observers, and multiple methods is referred to as triangulation. In Triangulation of data sources is certain of the truth informant through a variety of methods and sources of data acquisition. In this research, the researcher used triangulation with data sources to verify the collected data that are from written document (result of observation, interview and documentation).

Result and Discussion

Research data collection activities were carried out on October 6th, 2021 – October 13th, 2021. There were 3 steps to collect data, namely observation, interviews and student worksheet (documentation). There were 31 students who were observed, and interviewed, and an English teacher was observed and interviewed too.

Wednesday was chosen as the day for observation because it was their lesson schedule. Observations were made during the learning process. For the interview, the

G-form link was distributed using Whatsapp group after the learning process took place and they were given two days to fill out.

During the learning process, the teacher gave assignments to them. They were asked to make a free-themed descriptive text and then collected it when the lesson time was up. These assignments were used as documentation for research.

Based on the findings, students' errors in writing were divided into two: in its generic structure and in grammar. According to Kasini & Pusparaini (2019), error is made by lack of knowledge, learner can not self corrected, and mistake happened because forgetfulness, not concentrate and slip of tongue, and the learners can correct their own mistakes. According to Foster (2005), an error is a file that represents a user's deviation from normal language norms in grammar, syntax, pronunciation, and punctuation. Errors in writing cannot be avoided by students, with limited knowledge

and several other factors that allow students to make mistakes.

According to Ratnaningsih (2019), students can make mistakes in writing descriptive text in its generic structure, the following are the errors: unclear meaning, run on sentences, and sentences structure. Based on the results of the study, from 31 students of class X MIPA 5 SMA Negeri Pakusari none of the students made a writing error in the unclear meaning category, 7 students or 23% made a writing error in the run on sentences category, and none of the students made a writing error in the sentences structures category. The results of this study are quite different from the research of Ratnaningsih (2019), where in this study errors in writing the categories of unclear meaning and sentence structure did not occur at all for the 31 students.

According to Sadiyah & Royani (2019), students can make mistakes in writing descriptive text in grammar, the

following are the errors: verb tense, subject verb agreement, singular & plural, pronoun, usage of article & preposition, spelling, and capitalization. Based on the results of the study, from 31 students of class X MIPA 5 SMA Negeri Pakusari 12 students or 39% of the participants made writing errors in the verb tense category, 1 student or 3% of the participants made writing errors in the subject verb agreement category, 3 students or 10% of the participants made writing errors in the singular & plural category, 6 students or 19% of the participants made a writing error in the pronoun category, 4 students or 13% of the participants made a writing error in the usage of article & preposition category, 18 students or 58% of the participants made a writing error in the spelling category, and 20 students or 65% of the participants made writing errors in the capitalization category.

From the 10 categories above, students often make mistakes in writing

grammar compared to the generic structure. I assume that students make more writing errors in the grammar above because of their lack of understanding. The seven categories above must have often been studied by them, but to understand and apply them requires good memory.

Students' errors in writing must be caused by several factors. According to Syahputri & Masita (2018), there are three factors that can be classified as causes of errors. They are interlingual interference, intralingual interference, carelessness. Based on the results of the study, students of X MIPA 5 SMA Negeri Pakusari had the causes of writing errors, namely intralingual interferences and carelessness.

According to Brown (2002), intralingual is a cause of error from the target language itself due to its complicated system. The results of interviews with students, almost all students said that they did not understand the material. According

to Ernawati et al (2019), the errors appear when the student has not obtained foreign language rules. The results of interviews with teachers, the teacher said that when students did not understand the material, the teacher explained in other ways and the media could help increase their interest. At the time of observation, the researcher knew that the teacher did this, but there was no media during the learning process. I can conclude that students still do not understand the material because English is difficult for them. Moreover, there is no media to help them.

The students also made mistakes due to carelessness. Kurniawan (2019) stated that carelessness is often closely related to lack of motivation. Many teachers admit that student mistakes occur if they lose interest, maybe the material or presentation style is not suitable for them. Based on the results of indirect interviews with students, some of them answered that they did not do any

preparation before starting class. Based on the results of interviews with teachers, teachers answered that students are lazy to read. By not preparing anything before learning begins, it can prove that students are indeed lazy to read. The result of study are similar with the research of Syahputri & Masita (2018), where student carelessness is one of the causes of student errors in writing descriptive text.

From the results above, we can see that the causes of errors in writing descriptive texts for class X MIPA 5 SMA Negeri Pakusari are varied due to their understanding of English is very low. Moreover, most of them are lazy in reading.

Conclusion

From the results of research conducted at SMAN Pakusari regarding student errors in writing descriptive texts. Of the 10 categories of writing errors, students made mistakes in only 8 categories. Among

others: run on sentences, verb tense, subject verb agreement, pronoun, usage (article & preposition), spelling, and capitalization. As for some of the reasons they make these mistakes, among others: lack of understanding of the material, no learning media during learning so that students are less interested in the material being taught, and students are lazy to read and do not even do any preparation before learning begins.

REFERENCES

- Amalia, D. R. (2016). Learner Errors In Writing Descriptive Text Made By Students Of Smp Al Islam Kartasura. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, 17(1), 65-73.
- Ancker, W.2000.*Errorand Correction Feedback:Update Theory and Classroom Practice..*
- Ary, Donald. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education*. Belmont, CA:Wadsworth Publisher
- Brown, H.Douglas.2002.*Language Assessment Principles and Classroo Practice*. SanFrancisco, California

- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Ellis. 2002. *Learning to Learn English*. Cambridge: University Press
- Ernawati, R., Purnomo, N. F., & Suryani, L. (2019). An Error Analysis In Writing Descriptive Text Of The Seventh Grade Students. *Project (Professional Journal Of English Education)*, 2(5), 616-621.
- Foster, J. 2005. *Good Reasons for Noting Bad Grammar: Empirical Investigations into the Parsing of Ungrammatical Written English* : University of Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
- Kasini, K., & Pusparaini, M. (2019). Grammatical Error In Writing Descriptive Text At Seventh Grade Students of Junior High School In Cimahi. *Project (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 2(4), 501-506.
- Kurnia, R., & Kareviati, E. (2021). Students' Perception In Writing Descriptive Text. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 4(3), 397-401.
- Kurniawan, P. T. (2019). *An Analysis on Students' errors of Simple Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Texts (A Case Study of The Seventh Graders of Mts Assalam Bangilan-Tuban, East Java in The Academic Year of 2018/2019)* (Doctoral Dissertation, Ikip Pgrri Bojonegoro).
- Lyons, John. 1968. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistic*. London: Cambridge University Press
- Mohammed, M. S., & Abdalhussein, H. F. (2015). Grammatical error analysis of Iraqi postgraduate students' academic writing: The case of Iraqi students in UKM. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 3(6), 283-294.
- Moleong, Lexy J. (2007) *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: Penerbit PT Remaja Rosdakarya Offset
- Olasahinde, M.O.2002.*Error Analysis and Remedial Pedagogi*.Ilorin :Itaytee Press and Publishing Co, Nigeria
- Pratiwi, R., Aulia, R. P., & Suryani, L. (2019). An Error Analysis on Using Personal Pronouns in Writing Descriptive Text. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 608-615.
- Ratnaningsih, S. (2019). *Error Analysis in the Descriptive Text Writing of Vocational High School Students*. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 19(1), 175-186.
- Sadiah, S., & Royani, A. S. (2019). An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students' Writing Descriptive Text. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 2(6), 764-770.
- Sasmiasih, E. (2014). Error Analysis on The Students Writing of Descriptive Text (A Case Study at Second Grade Students of SMP PGRI 2 Ciputat).
- Syahputri, D., & Masita, S. (2018). An Analysis of the Students' Errors In Writing Descriptive Text. *EduTech: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sosial*, 4(1).