

STUDENTS' ERRORS IN THE USE OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE ELEVENTH GRADE OF SMA NEGERI 1 TELUKDALAM

Fanismawati Lase¹

Teacher at Bintang Laut Catholic Private Junior High School

(fanismawatilase92@gmail.com)

Abstract

This study investigated the students' errors in writing descriptive text especially in the use of simple present tense made by the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Telukdalam. The objectives of the study were; (1) To describe the students' errors, and (2) To find out the causes of the students errors. The method used in this study was qualitative method. Total of participants in this study were 34 participants. The result of the data analysis showed that; (1) Students' errors in writing descriptive text consisted of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The students made errors in constructing simple present tense such as errors in constructing verbal and nominal sentences, errors in using to be, errors in applying the suffix s/es and the errors in using pronoun, (2) The causes of the students errors were interlingual and intralingual errors. In conclusion, most of students at the eleventh grade of SMA N. 1 Teluk Dalam made errors in the use of simple present tense of writing descriptive text with the highest error happened in misformation, moderate in addition, next omission and the lowest error happened in misordering. It is suggested to English teachers to improving the method of teaching the simple present tense and how to applying it in writing a text. For the students, it is suggested to learn more about the simple present tense and practice more how to using the simple present tense in constructing a text. And, for the next researcher can takes the useful information from this research.

Key words: *Errors; writing descriptive text; simple present tense.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis tentang kesalahan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif khususnya dalam penggunaan *simple present tense*. Adapun tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu; (1) Mendeskripsikan kesalahan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif khususnya dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* dan (2) Menemukan penyebab dari kesalahan siswa tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif. Total partisipan dalam penelitian ini yaitu 34 siswa. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa; (1) Kesalahan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif terdiri dari penghilangan, penambahan, kesalahan pembentukan kata dan kesalahan tata letak kata. Siswa melakukan kesalahan dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* seperti kesalahan dalam menyusun kalimat *verbal* dan *nominal*, kesalahan dalam menggunakan kata bantu, kesalahan dalam menerapkan penggunaan *S/ES* dan kesalahan dalam menggunakan kata ganti; (2) Ada dua penyebab kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa yaitu: kesalahan *interlingual* dan *intralingual*. Berdasarkan penjelasan diatas, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa



sebagian besar siswa kelas XI melakukan kesalahan dalam menulis teks deskriptif khususnya dalam penggunaan *simple present tense* dengan kesalahan terbanyak terjadi pada *misformation*, kemudian *addition*, lalu *omission* dan kesalahan terendah pada *misordering*. Peneliti menyarankan kepada guru mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan metode pengajaran *simple present tense* dan bagaimana cara menerapkannya dalam sebuah kalimat atau teks. Bagi siswa, peneliti menyarankan untuk belajar lebih dalam lagi tentang penggunaan *simple present tense* dan berlatih lebih banyak tentang bagaimana cara penggunaannya dalam membuat teks. Dan, untuk peneliti selanjutnya, peneliti mengharapkan penelitian ini dapat bermanfaat dan menjadi referensi bagi mereka untuk melakukan penelitian selanjutnya yang berhubungan dengan penelitian ini.

Keywords: *kesalahan; menulis: teks deskriptif; simple present tense.*

A. Introduction

Language is one of principal tool which is consisted of symbols that used by human in communicating and interacting. Chomsky (2002:1) states "Language is a natural object, a component of the human mind, phisycally represented in the brain and part of the biological endowment of the species." It means that language is something that occurring naturally. Language is a system that arranged by a set of signs or symbols that formed in human mind. The human represent the signs or the symbols in their mind into words to convey their thoughts, messages, information, or ideas to others. Through the language they can communicate to each other. To be able to communicate and interact they must use and known the same language. English is one of language that known and used by many people around this world.

English is a language which is used by most of people in this world as a tool of communication in their daily life. English has a crucial position and it is important to be mastered, because in this era, English

has been a key to scientific and technical knowledge. In Indonesian, English has been taught as a foreign language and the students are expected to be able communicate in English correctly. To be able communicate, the students must master the skills in English. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening is the ability to hear and understanding the meaning of the language spoken by another speakers. Speaking is the ability to create sounds by using our speech organs. This skill allows us to There are four skills in learning English convey our thoughts and giving information directly in a way the listeners able to understand. Reading is the process of gaining information from the written form to increase our knowledge about English. The last skill is writing. Writing is the representation of our ideas or thoughts by using a set of sign or symbols to the written form.

Writing is one of the main skills in English. It is a productive skill. It means that writing involves producing language rather than receiving it. Brown (2004:218)



says “The ability to write has become an indispensable skill in our global literate community.” Writing is a essential skill that should be master by people in this era, because writing is an effective way to convey message, information or ideas which is necessary to be expressed in a text. To make the text is able to understood by the reader, the writer should be conveys it effectively by using correct structure. Structure or grammar is one of the basic components of language that must learn by learners.

Writing is not easy to be mastered. It needs many efforts to be a good writer because in writing activity the writer should be comprehended and understood about the rules or arrangement in language writing. According to Lyons (1987:1) “Writing is a form of problem solving where writers faces two main tasks there are generating ideas in language and composing these ideas into a written structure an adopted to the needs of the readers and the goal of the writers.” In the same way, Heaton (1990:135) states, “Writing skill are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also conceptual and judgmental elements.” It means that, the process of learning writing skill is not easy to do.

In education field, students of senior high school are required to learn how to write different text types. By learning the text types, the students are expected to able to write well. The text types that should be mastered by students are procedure text,

narrative text, recount text, descriptive text. However, the researcher just focuses on descriptive text.

Descriptive text is one of text genres that taught at eleventh grade of senior high school. Descriptive text is a text which is describing a particular object such as person, place, animal, and things. Oshima & Hogue (2007:61) stated that descriptive writing appeals to the senses. It means that, in writing descriptive text, the writer should be tells what actually he/she looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description is a word picture; the reader can imagines the object, place, or person in his or her mind. The writer should be able to describe the object in detail to make the reader like seeing or feeling the object directly.

Descriptive text consists of two components are generic structures and language features. In generic structures there are introduction (the part of paragraph that introduces the character of the object) and description (the part of paragraph that describes the object). Another component is language features (using simple present tense, action verbs, adjectives, relating verbs). It is supported by Mukarto et al (2007:140) explain the two main parts in generic structure those are identification and description. Identification introduces what is the topic of the text and what is the text about or who is the subject is being described. While description is part that describes qualities and characteristics or the supporting part of paragraph which describe in detail to



assists the reader to see and feel the subject such as shapes, sizes and colour (Sudarwati & Grace 2007:144). The second component is the lexicogrammatical/language features. That are the characteristics of language which is used to construct descriptive text which consists of grammar rules and vocabulary.

Descriptive text uses simple present tense. It is used because writing descriptive text has a lot of description about general and habitual of thing in each paragraph itself. Simple present tense is one of important component should be mastered by the writer when writes a descriptive text. In which, through master the simple present tense, the writer able to make and arrange sentences in a paragraph or text correctly.

Simple present tense is a kind of tenses that related with habitual action, facts, and general truth. In general, the simple present tense used in writing descriptive text, which is the descriptive text is a writing form that aims to explain or describe something, such as person, animal, and things.

Learning writing descriptive text is important to students of senior high school including the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam. They are expected to be able to express their ideas and able to describe something and represent it into written form.

In the process of learning writing skills the students can't separate from the error. Error is the fault made by the writer, it is unintended deviation from the

immanent rules of a language variety made by the second language learners. Error occurred because the students lack of knowledge about how the correct item. Making error is a normal process when learning English as foreign language learners. This happened because the English structures is really different with the structures of their mother tongue.

However, based on the researcher's experienced on preliminary study at SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam during the teaching practice, the researcher found that there were many students in a class which is consisted of 34 students made errors in constructing simple present tense on their descriptive text when they tried to describe something around them. In this case, many students constructed the sentence without paying attention to the pattern. Researcher found that mostly of the students made errors.

Based explanation above, the researcher is interesting in knowing deeply the errors made by students and wanted to find out the causes of the errors made by the students. The researcher hoped the result of this study will provide benefits in education field. The researcher were conducted this research with the title **"Students' Errors in the use of Simple Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Text at eleventh Grade of SMA Negeri 1 Teluk Dalam"**.

B. Research Method

This research was conducted by using qualitative method. This study held



on January 17th until 24th 2023 in SMA Negeri 1 Telukdalam which is located in Pendididkan street, Telukdalam, south Nias Regency. This study especially connected to the XI-Mia Melati that consisted of 34 students.

The source of the data in this research was the students writing of descriptive text, students worksheet, interview script and documentation. To collect the data in this research, the researcher asked and collected students' writing of descriptive text by giving students worksheet and interviewed several students who makes many errors on their writing.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the error analysis method from Corder (1981) Identify errors, describe errors, and classif the errors. The first, researcher identified the errors into types of errors that composed by Dulay (1982:150-163) that contain of omission, addition, mis-formation and misordering by checked the students worksheet. After identified the errors, the researcher describe the errors by taking and selecting th errors made by students and present it into table. after getting the classisfication, the researcher discussed the data by presenting it in the form of description. Finally the researcher took conclusion.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

1. Research Finding

Errors made by students in constructing simple present tense.

Learning tenses are important for students include simple present tense. Simple present tense is a kind of tenses that used to explain the truth event or something that happend in the right time. Simple present tense can be used to make a text. For example in writing descriptive text. Descriptive text is a writing form that aims to explain or describe something, such as person, animal, and things. Based on research that has been done by the researcher, the researcher found that most of students made errors in applying simple present tense in writing descriptive text. The researcher describe the errors made by students as following:

a. Error on omission

Omission is a kind of errors which is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. In this type of error, the students made 17.34% sentences errors.

For example:

1). Verbal form

Students sentences:

She really love her children.

He really like to cook and has a lot of skills that make me jealous.

Correction:

She really loves her children

He really likes to cook and has a lot of skills that makes me jealous.

The errors on the sentences above are students omit one item that must appear in those sentences. In constructing the simple present tense, on the third-person singular, the suffix s/es should be add after the verb. For example, on the sentences above the



students didn't add suffix s/es after the verb *love*, the sentence should be *she really loves her children*. And on the second sentences the students didn't add suffix s/es on the verb *like* and *make*, the sentence should be *he really likes to cook and has a lot of skills that makes me jealous*.

2). Nominal form

Students sentences:

He from Brazil.

My mother a good person.

Correction:

He is from Brazil

My mother is a good person.

The sentences above are incorrect, the students omit an item that must appear in those sentences, in constructing nominal sentence in simple present tense, the students should be put *to be (am, is, are)* after the subject in the sentences. The sentences above should be *he is from Brazil* and *my mother is a good person*.

b. Error on addition

Addition is a kind of errors which is characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed. In this type of error utterance. The students made 23.46% sentences errors.

For example:

1). Verbal form

Students sentences:

He likes to plays football.

I likes panda.

Correction:

He likes to play football

I like panda

Those sentences are incorrect, the students add an item that must not appear in those sentences. On the first sentence, the students add the suffix s after *to infinitive (to plays)* the sentence should be *he likes to play football*. And on the second sentence the suffix s/es should not appear on the first person singular, the sentence should be *I like panda*.

2). Nominal form

Students sentences:

She is likes my friend.

I am have a dog.

Correction:

She is like my friend

I am have a dog.

The sentences above categorized as error of addition because the students add an item that should not appear in those sentences.

c. Error on Misformation

Misformation is a kind of error which is characterized by the wrong form of the morphem or the structure. In this kind of errors, the students supplied something but in the incorrect form. In this type of error, the students made 37.75% sentences error.

For example:

1) Verbal form

Students sentences:

He have black skin but he is handsome.

He have straight teeth.

Correction:

He has black skin but he is handsome.

He has straight teeth.

On the sentences above, the students used the wrong auxiliary verb



that suitable with the subject. On the third person singular, the auxiliary verb that used should be *has*. The correct form are *he has black skin but he is handsome* and *he has straight teeth*.

2). Nominal form

Students sentences:

Wita are my best friend.

Me favorite person is jeon jungkok.

Correction:

Wita is my best friends

My favorite person is Jeon Jungkok.

The errors on the first sentence, they used *to be (are)* on the third –person singular. Meanwhile grammatically, if the subject third- person singular the *to be* should be *(is)*. The correct sentence is *wita is my best friend*. and on the second sentence, *me* is used when it's function as object in the sentences, the correct pronoun should be *my*, because *my* is used to show possession.

d. Error on Misordering

Misordering is a kind of errors which is characterized by the incorrect placement of morpheme or group of morphemes in a utterance. In this type of error, the student made 21.42% sentences error

For example:

1). Verbal form

Students sentences

The Moppy I get from uncle me.

The cat I named cimoy.

Correction:

I get Moppy from my uncle.

I named the cat Cimoy.

The errors in those sentences above are the sentences structures. The students made error in put the words. In constructing simple present tense, it begin with the subject, then verb and complement. The sentences should be *I get the moppy from my uncle* and *I named the cat cimoy*.

2). Nominal form

Students sentences:

It place is weird.

Kumbang is dog cute.

Correction:

It is a weird place

Kumbang is a cute dog

The placement of the sentences above is wrong. The sentences should be *it's a weird place* and *Kumbang is a cute dog*.

The causes of students errors

Based on the result of findings that has been presented, It showed that students made errors in writing descriptive text especially in constructing simple present tense. To know the causes of the students errors in the use of simple present tense in writing descriptive text, the researcher were conducted the interview with some students. Based on the interviewing result, the researcher found that there are two factors:

1. Interlingual

Transfer

This kind of errors occurred when the students use their own native language as a source in making the sentence. It means, in constructing the sentences, the students write it first on their native language and then they translate it to the second

language. In fact, both of Indonesian and English have differences in any types. For example, in its grammar. Based on the result of interview, the researcher found that one of the causes of students' errors is interlingual transfer. It can be seen from the students' statement *"when I wrote the sentence I translated it word by word and I wrote it based on the Indonesian form"*. The students should not follow the Indonesian structure when writing an English sentence, because the rules of English and the Indonesian are really different. So, the researcher concludes that the students' errors are influenced by their native language.

2. Intralingual transfer

Intralingual transfer occurred when the students are overgeneralization the rules in wrong concepts into target language with their limited experience about it. It can be seen from the students' statement *"I don't know how to use pronoun correctly" and I didn't write it based on the grammar*. Most of the students' sentences errors happened in constructing the grammar. The students didn't follow the rules of English.

2. Discussion

This section presents the discussion based on the findings of the research. It consists about the students' errors types in constructing the simple present tense in writing descriptive text at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Telukdalam.

This research was carried out to get the students' errors in the use of simple present tense in descriptive writing and the

causes of the students' errors. In processing the data, the researcher analyzed the data to find out the students' errors and the causes of the students' errors. The data analyzed based on the surface strategy taxonomy that proposed by Dulay (1982:150-162) which is classified errors into four types are omission, addition, misformation and misordering. In this research, the researcher found that the students made 37% errors of misformation, 23% errors of addition, 21% errors of misordering and 19% errors of omission.

The researcher found the errors most happened in constructing the grammar of simple present tense. For example in using *to be, auxiliary verb, pronoun, suffix*. The researcher also found the other form of error such as *word order, to infinitive and articles*.

From the explanation above, there are some sources of errors based on Brown (2007:263-266) those are interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer, communication strategies and context of learning. Based on the result of interview that did by researcher with the students, there are two causes of students' errors are *interlingual transfer* and *intralingual transfer*.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

The findings of this research show that most of the students at the eleventh grade of SMA Negeri 1 Telukdalam made errors in making a good sentence. They made errors in



constructing the simple present tense because the lack of knowledge about the English grammar and also influenced by their mother tongue. There are four types of error they made, those are misformation, misordering, addition, and omission. There are two causes of the students errors were interlingual and intralingual transfer.

Suggestion

1. For the English teacher. The teacher should give more knowledge in effective way about the using of simple present tense in writing descriptive text.
2. For the students, The students should improving their skill in writing by practice especially in constructing sentences in English correctly and learn more about descriptive text.
3. For the next researcher, the researcher hopes the result of this study can be reference or used as early information to conduct further research and the next research will be more useful.

Finally, the researcher hopes this research can be useful as a source of scientific information.

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