



The Description of Grammatical Errors in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022.

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ABSTRACT: Writing is one of the most difficult English skills. Therefore, many students who learn English as a foreign language tend to commit errors in their writings. Meanwhile, students are expected to be able to write English texts correctly. Based on the background of the problem, an analysis of grammatical errors is important to conduct. Therefore, the research was conducted with a qualitative descriptive design. It aims to describe the grammatical errors based on the types of omission, addition, misformation and misordering committed by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022. Furthermore, the data were collected from students' descriptive writings. Finally, as the research findings, the type and percentage of grammatical errors committed by the students were omissions (58.82%), followed by misformation (29.41%), addition (8.82%), and misordering (2.94%). Thus, the results of this study can be used as a reference for students' writing problems at the school concerned.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors, Students' Writing, Descriptive Texts.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity of transferring ideas into written form through language. Furthermore, writing has been perceived as the most difficult language skill especially for students who write in a foreign language. One of foreign languages taught in Junior high schools in Indonesia, as a basic understanding of global communication, is English. English has been included in the curriculum of the Junior High School in Indonesia as part of the teaching material in the field of the introduction of foreign languages used throughout the world.

In English language syllabus of *Kurikulum 2013 (K 13)* for the eighth grade students of Junior High Schools, students are expected to learn how to write some texts according to several types of texts such as narrative text, recount text and descriptive text. In other words, students are led to comprehend the most appropriate English structures of English Grammar in composing some sentences or texts, at least, as basic skill in writing. Grammar is one of the sub-skills which supports writing. It's very important for students to write correctly.

According to Behrens (2014:42), "Grammar should be taught in contexts that are meaningful to students. Educators are advised to teach grammar and usage in the context of student's writing." Nevertheless, students have different cognitive abilities in writing a text; moreover, Indonesian grammar is so different from English grammar. Those are what make students tend to make errors in writing, especially for English writings. According to Silverman & Rader (2018: 33), "Writing is hard. Writing is a duty. Writing is something I do to prove that I know something." Thus, writing is a difficult duty to do and as a real phenomenon carried out by students in the classroom.

Based on the problem explained above, the researcher has carried out a research to explore the grammatical errors phenomenon in writing descriptive texts committed by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara. In English language syllabus of *Kurikulum 2013* (a name of intergrated curriculum being officially released in 2013, in Indonesia), descriptive text has been recommended as one of learning materials for the eighth grade students of a Junior High School. Furthermore, in this research, the theory of Dulay, Burt and

Krashen (1982) about surface strategy taxonomy (namely: omission, addition, misordering and misformation) has been used to analyze the grammatical errors found from students' writings. In other words, those are very important to be analyzed in order to make a better correction for students' errors in future time. The theory is supported by James (2013:111) with his statement:

To summarise so far, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) offer a useful descriptive error taxonomy which I suggest we call a Target Modification Taxonomy, so

acknowledging the fact that it is based on a comparison of the forms the learner used with the forms that a native speaker (or 'knower') would have used in the same situation.

The statement above shows the effectiveness of the use of Error Taxonomy released by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) as a guideline for understanding non-native students' errors, such as in writing English texts; even, native speakers are possible to use the same taxonomy to analyze students' errors in writing. The errors encompass all parts of speech, morphemes and the structures of sentences in English. The researcher used the qualitative research; therefore, the grammatical errors had been classified clearly in order to be understood simply by any reader of this research.

Thus, this research focus was formulated:

- 1) The Types of Grammatical Errors found in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022.
- 2) The Percentages of Grammatical Errors regarding the written verbs or verb groups in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022.

Based on the statements above, the research questions were formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the types of Grammatical Errors found in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022?
- 2) How often do the Grammatical Errors regarding the written verbs or verb groups occur in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022?

While, the purposes of the research were formulated as follows:

- 1) To describe the types of Grammatical Errors found in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022,
- 2) To describe the percentages of Grammatical Errors regarding the written verbs or verb groups found in the Eighth Grade Students' Descriptive Text of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022.

RELATED LITERATURE

1). Writing

Writing has been defined as the process of putting ideas on a paper to change our thought into words, to sharpen our main ideas, to give them structure and coherent organization. In addition, writing is used as a tool for communication by the people who want to communicate with others. According to Coulmas (2003: 1):

At least six meanings of 'writing' can be distinguished: (1) a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks; (2) the activity of putting such a system to use; (3) the result of such activity, a text; (4) the particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing; (5) artistic composition; (6) a professional occupation.

The statement about the meanings of writing above has explained what writing is. Briefly, writing is an activity of using the visible language marks or particular form with its own composition in order that the writer enables to deliver a message to a reader using media (such as: paper). Dealing with its process, writing has been perceived as a complicated task to do. "Even a native speaker fails to write a good piece of writing" (Kukur, 2012, cited in Sermsook, et al., 2017). Moreover, students who learn to write in English as their foreign language within different backgrounds can succeed or fail. Nevertheless, according to Kane (1988: 5), "Good writing has personality." Thus, students, as second or foreign language learners, who are able to write correctly in English are the best thinkers.

In English, writing is one of the four skills that students need to learn. Talking about writing, students in Indonesia are expected to learn how to write English texts correctly in order that they are able to express their ideas into written form. That has been included in the curriculum as a study guideline at school. Based on the 2013 Curriculum of the school year 2021/2022, the syllabus of English language materials for the eighth grade students of Junior High School recommends students to acquire the basic skill of writing by understanding the rules of building grammatical sentences in written English text. Furthermore, types of texts recommended to the eighth grade students of Junior High School based on the 2013 Curriculum are recount, narrative and descriptive texts. Nevertheless, the analysis of this research is only on descriptive text.

2). Descriptive Text

To describe something or someone is to give a description about how he/she/it looks like. Kane (1988:351) defines: "Description is about sensory experience - how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly, it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception."

In writing descriptive text, there are some generic structures, as follows:
a. Identification: (contains about the introduction of a person, place, animal or object will be described.)

Description: contains a description of something such as animal, things, place or person by describing its features, forms, colors, or anything related to what the writer describe.

Furthermore, the language feature of descriptive text:

- a) Specific participant : has a certain object, is not common and unique (only one). For example: *Nias Palace Hotel*, etc
- b) The use of the adjective (an adjective) to clarify the noun, for example: a *beautiful* place, *wonderful* Gunungsitoli, etc.
- c) The use of simple present tense: The sentence pattern used is simple present because it tells the *fact* of the object described.
- d) Action verb: verbs that show an activity, for example: *work*, *run*, *play*, etc.

3). Grammatical Errors

According to Burt and Kiparsky (1974; cited in Prabarini 2014:2), grammatical error is an error which is not suitable to the grammatical rules that may make writing become not good. The grammatical errors is kind of important to be considered by the learners because it does not match with the grammatical system of a language. The English learners have to be able to understand what the grammatical rules of English and how to apply them well, especially in writing. Learning the grammatical errors enables the students to produce a good writing.

Furthermore, there are four classification of errors based on their taxonomies, but one of them is *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* according to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) theory. Furthermore, Surface Strategy Taxonomy identifies errors into four categories, namely: omission, addition, misordering, and misformation. In addition, *Omissions* (1982: 154-155) are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Omission errors are the grammatical morphemes (prepositions, articles, conjunctions; including suffixes, prefixes, and unaccented particles) errors. Including the content morphemes carry the bulk of the referential meaning of a sentence: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Furthermore, *Additions* (1982: 156-158) are the opposite of omissions characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. Additions classified into three parts, namely *double markings*, *regularizations*, and *simple additions*. Other errors are *Misformation* (1982: 158-162). Misformation is characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morphemes or structures which are classified into three types, namely *regularization*, *archi-form* and *alternating form*. The last type is *Misordering* (1982: 162-163) referring to the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

In English Grammar, verb is a word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence. Types of verbs in English Grammar:

An action verb (sometimes called main verb) explains what the subject of the sentence is doing or has done. It can be transitive or intransitive verbs. A transitive verb is a verb that only makes sense if it exerts its action on an object. For examples: *write, speak, eat*, etc. While an intransitive verb will make sense without an object. For examples: *go, smile, lie*, etc. Furthermore, some verbs may be used both ways.

An auxiliary is a verb that adds functional or grammatical meaning to the clause in which it occurs, so as to express tense, aspect, modality, voice, emphasis, etc. For examples: *am, is, are, do*, etc. Sometimes, it is called linking verb.

A modal verb is a verb which adds meaning to the main verb in a sentence by expressing possibility, ability, permission, or obligation. Sometimes, it is called helping verb. For examples, *can, may, must, ought to*, etc.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research is a Qualitative Descriptive Research. Data collection of qualitative descriptive research focuses on discovering the nature of the specific events under study. A qualitative descriptive approach needs to be the design of choice when a straight forward description of a phenomenon is desired. In other words, it aims only to present a detailed, contextualized picture of a particular phenomenon. It is an approach that is very useful when researchers want to know, regarding events, who were involved, what was involved, and where did things take place (Vickie, 2012:256).

In this study, the researcher used design of descriptive method that attempts to describe and interpret the objects in accordance with reality. The descriptive method is implemented because the data analysis is presented descriptively. The goal is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. This research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened.

Therefore, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In such research, the data are collected qualitatively, but it is often analyzed quantitatively, using frequencies, percentages, averages, or other statistical analyses to determine relationships.

Based on the explanation above, this research is only intended to describe the phenomenon of grammatical errors of descriptive texts through students' worksheets. The researcher does not intend to find out the cause and

effect or answer hypotheses of grammatical errors. The grammatical errors were analyzed based on the surface strategy taxonomy. In addition, it was focused on describing the grammatical errors and its percentages regarding the written verbs or verb groups found in the students descriptive texts.

The research has been carried out at SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022 which is located in Tetehösi Afia village. It's about 18 Kms from Gunungsitoli central town and the location is reachable by vehicles, such as motorbike and car.

This research approach is a qualitative descriptive design; therefore, the researcher has carried out a procedure of collecting data: Firstly, the researcher has used an instrument of collecting the data, namely 'documentation'. Sugiyono (2008: 240) stated that documentation can be written and picture by someone that can be used to obtain information. In conducting documentation method, the researcher can provide magazines, books, documents, etc. The function of documentation method is to make credible the result of observation or interview. In this research, the documentation guide is students' worksheets.

Therefore, the researcher collected the data from students' worksheets of descriptive texts by using procedure of Error Analysis. The procedure consists of five steps based on Corder's theory, namely: collecting of the sample, identification of errors, describing errors, explanation of the error and evaluation. These steps attempt to account for why the errors occur. The last step is evaluation of errors. Evaluation aims to distinction which errors will be corrected in order that the learners, who made errors, will not be distressed of getting correction. To do the last step of quantifying each percentage of errors, the formula of Bluman (2004:68) was used:

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

Note:

P: Percentage;

f: Frequency of a type of error;

n: Number of total errors occur

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, documents are the students' worksheets about describing idol written in English descriptive texts. The documents are used as the primary data collected from the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara. Documents can provide background information and broad coverage of data, and are therefore helpful in contextualizing one's research within its subject or field (Bowen, 2009). Based on the description of grammatical errors, the researcher found the omissions, additions, misformati on and misordering on the descriptive texts committed by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022.

1) Omissions

According to Dulay, et al (1982: 154 155). Omissions are characterize d by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Therefore, based on the research data, the students tended to make errors in several omission types:

a). Omission of ending "-s/-es"

Omission of ending "-s/-es" means the a verb ending "-s/-es" which is not written according to the grammatical rule of the sentence. For exampl e, "*She study hard every day*". The sentence is simple present tense. In simple present tense, a verb accompanying the third singular person subject in positive sentence has ending "-es/-s". Therefore, the correct sentence is "*She studies hard every day*".

b). Omission of Linking Verbs

In English grammar, auxiliary/ linking verb is important in composi ng sentences. For example, "*We friend*". The correct sentence is "*We are friends*". Based on the sentence, the linking verb is "are".

2) Addition

Addition refers to the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. Furthermore, additions are the opposite of the omissions (Dulay, et al. 1982: 158).

a) Addition of Linking Verbs

For example, "*We is can study...*" The sentence is not grammatically correct. The auxiliary "is" does not fit the sentence. In English grammar "is" can be used to the third singular person (he, she, it). Therefore, the correct form is "*We can study...*"

b). Addition of Action Verbs

"*We go play football*" is an example of the addition of action verb. Based on the sentence, "go" is an action verb that should not have been

added in that sentences based on the descriptive texts. Therefore, the correct sentence is “*We play football*”

3) Misformation

Misformation is characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morphemes or structures which are classified into three types, namely *regularization*, *archi-form* and *alternating form*. In other words, Misformation refers to the wrong formation of part of speech in a sentence and the wrong form of its own written morphemes / words. e.g: Misformation linking verbs, action verbs and word choice in a sentence.

a). Misformation of Linking Verbs

A Linking verb (auxiliary) is a verb that adds functional or grammatical meaning to the clause in which it occurs, so as to express tense, aspect, modality, voice, emphasis, etc. Linking verbs usually accompany an infinitive verb or a participle, which respectively provide the main semantic content of the clause. "*be*, *have* and *do*" are the primary auxiliary verbs in English. For example, "*She have short hair and brown skin*". *Have* is a linking verb. Even so, the sentence is not grammatical correct. "Have" should be "has" after a subject of the third singular person in a sentence. It is based on the rule of simple present tense. Therefore, the correct sentence is "*She has short hair and brown skin*".

b). Misformation of Action Verb

Table.1 Misformation of Action Verb

N o.	Types of Errors	Frequen cy (<i>f</i>)
1.	Omission of ending -s/-es	17
2.	Omission of linking verbs	3
3.	Addition of action verbs	1
4.	Addition of linking verbs	2
5.	Misformation of action verbs	2
6.	Misformation of linking verbs	8
7.	Misordering verbs	1
Number of Total Errors Occur		34

An action verb is a verb showing the action of a subject in a sentence. For example, Otorianus Zai wrote “*He always help me to **work** my tasks from school*”. “*Work*” is an action verb. Nevertheless, its presence does not fit the meaning of the sentence. In English Grammar, “*He always helps me **do** my tasks from school*” is correct.

4) Misordering

Misordering refers to the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance (Dulay, et al. 1982: 162-163). In other words, it is the word order error in a sentence. For example, “*She can **dance** good and **sing***”. The correct order is “*She can **dance** and **sing** well*”.

Based on the total of errors displayed in table 1, the number of errors can be classified in four categories, as follows:

Table 2. Misordering

No .	Errors	(f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Omissions	20	58.82%
2.	Additions	3	8.82%
3.	Misformation	10	29.41%
4.	Misordering	1	2.94%
Total of Errors		34	99.99%

From Table 2, it can be seen that the highest percentage of errors is found in omissions (58.82%) with 20 errors out of 34 errors committed. Furthermore, additions are in 8.82% with 3 errors and 10 errors (29.41%) in misformation. The last one is misordering. Misordering is the lowest percentage of errors. The students committed 1 error (2.94%) in writing English descriptive texts. It is clearly showed on the table that the highest score of frequencies arises from omission while the lowest comes from misordering.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Utara in 2021/2022 committed grammatical errors in descriptive texts in the form of omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The omissions were *ending -s/-es, and linking verbs*. While, the additions were *action verbs and linking verbs*. Furthermore, misformations were found in the use of *action and linking verbs word choice*. Misordering referring to the incorrect word order was found in *verbs*.

As the result, the percentages of total errors found in the grammatical errors classification showed that the eighth grade students committed 58.82% omissions with 20 errors, 8.82% additions with 3 errors, 29.41% misformations with 10 errors and 2.94% misordering with 1 error.

Thus, the result showed that the highest number of total errors occurred is omission and the lowest is misordering.

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