

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST GRADE STUDENTS' ERRORS TO USE SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT SMK N 4 PADANG

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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages used by many countries, one of which is Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is taught as an important subject because it is very influential for the future of students. In English, there are four types of skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills are important to master when students want to learn English. The role that language plays is immense, since time embarked [1]. The four necessities in language or commonly known as the four skills reading, writing, listening and speaking play a vital role in any language learning.

Writing is an English skill that is used to communicate information in written form. Writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible and concrete [2]. Writing encourages thinking and learning. Writing is a way of thinking and learning, which gives a unique opportunity to explore ideas and acquire information. Writing involves several language components, namely grammar, vocabulary, clause, and phrase.

Grammar is the most important aspect of writing and is one of the basic components of language that students must learn. Grammar means the set of rules about the grammatical structure of a language. Grammar is a way to organize sentences and create good language [3]. In grammar there are many tenses and the simple present tense is one of them. Simple present tense is important as a basic rule for students to make and use sentences in writing. Simple present is used to show actions, events, or circumstances that occur as a habit or as a general rule [4]. Simple present tense is one of the tenses used in descriptive texts.

Descriptive text is one type of the English texts that contains a detailed description of an object. Usually the objects depicted can be inanimate objects, places, as well as humans and other living things.

Descriptive text is the text that describes something to make the readers or listeners could feel as the writer's experience with his or her six senses; looks, smells, feels, acts, tastes, and sounds [5]. Descriptive text can be classified into three types: a) Subjective descriptive text, b) Objective descriptive text, and c) Spatial description text. Descriptive text describes an object through words. The objects depicted can be people (objective), interpretations or impressions of feelings (subjective), places or events (spatial) [6].

Vocational High School is often known as Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) in Indonesia. SMK is a learning institution that focuses on developing relevant skills. The process of learning English in SMK is quite difficult for students because English is a general subject and not a major. The description text is one of the texts taught in SMK and in writing a descriptive text, sometimes students still make errors. For example, students write "He, walk to school every day" instead of "He walks to school every day". Types of errors are grouped into thirteen kinds, namely : singular-plural, word form, word choice, verb tense, add or omit a word, word order, incomplete sentences, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, article, meaning not clear, and run on sentence [7].

There are several researchers who have conducted the research related with student's errors to use the simple present tense in writing a descriptive text. Vattia did a research entitled "Students' Errors in Using Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Text (A Study at MTsS Jeumala Amal, Lueng Putu)". She analyzed the most dominant errors made by students based on four classifications of types of errors, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, and also described the factors causing students' errors in using the present tenses in writing a descriptive text [8]. Next, Eka also did research entitled "Error Analysis on the Students Writing of Descriptive Text at SMK N 2 Ciputat Timur". She analyzed the sources and types of errors made by

students in using adjectives in writing a descriptive text based on four classifications of types of errors, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering [9].

Because the lack of knowledge of SMK students about grammar and the researchers above only analyzed errors based on four classifications of types of errors made by students in writing descriptive texts, the researcher was interested to analyze students' errors to use simple present tense in writing a descriptive text, based on the classification of errors suggested by Azar [7].

METHOD

This research belongs to a descriptive research because it describes the current status of the research subject. The population of this research was the first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang. The number of sample was 31 students taken by proportional stratified random sampling technique.

The researcher used interrater technique to analyze the reliability of research instrument and applied the Pearson Product Moment formula. The reliability index was 0.90, indicating that the instrument was reliable. To collect the data, the researcher used writing test. To classify students' errors, the researcher used the criteria of errors adapted from Cholipah [10]. Then, the researcher calculated the percentage of students who had errors using the formula from Ellis et al [11].

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher found that the first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang had errors in writing objective descriptive text. Related to singular-plural there were 5 (16%) students who had errors, to verb tense there were 10 (32%) students who had errors, and to mechanics especially, spelling there were 12 (38%) students who had errors, to punctuation there were 28 (90%) students who had errors, and the last one to capitalization there were 30 (96%) students who had errors.

Table percentage of students who had errors in writing objective descriptive text.

No	Types of Errors	The Number of Students Who Had Errors	Percentage
1.	Singular-plural	5	16%
2.	Verb Tense	10	32%
3.	Spelling	12	38%
4.	Punctuation	28	90%
5.	Capitalization	30	96%

As already discussed previously, this research found that many of first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang had error in singular-plural, verb tense, and mechanics. It was probably caused by student's limited knowledge of the types of grammatical errors. Previous research conducted by Cholipah, entitled "An Analysis of Students' Errors in Writing Recount Text" also discussed grammatical errors. In her study, there were several dominant errors made by students such as singular-plural 2.51%, verb tense 12.54%, spelling 8.48%, punctuation 5.38%, and capitalization 23.9%. While in this study, the researcher found students' errors in writing descriptive text where singular-plural 16%, verb tense 32%, spelling 38%, punctuation 90%, and capitalization 96% [10]. In other words, this study result is in line with Cholipah's.

The next finding of this research was that the first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang had error in singular-plural. It was indicated by the fact that 16% students had error in singular-plural. For examples:

- Student's Answer: the numbers of members is different in each song.
- Correct Sentence: The number of members is different in each song.

Based on the example above, the students had error in singular-plural in writing objective descriptive text. This finding was in line with Vattia who found that most of students had error in singular-plural (62.92%) because the students did not use suffix s or es when they used third person singular and plural noun, did not contribute the article (a, an, and the) before using noun and leaving out preposition [8].

The next finding of this research was that there were some of the first year students at SMKN 4 Padang who had error in verb tense. It was indicated by the fact that 32% students who had error in verb tense. For example:

- Student's Answer: She looked so sad every day.
- Correct Sentence: She looks so sad every day.

Based on the example above, the students had error in verb tense in writing objective descriptive text. This finding was in line with Cholipah [10], and Noviani [12] who found that most of students had error in verb tense. This means that using tense properly in writing a text is still one of problem for students.

The last finding of this research was that the first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang had error in mechanics. It was indicated by the fact that 38% students had error in spelling, 90% students had error in punctuation, and 96% students had error in capitalization. For examples:

a. Spelling

- Student's Answer: Her classmate was so worriod about her.
- Correct Sentence: Her classmate was so worried about her.

b. Punctuation

- Student's Answer: See you again bestie
- Correct Sentence: See you again bestie.

c. Capitalization

- Student's Answer: Nct dream has 7 members consisting of mark, haechan, renjun, chenle, jisung, jeamin, and jeno.
- Correct Sentence: NCT Dream has 7 members consisting of Mark, Haechan, Renjun, Chenle, Jisung, Jeamin, and Jeno.

Based on the example above, many of the first grade students at SMKN 4 Padang had errors in mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization). Previous research conducted by Noviani [12] and Cholipah [10] also discussed grammatical errors in mechanics especially capitalization. It means that capitalization really becomes one of problems found by students in writing a text.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In line with the results of data analysis above, it can be concluded that the students had errors in using simple present tense in writing objective descriptive text. Among the three types of grammatical error, the serious error is on mechanics. It was indicated by the fact that 12 (38%) students had errors in spelling, 28 (90%) students had errors in punctuation and the last one 30 (96%) students had errors in capitalization. The second place is in using

verb tense. It was indicated by the fact that 10 (32%) students had errors in verb tense. The last place is in singular-plural. It was indicated by the fact that 5 (16%) students had errors in singular-plural. Dealing with such conclusion, it is suggested to the teachers to remind the students about grammatical errors, especially in punctuation and capitalization and improve their writing skills with learning methods that are active, creative, innovative, and fun. The students should be aware of grammatical errors in writing objective descriptive text and do more exercises and practice. Further researchers are suggested to refer to this research result as a reference.

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