

AN ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTICAL ERRORS IN STUDENTS' WRITING  
AT 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE MA MUALIMIN MUHAMMADIYAH  
BOARDING SCHOOL SAWAH DANGKA

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**Abstract**

The research was caused by several problems that were discovered in students' writing recount text. First, students make errors in their sentences. One error that occurs in their sentences is the omission of verbs. Students make sentences without verbs in writing recount text. Secondly, students only arrange sentences based on the words in the dictionary so that it causes mother tongue interference. This research aimed to investigate the errors in students' writing at syntactical error and causes of error in students' writing. The research used descriptive qualitative research. The data was collected from the students' writing recount in class 11 A of MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka. The technique of data analysis in this research was identification, classification, explanation, and evaluation. The finding of the research shows, Firstly. Syntactical errors occurred in the omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, which included noun phrases, verb phrases, and verb and verb construction. Noun phrases included determiner, pronoun, and preposition. Verb phrase included the omission of verb and subject and verb agreement. Then, verb and verb construction. Secondly, the two major causes of errors were interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer.

**Key Words:** *Syntactical Error, Causes of Error, Analysis Error*

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini disebabkan oleh beberapa masalah yang ditemukan pada teks recount tulisan siswa, pertama siswa membuat kesalahan dalam kalimatnya. Salah satu kesalahan yang terjadi dalam kalimat mereka adalah penghilangan kata kerja. Siswa membuat kalimat tanpa verba dalam penulisan teks recount. Kedua, siswa hanya menyusun kalimat berdasarkan kata-kata yang ada di kamus sehingga menyebabkan gangguan bahasa ibu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesalahan yang terjadi pada tulisan siswa pada kesalahan sintaksis dan penyebab kesalahan pada tulisan siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dari hasil tulisan siswa kelas 11 A Pondok Pesantren MA Mualimin Sawah Dangka. Teknik analisis data dalam penelitian ini adalah identifikasi, klasifikasi, penjelasan dan evaluasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan, Pertama. Jenis kesalahan sintaksis terjadi pada omision, addition, misformation dan misordering yang termasuk dalam noun phrase, verb phrase, dan verb and verb construction. Noun phrase termasuk determiner, pronoun dan

preposition. Verb phrase termasuk omission of verb dan subject and verb agreementa. Kemudian, konstruksi verba dan verba. Kedua, dua penyebab utama kesalahan adalah transfer interlingual dan transfer intralingual.

**Kata Kunci :** *Kesalahan syntax, penyebab kesalahan, analisis kesalahan*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity where the writers or learners try to transfer their thoughts into words to read, perform or use in learning. Syahrul and Widya (2018) said that writing could be an enjoyable activity for some students, and they find it an enjoyable exercise when they put their thought or ideas on paper. Writing is one of the skills that must be mastered by students, especially for senior high school level 11. At that level, students are taught how to write a paragraph in text writing well. To write good English, syntax is one aspect that must be considered because syntax related to the rules in writing.

According to Cranade (1981:102), the syntax is how words are put together to form phrases and sentences. Syntax study is to study the patterns and relationships of words, phrases, and clauses. In writing, students often make errors in

their writing. In another way, to analyze errors can see from the types of errors in writing. According to Roza (2009), errors may occur because students failed in mastering the rule of the target language. It means the error is produced by the learner who still develops their knowledge about language so that it is causing errors in the learning process. in general, Dulay (1982:146) set four types of errors in surface strategy taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

In writing analysis, we also need a linguistic category to see an error in students' writing. Linguistic category taxonomy is classified according to language components such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic. So, the syntactical error is an error classified based on the linguistic category. There are five types in linguistic category:

1. Noun phrase includes determiner, number, nominalization, pronoun, and preposition
2. verb phrase includes Omission of a verb, Use of progressive and Agreement of subject and verb
3. Verb and verb construction
4. Word order
5. Some transformation includes Negative transformation, Question transformation, There transformation, Subordinate clause transformation.

In syntactical error, surface category and linguistic category are used to analyze syntax in students' writing.

Based on preliminary research in class A at second grade MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka, the researcher looked at syntactic error in students' writing by a document analysis of students' daily exercise recount text. From the analysis document, the researcher found some students' errors in syntax. First, Students made some errors in their sentences. One error occurred in the omission of a verb. Students made sentences without verbs. For example, a student wrote,

"last month, my family to Jakarta." In this sentence, the student lost a verb. Students should make the sentence "last month; my family went to Jakarta." The student should use a verb such as "went" to make the sentence correct and according to the sentence's rules.

Second, According to Brown (2000), two causes of error are interlingual error and intralingual error. Based on the analysis document, the researcher found students who had errors in arrangement words to make sentences. It caused students to only write based on the words that they get in the dictionary, without considering the word order and rules in the correct sentences. It caused students to make a sentence like a mother tongue's arrangement to transfer ideas to the target language. The mother tongue's influence made it difficult for students to arrange words into the right sentence so that words are reversed. For example, a student wrote "animal many in zoo". Students made sentences based on their mother tongue so that the sentence structure became an error. Students should

make the sentence "I see many animals in the zoo" to become the correct sentence. Therefore, the students did this error because the students made the sentence with imitated their mother tongue.

In class A at second grade MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka, the researcher looked at syntactic error in students' writing by a document analysis of students' daily exercise about recount text. So, it is crucial to analyze student writing by looking at syntax errors and their causes.

## METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design. Gay (1990:7) stated that qualitative research is the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e., nonnumerical) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. Louis (2007:168) stated that qualitative research had some purposes are; describing and reporting key concepts, theory generation, and testing. It means that descriptive research did not test the specific

hypothesis but naturally described some variables and conditions.

The informant of the research was students in eleventh grade at MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah boarding school Sawah Dangka. There were three classes of eleventh-grade students of MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka. This research chose XI A class as an informant because they have learned to write recount text, but the researcher found some errors in students' writing recount text. The reason for taking class A was the class that made the most errors in writing recount text from the teacher's information.

This research collected data by using documentation to answer the research question about types of syntactical errors found in students' writing and causes of errors in students' writing of MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka. The researcher collected the students' writing of eleventh grade at Ma Mualimin Muhammadiyah boarding school Sawah Dangka. The researcher used the students' daily exercise that had

been given by the teacher. After collecting students' writing, the researcher analyzed based on syntactic errors and causes of error.

The technique was used to analyze the data from the document by using the procedures proposed by Ellis (1997):

1. In the first step, the researcher was assisted by a rater to identify errors from the students' daily exercises. The researcher and rater identified errors to find out the type of syntactical error in students' writing. The sentences should be compared with normal or correct sentences in the target language that correspond with them to identify errors.
2. The second step was described and classified into types of errors. The errors were classified into different error categories based on the linguistic category. Types of syntactical errors in this research are classified into six main categories. There were noun phrases, verb phrase verbs, verb constructions, word orders, and some transformation.

3. In the third step, the researcher explained why the errors occur.
4. In the last step, the researcher evaluated students' errors.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### *Types of syntactical error in students' writing recount text*

Based on the review of the related literature in chapter ii, those of error were classified based on surface strategy taxonomy; there were omissions marked by (\*), additions marked by (^), misinformation marked by bold type, and misordering marked by underscore type—types of error based on surface strategy taxonomy used to analyze the syntactical error in students' writing.

**Table 4.1 The result of syntactical errors in a noun phrase**

Code	Sentence	Type of syntactical errors	Type of errors
1.1 determiner			
1.1.1	We visited *bigben tower that was really beautiful	Determiner	Omission
1.1.2	*family and i went to London	Determiner	Omission
1.1.3	I went to *library	Determiner	Omission
1.1.4	We started to go at 06.00 a.m by <u>car my father</u>	Determiner	Misordering
1.1.	We went* beach	Determiner	Omission

5		iner	on
1.1.6	<i>I went to*zoo</i>	Determ iner	Omissi on
1.1.7	<i>I want to beach sasak</i>	Determ iner	Omissi on
1.2 pronoun			
1.2.1	<i>*is long rectagular construction</i>	Pronou n	Omission
1.2.2	<i>*started to go at 05.09 a.m</i>	Pronou n	Omission
1.2.3	<i>Before *enter to the zoo</i>	Pronou n	Omission
1.3 preposition			
1.3.1	<i>I to go palembang because my sister married there</i>	Preposi tion	Misord ering
1.3.2	<i>I to go palembang by car</i>	Preposi tion	Misord ering
1.3.3	<i>We to^ arrived *eleven o'clock</i>	Preposi tion	Additio n Omissi on
1.3.4	<i>We went* beach</i>	Preposi tion	Omissi on
1.3.5	<i>We to^ passsed time with praying</i>	Preposi tion	Additio n
1.3.6	<i>I and my family to^ enjoy a night in the hotel.</i>	Preposi tion	Additio n
1.3.7	<i>We entered *the zoo</i>	Preposi tion	Omissi on
1.3.8	<i>In the start, we saw wonderful pictures</i>	Preposi tion	Misfor mation

Table 4.2 the result of syntactical errors in verb phrase

Data		Type of syntactical Errors	Type of errors
Code	Sentence		
2.1 omission of verb			
2.1.1	<i>This holiday* very happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on

2.1.2	<i>My young sister *afraid with wave</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.3	<i>I *very happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.4	<i>They *many kind of fruits</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.5	<i>We *very hungry</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.6	<i>We *very happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.7	<i>After we* back strong</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.8	<i>We* very tired</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.9	<i>We* back home</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.10	<i>She* from canada</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.11	<i>It *my best experience</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.12	<i>We *very happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.13	<i>Tiger *very scary for me</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.14	<i>The zoo*very far from my home</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.15	<i>It *from big until small</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.16	<i>I* so happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.17	<i>When i *in the library</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.18	<i>After that, i *back home for rest</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.19	<i>Niagara fall* very beautiful</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.21		Verb	Omissi on
2.1.22	<i>We* back home at 06.00 p.m</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.23	<i>We* very comfortable of beautiful creative force</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.24	<i>There* foods and drinks that* very delicious</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.25	<i>It* really happy</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.26	<i>After we* from harau</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.27	<i>We *to sunset</i>	Verb	Omissi on
2.1.	<i>My trip* very nice</i>	Verb	Omissi

28			on
2.1. 29	<i>There were many wonderful views that appropriate for us</i>	verb	Omission
2.1. 30	<i>My holiday in padang city really*happy</i>	Verb	Omission
2.1. 31	<i>..... that*very delicious</i>	Verb	Omission
2.2 agreement subject and verb			
2.2. 1	<i>There was many people there</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 2	<i>There is a short description of the beautiful</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 3	<i>I am really happy</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 4	<i>It is my holiday</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 5	<i>My holiday is not special</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 6	<i>There was many historic objects</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 7	<i>There is snow, river, etc</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 8	<i>Japan state is advance, very clean etc.</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 9	<i>There are jam gadang</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 10	<i>There are more t-shirt, clothes, etc</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 11	<i>There is more games</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 12	<i>We are very happy</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 13	<i>I am really happy</i>	Subject and verb	Misformation

		agreement	
2.2. 14	<i>It is my holiday</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 15	<i>....because we are tired.</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 16	<i>It is very delicious</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 17	<i>...mu uncle's house, which is 10 minutes away by foot</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation
2.2. 18	<i>There was many building</i>	Subject and verb agreement	Misformation

Table 4.3 the result of syntactical errors in verb and ver construction

Data		Type of syntactical errors	Type of errors
Code	Sentence		
3.1	<i>We stopped surface to took some pictures</i>	Verb and verb construction	Misformation
3.2	<i>I stopped in the restaurant to bought a gift</i>	Verb and verb construction	Misformation
3.3	<i>We went* walk together</i>	Verb and verb construction	Omission
3.4	<i>We spent three days* stayed in my uncle's house</i>	Verb and verb construction	Omission Misformation
3,5	<i>We looked many people from other countries* visited teutu lombok beach</i>	Verb and verb construction	Omission
3.6	<i>I and my family started* explore food</i>	Verb and verb construction	Omission
3.7	<i>I looked many people from</i>	Verb and verb	Omission

	<i>other countries* visited kuta bali beach</i>	construct ion	Misfor mation
3.8	<i>...that appropriate for us to enjoyed</i>	Verb and verb construct ion	Misfor mation
3.9	<i>We made snacks to brought to harau</i>	Verb and verb construct ion	Misfor mation
3.10	<i>We started *go at 06.00 a.m</i>	Verb and verb construct ion	Omissi on
3.11	<i>I started to doing something</i>	Verb and verb construct ion	Misfor mation
3.12	<i>I stopped in the restaurant to bought a gift</i>	Verb and verb construct ion	Misfor mation

The results of the data analysis of syntactical errors were found in students' writing. The researcher found three types of syntactical errors. There are noun phrases, verb phrases, and verb and verb construction. First, based on the table of the result of a syntactical error in noun phrase students'. This error included in determiner, nominalization, number, use pronouns, and use prepositions. In students' writing, students made an error in the noun phrase in three categories. There were a determiner, use pronouns, and use prepositions.

Based on the data analysis of students' documentation test results, the researcher found students made an error in use determiner. Students made an error in determiner such as the omission of the article. In writing sentences, they omitted determinants like the, a, an, and the. Students also made an error in misordering of possessive determiner. For example, in data 1.1.3, *i went to \*library*. The sentence above is not well-formed because this sentence is an error in determiner. The error includes the omission of the article. The article is used should be *the* to clarify the object *library*. Article *the* is used to describe nouns in specific. The correct form of the sentence above is suggested as follow "*I went to the library*"

The next error made by students in noun phrases is errors in using the pronoun. The researcher found students made errors in use pronouns. Students made an error in use pronouns, such as the omission of the pronoun *we* and *they*. For example, in the data 1.2.4 *before \*enter to the zoo*. The sentence above is not well-formed because this

sentence is an error in using a pronoun. The error includes in omission because this sentence does not have a subject pronoun. This error includes the omission of the subject pronoun. The sentence needs subject *we* before verb *enter*. The verb is used should be verb two *entered*. The correct form of the sentence above is suggested as follow “*Before we entered to the zoo*”

The next error made by students in noun phrases is errors in using the prepositions. The researcher also found students made errors in use prepositions. Students made an error in a preposition, such as the omission of a preposition, the addition of preposition, and misordering of a preposition, for example, from the data 1.3.2 *i to go palembang by car*. The sentence above is not well-formed because this sentence is an error in using a preposition. The error includes misordering because this sentence lost preposition *to* and *incorrect* in verb past tense. The preposition *to* should be removed between the subject *i* and verb *go*. The preposition *to* is changed after the verb *went*. The preposition *to*

should be placed after verb *went* to show the relationship between object. The verb is used should use verb 2 *went* because the sentence is past tense. The correct form of sentence above is suggested as follow “*I went to palembang by car*”.

The second, Table 4.2 the result of syntactical errors in verb phrase. these errors included in the omission of verb and agreement of subject and verb. Based on the data analysis of students’ documentation test results, the researcher found students made errors in verbs such as omission to be. In writing recount text, students must used *to be* were/was to mark the nominal sentence. Example from the data 2.1.13 *tiger\* very scary for me*. The sentence above is not well-formed, because this sentence omission of to be, to be is used should be *was*.to be *was* is used because of subject *tiger*. To be *was* is also used as a verb because of this sentence is a past tense. The correct form of the sentence above is suggested as follow “*Tiger was very scary for me*”.

Next, researcher also found students made errors in subject and

verb agreement. Students made errors in misformation subject and verb agreement such as disagreement of subject and tenses and disagreement of subject and number. Example from the data 2.2.12 *We are very happy*. The sentence above is not well-formed, because this sentence is error in agreement subject and verb. The error includes misformation because this sentence is disagreement of subject and tense. Subject *we* doesn't match with *to be are* because this sentence is past tense. *To be are* should be changed with *were* to subject plural *we*. The correct form of sentence above is suggested as follow “*We were very happy*”.

The third, Table 4.2 the result of syntactical errors in verb and verb construction., The researcher found students made errors in verb and verb construction. Students made an omission of the infinitive *to* in the verb and verb construction. Example from the data 3.10 *we started \*go at 06.00 a.m*. The sentence above is not well-formed because this sentence includes the error in verb and verb construction. This sentence is the omission of *to* in the verb and verb

construction. This sentence loses *to* infinitive between verb *started* and verb *go*, which holds verb and verb construction. The correct form of the sentence above is suggested as follows “*We started to go at 06.00 a.m*”.

There were three types of syntactic errors in students writing recount text from the data analysis above. There was noun phrase include determiner, pronoun and proposition. Verb phrase included omission of verb and subject and verb agreement. The last, verb and verb construction. The error in syntax occurred in omission, addition, misformation and misordering

#### ***The causes of students' error in writing recount text.***

The researcher found the two causes of students' errors in writing. They are interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. The causes of error were analyzed by researchers in students' writing daily exercise about recount text.

First, One of the causes of students' errors in writing is interlingual transfer. Interlingual transfer is a cause of errors that

occurs because of the process of transferring the element of first language or mother tongue into the second language. It happened because of the negative influence from students' native language system into their second language system. Based on document analysis, most of the errors were caused by mother tongue interference. The causes of error in interlingual error found in omission and misordering. The omission happened in verb phrase which was omission of determiner, pronoun, preposition and omission in verb. Example from the data 1.1 " *we visited \*bigbeng tower that was really beautiful*". The article 'the' should be used to precede the noun 'bigbeng'. Omission of the article occurred because was Indonesian language, there wasn't grammatical structure of an article in its sentences. Then, the students often omit the article before the appearance of a singular countable noun.

The causes of error in interlingual error also found in misordering. One of error was misordering of determiner. Example from the data 1.25 *we started to go at*

*06.00 a.m by car my father*. The sentence is a kind of verbal sentence. This sentence has a word order error that can be seen from the order of the object "*car my father*". This error is a misordering in possessive noun. The possessive noun of *my father* is placed before the word *car*. The noun *car* is possession from my father. A sentence like this in Indonesian "kita mulai berangkat jam 6:00 pagi dengan mobil ayahku" but it is wrong if it applies in English. Possessive noun must take precedence, then followed by noun *car*. It can be seen that the student applied Indonesian pattern of sentence in English sentences. So the cause of errors in students' writing also causes of the interlingual transfer.

Second, The error was made by students also caused by the intralingual transfer. The intralingual transfer occurred when the students had begun to acquire parts of the new system or target language system. Based on the analysis document, the error happens when students learn about one target language rule she applied it for all sections. The cause of the intralingual error was found in

misformation and addition. It can be seen from the data 2.6 "I **am** really happy". The causes of error in this sentence occurs due to intralingual error. This sentence had errors in misformation subject and verb agreement. In past tense, the sentence was marked with to be (*were / was*). The used of tobe *was / were* can be seen from the subject used. For singular subject use to be *was*, and for plural, subjects use to be *were*. In the past tense sentence, there were exceptions to subejct *i*, subject *i* use to be *was*. In the sentence, tobe should be used for subject *i* is *was*. The correct sentence," *i was really happy* ". In this case. This error happens because the students did not pay attention to the use tobe of the nominal sentence in the simple past tense. The cause of errors occurred when students try to apply a correct rule in a problematic situation.

The causes of error in intralingual also found in addition. Example from the data 2.2 *we to passsed time with praying*. In this sentence, error occured due to intralingual error. This sentence is not well-formed, an error occurred

because of the addition of prepositions *to* that were not needed in the sentence. The preposition should be removed after subject *we*, in this case. It involves the application of rules to the context where they do not apply. It means this causes of error occurs when the students cannot use the expectation rules. It caused students to make errors in the use of the target language itself. In conclusion, the errors made by students was caused by intralingual errors.

From the data analysis above, the researchers concluded that the causes of students' errors in writing at 11<sup>th</sup> grade of MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka were interlingua transfer and intralingual transfer.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings of the analysis of syntactic error in students' writing recount text at 11th-grade students of MA Mualimin Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sawah Dangka. It can be concluded that many students committed errors in writing recount text and there are

some causes of error in students' writing. The types of syntactical error and causes of student's error in students' writing recount text can be concluded as follow: Firstly, the types of syntactical errors that are done by the students are noun phrase, verb phrase, and verb and verb constructions. In noun phrases, student-made errors in omission and misordering in determiner, omission in pronoun and omission, addition and misordering in prepositions. In verb phrases, students made an error in omission in verb and misformation in the subject and verb agreement. The last, students made an error in misformation in verb and verb construction. The most common error found in class 11 A at Mualimin Muhammadiyah Dangka is an error in a noun phrase, which is the omission of the verb is mostly done by students. Secondly, there are some causes of students make a syntactical error in writing recount text. The causes of students' errors found were interlingua transfer and intralingual transfer.

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