

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' COMMON ERROR IN WRITING  
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AT THE 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE OF  
MA NURUL HUDA SUNGAI LUAR**

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**Abstract**

The goal of this research was to find out the students' common error in writing descriptive text at the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar. This research belongs to descriptive study, specifically descriptive qualitative. In order to find out the students' common error, the researcher used a written text where the students should write their own descriptive text. Students' writing were assessed based on global error which consist of error in verb tense (vt), word order (wo), connector (conn), local error which can be divided into article error (art), number (num), and organization error (identification error and description error). After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed them by describing the errors. As the result, the researcher found that the students made 143 errors which can be separated into verb tense is about 73 or 51%, word order 14 or 10%, connector 7 or 5%, article 8 or 5,5%, number 26 or 18%, and identification 15 or 10,5%. At the end, since the goal of this research is to find out the common error, it can be concluded that the common one is error in using verb tense (vt).

*Key words: Error Analysis, Writing, Descriptive Text.*

**Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesalahan umum siswa dalam penulisan teks deskriptif pada kelas XI MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Untuk mengetahui kesalahan umum siswa, peneliti menggunakan teks tertulis dimana siswa harus menulis teks deskriptif mereka sendiri. Tulisan siswa dinilai berdasarkan kesalahan global (*global error*) yang terdiri dari kesalahan dalam kata kerja (*vt*), susunan kata/kalimat (*wo*), konektor (*conn*), kesalahan lokal (*local error*) yang dapat dibagi ke dalam kata sandang (*art*), bilangan (*num*), dan kesalahan organisasi (kesalahan identifikasi dan kesalahan deskripsi). Setelah mengumpulkan data, peneliti menganalisisnya dengan menjelaskan kesalahannya. Hasilnya, peneliti menemukan bahwa siswa melakukan 143 kesalahan yang dapat dipisahkan menjadi kata kerja adalah sekitar 73 atau 51%, susunan kata/kalimat 14 atau 10%, konektor 7 atau 5%, kata sandang 8 atau 5,5%, bilangan 26 atau 18%, dan susunan teks (organisasi) 15 atau 10,5%. Pada akhirnya, karena tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesalahan umum, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kesalahan yang umum terjadi adalah kesalahan dalam menggunakan kata kerja (verb).

*Kata kunci: Analisis Kesalahan, Menulis, Deskriptif Teks.*

## INTRODUCTION

There are four language skills in English; they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is well known language can be spoken and written forms, so it is needed to learn writing. It is different from the other language skills. In listening and reading, the students receive something that is said or given by others. Meanwhile in speaking, the students interact by using their own ideas and involve the other people, so there will be conversation going on. On the other hand, the interaction through the written form need something called as the proficiency in order to be better or effective. Moreover, writing is also one of the language skills that should be mastered by students.

As stated by Harmer (2004: 33) “ Writing is frequently useful as preparation to others activity, in particular when student write sentence as a preamble to discussion activities”. In addition, writing is obviously a process of thinking (Brown, 2001: 336). Other than Harmer and Brown, Elbow (1998: 7) also said that writing triggers the ability to make an invention words and thoughts out of our self, moreover, it triggers the ability to beg them out in order to choose which one will be used.

In writing skill, the students should have a lot vocabulary and know various grammatical rules of sentences. It is such an important skill because it will be applied in many aspects of life, just like speaking, listening, and reading. Through writing, people should enable to express their feelings or ideas in written form. Considering to expressing feelings or ideas in written form, it can be done it by using a text.

Next, there are some kinds of texts that are taught both junior and senior high schools or even in university level. Each of them has its own function, and language features. One of the texts that is taught in high school or university is descriptive text. It is used to describe or tell how a thing, person, or place looks like. One describes it by telling its characteristics or everything relates to the object which is described about. As stated by Oshima and Hogue (1997: 50) descriptive appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smell, tastes, and sound. As the result, with the definitions of descriptive text given by some experts have been shown and gathered, the researcher assumes that descriptive text is used to describe or tell how a thing, person, or place looks like in order to become real and interesting for readers to read.

Generally, there are three types of descriptive text. Zemach & Rumisek, (2003: 26-28) said that there are three types of descriptive text. 1) Describing place: a description of place may answer some of the questions such as where the place is, how big it is, how warm or cold the place is, how your feeling about it, what things you can see at it, and what colors you see. 2) Describing People/person: as for the describing person, it may answer some of the questions such as who the person is, what that person do, how she looks like, how is his/her personality. 3) Describing Thing: describing thing may answer some of the question such as what color that thing is, how it looks like, where it is being put and etc.

In addition, just like the other kind of text, this one also has its generic structures which can be divided into two things (Mulyono & Widayanti, 2010:106). 1) Identification: A statement containing a topic to describe. 2) Description: The details of description about the object mentioned in the identification.

However, writing is not as easy as it seems, no matter what kind of a text that one is dealing with, if he does not have some knowledge about how to write (grammatical system) he will end up creating some error. That is why before he decides to write something, he has to master or know at least about the

grammatical system in order to help us in writing to avoid errorness in his composition.

There are some definitions of error itself. Brown (2007: 258) thinks that error is an obvious divergence from the adult grammar of an informant, reflect to the learners' competence. Next, Dulay (1998:138) mentions that error is the flaw side of the learners' speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance. The next definition of error is stated by Richards (1971: 5). He assumes that error can not be dismissed as once in a while, unintentionally, or even as just slip of the tongue. In brief, error has something to do with one's knowledge, if one does not know what he does at all.

Lane and Lange (1993: 1-2) divided those errors into two things. The first one called as global errors, and the second one called as local errors. 1) Global Errors. It impedes understanding. Take a look at the following table:

Symbol	Explanation
<i>Vt</i>	Incorrect verb tense
<i>Wo</i>	Incorrect word order
<i>Conn</i>	Incorrect connector

Refers to the table above, the explanation will be:

a) *vt* (incorrect verb tense)

Verb tense refers to the time the verb express. For example: *Andy always rides motor cycle to campus* indicates Andy's habitual action, not just in the past or the future. Furthermore, the students tend to put an incorrect verb tense in a sentence, for example: *Alex jog on Jl. Soebrantas every Saturday*. This sentence does not have an appropriate verb tense to express the time of the action. Since the sentence express about habitual action, the correct verb should be '*Jogs*' due to the subject is Alex.

b) *wo* (word order)

A word order error is one in which the order of words in sentence is incorrect or awkward. For instance, *my mother is woman beautiful*. In the sentence, the word *woman* is in incorrect position; it should come right after the adjective *beautiful*.

c) *conn* (connector error)

Connector error is an error in which the connection between words, sentence, clauses, or paragraph is either unclear, illogical, because of double, missing, or misplaced connector. i.g, *Rani and mira are sick, and dori is not*. The connector here is not appropriate, the right one is *but*.

2) Local Errors. These errors, while distracting, most often do not impede understanding.

Symbol	Explanation
<i>Art</i>	Article error
<i>Num</i>	Number error

a) *art* (article error)

An art error is one in which the article has been used incorrectly. For instance, He has a green book. The article 'a' in the sentence is not right, since the book is obvious which is green, the definite article 'the' is needed instead.

b) *num* (Number Error)

A number error is one in which the singular form of a noun has been used instead of the plural or vice versa. i.g: in the sentence I have two sister, there is a number error because sister should be sisters. Likewise, In the sentence *He gives me some informations every Sunday*. There is also a number error because *informations* should be *information*.

Those kinds of errors often occur in writing, which is also determined of the students at MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar Kab. Inhil. For instances, they wrote *I am not understand you*, when it should be *I do not understand you*. Then they also made error in choosing an appropriate words in sentence such as *My head is around* instead of *My head is spinning* or *My head is dizzy*. Additionally, they used an

incompatible tense as like *I goes with her everyday*; or *He walk to school*. On the first example, the word *goes* should be replaced *go*, while the second example, the word *walk* should be changed into *walks*.

Finally, regarding to this research, it must have a goal. It is something that the researchers want to achieve here. As for this research, the goal is to determine the most common errors in writing descriptive text toward the students of MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar Kab. Inhil.

## METHOD

This experimentation is designed as descriptive qualitative or survey study. Qualitative research entails collecting primarily textual data and examining it using interpretive analysis (Heigham, 2009:5). The researchers used descriptive qualitative because they want to describe the errors of the students' descriptive text composition, and find the common one. Those errors were described in detail in this research based on the students' writing project.

It was conducted at MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar. It is located on Parit 5 Sungai Luar. It has 5 classes which separated as 2 classes for first grade, 1 class for second grade, and 2 classes for third grade. Moreover, this research was conducted on Mei 2017.

Since the amount students of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar were 39 students, and it consist only 1 class, the sampling technique of this research was total sampling which means all the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students of MA Nurul Huda were the sample of this study. As mentioned by Sugiyono (2010: 175) total sampling is the sampling technique where the amount of sample is as many as the population. Moreover, if the population is less than 100, then all the population can be the sample.

And then, the researcher used a written test as the research instrument. The researcher used this kind of research instrument because he wants to know about students' grammatical common error in writing descriptive text.

In order to complete the data, the researcher did a test. Moreover, the test was writing the descriptive text about describing place, thing, and person. However in this case, the students just have to choose one of the types of descriptive text. In addition, if it is possible, the students would be given 45 - 50 minutes to write their own paragraph.

After collecting the data, the result of them (per sentence) will be analyzed in order to find out the error that have been made by the students of MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar. The data was analyzed by following method which mentioned by

Corder, cited by Ellis (1994: 48) in Haryanto (2006: 25) suggests these following steps to conduct on error analysis research; 1) Collection of samples of learner language, 2) Identification of errors, 3) Classification of errors, 4) Explanation of Error, 5) Evaluation of errors.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

The data were collected through the composition test. Dealing with its results, it could be observed that there are 39 students' writings, from which the researchers found errors, in punctuation, spelling, words choices, and grammar. However, In this case, the researchers only focused global error which can be divided into verb tense, word order, and connector. And then, local error which can be separated article error, and number error. Finally, the organizations of descriptive text will be also assessed.

After analyzing the data, it was found 143 errors (global, local, organization error). From the calculation of the data, error in verb tense is the common one that often happened toward the students' writing. The total of verb tense errors were 73, followed by number errors were 26 errors, identification errors were 15, word order errors were 14 errors, articles errors were 8 errors, and connector

error were found 7 errors. The recapitulation can be seen in this following table.

**Table 1. Types of Error and Their Frequency**

Type of Error	Total Number of Error	Percentage
<b>Global Error</b>		
Verb Tense (vt)	73	51%
Word Order (wo)	14	9,8%
Connector (conn)	7	4.9%
<b>Local Error</b>		
Article (art)	8	5,6%
Number (num)	26	18,1%
<b>Organizations</b>		
Identification	15	10,5%
Description		
<b>Total</b>	143	100%

As the table shown, the common error would be error in verb tense. It seemed like the students struggle with it. in this case, the students got it right on the first sentence, but they got it wrong on the next sentence. For example: *\*Andi has two brothers. He also have two sisters.* This common error always happened to them. The same thing applied in this sentence too. *\*Jimmy plays basketball on every Sunday, he also play volley ball on the same day.*

Those sentences above show the students' inconsistency in using verb tense. Other than that, they sometimes use the past form instead. E.g: *\*My friend was kind.* This is absolutely wrong in simple



present tense. However, unless the student tried to describe his friend's behavior in the past, this could be used in descriptive text.

As for the other errors like word order, connector, article, number, and identification will also be shown. They are: 1) word order \**she has hair long*. Some of the students tended to use noun first and then followed by adjective while it is actually vice versa in order to be correct. 2) connector \* *Gita has very unique voice, but with that voice she can become famous in Indonesia*. the students used the wrong connector in this sentence, it is not used properly by them. 3) article \* *Afgan is a indonesian singer*. The article should not be there, the article an should be used instead. This is also one of their problems. 4) number \* *I have many poster in my bedroom*. There are many students in MA Nurul Huda Sungai Luar specifically the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students made this kind of error. They tended to use singular form while plural is actually needed.

As for the identification error, some of the students just go directly into the description part without introducing the object that is being described.

### **Discussion**

This experimentation aimed at examining the common error made by the

students in composing descriptive text. Looking back at the finding of this research, the researchers would like to show what he found of this inquiry compared with the previous researches' findings who also conducted the same topic as this one.

The research findings of this present study were the students made error on some points. *Firstly*, global error which covered errors on verb tense, word order, and connector. The results showed that the verb tense errors was the most common error that made by the students in writing descriptive texts. Then it was followed by word order and connectors errors. *Secondly*, local error which included error on using articles, number, and identification. The most common error was in using number, and then followed by identification and articles errors.

Those findings were in line with the previous studies which also concerned on the similar issue. Halimah (2014) conducted the study on the error analysis of students' writing descriptive text at English Department of Surya Kencana University. She found the students tended making errors in omission (231 errors = 47%), there were about 143 errors = 29% in misformation, 68 errors = 14% in addition, and about 50 errors = 10% in misordering. In comparison with this research, the researcher used different

indicators. She assessed the students' writing based on the surface strategy taxonomy while this research assessed based on global and local errors. Then Daryanto (2013) carried out the investigation which aimed at finding out error in descriptive text written by the ninth grade students of SMP 2 Boyolali. His findings showed that that the students' errors in omission was about 33.14% while in misformation was about 26,03%. Then blend error was 22.29%, and the last is addition error, the researcher found that there was 15.49% containing addition error. This research used the same indicators as the previous researcher who has been mentioned above.

It can be taken an obvious statement that grammatical error often appears in writing descriptive texts. If it was in using both global and local errors. The analysis of students errors might be in verb tense, word order, connectors, articles, number, and text organization.

## CONCLUSION

After doing this research, analyzing the result of the test, and presenting it all, the conclusion of this research can be finally presented in this final point. In line with the research finding, while the inquiry question is to investigate the common error that happens toward the students'

composition. According to research findings, the common error of the students' writing descriptive text is error in using Verb Tense (*vt*) with fifty percent errors. This means that the students have not mastered how to use simple present tense properly in a sentence. It is not like they cannot use it literally, but some of them have inconsistent issue. They got the first sentence right in forming it; however, they got it wrong on the next sentence.

Some recommendations are delivered to some stakeholders. First of all, the teacher should give more exercises in writing activity toward the students in order to make them become familiar with it. The explanation of how a tense work should be explained carefully and clearly so that the students are easier in comprehending it. Then as the problems shown in this research, if there is another researcher who wants to conduct his/her research in the similar topic, she/he can try how the students identified simple present tense, how they distinct between the use of verb with *s/es*, or how they construct a verbal and nominal sentence of simple present tense, and see how their consistency in it, as this verb tense error is the becoming the common one in this research. Moreover, it seems like the students have problem in vocabulary. It explains why the researcher found some strange words or Indonesian words in their



writing. Thus, the researchers suggest including vocabulary or code switching as one of the indicators for the next researcher. Moreover, it is for the students keep trying the consistency in using tenses. They need to review about how tenses work more.

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