

THESIS ARTICLE

A Descriptive Study on Grammatical Errors of the Eighth Grade Students' Narrative Text Writing at SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 Academic Year

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Abstract

This research was intended to describe the grammatical errors of the eighth grade students' narrative text writing. The respondents of this research were all of the eighth grade students at SMPN 1 Wuluhan in the 2013/2014 academic year that were determined by using proportional random sampling by lottery. The design of this research was descriptive research. The data collection methods of this research were writing test, interview guide and documentation. Based on the results of writing test, the students made the grammatical errors in terms of syntactical errors and morphological errors. The students made 192 grammatical errors which were classified into 37 errors in producing simple past tense, 86 errors in the use of article, 24 errors in the use of preposition, 23 errors in the use of possessive inflection, 12 errors in the use of plural inflection and 10 errors in the use of past tense inflection. Based on the frequency of grammatical errors, it was known that the most grammatical errors made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember is the errors in the use of articles as many as 86 errors and 45% as the percentage.

Keywords: *Descriptive Research, Grammatical Errors, Narrative Text Writing*

Introduction

In Indonesia, English has been a compulsory subject in the curriculum since a long time ago. Even since 1994, it has been put in the elementary curriculum, because the government has fully realized that it has an important role in education. In learning English, the students have to master four English skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. They also have to master two language components of English namely grammar and vocabulary. In the process of acquiring writing skills, the students normally commit errors which are inevitable including grammatical errors in both syntactical and morphological aspect.

According to Harmer (1998:79), writing as a skill is a basic language skill, as important as speaking, listening and reading. According to Langan (2008:8), writing is a skill that anyone can learn with practice. It is a skill, like driving or word processing that you can master with hard work.

Grammar and punctuations are the micro issues of writing. Learning grammar will extend pupils' choices and freedom to express themselves powerfully as writers. Carroll (1990:1) states that knowledge of grammar and correct word usage are necessary conditions for good writing in that language.

It is clear that grammar is one of the English components that is closely related to the writing skill.

However, it is not easy to create good writing for students. Many learners produce grammatical errors in writing.

Based on the preliminary study that was conducted in SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember, there were many grammatical errors made by the students in writing. The teacher told that the students made errors in writing including syntactical errors and morphological errors. However, the teacher has never analyzed the students' grammatical errors in their writings. So that, I am interested in analyzing the students' grammatical error in their narrative writing. Because it can be used as a basis to improve the students' ability in writing. They give valuable input about the grammatical errors in their writing especially in narrative text writing.

Research Methods

This research is a descriptive quantitative research that is particularly in the form of error analysis. According to McMillan (1992:144), a descriptive quantitative research describes a phenomenon and usually in the form of statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, averages, and sometimes variability. The main purpose of this research is to describe the grammatical errors in writing a narrative text writing made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year.

The area of this research was determined by using purposive method. According to Arikunto (2006:127), a purposive method is a method based on a certain purpose and reason. This research was conducted at SMPN 1

Wuluhan Jember because of some reasons. First, it was known that narrative text writing especially for personal narrative writing has been taught to the students, but they still made some grammatical errors in their writings and the teacher never analyzed those grammatical errors. Second, the research dealing with the grammatical errors has not been conducted in this school. Third, the teacher gave permission to conduct the research at the school by analyzing the students' grammatical errors in their writings.

The population of this research is all of the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The number of population was 283 students which were divided into 8 classes. Each class consisted of \pm 35 students. Therefore, the research sample was taken by proportional random sampling using lottery as many as 15% from each class of the population. The researcher took randomly 15% of each class. So, the respondents of whole classes were 40 students.

In this research, the main data were collected by using writing test and the supporting data were collected by interview and documentation. Writing test was used to get the primary data about the eighth grade students' grammatical errors in writing a personal narrative text. The test given to the students was an essay test. The students were asked to write a personal narrative text consisting of 10-12 sentences in 80 minutes based on the topics of the narrative text provided. The topics were relevant to the English curriculum for the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The topics provided were my bad experience and my interesting experience. The students' narrative writing were scored based on syntactical and morphological errors. In this research, the aspects of writing were not evaluated. So, the writing test was used as the instrument to analyze the students' grammatical error. The grammatical errors were counted individually according to the classification of syntactical and morphological errors. Each error that the students made was regarded as 1 point.

After collecting the students' narrative text writing, the researcher used frequency and percentage in analyzing data especially in analyzing grammatical errors of students' writing. Each category of syntactical and morphological errors made by the students was counted in the form of percentage. So, we know the frequency of the errors made by the eighth grade students in their narrative writings. This following formula was used to calculate the percentage of each error category:

$$E = n/N \times 100\%$$

(adapted from Ali, 1993:186)

Note:

E = the percentage of each error category made by the students in their narrative writing

n = the frequency of each error category made by the students in their narrative writing

N = the total number of frequency of each error category made by the students in their narrative paragraph writing
After calculating the percentage of each error category, the most frequent error and the least frequent error was found.

Discussion

The researcher found some grammatical errors in term of syntactical errors and morphological errors in students' narrative text writing. According to Erdogan (2005:265-266), the students can make Interlingual Transfer and Intralingual Transfer and Developmental Errors in their writing. Based on that theory, the students made those kinds of errors because they assume that the target language and their native language are similar. So, they generalize the rules of his native language and the target language. The low grammar mastery of the students also can cause those kinds of errors. When he has something that he doesn't know, he may guess what it should be there. Lengo (1995:1) added that foreign language learners commit errors largely because of the paucity of their knowledge of the target language.

Based on the result of the data analysis about the types of syntactical errors in narrative text writing are made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year, it could be found that the types of syntactical errors made by the students were simple past tense error, the misuse of article and the misuse of prepositions and the types of morphological errors made by the students were possessive inflection error, plural inflection error and past tense inflection error.

Based on the result, it can be concluded that the students made 192 grammatical errors which were classified into 37 errors in producing simple past tense, 86 errors in the use of article, 24 errors in the use of preposition, 23 errors in the use of possessive inflection, 12 errors in the use of plural inflection and 10 errors in the use of past tense inflection. For the percentage, it was found that 19% simple past tense errors, 45% misuse of articles, 13% misuse of prepositions, 12% possessive inflection errors, 6% plural inflection errors and 5% past tense inflection errors. From the results of data analysis, the highest percentage of syntactical error was the errors of using articles as many as 45%, while the lowest percentage was the errors of using prepositions as many as 13%. Then, the highest percentage of morphological error was possessive inflection errors as many as 12%, while the lowest percentage was past tense inflection marker as many as 5%.

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Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results of the data analysis and the discussion, it could be concluded that the results are as follows:

- The types of grammatical errors made by the students in writing a narrative text covered (1.) Syntactical errors (Simple Past Tense errors, The Misuse of Articles (a, an and the) and The misuse of Prepositions) and (2) Morphological errors (Possessive Inflection errors, Plural Inflection errors and Past Tense Inflection errors).
- The percentage of each type of grammatical errors in narrative text writing made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year were (1.) Syntactical errors 77% (Simple Past Tense errors 19%, The Misuse of Articles (a, an and the) 45% and The misuse of Prepositions 13%) and (2) Morphological errors 23% (Possessive Inflection errors 12%, Plural Inflection errors 6% and Past Tense Inflection errors 5%).
- The most grammatical errors in narrative text writing made by the eighth grade students of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year was the misuse of articles as many as 45%.

Considering the result of grammatical error analysis in this research, some suggestions are proposed to the English teacher, the students, and the other researchers.

- For The English Teacher. The researcher found many grammatical errors in the students' narrative text writing. It means that the students still have difficulty in applying grammatical rules in writing a narrative text. It becomes a must for the English teacher of SMPN 1 Wuluhan Jember to teach grammar which is integrated to writing. The English teacher should give the student some writing assignments especially in writing narrative text. It is helpful for the students to apply the structure that has been learned. The English teacher also has to give the students a feedback. So, the students will know the errors they made and they will not make the same errors later.
- For The Students. It is suggested that the students should study a structure more. So, they can apply the structure in their writing without any difficulties. They also have to practice writing especially for narrative writing to develop their writing skill without making a lot of errors especially on grammar.
- For the future researcher. The future researcher are suggested to conduct a further research with a similar problem and with a different research design such as a classroom action research to develop their grammar mastery at different schools and different level of students. It is also aimed to improve the students' grammatical mastery through feedback of grammatical errors.

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