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# Analyzing Grammatical Errors Committed by Students in Writing in the Academic Year 2020/2021

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the types of errors in writing recount texts and identify the source of errors in students. The subjects of this study were tenth-grade students of Languages major at SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan with a total of 31 students. This research was qualitative descriptive research. Data were collected from students' writing assignments, questionnaires, and interviews. This study used the theory of Dulay et al. (1982) to find out the types of errors supported with the theory from Sawalmeh (2013) regarding spelling errors which was supported by the theory from Besten & Granger (2011). The theory from Brown (2007) was used to find out the source of students' errors. The results of this study indicate that the types of errors found in student texts are omission, misformation, addition, misordering, and spelling. Sources of student errors are interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communication strategy.

#### INTRODUCTION

Listening, reading, writing, and speaking are language skills that have to be learned by the students. Writing is classified as one of the difficult skills because Klimova (2013) states that writing requires knowledge and practice from the other skills. Because writing is classified as a complex skill, most of the students encounter some problems when writing. Problems in writing can be found in almost every level of education. Hendriyani (2020) explains that some problems may occur in teaching and learning writing in the English language.

Furthermore, the cause of the problems can be from intern and extern

factors. Lack of vocabulary, comprehension in language features and tense, lack of comprehension of the text's theme is the intern factors of students' problems. Problems in writing were also found in SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan.

After the observation was conducted to gain information before conducting the study, the students of language major in SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan faced some problems in writing. The teacher said that the students had difficulties developing an idea, capitalization, and some of the students do not understand how to apply the tenses to create a well-formed sentence, but most problems are found in grammar and spelling. For example,

when the students were asked to make descriptive text, the students sometimes omitted the marker -s/-es and a student wrote "wath" instead of "watch". Based on those explanations, this study tried to analyze the grammatical errors and errors committed spelling by students. This study attempted to find more information about the types of grammatical and spelling committed by the students. This study also tried to find the sources of errors so that the teacher could overcome the students' problems in writing.

SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan was chosen based on several considerations. It had been discussed before that the students in this school still faced some problems in writing. The other reasons were because SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan was the oldest public school in Kuta Selatan, and it offers a language major. Besides, Kuta Selatan is also one of the tourism areas, and most people here work in the tourism sector. Analyzing the types of the students' errors and the sources of errors can help them overcome their writing problems, especially in grammar and spelling, so that they can increase their English skills.

There were several considerations why recount text was chosen in this study. Descriptive texts were almost over when this study was conducted, and the teacher already found that the students omitted markers and some spelling errors found in students' text when they were descriptive asked to write Meanwhile, the study could get more information about the types of students' errors by choosing recount text because recount text was more complicated than descriptive text because past tense is required in writing recount texts.

Based on those explanations, this study made two research questions. The questions were 1) What types of errors were committed by the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan

in writing recount text, 2) what are the sources of committed by the tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan in Writing recount text. Thus, this study aimed to find and analyze the types of errors committed by the students and the sources of errors.

#### METHOD AND THEORY

This study used the descriptive qualitative method to obtain the data. According to Anggito & Setiawan (2018), descriptive qualitative is a method that is describing an object, phenomenon, or social, and the data or facts of the study were described using words or figures instead of a number. The data of this study were collected by using documentation, questionnaires, and interviews. In this study, the data were gained from the students' production to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was adapted Sophiariani, Suarnajaya, Ramendra (2017) that consisted of 8 questions.

The total subjects of this study were 31 students of language major of SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan in the academic year 2020/2021. The objects of this study were the types of errors and the sources of errors in students' recount text.

The data were analyzed using the theory from Gass & Selinker (2008). The five steps are collecting, identifying, classifying the errors, and analyze the sources of errors. The recount texts that were written by the students were collected first. Next, the data were identified and analyzed by marked the students' sentences that contained errors and then classified the errors based on the theory used in this study. The sources of errors were analysed using the students' texts, questionnaires, and interviews.

Writing is classified as a complex skill. Raimes (1938) mentions several writing structures, namely, syntax, grammar, mechanics, organization, word

choice. writing content, process, audience, and the purpose of writing. Grammar is one aspect of writings that rules for verbs. includes agreement, pronouns, and many more. Grammar is essential in writing because grammar is a set of rules of the language used to make a sentence (Roberts, 1962). Grammar has a different mechanism that depends on the language used communicate (Geoffey, Margaret, Hoogenraad, 1982). Without knowing the grammar of a target language, it will be hard to make a sentence in writing.

In the process of writing, mistakes and errors cannot be avoided. Mistakes are not the same as errors. The terms mistakes and errors different. are According to Jabeen, Kazemian, & Mustafai (2015), Errors happen due to incomplete learning learners' Meanwhile, incompetency. linguistic mistakes are caused by the poor performance of language, so errors cannot be self-corrected by the students, but a mistake can. Thus, errors analysis is conducted to solve these problems. Because Jabeen, Kazemian, & Mustafai (2015) argue that error analysis has an important role in education, especially for second and foreign language learners, because the teacher can give feedback toward the errors

There were several theories used in this study. In analyzing the types of students' errors, this study used the theory stated by Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982), namely: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Omission, addition, and misformation are divided into several subtypes. Omission consists of seven subtypes. Those are the omission of prepositions, omission of markers, omission of to be, omission of verbs, omission of conjunction, omission of pronoun, and omission of articles. The addition is divided into three types, simple addition, double marking, and regularization. The last is misformation that has three subtypes. Regularization, alternating form, and archi form are the subtypes of misformation.

The theory from Sawalmeh (2013) about spelling errors was also added in this study. This theory was supported by the theory from Besten & granger (2011), that classified spelling errors into nine types, namely: omission of a letter, the addition of a letter, single letter instead of a double letter, double letter instead of a single letter, substitution of one letter, interchange of two adjacent letters, error involving an apostrophe, erroneous splitting or joining of words (word segmentation error) and two or more errors of the same type of different types.

Brown (2007) states that there are four sources of errors, 1) interlingual transfer, 2) intralingual transfer, 3) context of learning, 4) communication strategy. This theory was then used as the theory to find the sources of the students' errors in writing recount text.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Types of Errors**

After collecting, identifying, and classifying the data, this study found four types of errors in the students' text. The errors were omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and spelling errors.

The first type of error was an omission. The omission is an absence of an item that must be appeared to make well-formed sentences (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). There were seven types of omission errors found in the students' text. The first type of omission was the omission of prepositions. For example, the students omitted the preposition in the sentences, for instance, "we finish working assignments." The students needed to put a preposition before the noun "assignments" so, the correct one "We finished working assignments.". Omission of articles was

the second type of error found in the students' sentences. For example, the sentence "I am going to kitchen take rice for lunch." Article must be placed to the specific noun, such as the noun "kitchen" in the sentence. The correct one was "I was going to the kitchen to make rice for lunch." The third was Omission of to be. It was found in the students' text. To be was used to connect the subject with predicate. The example was "This my first time trip to Lembongan. " The students omitted the to be was in the sentence. The correct one was, "This was my first time trip to Lembongan." The fourth was the omission of conjunctions. The absence of conjunctions was found in the students' text. The example was, "I tried to catch him but couldn't because the crab's agility and the deep hiding ended up playing sandcastle." The students omitted the conjunction "so" to explain the effect of the events. The correct sentence was, "I tried to catch him, but I couldn't because of the crab's agility and the deep hiding so, I ended up playing sandcastle." The fifth was Omission of pronoun. The subject was needed to make well-formed sentences. The example was" After that, play sand for a while.". The correct one was "After that, I played sand for a while." The sixth was the Omission of the marker. It was another error committed by the students. "-s/es" was a marker used to form present tense and some plural nouns and "-d/-ed" was used to form a past form of a regular verb. In writing recount text, the students had to use the past tense. Still, the students forget to put a marker to change the verb form, for example, "we complete all the tasks given." The marker "-d" must be added in the verb "complete." So, the correct sentence was "we completed all the tasks given". The seventh type of omission found in the texts was the omission of the verb.

Verbs showed an action done by the subject. This study found that some sentences did not have a verb. for example "we back to home". The word "back" was not a verb, so the correct

The second type of errors found in this study was an addition. Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982) explains that addition is an item that is not required in a sentence. They divide addition into three types, but this study only found two types of addition errors. Those are simple addition and regularizations. Simple addition is a presence of a small item in a sentence (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). This study found that some students added unnecessary items in the sentence. For example, "On a vacation to Pandawa beach on Sundays at 15.59". The marker "-s" in the noun "Sunday" was unnecessary, so the marker must be deleted in the sentence. The correct one was "On a vacation to Pandawa beach on Sunday at 15.59". Regularization is the addition of a marker to the member of a class that did not take a marker (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). This study found that the student put a marker in a noun in which its plural form does not take a marker -s/-es. For example, remembered there were some homework." The plural form of the noun "homework" did not take any marker, so the correct one was "I remembered there was some homework"

Misformation was the third type of errors. Misformation is marked by the use of the wrong form of morpheme in the sentence. This study found three types of misformation errors in the students' text. Those are alternating form, archi form, and regularization.

The first type of misformation were Archi form. It is characterized by a selection of a member's marker of class to represent others in the class (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). The students

used the wrong item in their sentences. The example was "I go to the bathroom for taking a bath." There were some errors committed by the students in their sentences, but archi form was found in the use of the preposition "for". In the sentence, the appropriate preposition was "to" instead of "for". The correct sentence should be "I went to the bathroom to take a bath." Alternating form was characterized by the wrong selection of words because of the alternation of various class members. The students used present tense instead of past tense in writing recount text which required past tense. The example was "I take a shower and get ready to go to a friend's house." The verb that the students used in the sentence should be in the form of past tense so, the verb "take" and "get" must be changed. The correct verb form was "took" and "got." The correct sentence was "I took a shower and got ready to go to a friend's house."

Regularization errors were the second type of misformation found in this study. Regularization is the use of regular markers in place of irregular ones. The students put the markered in a verb to change the verb into a past tense, but it was incorrect because it was an irregular verb that did not take a The example markered. "Unexpectedly, my motorcycle hit the wall which made me fell from the motorbike." The past form of the verb "fall" was "fell." The correct sentence was "Unexpectedly, my motorcycle hit the wall which made me fell from the motorbike"

The fourth type of grammatical error was Misordering. Misordering is the misplaced or wrong order of a morpheme or group of morpheme in the sentence. The students did not follow the rule of the target language and misplaced the word order in a sentence. The example was "Beach Muaya." The

students used the structure of their mother tongue, the Indonesian language, to write a noun phrase in English. The correct structure was "Muava Beach"

Spelling was another type of errors added in this study. Spelling means the process of writing that an actor does use the correct formation (Sawalmeh, 2013). Spelling errors are types of errors marked when the students make a wrong formation of a word. This study found that the students in SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan misspelled some English words. Based on the theory that is stated by Bestgen & Granger (2011), this study found six out of nine types of spelling errors. First, the Omission of a letter was found in the students' sentences. For example, "while looking at the beautiful scenery." The students misspelled the word "beautiful" by omitted a letter in the sentence. The correct one was "while looking at the beautiful scenery." Besides omitted a letter, this study also found that the students added a letter in a word. For example, "Study tour to java 2 years ago". The word "study" was incorrect. The student misspelled the word by adding the letter "o," in the word "Study" which was incorrect. correct spelling was "study." The sentence must be "Study tour to java 2 years ago". The second type of spelling errors found in this study was double letters instead of one letter. The students wrote "I'm Verry happy" which had some errors. The spelling error was on the word "Verry". That word only used one "r" and not double "r." The correct one was "I was very happy". The third was a substitution of one letter where the students changed a letter in a word. For example "Than we went to the parking area ". The word "then" was misspelled. The letter "a" must be changed with the letter "e". So, the correct sentence was "Then, we went to the parking area". Word segmentation

errors also were the fourth type of spelling errors found in the students' sentences where the students combined two words. For instance, "Then I sit down again". It could be seen that the students joined the word "sit" and "down" together which was wrong. The correct one was "Then I sit down again". The last was more than one error found in one word written by the students. For instance "Cahvani aktifities". The word "activities" was misspelled. The correct spelling was "Activities". So, from the phrase, the students substitute more than one letter in a word. The correct sentence was "Cahyani's activities"

# **Source of Errors**

Based on the theory of sources of errors proposed by Brown (2007), this study found four sources of students' errors: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communication strategy.

The first source of errors was Interlingual transfer. An interlingual transfer is one error that commonly occurs in the early stages of second learning that occurs because students are not familiar with the second language system (Brown, 2007). Interlingual happens because of the negative transfer of the mother language. The example is "Beach Muaya". This error happened because the students used the language structure of their mother tongue to write a phrase, clause, or sentence in the English language

Based on the questionnaire, the statement said that the students translate the Indonesian language to English language word by word. The result showed that for question number one, 6 out of 31 students strongly agree. Meanwhile, 16 out of 31 students agree, 5 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last four students disagree. The second statement said that the students

did not use the Indonesian structure in writing, 11 out of 31 students disagree, 15 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last 5 students agree. The result of this questionnaire showed that the Indonesian language influenced the students in writing that led them to errors. By translating the sentence word by word means that the students did not aware that the English language and Indonesian language have different language systems. That was the reason why misordering was found in the text written by students.

The second type was Intralingual transfer. It is the overgeneralization of the target language (Brown, 2007). Most of the students did not understand the use of past tense in writing recount text, for example. "I want to celebrate it with my friend"

The questionnaire showed that when the statement said that the students always put marker d/-ed in a verb, 2 out of 31 students strongly agree. 10 out of 31 students agree, 17 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last 2 students disagree. Then, the statement said that some verbs do not require the marker d/-ed and the verb change in writing recount text. 14 out of 31 students agree with the statement. Meanwhile, 15 out of 31 students chose undecided, 3 out of 31 students strongly agree, and the last student disagrees. The result showed that most of the students were not sure about the answer. Misformation and omission were the of errors by types caused the overgeneralization of the language. in the texts that were written by the students, some sentences were written in the correct tenses but some sentences were incorrect, for example, "my motorcycle hit the wall which made me fell from the motorbike". In these sentences, the students wrote the correct form of the verb "hit" and did not put any marker because it was an irregular

verb, but the students put a marker in the verb "falled" which was wrong.

The third was Communication strategies. It is the source of error that happened because the student tried to convey the message using their way, but it led them to errors. Because of that, the students misspelled the words. The example was "My father thought me to ride a motorcycle in a field near the house"

The questionnaire showed that when the statement said that the students mixed the Indonesian words with English words when they did not know English words. The student's answers showed that 2 out of 31 students strongly agree that 14 out of 31 students agree. 7 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last 11 disagree. students The following statement said that when the students did not know the word in English, the students used a dictionary to find the word. The students' answers showed that 8 out of 31 students strongly agree, 21 out of 31 students agree with the statement. Meanwhile, 4 out of 31 students chose undecided. The result of this questionnaire showed that the spelling errors committed by the students were mostly caused by the for example. mother tongue, "activities". Most of the students agreed that they used a dictionary when they did not know the word in English. Thus, spelling errors happened because the students mix the words.

The fourth was the context of learning. It is the source of error that came from the teacher, class, or textbooks. The students omitted the subject in the sentences. Sometimes, the subject or object was omitted in the sentences when speaking, but it is inappropriate for writing, especially in academic writing. The example was "... and after that, I shared with my friend"

The statement said that teacher's explanation of grammar is in accordance with what is explained in the textbook. The students' answers showed that 2 out of 31 students strongly agree with the statement. Meanwhile, 7 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last 24 students agree. For the second statement, the statement said that students often feel confused when reading the English textbook given by the teacher regarding the use of grammar. The students' answers showed that 1 student strongly agrees with the statement. Meanwhile, 11 out of 31 students agree, 19 out of 31 students chose undecided, and the last 2 students disagree. This means that the context of learning is the less frequent source of students errors even though some students still omitted the subject in writing an active voice. For example, "after that <u>play</u> the cellphone for a while"

After collecting the answer from the questionnaire, interviews were also conducted with the students to gained additional information and to support the data from the questionnaire. After conducting some interviews, the students said that they translated their text from Indonesian to the English language. Thus, that was the reason why misordering errors were found in the students' text. The result of this interview was in accordance with the answer from the questionnaire. So, it was true that Intralingual transfer was the source of the errors.

The students also said that they knew how to use past tense in writing recount text, but this study found that the students committed omission, addition, and misformation. Compared with the result of the questionnaire, 12 out of them agreed that the marker -d/ed was always added in the verb. it means that the students did not aware of how to use past tense. This showed that

the students overgeneralized the target language and they were not aware of it.

When the students did not know the word in English, the students would use a dictionary to help them find the words and this result was in line with the answer in the questionnaire but this study found that the students also committed spelling errors in their texts. In the students' texts, some students still omitted the noun in making sentences.

The students said that the way the teacher taught them was clear, but some of the students did not understand the textbooks that the teacher gave. The students said that the textbooks or material were hard to read because it was written in the English language. Thus, this interview found that the problems came from the textbooks or the materials that were given by the teachers.

Similarities and contrasts were found from this study with the other studies. The similarities were found in the study conducted by Suwastini & (2017),Fridayanthi Yukti (2017),Suarnajaya, & Dambayana Artono, (2017), Erlanga, Suarnajaya, & Juniarta (2018), Manik & Suwastini (2020), Yudari (2017), Asni & Susanti (2018), and Solikha & Rozak (2020). Those studies found that omission. misformation, misordering, and addition were the types of errors found in the students' texts. The contrasts were this study found spelling errors in students texts with 6 different types of spelling errors

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study found five types of errors in the recount texts, which were written by the tenth-grade students of language major of SMA Negeri 1 Kuta Selatan. The types of errors were from the theories stated by Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982), Sawalmeh (2013), and Besten & Granger (2011). The types of

found in this study were errors omission, addition, misformation, misordering and spelling errors. There were seven types of omission found in this study, namely omission of to be, omission omission of verbs. prepositions, omission of markers. omission of pronouns, omission of conjunction, and omission of articles. There were also two types of additives found in students' text. Those were simple addition and regularization. Three subtypes of misformation were found in students' text, were alternating form, archi form, and regularization. In spelling errors, students made six types of errors, namely omission of a letter, the addition of a letter, double letter instead of a single letter, the substitution of one letter, erroneous splitting or joining of words (word segmentation error), and two or more errors of the same type of different types.

Interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, the context of learning, and communication strategy were sources of errors found in this study. These sources of errors were gained by using theory from Brown (2007). This study found that most of the students agreed that they translated the sentences word by word and they tend to use Indonesian language structure in writing sentences. The spelling errors, it was caused because students mixed the English language with the Indonesian language.

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