

**An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students'  
Writing Recount Text at Grade VIII SMP N 3 Padangsidimpuan**

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**Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis kesalahan yang dibuat oleh siswa, untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis kesalahan yang paling banyak terjadi oleh siswa, untuk mengetahui alasan mengapa siswa membuat kesalahan ketika mereka menulis teks recount. Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode campuran. Teknik pengumpulan datanya adalah tes tertulis dan wawancara. Penulis menemukan seluruh kesalahan yang berjumlah 14. Kesalahan yang paling dominan adalah tanda baca sebesar 21,14%. Diikuti oleh kapitalisasi sebesar 18,12%. Sumber kesalahan yang ditemukan adalah kesalahan intralingual sebesar 88,21% dan kesalahan interlingual sebesar 11,78%. Peneliti juga menemukan mengapa siswa membuat kesalahan saat menulis teks recount. Hal ini disebabkan karena kosakata mereka kurang memadai dan kurang memahami simple past tense.

**Kata kunci:** Kesalahan tata bahasa, teks recount, dan menulis.

**Abstract**

The objectives of the study are to know the types of error are made by the students, to know the types of error are dominantly occurred by the students, to know the reason why students made error when they write recount text. The methodology of the research was mixed method. The technique of data collection was writing test and interview. The most dominant error is punctuation with 21,14%. It is followed by capitalization with 18,12%. The sources of the error found are intralingual error with 88,21% and interlingual error with 11,78%. The researcher also found out why students made error when writing recount text. It is because they were inadequate vocabulary and lack of misunderstanding of simple past tense.

**Keywords:** Grammatical errors, recount text, and writing.

**Introduction**

English has become an international language and is taught at almost every level of education around the world. People realize that the purpose of learning a foreign language is to use it in oral and written communication. According to data released by the British Council, the number of people who speak English has reached 1.75 billion, accounting for about a quarter of the world's population. This huge number is due to the presence of English in almost every area of life.

English is the most widely used language in the world and is regarded as an official international language in many nations. For this reason, learning English at school is crucial for pupils' future success as well as for introducing them to a foreign language.

In English, there are four skills that should be studied. It is covered listening, speaking, reading and writing. Meanwhile, the component covers grammar, vocabulary, phonology and graphology. From the four skills of English which should be taught, the researcher focus on writing. Writing is one of activities for the students to express their feeling and ideas in form of written language.

Students are said to be proficient at writing if the structure of their sentences is in accordance with existing grammar and readers can understand the meaning of the writing. However, the reality in the field is that there are still ambiguous sentences that do not fit grammatically in students' writing. This is due to the many elements of grammar, such as singular-plural, verb tenses, word choice, word order, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, that students must master. This is based on the author's observations at SMP N 3 Padangsidimpuan. The author found that in students' writing, especially in recount text, there was still a lot of writing that was not in accordance with grammar, one of which was the use of tenses. As we know, tenses are one of the elements of grammar, and students are required to master 16 types of tenses. Because in this research the author focuses on recount text, the tense used is simple past tense.

Based on the researcher's interview in the preliminary study on March 5, 2024, at SMP N 3 Padangsidimpuan, with Mam Ramaita Piliang as the English teacher, researchers asked what the students' weaknesses were in writing. The teacher mentioned several compilations of students' weaknesses in the task of writing recount texts, like students cannot use good grammar in using past tense, and the students make mistakes in choosing verbs from past tense.

Based on the phenomena mentioned above, most students have many problems in writing recount texts, it is clear that writing requires aspects of mastered by students. As required in the curriculum, the learning of writing cannot be implemented effective if students cannot master the aspect of writing. Based on the problem described above the writer interested in conducting the research entitled by "An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students' Writing Recount Text At Grade VIII SMP 3 Padangsidimpuan".

## **Method**

The method of this research is a mixed method. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner in Hands (2022) stated that mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. Mixed methods research involved the use both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study.

This research conducted at SMP N 3 Padangsidimpuan which is located in Jl. Kh Ahmad Dahlan, No.39 Wek. I Kecamatan Padangsidimpuan Utara, Kota Padangsidimpuan. Subjects in this study is 15 students at the eight grade of SMP Negeri 3 Padangsidimpuan.

This study used two types of instruments, test and interview. The first, the researchers entered the class, give short introduction, and also provide a little explanation about recount text. The researchers asked the students to write about their last holiday in 90 minutes. The researchers observed the students while they write. The researchers asked the students to collected their writing. The researchers analyzed students' error in writing recount text. The second step, the researchers conducted the interview. Interview is a supporting instrument. Interviews were done to 13 students and 1 teacher. The researchers recorded the interview process.

The researchers used mixed method. To get quantitative results, the data is calculated by the formula of Allan 2004 (in Astrianingsih), as follows:

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

P= Percentage

F= Frequency of error occurred

N= Number of cases (total frequent / total individual)

The researchers analyzed the data from written test and interview. First, the researchers corrected the errors of each students. The researchers classified the errors based on their location. After the errors were classified, the researchers calculated each total errors (F). How many errors of capitalization, spelling, singular-plural, word choice, word order, word form, add a word, incomplete sentence, article, meaning not clear, run on sentence, and punctuation. Then, the researchers calculated all errors occurring (N). So after that, the researchers looked for a percentage errors using the formula of Allan. The researchers found the percentage of each error. The second step was to analyze the results of the interviews. The collected data were also analyzed to support the data.

## Result and Discussion

The researchers did the interviews on 5 June 2024 to 13 students and an English teacher. The researchers concluded that the students' lack of interest in learning English. The researchers also found that the students' inadequate vocabulary, difficulty in using punctuation, and did not know when to use capital letters which makes it difficult for them to write, especially in writing recount text and their lack of understanding of simple past tense. It was due to their confusion to distinguish between verb 1, 2, and 3.

Teachers also stated that the textbooks they used were inadequate in explaining the details of the material. students still needed additional explanations from the teacher. Even, students still translated English word by word, which means wrong. One of the errors that they sometimes forgot is when to use to be "was/were". They were also wrong to pick up a suitable word of verb 1, 2, and 3.

The researchers found many errors made by the students in writing recount text. Any errors found were marked and corrected. After that, the researchers classified each type of error and each source of error made by the students. Then, the researchers calculated the number of each error by using the percentage.

In this section, the researchers identified the students' error in writing recount text. Below was the result of problem identification:

**Table 4.1** The Recapitulation of the Students' Grammatical Error

| No. | Students' Initial | Types of Error  |           |             |            |          |             |            |          |             |                |         |                   |            |                 | Total |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|----------|-------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|
|     |                   | Singular-Plural | Word Form | Word Choice | Verb Tense | Add Word | Omit a Word | Word Order | Spelling | Punctuation | Capitalization | Article | Meaning Not Clear | Incomplete | Run On Sentence |       |
| 1   | AA                | 0               | 0         | 1           | 1          | 0        | 0           | 0          | 1        | 5           | 3              | 0       | 2                 | 0          | 0               | 13    |
| 2   | AE                | 0               | 0         | 0           | 4          | 0        | 0           | 0          | 2        | 1           | 15             | 0       | 1                 | 0          | 0               | 23    |
| 3   | AM                | 1               | 0         | 1           | 6          | 0        | 0           | 0          | 6        | 3           | 2              | 1       | 1                 | 0          | 0               | 21    |
| 4   | AR                | 0               | 0         | 0           | 1          | 1        | 1           | 1          | 2        | 2           | 1              | 0       | 4                 | 0          | 1               | 14    |
| 5   | DL                | 0               | 0         | 1           | 6          | 5        | 1           | 0          | 7        | 11          | 5              | 0       | 4                 | 0          | 1               | 41    |
| 6   | FA                | 1               | 0         | 1           | 6          | 1        | 1           | 0          | 3        | 7           | 3              | 0       | 3                 | 0          | 0               | 26    |
| 7   | HR                | 0               | 0         | 0           | 3          | 2        | 0           | 0          | 3        | 3           | 3              | 0       | 4                 | 0          | 0               | 18    |
| 8   | MA                | 1               | 0         | 1           | 5          | 1        | 1           | 0          | 4        | 8           | 6              | 0       | 3                 | 0          | 0               | 30    |

|            |     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |        |        |        |       |        |       |       |      |
|------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|------|
| 9          | RA  | 0     | 0     | 2     | 2      | 0     | 2     | 0     | 2      | 4      | 0      | 0     | 4      | 0     | 0     | 16   |
| 10         | RAH | 0     | 0     | 1     | 1      | 1     | 1     | 0     | 1      | 6      | 1      | 0     | 5      | 0     | 0     | 17   |
| 11         | RAS | 0     | 0     | 3     | 1      | 0     | 3     | 0     | 1      | 2      | 0      | 0     | 8      | 0     | 0     | 18   |
| 12         | RM  | 2     | 0     | 3     | 3      | 4     | 2     | 0     | 2      | 7      | 6      | 0     | 5      | 1     | 0     | 35   |
| 13         | RR  | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0      | 1     | 1     | 0     | 0      | 6      | 0      | 0     | 3      | 0     | 0     | 11   |
| 14         | SP  | 1     | 0     | 1     | 5      | 4     | 2     | 0     | 2      | 4      | 3      | 0     | 2      | 0     | 0     | 24   |
| 15         | SS  | 1     | 1     | 3     | 2      | 0     | 2     | 0     | 1      | 1      | 11     | 0     | 2      | 0     | 0     | 24   |
| Total      |     | 7     | 1     | 18    | 46     | 20    | 17    | 1     | 37     | 70     | 60     | 1     | 51     | 1     | 2     | 331  |
| Percentage |     | 2.11% | 0.30% | 5.43% | 13.89% | 6.04% | 5.13% | 0.30% | 11.17% | 21.14% | 18.12% | 0.30% | 15.40% | 0.30% | 0.60% | 100% |

**Table 4.2** The Recapitulation of the Sources of Errors

| No.        | Students' Initial | Source of Error |              | Total |
|------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
|            |                   | Interlingual    | Intralingual |       |
| 1          | AA                | -               | 13           | 13    |
| 2          | AE                | -               | 23           | 23    |
| 3          | AM                | -               | 21           | 21    |
| 4          | AR                | 3               | 11           | 14    |
| 5          | DL                | 6               | 35           | 41    |
| 6          | FA                | 2               | 24           | 26    |
| 7          | HR                | 2               | 16           | 18    |
| 8          | MA                | 2               | 28           | 30    |
| 9          | RA                | 2               | 14           | 16    |
| 10         | RAH               | 2               | 15           | 17    |
| 11         | RAS               | 3               | 15           | 18    |
| 12         | RM                | 6               | 29           | 35    |
| 13         | RR                | 2               | 9            | 11    |
| 14         | SP                | 6               | 18           | 24    |
| 15         | SS                | 3               | 21           | 24    |
| Total      |                   | 39              | 292          | 331   |
| Percentage |                   | 11,78%          | 88,21%       | 100%  |

### The Description of Error

After identifying the data, the author analyzed the errors and classified them based on Azar in Kusuma (2020) to know the error of singular-plural, verb tense, word choice, word order, word form, add a word, omit a word, incomplete sentence, article, meaning not clear, run on sentence, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

#### a. Punctuation error

The most dominant error made by students was the punctuation. Total 70 errors out of 331 errors or 21,14% are committed by students. Mostly, they did not put a full stop where it should be. For example, “*My room is painted light brown there is.*” It should be “*My room is painted light brown. There is....*” The students made many errors in punctuation. The error are mostly about the absence of full stop and comma. It shows that the students still careless about punctuation. They might forget about the importance of punctuation in written text.

#### b. Capitalization error

The second type of error is capitalization error, 60 out of 331 errors are committed by the students. Some students made the error of writing the name of place. For example, “*We go*

*to game zone in plaza anugerah with my friend.*”). It should be “*We went to the game zone in Plaza Anugerah.*” They also made error in the beginning of a sentence. For example, “*they back home with car to home.*” It should be “*They returned home by car.*”

c. Meaning not clear error

The third type is meaning not clear, happened 51 times or 15,40%. In this error, the researcher could not understand what students wanted to write. For example, “*I talking home every morning.*”. It should be “*I take care of the house every morning.*” The context of this sentence is not clear, whether the students *talk at home every morning* or it may be *take care of the house every morning*.

d. Verb tense error

The next type is verb tense. Total 46 errors out of 331 errors or 13,84% shows that students have difficulties to deal with tenses, particularly in past tense which is used in recount text. For example students wrote “*So, I see a cat and I feeds the cat with cooked fish.*”. It should be “*So, when I saw a cat, I fed the cat with cooked fish.*” The students is able to use verb *cooked* but at the same time the students is unable to change verb *see* and *feed*. It shows that the students still confused with when to use past tense and how to use it alongside other tense.

e. Spelling error

The spelling error occurred 37 times or 11,17%. Students misspelled some words like *basfran*, *baall*, and *chiken*. They should be *bestfriend*, *ball*, and *chicken*. Some students misspelled adjectives. For example, “*She is beatifull end kin person.*”. It should be “*She is beautiful and kind person.*”

f. Add a word error

The next category is add a word error. This kind of error appeared 20 times or 6,04% of the total errors. In this case, the students added a word in sentences. The example of adding a word is “*My favorite colour blue*”. That phrase is supposed to be “*My favorite colour is blue*”.

g. Word choice error

Word choice error appeared 18 times or 5,43% out of 331 errors. The example of word choice is “*...at street back home*”. It should be “*...at way back home*”

h. Omit a word error

Omit a word occurred 17 times or 5,13% out of 331 errors. The example of omit a word is “*...i helped sister and helped mom*”.. That phrase is supposed to be “*...i helped my sister and mom*”.

i. Singular-plural error

Singular-plural error was made 7 times. The example of this case is “*...me and my family go to the restaurant eating food*”. It should be “*...me and my family went to the restaurant ate foods*”.

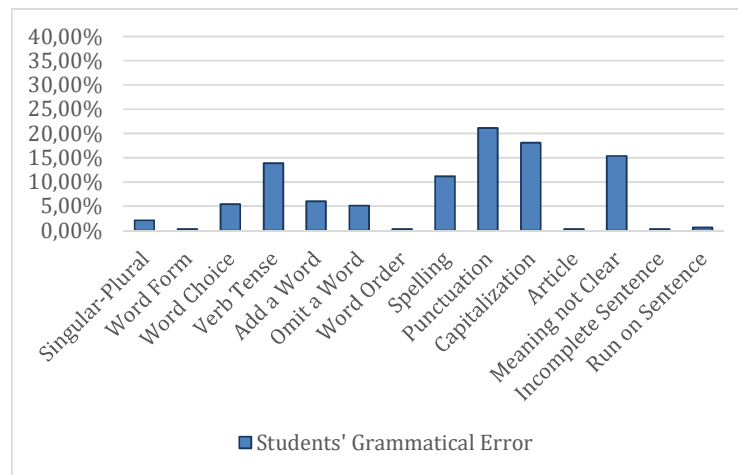
j. Run on sentence error

This kind of error appeared 2 times or 0,60% of the total errors. This kind of error occurs when two sentences are incorrectly connected. The end of one sentence and the beginning of the next sentence are not properly marked by a period and a capital letter or by a semicolon. One of examples of this error is “*After that we sat there after that we rood back home.*”. It should be “*We sat there. After that, we went home.*”

k. Word Order, word form, article, and incompleted sentence error

There is one error in each of these errors or 0,30% out of 331 errors. The students made errors in word order category such as “*Two month went i to Sibolga.*”. It should be “*Two month ago, i went to Sibolga.*” The example of error students made in word form is “*...take a beauty picture.*”. That phrase should be “*...take a beautiful picture.*” The example of error student made in article is “*I’m doing my homework and rewatch on anime.*”. It should be “*I’m doing*

*my homework and rewatch an Anime.”* The example of incompleted sentence is *“I to zoo to moment in.”*. That phrase is supposed to be *“I went to the Zoo at that moment.”*



**Figure 4.1** The Percentage Recapitulation of Errors

Based on the result of this research, it can be concluded that from the error types suggested by Azar in Kusuma (2020), the researcher found every kind of them. The most dominant error is punctuation error with 70 errors or 21,14%. It is followed by capitalization error with 60 errors or 18,12%. Meaning not clear error with 51 errors or 15,40%, verb tense with 46 errors or 13,89%, spelling with 37 errors or 11,17%, add a word with 20 errors or 6,04%, word choice with 18 errors 5,43%, omit a word with 17 errors or 5,13%, singular-plural with 7 errors or 2,11%, run on sentence with 2 errors or 0,60%, word form, word order, article, and incomplete sentences appeared simultaneously once each or 0,30%.

## Conclusion

Based on the result of this research, the researcher can conclude that; first, the students made punctuation error as the most dominant. Most of them do not end a sentence with period and misplace commas. Second, the students missed to put a correct capitalization to the name of places and capitalizing words that should not be capitalized. Third, the students wrote sentences with unclear meaning. Fourth, the students made error on the verb conjugation in past tense. Fifth, the students misspelled some words. Sixth, the students do not add words that should be in a sentence. Seventh, the students chose the wrong word or preposition which led to word choice error. Eighth, the students insert words that are not needed in a sentence. Ninth, the students misused the singular-plural rules. Tenth, the students run on the sentences where it should be cut. The other is word form, word order, article, and incomplete sentence. Word form happened because the students were unable to differentiate the part of speech between adjective and adverb. Word order appeared because the students used the wrong order of words. Article error happened because the students missed or put the wrong article. The last one is incomplete sentence error, appeared because the students cut the sentence which made the idea was not constructed correctly.

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sentences appeared simultaneously once each. This means students still have to understand English rules better to avoid mistakes.

Based on the result of interview students and English teacher, the researcher found the reason of why students made error when writing recount text. It is because they lack of vocabulary, difficulty in using punctuation, and did not know when to use capital letters. This may also be caused by the lack of hours to study English at school, considering that they did not study English during Elementary School.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the conclusion of the research, some suggestions related to this result of this research are presented. It might enhance the process of instruction and learning. Here are some suggestion that should that might be useful in the process of teaching and learning.

1. For the English teacher  
The suggestion is given to English teacher that the teacher should not ignore the students' error, if it all possible, to utilize acceptable error correction techniques to provide suitable remedy. Additionally, as research indicates that the majority of students found the assignment, upsetting, it is advised that teachers doing remedial sessions teach writing recount texts to their students, going over the process in depth.
2. For the students  
To increas their understanding, students should take their English studies more seriously. They can get better English language skills from instructors or pals, especially when it comes to producing recount text.
3. For the other researcher  
There are numerous flaws in this study. In order to avoid the broad breadth of grammar itself, the researcher recommends that future concentrate on a specific area of grammar.

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