

Grammatical Errors in Writing Recount Texts Committed by the Tenth Grade Students of Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka in the School Year of 2015/2016

FIKRI, ZAENUL

Dosen FKIP-Universitas Gunung Rinjani
Selong-Lombok Timur

email : fikrizaenul@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study was meant to discover the types of grammatical errors committed by the tenth grader of students in writing recount texts, and to discover why those errors happen. This study was a case study with qualitative approach. The subject of this study was 51 students of the tenth grader of *Madrasah Aliyah Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka* in the School Year of 2016/2017. The instrument used in this study was written test of recount text. Data collection method used in this study was observation, interview, and documentation. The data was analyzed by classifying the types of grammatical error into seven categories and then determined the possible causes of those errors according to the theory of Erdogan(2005). The result showed that: (1) The students made 323 grammatical errors in 431 sentences classified into 98 or 30.3% errors in producing verb groups, 112 or 34.7% errors in subject-verb agreement, 46 or 14.2% errors in pluralization, 18 or 5.6% errors in the use of article, 20 or 6.2% errors in the use of preposition, 12 or 3.7% errors in the use of pronoun, and 17 or 5.3% errors in the use of conjunction.(2) The possible causes of those errors are: intra-lingual transfer (88%) and inter-lingual transfer (12%).

Key words: *Grammatical Errors, Recount Text.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan jenis-jenis *grammatical errors* yang dibuat oleh siswa kelas X di dalam menulis *recount text*, dan untuk menemukan penyebab errors tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus dengan menggunakan pendekatan *qualitative*. Subjek penelitian ini sebanyak 51 siswa kelas X Madrasah Aliyah Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka Th. Pelajaran 2016/2017. Instrument yang digunakan adalah tes tulis dalam bentuk *recount text*. Metode pengumpulan data yang dipakai dalam penelitian ini adalah observasi, interview, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan mengklasifikasikan jenis-jenis *grammatical errors* dan kemudian menentukan kemungkinan penyebab errors tersebut dengan mengacu kepada teori Erdogan (2005). Hasil yang didapatkan adalah: (1) siswa membuat 323 *grammatical errors* dari 431 kalimat dengan klasifikasi sebagai berikut: 98 atau 30,3 % errors di dalam membuat *verb groups*, 112 atau 34,7 % errors pada *subject-verb agreement*, 46 atau 14,2 % errors pada *pluralization*, 18 atau 5,6 % errors pada penggunaan *article*, 20 atau 6,2 % errors pada penggunaan *preposistion*, 12 atau 3,7 % errors pada penggunaan *pronoun*, dan 17 atau 5,3 % errors pada penggunaan *conjunction*. (2) kemungkinan penyebab errors tersebut adalah: *intra-lingual transfer* (88%) dan *inter-lingual transfer* (12%)

Kata Kunci: *Grammatical Errors, Recount Text*

INTRODUCTION

When writing is taught in the classroom, the students are expected to be able to write in English using a correct grammar. Mary and Water (1995:90) as cited in Setiawan (2009) state that writing is complex process since it is made of a large number of skills, not only one element that is used but also all of language elements need to be considered such as: spelling, grammar, diction, punctuation, etc.

Grammar is one of the basic components of language which must be learnt. Harmer (2001: 12) defines grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their form and can be combined into sentences in that language. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 2) state that grammar is a theory of a language, of how language is put together and how it works. In this case, it is stated clearly that grammar is an essential part for each English learner, since the good competency in grammar will make a good writing that means the learners able to use English language correctly so that the goal of teaching writing will be reached.

Unfortunately, when someone learns a foreign language, he/she often faces interference, where he/she applies his/her mother tongue or first language structure to the structure of the foreign language which is different from his/her native language. The differences between Indonesian and English language can cause students to make some grammatical errors.

The standard competence in syllabus of English at the tenth graders states that the students must be able to express the meaning in written functional text and short simple essay in the form of descriptive and recount to interact with their environment.

Thus, kind of texts which are colored by various communicative objectives, parts of the text arrangement, and certain linguistics features should be noticed by every English language learners in Indonesia. It means that the learners can not only create English sentences in isolation, but also arrange them to become texts which are accepted by the native speakers. So they must be able to master how to write a good text. In this case

the text was focused on a good recount text composition.

In composing a recount text, some of the tenth grade students of *Madrasah Aliyah Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka* sometimes made errors, e.g. error in using verb forms, error in using pronoun, error in using articles, error in using preposition, error in using conjunction, and error in the other aspect of written language. This case occurs because of some reasons.

Thus, this study aimed at exploring grammatical errors in writing recount texts made by the tenth grade students of Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka in the School Year of 2015/2016.

The result of this study is expected to be useful for teachers, students, and other researchers in relation to English language education in Indonesia as well as to research in language teaching.

For the teacher: by reading the result of this study, he/she could find new way in improving their teaching competence.

For the student: by reading the result of this study, he/she could know their errors in writing sentences, especially in composing recount texts.

For the other researcher: as a reference for the other researcher who want to investigate much more about writing and grammar, especially about how to write a structured recount text.

METHOD OF STUDY

This study constituted as an Error Analysis. Thus, this study utilized a descriptive-qualitative design, in particular, a case study form.

This study took place at *Madrasah Aliyah Thohir Yasin Lendang Nangka* in the school year of 2016/2017. It was located in Masbagik sub-district of East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The subject of the research covered all of the tenth grade students, 51 students. Data collection technique was an instrument in form of essay test. The participants were urged to make a free recount text based on the applied optional picture.

Data was analyzed by utilizing error analysis method advocated by Corder as quoted by (Ellis, 1994) with the steps such as: Collection of samples of learner language, Identification of errors, Classification of errors, Explanation of errors, and Evaluation of errors.

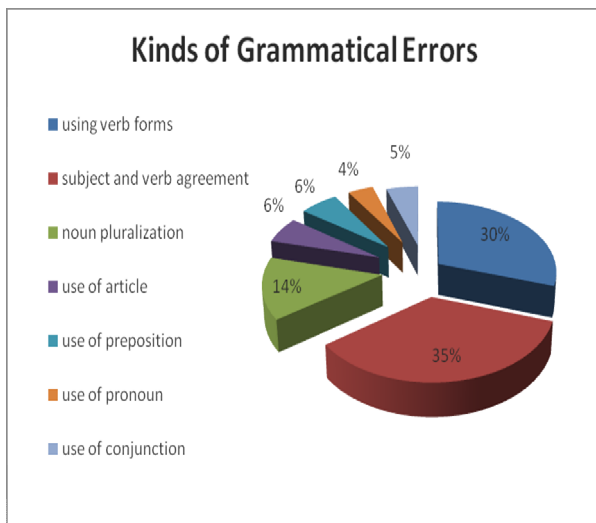
FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

Types of Grammatical Errors

It was found that there were three hundreds and twenty three (323) grammatical errors in four hundred and thirty one (431) sentences. Those are: 98 errors in using verb groups, 112 errors in subject-verb agreements, 46 errors in pluralization, 18 errors in the use of articles, 20 errors in the use of prepositions, 12 errors in the use of pronouns, and 17 errors in the use of conjunctions. The result of the analysis can be seen on the following figure:

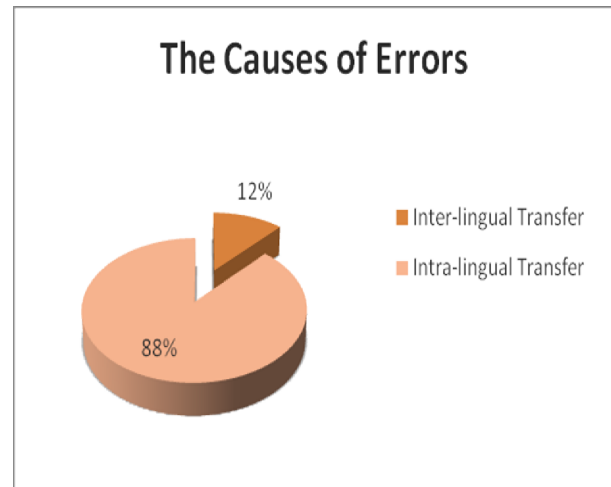
Figure 1



Causes of Errors

After analyzing data to find out the causes of students' grammatical errors, the present researcher did an interview to the students. According to Erdogan (2005: 265) the causes of errors are categorized within two domains, they are inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer. Based on the interview, the result could be seen on the following figure.

Figure 2



FINDING

Types of Grammatical Errors

The types of grammatical errors created by the students were marked with "asterisks" (*) and underlined. The exact place of the error sentences is marked by "S1.2" in which "S1" was the sentence's number and "2" was the code of samples.

1. Errors in Using Verb Group

In utilizing verb groups, there are some rules that must be obeyed, such as: the form of the sentence whether it is in the active or passive form, and the tense of the sentence. These rules are complex. The students, therefore, often made errors in this area. Some of those errors were illustrated as follows:

- *We decided to went back. (S8.1)
- *We walked again while listened music, after that..... (S7.36)
- *We to take rest at the same time. (S6.17)

In sentence a, the students made errors in producing *to infinitive* verb (missform). They failed to recognize where they had to put the infinitive verbs. In sentence b, the student failed to recognize that in order to explain a process; they should use the *-ing* form of the verbs, while in sentence c, the students made a mistake by using *to infinitive* after the subject. The sentences should be:

- We decided to go back.
- We walked again while listening to music, after that.....
- We took a rest at the same time.

Besides the infinitive forms, verb groups could also be in the form of linking verbs (to be). Frank (1972) states that linking verbs are verbs of incomplete predication; it merely announces that the real predicate follows. The complement is usually an adjective or a noun. Some errors on this part are:

- a. *We swimming for about half hour. (S4.9)
- b. *Because there, wave extremely big. (S9.11)
- c. *We all very tired, but we were happy. (S11.12)

In three sentences above, the students failed to put the linking verbs (missing verb). In sentence a, the student failed to put the linking verbs before the *ing* verb, while in sentences b and c, they failed to put the linking verbs before an adjective. Moreover, the sentence b was unstructured sentence. The sentences should be:

- a. We were swimming for about half hour.
- b. Because there, the wave was extremely big.
- c. We all were very tired, but we were happy.

In writing a recount text, past tense is commonly used since it tells about past experiences. In the sentences below, the students failed to put the verbs in past form (missform). The errors are as follows:

- a. *We go home. (S4.44)
- b. *First, we take bath then we having lunch. (S6.7)
- c. *We leave our house at about 8.30 a.m. (S4.21)

In sentences a and c, the students failed to recognize the past form of the verbs. They still used the simple form of the verbs. This is incorrect since in telling their past experiences they should use the past form of the verbs (verb2). In sentence b, the student also failed to recognize the past form of the verb, moreover the student used *ing* form. The sentences should be:

- a. We went home.
- b. First, we took a bath then we had our lunch.
- c. We left our house at about 8.30 a.m.

2. Errors in Subject and Verb Agreement

Errors in Subject and Verb Agreement were the most frequent ones made by the students. Agreement between subject and

verb are influenced by the subject form whether it is singular or plural. To construct a correct sentence structurally, the verb must be agreed by the subject. Failing to recognize this means failing to construct correct structurally sentences. Thus, the students must be able to identify the subject whether it is singular or plural. Having no competence in identifying the subject will make students fail to produce the correct form of the verb. It means that the students have created errors in making the agreement between subject and verb.

In past tense, there is an agreement between subject and verb, in this case is *to be*. For the first and the third person singular subject, we should use *was*, and for the other forms of subject, we should use *were*. The students made some errors in this area. They were as follows:

- a. *....., but we was very happy. (S5.38)
- b. *It's was very tired but I was very happy (S7.42)
- c. *..... because this is experience the first with my family. (S10.12)

In sentence a, the student failed to make the agreement between subject and verb. The student failed to recognize the subject of the sentence, in which *we* is the first person plural. So the student should use *were*. In sentence b, the student used two forms of *to be* i.e. *is* and *was*. It made the sentence become unstructured. While in sentence c, the student did not use the past form of *to be* *is*. The sentences should be:

- a., but we were very happy.
- b. It was very tired but I was very happy.
- c. because this was the first experience with my family.

3. Errors in Pluralization

Pluralization is a process of adding morpheme *s/es* to pluralize nouns. The function of pluralization is to show that the noun is more than one. The students' errors in this area are as follows:

- a. *Then we walked around and bought some drink, then (S9.28)
- b. *.... Then we took some picture. (S7.30)
- c. *The journey took about three hour. (S5.15)

In sentence a and b, the student did not add *s* to the objects although the objects were clearly more than one. It was known by the word *some* that showed the object more than one. In sentence c, the student also did not add *s* to pluralize the word *three*. The sentences should be:

- a. Then we walked around and bought some drinks, then
- b. Then we took some pictures.
- c. The journey took about three 3 hours.

4. Errors in the Use of Articles

The use of articles is also determined by the noun whether it is countable or uncountable and whether it is singular or plural. There are two kinds of article; they are definite article (*the*) and indefinite articles (*a/an*). We use definite article *the* if the noun has been mentioned before or if the noun has been familiar. *The* developed historically from a word meaning *This* and still retains some of the basic meanings of the pointing demonstrative. *The* is served to particularize a noun. It helps to distinguish the known from the unknown. It may narrow down a class, or it may even limit the class to one.

While, we use indefinite article *a/an* if the noun has not been mentioned before. The use of indefinite article also takes into account whether the noun is countable or not and whether it is singular or plural. If the noun is not referring to a particular thing or person, the indefinite article must be used.

Thus, to be able to use an article properly, the students have to be sensitive in differentiating the use of definite article, indefinite article and even using no article at all. If they are not able to differentiate them, they could make errors as follows:

- a. *I Last Monday, I and my family went to beach. (S1.7)
- b. *It was the second time visiting to beach. (S2.17)
- c. *There, I rent belt for swimming. (S9.11)

In sentences a and b, the student did not use an article, where as they must put a definite article *the* in order to particularize one place. In sentence c, the student did not use an article, where as they must put an indefinite

article *a/an* to refers a thing. The sentences should be:

- a. I Last Monday, I and my family went to the beach.
- b. It was the second time we visited the beach.
- c. There, I rent a belt for swimming.

5. Errors in the Use of Prepositions

Prepositions are always followed by nouns (or pronouns). They are connective words that show the relationship between the nouns following them and one of the basic sentence elements: subject, verb, object, or complement.

They usually indicate relationships, such as position, place, direction, time, manner, agent, possession, and condition, between their objects and other parts of the sentence (Wishon & Burks, 1980). A preposition may be composed of one, two, or three parts. For instance:

One part: of, on, in, at, for, from.

Two parts: because of, according to, etc.

Three parts: in front of, on top of, as far as, etc.

In using a preposition, one should be aware because there is no certain rule for this. One has to determine which preposition should be used based on its context. Some of the errors made by the students in this area are as follows:

- a. *we arrive to Labuhan Haji 9.30 am. (S5.11)
- b. *We both went there Motorcycle. (S3.15)
- c. *We got rest for minutes and we already for back. (S3.12)

In sentence a and b, the students failed to put a preposition before the words *9.30* and *Motorcycle*. While in sentence c, the student made a mistake by putting a preposition *for* before the word *back*. The sentences should be:

- a. We arrive to Labuhan Haji at 9.30 am.
- b. We both went there by Motorcycle.
- c. We got rest for minutes and we already to get back.

6. Errors in the Use of Pronouns

Pronoun is used to substitute nouns. It has many types; they are personal, reflexive, indefinite, relative, interrogative,

demonstrative, and expletive pronouns. The students made errors in this area. They are as follows:

- a. *Last week I and parents went to Senggigi. (S1.10)
- b. *We go there to walked and arrived to home my grandmother. (S3.25)
- c. *After that my and my friend rest together.... (S8.2)

In sentence a and b, the student failed to recognize the possessive pronoun. Furthermore, sentence b is a much unstructured sentence. While in sentence c, the student failed to recognize the possessive pronoun, where as he/she should use personal pronoun despite of possessive pronoun. The sentences should be:

- a. Last week I and my parents went to Senggigi.
- b. We go there to walked and arrived to my grandmother's home.
- c. After that I and my friend rest together.

7. Errors in the Use of Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used to connect words. They connect not only words, but also phrases and clauses. The rules in using them are the same as their rules in Indonesian. Despite the same rules, the students still make errors in this area. The errors are as follows:

- a. *We took some picture together my parents. (S10.10)
- b. *During the journey we saw (S7.35)
- c. *Last Saturday, I my family go. (S1.24)

In sentence a and c, the student do not use conjunction at all, in which they should put a conjunction between (*together* and *my*) and (*I* and *my*) to correlate them. In sentence b, they fail to recognize where they have to put a "point" or a "coma". The sentences should be:

- a. We took some picture together with my parents.
- b. During the journey, we saw
- c. Last Saturday, I and my family went

Causes of Errors

1. Inter-lingual Transfer

In this research, inter-lingual transfer contributed the errors with percentage only 12% or 39 cases. It occurred at different levels

such as transfer of phonological, morphological, grammatical and lexical semantics elements of the native language into the target language. The students made errors because they were still influenced by their first language. Some of the students made errors in changing the verb. In English verb in past should be added by suffix -ed or -d and should be added by suffix -s or -es in present tense. Meanwhile, in Indonesia the verb did not change even in present or past tense. It made students confused and did errors repeatedly. Then, there was a student made errors in noun pluralization. It occurred due to the difference level of morphological. Because in Indonesia, to show noun pluralization it did not need adding suffix -s or -es. Besides, in English we should add it. Consider these examples!

- a. "**It's** was very tired but **we was** very happy", instead of "**It was** very tired but **we were** very happy" (S7.9)
- b. "We bought some **drink**", instead of "We bought some **drinks**" (S8.10)

In the first example, student thought that present and the past form of to be "*is*" was the same. The student assumed that the meaning was the same, so why it has to be changed. Moreover, student assumed that the use of to be *was* and *were* was the same for all personal pronoun. In the second example, the word *drink* should be added by the suffix -s. Before the word *drink* there was, also "*some*" which indicated the word *drink* should be in the plural form. The student said that she did not know how to show that the noun in plural or singular in English, because the student thought that in Indonesian language there was no rule about how to write the singular or plural noun. That is why the students' error was influenced by the first language (Indonesian language).

2. Intra-lingual Transfer

In this research, intra-lingual transfer was the most contributed errors with percentage of 88% or 290 cases. It was caused by the influence of one target language item upon another. Students frequently made errors because they had lacked of knowledge about English rules and structures. For example, learners attempt to use two markers at the

same time in one sentence since they have not mastered the language yet.

According to Richards (1971:19-22) intra-lingual transfer is divided into 4 categories i.e. overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized.

a) Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization had percentage of 57%. The students created a deviant structure on the basis of the other structure in the target language. They were lacked of knowledge about the elements of grammar and over generalized only what they have known. The errors could be seen in using preposition and punctuation. The student only knew about preposition and also punctuation, so they over generalized the preposition without knowing its function.

a. We arrived **to** Labuan Haji 9.30 am. The sentence should be: We arrived **at** Labuan Haji **at** 9.30 am. (S5.11)

b. I and my family arrived **in** Labuan Haji. The sentence should be: I and my family arrived **at** Labuan Haji. (S5.17)

In sentences a and b the students got errors because of overgeneralization. In the sentences above, all the students showed that they only knew the preposition without knowing its function. The students over generalized the entire preposition that they only knew. Students did not know about the rule or they could not apply what they have learned.

b) Ignorance of Rule Restriction

In this research, ignorance of rule restriction had percentage of 0%. There were no students which made a deviant structure in which grammatical rules are applied into inappropriate contexts in which other rules should be used instead.

c) Incomplete Application of Rule

In this research, incomplete rule application contributed the errors with percentage of 19%. Some of students got failure to fully develop a structure. They omitted some elements which were needed in the sentence. Some cases could be seen in omitting to be and/or preposition. The Examples could be seen below.

a. We arrived there 11.15 am. The sentence should be: We arrived there **at** 11.15 am. (S4.8)

b. We all very tired, but we were happy. The sentence should be: We all **were** very tired, but we were happy. (S11.12)

The students omitted *to be* and *preposition* which important in that sentence. They forgot to put the preposition and to be. It meant that the student got failure to fully develop a structure. The student made errors because of the incomplete application of rules.

d) False Concept Hypothesize

In this research, false concept hypothesized contributed the errors with percentage of 24%. The learner failed to comprehend fully distinction in the target language. The examples could be seen below.

a. It **is** was very tired but I was very happy.

The sentence should be: It is was very tired but I was very happy. (S7.6)

b. We **was** happy. The sentence should be: We **were** happy.

The first sentence, student stated that when he/she wrote a sentence, it should be followed by to be. They did not know whether *was* was the past form of to be *is*. Then in the second sentence, student used *to be* whenever they want because they only knew that *to be* could be used in every sentence without knowing the function. In this case, both of them failed to comprehend the fully distinction in the target language.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the justification above, it could be concluded that there are seven types of grammatical errors committed by the Tenth Grader Students of Madrasah Aliyah (MA) ThohirYasin LendangNangka in the School Year of 2015/2016 in writing recount text such as errors in using verb group, errors in subject and verb agreement, errors in pluralization, errors in the use of article, errors in the use of preposition, errors in the use of pronoun, and errors in the use of conjunction. In addition to, there are two possible causes of errors as follows: The inter-lingual transfer influenced the errors with percentage of 12% 39 cases and Intra-lingual

transfer influenced the errors with percentage of 88% or 290 cases. Then, intra-lingual transfer divided into 4 categories, those are overgeneralization (57%), ignorance of rule restriction (0%), incomplete application of rule (19%) and false concept hypothesized (24%).

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