

THE ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE ESSAY WRITING OF EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT PANCA BUDI MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed to analyse grammatical errors in the written essays that consists of simple present tense and simple past tense. The sample member in this research is the eighth-grade students who attend Panca Budi school Medan where simple random sampling method is adopted to generate the participants. Qualitative and descriptive research methods are used as the research design. Documentation method is used as the data collection method because the data are the descriptive essays written by 40 eighth-grade students. The research results revealed that all 4 types of errors were found in the students' essays such as omission, addition, misinformation, and mis ordering. Omission type of errors were known to be dominating with 92 times of occurrence, followed by addition errors with 70 times of occurrence, misinformation errors with 54 times of occurrence, and lastly, mis ordering errors with only 8 times of occurrence. Therefore, eighth-grade students of Panca Budi school Medan commit a significant large number of errors.

Keywords: *Grammatical Errors, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, Simple Past Tense, Simple Present Tense, Eighth-grade Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication in human life as social beings is surely very critical in order to interact with each other. One of the tools adapted by people to interact with their surroundings is language. In Indonesia, the official spoken and written language is called *Bahasa Indonesia*. However, throughout schools, students were taught other secondary languages as well, such as English and Mandarin Chinese because those two languages have the most widely spoken languages out of at approximately 7000 languages in the world (Kaufman, 2022).

As one of the most spoken languages in the world, Indonesian students have been taught English from nursery school level to university level, which shows how important English language is in Indonesia. In general, there are 3 forms of communication used by human beings, namely verbal communication, nonverbal communication, as well as written communication. However, in learning English, students are expected to master four skills namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Iswari et al., 2018:9). There are also official tests to measure someone proficiency in English, such as IELTS or TOEFL. Nevertheless, this research concerned with two types of essays, which are descriptive and narrative essays. In Indonesian's 2013 curriculum, there are actually three types of texts which students need to study, namely recount, descriptive, and narrative texts.

Furthermore, there are at least twelve types of tenses in English, such as simple present tense, present continuous tense, simple past tense, past continuous tense, present perfect tense, past perfect tense, present perfect continuous tense, past perfect continuous tense, simple future tense, future perfect continuous tense, future perfect tense, and future continuous tense (Gaspersz, 2019:4). However, this research will be focused on students' errors especially in writing essays using simple present tense and simple past tense because in reality, eighth grade students in Panca Budi Medan are facing difficulties in writing essays using simple present tense and simple past tense. As a result, there are errors found in their daily English assignments. This research is expected to help the students to improve their English writing skills, where students could write whole paragraph of essays using correct grammatical order.

Moreover, there are some previous studies similar to this research. Through her research titled, “*Analisis Kesalahan Gramatikal pada Penulisan Descriptive Text Bahasa Inggris Siswa Kelas VII-A dan VII-B SMP Negeri 2 Parbuluan,*” Sinaga (2021) using Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory pointed out that through descriptive texts written by the students of *SMP Negeri 2 Parbuluan*, there were four types of grammatical errors made by the research object, such as omission (equal to 68,31%), addition (equal to 9,6%), misinformation (equal to 8,45%), and misordering (equal to 2,11%). In general, it can be concluded from research conducted by Sinaga (2021) that among all types of errors, the majority of students frequently made omission type of error.

On the other hand, Walasari et al. (2021) through their research titled “The Analysis of Grammar Error in Writing Descriptive Text for Seventh Graders” which also relied on the theory of surface strategy taxonomy found out that most frequent error made by seventh graders is omission (37,28%), followed by addition (29,66%), misinformation (31,35%), and lastly misordering (1,69%).

The weaknesses of students in Indonesia especially eighth graders who attend Panca Budi school medan when it comes to write essays has been a major issue, which is also one of the reasons the writers want to conduct research titled, “*An Analysis of Grammatical Errors (Simple Present Tense and Simple Past Tense) in the Essay Writing of Eighth-Grade Students at Panca Budi Medan*”.

METHOD

1. Research Design

In this research, qualitative and descriptive research methods are conducted. Qualitative research is a procedure in research without using statistical or other quantitative procedures due to the purpose of qualitative analysis is to understand the context by directing it to a detailed and in-depth description of the portrait of the condition in a natural setting, about what happened according to what it is in the field of study (Sugiyono, 2019a). In addition, qualitative approach is adopted for this research due to the main purpose of the research itself is to describe grammatical errors conducted by eighth-grade students of Panca Budi Medan.

2. Setting and Participant

The research subject of this paper is the eighth-grade students who are currently attending Panca Budi Medan at Jl. Jend. Gatot Subroto Km. 4,5 Sei Sikambing , Medan. The eighth-grade students are divided into 4 classes, namely class 8-1 with 28 people, class 8-2 with 28 people, class 8-3 with 30 people, and finally class 8-4 with 27 people. Therefore, it can be concluded that the number of populations is 105 people.

3. Research Instrument

Research instruments are the tools or used by the researchers in collecting relevant data for their research papers so that their works would be easier, and the results would be better, in the sense that the research results are more accurate, complete and systematic (Arikunto, 2019). The instruments used in this research consist of students' written descriptive essays, where students would be given sets of images or pictures, and the students are ought to describe the images in sentences, where there is no minimum word, using simple present or/ and simple past tenses and documentation to shows the evidence of research conducted at Panca Budi Medan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Research Object

Characteristics of Sample Members

The respondents in this research are eight-grade students who attend Panca Budi School Medan. Furthermore, the respondents consist of 40 people, both men and women. Out of 40 papers which consist of some images, all sample members returned the papers with loaded descriptive texts which were written based on those images. As a result, the total retrieved data which is relevant to be used in this research is 40 respondents.

Overview of Research Object by Gender

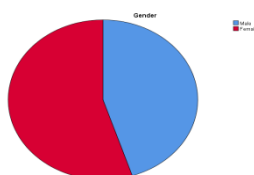
Table 1 below interprets the frequency table of male and female respondents. Out of 40 sample members, 18 of them are male students, while 22 of them are female students at Panca Budi school.

Table 1 Gender Classification Table

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Female	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

On the other hand, figure 1 represents the overall gender classification of the sample members in this research in pie chart. It can be seen that the majority of respondents are female (55%), while male respondents being the minority



(45%).

Figure 1 Pie Chart of Gender Classification

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Overview of Research Object by Class Group

Table 2 below showed that there are at least 10 students from each class picked through random sampling techniques so that every student in each class has the same chance of being picked as the sample member.

Table 2 Class Group Classification Table

		Class_Group			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	8-1	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
	8-2	10	25.0	25.0	50.0
	8-3	10	25.0	25.0	75.0
	8-4	10	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

On the other hand, figure 2 below interpret the overview of class group classification in pie chart.

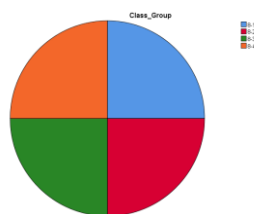


Figure 2 Pie Chart of Class Group Classification

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

2. Types of Students' Errors

This research is focused on finding errors made by students through implementing surface strategy taxonomy theory by Dulay et al. (1982), where the theory specifying general errors made by 2nd language speakers or learners in the surface strategy taxonomy which consists of omission, addition, misinformation, and mis ordering errors.

The analysis made by the writers found out that all four types of errors were found in the descriptive texts written by the 40 eight-grade students who are the targeted sample members. In addition, the frequency of the occurrence of each error can be seen in the table 3 below.

Table 3 Table of The Frequency of Errors

No.	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Omission	92	41%
2	Addition	70	31%
3	Misinformation	54	24%
4	Misordering	8	4%
Total		224	100%

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Omission

The main characteristic of omission errors is the absence of morphological aspects such as plural sign 's' or tenses markers such as 's' or 'ed' as well as certain elements sentences such as article and subject (Ayuningtias & Wenanda, 2013:22). Furthermore, non-English speaker like Indonesian students at Panca Budi school often conduct errors in content words such as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb as well as grammatical terms errors such as verb inflection, noun, the article 'a, an, the' or even verb auxiliaries 'is, am, are, will, can, must' and many more. In addition, the missing of preposition in a whole sentence is also considered as omission error such as the disappearances of preposition 'on, in, at, of, form'.

The research results regarding to the frequency and the percentages of omission type of error conducted by eight-grade students at Panca Budi school Medan can be seen in the table 4 below.

Table 4 Frequency Table of the Occurrence of Omission Errors

Grammatical Aspects	Frequency	%
Plural	22	23,91
Preposition	2	2,17
Article	20	21,74
Verb Auxiliaries	12	13,04
Subject	28	30,43
Possessive Adjectives	7	7,61
Direct Object	1	1,09
TOTAL	92	100,00

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

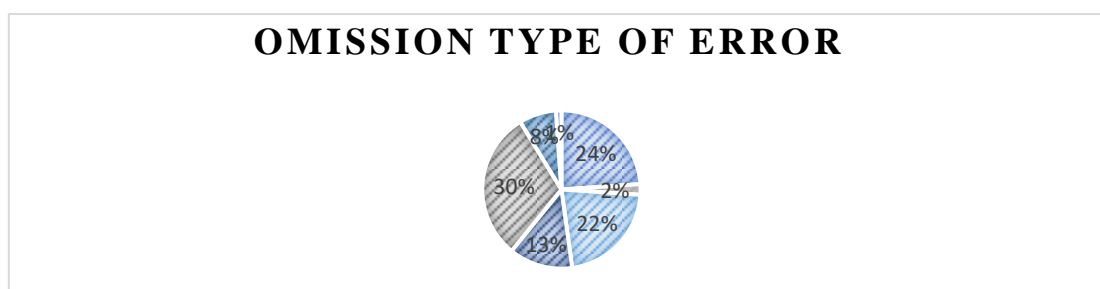


Figure 3 Omission Type of Errors Pie Chart

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Table 4 above shows that there are at approximately 22 plural errors in the texts written by 40 eight grade students who attend Panca Budi. The paragraphs below are quoted from one of the students' works in which plural errors were found.

- *I bought snack*
Explanation on error: not specified, could be plural, missing 's' as plural sign; should've been written as: I bought some snacks, or I bought snacks.
- *I took some picture last year*
Explanation on error: missing plural sign 's'; should've been written as: I took some pictures last year.

The errors in preposition according to table 3.4 above is the second least errors made by the students in comparison with other omission errors, with only 2 preposition errors found. The paragraphs below are quoted from one of the results of descriptive texts written by students in grade 8-4 Panca Budi.

- *We go there with a car*
Explanation on error: preposition error is occurred, this sentence should've been written as: "we go there **by** a car"
- *We went there on January last year*
Explanation on error: preposition error is occurred, the sentence should've been written as: "we went there **in** January last year."

The total number of article errors found in the essays of the eight graders is 20 missing articles. The paragraph below is quoted from the results of texts written by the targeted sample members at Panca Budi school Medan.

- *My family went to ___ mountain yesterday*
Explanation on error: missing article 'the'
- *I went to ___ Grand Canyon last year*
Explanation on error: missing article 'the'

The total number of verb auxiliary errors found in the essays of the eight graders is 12 missing verb auxiliaries. The paragraph below is quoted from one of the results of the texts written by the targeted sample members at Panca Budi school.

- *I ___ swimming*
Explanation on error: missing verb auxiliary 'am'

The number of missing subjects as omission errors according to table 3.4 is 28 errors. The paragraphs below are quoted from one of the results of descriptive texts written by students in grade 8-4 Panca Budi.

- *I play badminton before ___ take a bath*
Explanation on error: missing subject 'I'
- *I brush my teeth before ___ take a bath*
Explanation on error: missing subject 'I'

The total number of possessive adjective errors found in the essays of the eight graders is 7 missing possessive adjectives. The paragraph below is quoted from one of the results of the texts written by the targeted sample members at Panca Budi school Medan.

- *I brush ___ teeth every morning*
Explanation on error: missing possessive adj. 'my'

The total number of direct object errors found in the essays of the eight graders is one missing direct object. The paragraph below is quoted from one of the results of the texts written by the targeted sample members at Panca Budi school Medan.

- *My father drove ___*
Explanation on error: missing direct object 'car', as the student has mentioned about a specific car prior.

Addition

Addition type of error is somehow the contrary of omission type of error. Therefore, the addition errors are classified into three types, which are errors caused by double markings, regularization, and errors caused by simple additions (Walasari et al., 2021:40).

1. Double Markings Error

This type of error occurs when certain words/ items are not deleted which are compulsory in the construction of linguistics (Hendrawaty, 2018: 66).

The paragraphs below are quoted from eighth-grade students' works in which double marking errors were found:

- *He is takes a bath every morning*

Explanation on error: error in auxiliary be, the item "is" should be deleted in order to form a grammatically correct sentence. The correct format is: "*He takes a bath every morning.*"

2. Regularization

The error of regularization basically occurs when a student confuse singular word from plural word, for instance, writing 'rices' instead of 'rice' because rice is uncountable, thus has no plural form. In addition, regularization also happens in the verb production, the error in applying a regular to an irregular verb (Walasari et al., 2021:40).

The paragraphs below are quoted from eighth-grade students' works in which regularization-addition type of errors were found:

- *"My father drived his car very fast two weeks ago."*

Explanation on error: an error due to applying the rule of regular verbs to irregular verb rules, the past tense of "drive" is "drove"

3. Simple Addition Error

Generally, an addition error occurred which cannot be classified into double marking errors or regularization errors is classified into simple addition error. In addition, Hendrawaty (2018: 67) also pointed out that this type of error basically characterizes every addition error. Simple addition is the error which caused by the use of incorrect or useless item which appeared in well-formed sentences or speeches.

The paragraphs below are quoted from eighth-grade students' works in which simple addition type of errors were found:

- *"We went there last month ago."*

Explanation on error: the item 'ago' should be omitted.

Thus, the correct sentence is: *"We went there last month."*

The research results regarding to the frequency and the percentages of addition type of errors conducted by eight-grade students at Panca Budi school Medan can be seen in the table 5 below.

Table 5 Frequency Table of the Occurrence of Addition Type of Error

Grammatical Aspects		Frequency	%
Double Marking	Subject	0	0%
	Main Verb	0	0%
	Irregular/ regular past	3	4%
	Third person singular	7	10%
	Auxiliary be	2	3%
Regularization		12	
Simple Addition	Article	29	41%
	Preposition	11	16%
	Possessive maker	0	0%
	Relative pronoun	5	7%
	Plural-s	1	1%
TOTAL		70	100%

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Furthermore, figure 4 below interprets the proportions of each error below addition type of errors in pie chart.

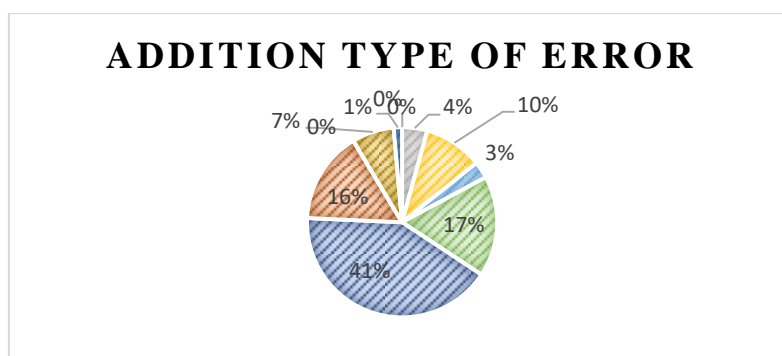


Figure 4 Addition Type of Errors Pie Chart

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Misinformation

The characteristic of misinformation type of error is the existence of an incorrect word/tense in morphological and structural aspects. Misinformation type of error is the contrary of the omission type of error. While in omission errors the writer does not use the elements that should be there, misinformation error occurs when the learner uses the elements that should be there but is used wrongly. Misinformation type of errors can be classified into three types namely Archi form, over regularizations, and alternating form (Ayuningtias & Wenanda, 2013: 25).

The results of the analysis of the eight grade students' essays show that the frequency of misinformation errors is quite low, which only happens 54 times in total. Nonetheless, the research results regarding to the frequency and the percentages of misinformation type of errors conducted by eight-grade students at Panca Budi *school* Medan can be seen in the table 6 below.

Table 6 Frequency Table of the Occurrence of Misinformation Type of Error

Grammatical Aspects		Frequency	%
Over regularizations	Past Verbs	2	4%
	Adjectives or adverbs	0	0%
Alternating forms	Surrogate subject	0	0%
	Third person singular	4	7%
	Subject-verb agreement	22	41%
	Auxiliary	2	4%
	Preposition	10	19%
	Pronoun	0	0%
	Article	0	0%
	Verb (gerund/ infinitive/ base form)	14	26%
TOTAL		54	100%

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

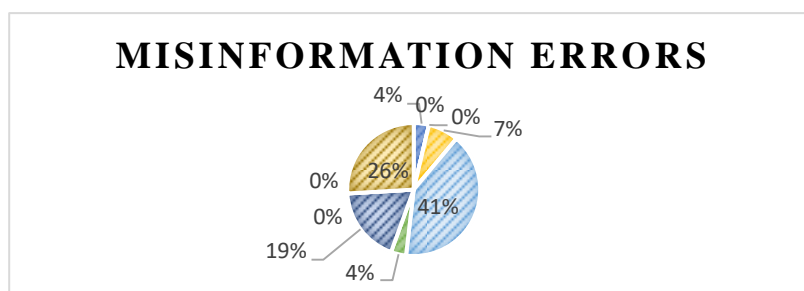


Figure 5 Misinformation Type of Errors Pie Chart

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Table 6 above shows that there are at 54 occurrences of misinformation type of error found in the eighth-grade students' essays. While figure 5 above interprets the proportion in percentages. The paragraphs below are quoted from eight grade students' essays, where errors regarding to misinformation types of error were found.

- *"My friends and I went to brastagi on last December."*
 Explanation on error: incorrect use of preposition 'on', it supposed to be: *"My friends and I went to brastagi in December last year."*
- *"I brushing my teeth before I take a bath every day."*
 Explanation on error: incorrect use of verb/ gerund, the sentence supposed to be written as simple present tense. It should have been written as: *"I brush my teeth before I take a bath every day."*
- *"I plays my phone after school every day."*
 Explanation on error: incorrect use of plural-singular form, the word 'I' indicates singular, where the correct form must be: *"I play my phone after school every day."*
- *"My uncle invited ours to go last year."*
 Explanation on error: incorrect use of third person singular, the correct form should be: *"My uncle invited us to go last year."*
- *"I swam and I jogged every morning."*
 Explanation on error: incorrect use of past verbs 'swam' and 'jogged', the sentence should have been written in simple present tense forms, it should be: *"I swim and I jog every morning."*

3.2.4 Mis ordering

Mis ordering errors often occur when students do word-to-word translation from their first language (Indonesian) to the target language which is English (Ayuningtias & Wenanda, 2013:27). Mis ordering is the errors in the arrangement of morphemes or groups of morphemes in sentences (Dulay et al. 1982 as cited by Ma'mun 2016: 104-105).

Table 7 Frequency Table of the Occurrence of Misordering Type of Error

Grammatical Aspects	Frequency	%
Misordering phrase	6	75%
Complex sentence	2	25%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

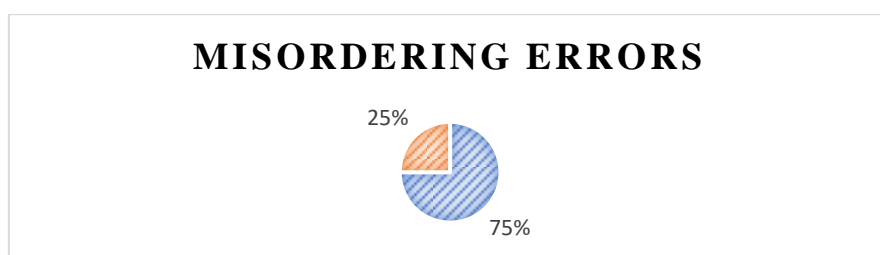


Figure 6 Mis ordering Type of Errors Pie Chart

Source: Arranged by the Writers (2023)

Through the research conducted by the author, this type of error is the least found errors in comparison with all errors bellow Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). Several reasons might account for this low frequency of students' errors in mis ordering. For instance, this research is limited to only assessing grammatical errors in essays which were written by the students using simple present tenses and simple past tenses, where mis ordering mistakes such as noun phrase might be found in the students essays due to their direct translate from *Bahasa Indonesia* to English. However, the writers believe that the given images or questions are too simple, and the students could not form more complex sentences, instead, many of them wrote the essays using only simple present tenses and simple past tenses.

The paragraphs below are quoted from eight grade students' essays, where errors regarding to mis ordering types of error were found.

- *I went there on 16th November 2022. That was when I went to Danau Toba with my family.*

Explanation on error: complex sentence due to a lot of repetition of several items such as: "went"; the item "Danau Toba" can be translated into "Lake Toba", or it could be written in italic as "*Danau Toba.*" It is recommended for the student to rewrite it as: "*I went to Lake Toba with my family on November 16, 2022.*"

- *We play some fun games, we rode a bicycle, we took my baby brother on a walk, and we watching a movie.*

Explanation on error: complex sentence, the constant repetition of item "we" in a sentence, not using parallel structure in the mentioned verbs. It is recommended for the student to rewrite it as: "*We played some fun games, rode bicycles, took my baby brother on a walk, and watched a movie.*"

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory by Dulay et al. (1982) was implemented with the purpose of finding the grammatical errors of eight graders who are currently attending Panca Budi school. Research results showed that there are four types of errors made by those eight graders while writing their assigned descriptive essays based on several images spread by the writers. Those four types of errors are omission, addition, misinformation, as well as mis ordering and the number of overall found errors is 224 errors. Most of students made omission type of errors, the frequency is 92 times or 41%, followed by addition type of errors with frequency equals to 70 or 31%. Misinformation type of errors were found in the students' essays a total of 54 times or equal to 24%. Lastly, mis ordering type of errors is the least found errors in comparison with the other errors below the theory, with only 8 times occurrences or equal to 4%.

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