# AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMAR ERRORS IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH OF GRADE X STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI MODEL TERPADU MADANI PALU

**Sri Wahyuningsi, Mochtar Marhum and Muh. Asri Hente**
*sriwahyuningsi99@yahoo.com*

**Abstrak**

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan kesalahan tata Bahasa yang umum dilakukan oleh siswa kelas X SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu dalam menulis paragraf deskriptif dan untuk mengetahui alasan mendasar dari kesalahan tata bahasa yang muncul di dalam tulisan siswa. Untuk mencapai tujuan penelitian, peneliti menerapkan penelitian descriptive. Sample dari penelitian ini merupakan X6 yang terdiri dari 30 siswa. Sample dipilih mengunakan tehnik purposive sampling. Dalam menganalisis kesalahan tata Bahasa, peneliti mengunakan tehnik paper and pencil method, in-depth interview, dan participant observation. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menemukan bahwa siswa umumnya melakukakan kesalahan tata bahasa didalam emapat jenis. Yaitu selection, omission, addition, dan ordering. Kesalahan selection merupakan kesalan tata bahasa yang paling umum yang siswa lakukan. Terdapat 47.5% dari jumlah keseluruhan kesalahan. Jenis keslahan ini disebakan oleh intralingual. Omission merupakan jenis kesalahan tata bahasa yang kedua yang umum dilakukan siswa. terdapat 32.6% dari total kesalahan. Jenis kesalahan ini disebabkan oleh interlingul dan intralingual. Addition merupakan jenis kesalahan tata bahasa yang ketiga yang umum siswa lakukan. Terdapat 13.7% dari jumlah keseluruhan kesalahan. Jenis kesalahan ini disebabkan oleh intralingual. Oredering merupakan jenis terakhir dari kesalahan tata bahasa yang umumnya dilakukan siswa. Dalam kesalahan jenis ini. terdapat 6.1% dari jumlah keseluruhan kesalahan. Interlingual merupakan sumber kesalahan dari jenis kesalahan ini.*

**Keywords:** *Kesalahan Tata Bahasa, Menulis, Paragraph Deskriptif.*

In Indonesia, students have learned English since they are in junior high school. When students learn English, they focus on mastering four language skills which are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Moreover, they must master those skills in order to make them being able to use English fluently.

Writing is the ability of arranging grammatical sentences into a paragraph or text which can help us to express our thought or idea. The previous statement is supported by Murcia (1991:223) "writing is the ability to express one's ideas in written form". Writing is one of the language skills which is important in our life since through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, and tell what we feel to others

without meeting them directly. In addition, writing is also a very important language skill for students because it can be useful for their academic task and their future profession. However, in foreign language students, writing is not as simple as "writing things down". It is one of the four language skills that is very complex and difficult to learn. The previous statement is supported by Richard (1990) who states that learning to write is the most difficult task for the EFL or ESL students. The problem is caused by several reasons. Firstly, the students are required to use correct grammar and to create coherent sentences and paragraphs. Secondly, the students are required to find out the idea of their writing. Therefore, the students should have the sharp awareness about

problems that arise around them that can be an idea of their writing. Besides finding the idea, the student or writer has to organize the idea into a good composition so the reader can receive the message that the writer wants to convey.

Grammar is one of the language components which has important role in writing since by mastering grammar, a writer can write properly. Therefore, the message that writer wants to deliver to the reader can be gotten by the reader. By seeing the importance of grammar in writing, we have to put it as primary aspect to be considered. However, the problem is that many EFL students produce grammar errors when they construct sentence and paragraph. The difference between the grammar of native language and target language is one of the factors which induces students making the errors. In addition, Richard in Heydari and Bagheiri (2012) state that the causes of errors are classified into two categories they are Interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual error is a kind of error sources which is caused by mother tongue interference. While an intralingual error is a kind of errors occurs during the learning process of the second or foreign language. It also occurs when the learners have not acquired the language completely. In addition, the errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself.

After conducting preliminary observation on November 22$^{nd}$, 2016, the researcher found that most of the students still made ungrammatical sentence in writing descriptive paragraph. For example: "Linda have hair long", based on the sentence, we can identify that selection of verb form and the word order are wrong, it should be "Linda has long hair''. The error in selecting the verb form and arranging the word order are assumed that those were caused by the way of students writing the sentence by using Bahasa's grammar. In Bahasa grammar, there is no difference between the forms of verb in

sentence which use third person singular as subject (she, he, it) and the forms of verb which do not use third person singular as subject. Moreover, in Bahasa, the position of noun always precedes adjective in sentence. Therefore, in constructing sentence students tended to put noun before adjective.

Besides the example above, there is another example of ungrammatical sentence that students produced in writing descriptive paragraph. The example was "She always drink a cup of milks in the morning" from the example previously, the researcher identified that errors occurred in verb and object. In verb, the students omitted third person singular marker (-s/-es) that should occur on it. Moreover, in the object, the students added plural marker (-s/-es) which should not occur in uncountable noun. By seeing the problem that students faced, the researcher assumed that most of grade X students made grammatical errors in writing descriptive paragraph. This reality was contrast to the basic competent of syllabus in curriculum 2013 that should be achieved by the grade X students. In basic competence, most of the students should be able to compose simple descriptive text or paragraph about person, historic site and tourist destination with correct generic structure and grammar.

From the phenomenon above, grammar errors become serious problems which need to be observed or studied deeply since by doing research; we could get some information related to common grammar errors made by the students and the reason underlining the errors. In order to observe or study the grammar problems above, the researcher used error analysis. Crystal (1987:122) defines "Error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying, and systematical interpreting the unacceptable form produced by someone in learning a foreign language, using any of the principle and procedure provided by linguistics". This statement is supported by Richard, Plott, and Platt (1996:127), "error analysis has been

conducted to identify strategies which learners use in language learning, to track the causes of learner's errors, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning or on how to prepare teaching materials". Based on the definitions stated by the experts, it can be concluded that error analysis is a systematic study used to investigate the errors that are made by foreign language students by identifying, classifying and interpreting the errors itself. Since it is the study of errors made by second and foreign language learners in learning or acquiring English. Moreover, it was conducted to obtain the information relating to the common grammar errors made by the students in language skill and the cause of it. Moreover, after seeing the grammar error that students made in previous explanation, the researcher classified the errors based on Corder's (1982) theory which were error of omission, error of addition, error of selection, and error of ordering. Error of omission is a deletion of essential item that students made in writing or constructing a sentence. Error of addition is a kind of grammar errors which occurs when the students add unnecessary item in the sentence. Error of selection is an error which occur when wrong item has been chosen in right place. And, Error of ordering is an error which occurs when elements have wrong arrangement in the sentence.

Due to the problem that has been described above, the researcher made the research question which *are What are common grammar errors made by the grade X students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu in writing descriptive paragraph?* And *What are the underlined reasons of the errors that are made by the grade X students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu in writing descriptive paragraph.* Therefore, the objective of this research are to find out the common grammar errors that the grade X students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu made in writing descriptive paragraph and to know the underlined reasons of the grammar errors which occurred in the students' writing. Moreover, this research only focused on the grammar errors that the grade X students made in writing descriptive paragraph. In analyzing the errors, the researcher used Corder's theory (1982) which classified grammar errors into four types. They were addition, omission, selection and ordering.

**METHODOLOGY**

In this research, the researcher attempted to analyze the students' grammar errors in writing descriptive paragraph by describing the common errors which were made by the students and the reasons of those errors. Relating to the objective of this research, the researcher used descriptive research design. Salkind (2010) states that descriptive research attempts to describe a group of people, phenomenon or event. Moreover, Cant, Strydom, and Jooste (2007) defines that descriptive research is a research design which provides answer to question as to the *who, what, when, where,* and *how* of a topic It also attempts to obtain a complete and accurate description of certain situation. Based on statement and the definition above, it could be concluded that descriptive research design is a kind of research designs which tries to describe the reality behind the phenomenon. After seeing the definition of descriptive research design, the researcher thought that descriptive research design was appropriate with the objectives of her research. In collecting the data, the researcher used three kinds of technique of data collection. They were, in-depth interview, and participant observation.

**FINDINGS**

After conducting the analysis, the researcher found that the students made grammar error in four types. They are

omission, addition, selection and ordering. the detail explanation can be seen as follows:
1. Omission

Omission is a type of grammar error which occurs when students omit necessary item in a sentence. In this research, the researcher found that there are 13 kinds of omission that the students made in writing descriptive paragraph.

Those are omission of copula be, auxiliary verb, past marker (-ed), preposition, third person singular marker (-s/-es), article, coordinating conjunction, suffix –ing in gerund, plural marker (-s/-es), pronoun and possessive adjective, progressive marker (-ing), verb, and possessive marker (-'s/-'). Moreover, the total errors of this type are 100.

**Table 1. Omission Error**

| No | Ill-Formed Sentences | Acceptable sentences |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Her name Wannabe Mayu. | Her name **is** Wannabe Mayu. |
| 2 | *Lionel Messi Playing for Barcelona | *Lionel Messi **is** playing for Barcelona |
| 3 | *Before he becoming the 1D member, he just a poor boy who **follow** the X-Factor audition | Before becoming the 1D member, he was just a poor boy who **followed** the X-Factor audition |
| 4 | *Now, I want to tell you about the characteristic Christina Perry | Now, I want to tell you about the characteristic **of** Christina Perry |
| 5 | *He **live** in England with his family | He **lives** in England with his family |
| 6 | *GD Is member of Bigbang | GD is **a** member of Bigbang |
| 7 | *They are Zayn, Nial, Harry , Liam | They were Zayn, Nial, Harry, **and** Liam |
| 8 | *He has a good accuracy on shoot and he is fast running | He has a good accuracy on **shooting** and he has fast running |
| 9 | *Many of his **film** was success because of his humor | Many of his **films** are successful because of his humor |
| 10 | *The team always support | The team always supports **him** |
| 11 | *He's **start** his solo with Sture Aoki and release a song named *Just hold on* | He's **starting** his solo with Sture Aoki and releasing a song named *Just hold on* |
| 12 | *Christina Perry is woman very beautiful and very good attitude | Christina Perry is a very beautiful woman and **has** very good attitude |
| 13 | **Lionel Messi** age  twenty eight | **Lionel Messi's** age is twenty eight |

2. Addition

Addition error is a type of grammar error which occurs when students add unnecessary element in sentence. in this type of error, the researcher found most of the grade X students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu made grammar error in

auxiliary verb, preposition, article, plural marker (-s/-es), pronoun, third person singular marker (-s/-es), verb, adjective, and past marker (-ed). The total errors of this type are 42. The results will be presented in  next page:

**Table 2. Addition Error**

| No | Ill-Formed Sentences | Acceptable Sentences |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | *She**'s** have beautiful smile, beautiful eyes, beautiful hair | She has beautiful smile, eyes, and hair |
| 2 | *He from **in** Spanyol | He is from Spain |
| 3 | *He's **a** the best Player in NBA on 2015 | He was the best player in NBA in 2015. |
| 4 | *CR7 Love **Childerns** and he likes to help people who are in contact with disaster | CR7 Loves **Children** and he likes to help people who are in contact with disaster |
| 5 | *Before **he** becoming the 1D member, he just a poor boy who follow the X-Factor audition | Before becoming the 1D member, he was just a poor boy who followed the X-Factor audition |
| 6 | *That is why I really **likes** him | I really **like** him |
| 7 | Rossi have hair curly and **have** big nose | Rossi has curly hair and big nose |
| 8 | *She's have beautiful smile, **beautiful** eyes, beautiful hair | She has beautiful smile, eyes, and hair |
| 9 | *Between the 7 members, there's the one that I **loved** | Among the 7 members, there is the one that I **love** |

3. Selection

Selection is a type of grammar errors which occurs when students select the wrong item in the sentence. In this type of error, the researcher found that there are 11 kinds of error that students made in writing descriptive paragraph. They are selection error of verb form, noun, pronoun, adjective, preposition, auxiliary verb, numeral, adverb, determiner, indefinite article, and conjunction. The total errors of this type are 146.

**Table 3. Selection Error**

| No | Ill-Formed Sentences | Acceptable Sentences |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | *She **was** about 12 years old | She **is** about 12 years old |
| 2 | *My favorite **actress** is Jacky Chan | My favorite **actor** is Jacky Chan |
| 3 | ***He** Name Is Valentine Rossi | **His** name is Valentine Rossi |
| 4 | *Her is **high** | She is **tall** |
| 5 | *He**'s** starting his carrier **on** 1973 | He started his carrier **in** 1973 |
| 6 | *Usually she **was** call Suzy from Miss A | Usually, she **is** called Suzy from Miss A |
| 7 | *He was became a KSAD Indonesia for about **4**th years | He became a KSAD Indonesia for about **4** years |
| 8 | ***Know,** he rider number one in moto GP 2017 | **Now,** he is number one rider in moto GP 2017 |
| 9 | *He competein and Valentino Rossi, Jorge Lorenzo and many **another** riders | He competes with Valenteno Rossi and Jorge Lorenzo many **other** riders |
| 10 | *On his action, he play **a** impossible action | On his action, he plays **an** impossible action |
| 11 | *I think he's a great man **cause** his acting | I think he is a great man **because** his acting is |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | was very great | very great |

4. Ordering

Error of ordering is also a type of grammar error which occurs when the students arrange words with wrong sequence in sentence. There are two kinds of ordering error that the students made in writing descriptive paragraph. They are ordering error of phrase and adverb order. The total errors of this type are 19

**Table 4. Ordering Error**

| No | Ill-Formed Sentences | Acceptable sentences |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Know, he **rider number one** in moto GP 2017 | Now, he is **number one rider** in moto GP 2017 |
| 2 | ***Also** he's very famous around the world | He's **also** very famous around the world |

Besides finding the common errors that students produced in writing descriptive paragraph, the researcher also found the reasons of the errors that the students made in writing descriptive paragraph through interview and observation. The result of observation shows two findings. Firstly, in teaching descriptive paragraph, the teacher only taught the students how to produce descriptive paragraph by using WH question without explaining the language feature of descriptive paragraph since the teaching method that the teacher used is not focused on grammar but it focused on language use. Secondly, in teaching learning process, some of students did not pay attention to teacher explanation about descriptive paragraph. besides the result of observation, interview also provides several results. Firstly, the frequency of students learning English is lower than language skill. Secondly, the students tend to transfer their native language (Bahasa) grammar to their target language (English) when they construct sentence. Thirdly, in teaching grammar, the teacher never teaches the students directly. She always teaches the students through the grammar errors that students produced in teaching learning process.

**DISCUSSION**

After conducting the analysis, the researcher found that the grade X students of SMA Negeri Model Terapadu Madani Palu committed error into four types. They are selection, omission, addition and ordering. based on the result of pen and pencil and paper method, selection error is the most commonly grammar error which is produced by the students. It takes 47.5% of the total errors. In selection error, the students did several kinds of errors. Firstly. The students did selection error in verb form. In this kind of error, the students did not know how to differentiate the verb form that is used in present tense and the verb form that is used in past tense since they used the past form of verb (V2) on present tense and the basic form of verb (V1) on past tense. Secondly, the students also did selection error in pronoun. They used subject pronoun as possessive adjective and object pronoun as subject in sentence. Thirdly, the students also selected wrong noun, adjective and adverb in writing, so the sentences that they constructed become meaningless. Fourthly, the students also produce selection error in preposition. They do not know the prepositions that are used for date and city. Fifthly, the students made selection error in auxiliary verb. In this kinds of error, the students used *auxiliary verb be* in past form for the present tense sentence and they used auxiliary verb be in negative sentence. Sixthly, the students produced selection error in numeral, they used ordinal number for the sentence that require cardinal number. Moreover, the

students also did selection error in determiner, indefinite article, adjective and conjunction. All of the errors which occurred in this type are caused by the lack of knowledge that students had about English grammar and language feature of descriptive paragraph (intralingual). This cause of error appeared since the students rarely learn English grammar and they did not learn the language feature of descriptive paragraph in detail. It can be proved based the result of participant observation. in the observation, the researcher found that the teacher only taught the students how to produce descriptive paragraph by using WH questions without teaching the language feature of descriptive paragraph since the teaching method that teacher used is not focused on grammar, but it focuses on language use. Moreover, based on the result of the interview which is given to the students, the researcher found that the frequency of the students in learning English grammar is lower than language skill since the curriculum which is used in SMA Negri Model Terpadu Madani Palu is curriculum 2013. In this curriculum, the improvement of students' language skill is more focused rather than language component.

The second type of grammar error that students commonly produced in writing descriptive paragraph fall into omission. It takes 32.6% of the total errors. In this type of error, there are 13 kinds of errors. First is omission error of copula *be*. This error occurred since the students omitted copula be which has function as main verb in sentence. Therefore, the sentences cannot be categorized as sentence. Second is omission of auxiliary verb. In this kind of error, the students did not add auxiliary verb in the sentences which required auxiliary verb such as passive sentences, negative sentences and present progressive tense. Third is omission error of past marker (ed/-d). In writing descriptive paragraph the students also used past tense. however, in writing the sentences which used past tense, the students omitted suffix –ed which mark the verb as past tense. Fourth is omission error of preposition. In preposition error, the student did not add preposition which give additional information to the noun and pronoun in the sentences. Therefore, the sentence become meaningless. Fifth is omission error in article. In this type of error, the students did not add article to noun which requires definite and indefinite article. Sixth is omission error in third person singular marker. This error, the students did not know the form of verb which use third person singular as subject. Therefore, they did not add suffix –s or –es to the verb. Besides those kinds of error, the students also made omission error in coordinating conjunction, suffix-ing in gerund, pronoun and possessive adjective, plural marker, progressive marker, possessive marker (-'s/-') and verb in wring descriptive paragraph. All of the errors which are explained previously are caused by two factor. First is intralingual, it happened since the students transferred their native language (Bahasa) grammar to target language (English. In English grammar there are some rules or terms that are not owned by Bahasa Grammar such as adding copula be for the sentence which does not use *other verb* as main verb in sentence, adding past marker to the regular verb in past tense, adding third person singular marker (-s/-es) to the verb which uses third person singular as subject, adding plural marker (-s) to the plural noun, adding progressive marker (-ing) to the verb in progressive tense, adding possessive marker (-s') to the proper noun which shows possession of something, pronoun and possessive adjective, and article. Therefore, when students make the sentence in English which require those items, they tend to omit them. The same case also happened to the grade X students of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, it can be proved based on the result of interview. When the researcher asked the students to transfer

sentence *Mia pintar* to English, they transfer it into *Mia Smart*. Based on the sentence, we can see that the students omit copula be since in Bahasa there is no copula be which is used as main verb in sentence. The second factor which cause the omission error that students produced in writing descriptive paragraph is trilingual. omission error of preposition, coordinating conjunction, and verb are caused by this factor. This cause of error arose since the students rarely learn English grammar and they have lack of motivation in learning English. therefore, when the teacher explained the material to the students, the students did not fully receive the material since they did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation. This case proved by the result of observation which shown that some of students did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation in teaching learning process.

Third type of grammar error that students made in writing descriptive paragraph fall into addition error. In this type of error, there are 13.7% of the total error. In addition, error, the students added unnecessary element on the sentence such as auxiliary verb and verb. Therefore, the sentences have double auxiliary verb and verb. Moreover, the students also added preposition, article, plural marker, third person singular marker, past marker, adjective, and pronoun in the sentences which do not need those word. This type of errors comes from intralingual. In other word, the students have lack of knowledge about English grammar. The lack of knowledge that students have is caused by lack of input that students received about English grammar since they rarely lean English grammar and practice writing. This situation can be proved by the result of interview which given by the teacher. The teacher informed that she never teaches grammar to the students directly, she taught the students through the grammar errors that

students produced in teaching learning process.

The last type of error that commonly made by the students in writing descriptive paragraph is error of ordering. in this type of error, it only takes 6.1% of total error. There are two kinds of errors in this type. they are error of ordering of phrase and error of adverb order. In ordering phrase, the students made some errors in putting the position of adjective which modifies the noun in sentences. They tended to put the adjective after the noun modified while in adverb order, the students did not know the position of certain adverb such as *also* which is commonly used before the verb and *too* is used at the end of the sentences. This error occurred since the students transfer the way of arranging the sentence in their native language to the target language (interlingual). Therefore, the order of word or element in sentence becomes error. Based on the result of interview which is given to the teacher. The teacher said that the students tend to transferring their native language grammar to target language when they construct sentence.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing and discussing the data in previous chapter, finally the researcher made conclusion that the tenth grade students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu commonly made grammar error in four types. They are selection, omission, addition and ordering error. Selection error is the most commonly grammar error that students made in writing descriptive paragraph. It takes 47.5% of total error. All of the errors which occurred in this type were caused by the lack of knowledge that students had about English grammar and language feature of descriptive paragraph (intralingual). Omission is second type of grammar error that commonly made by the students in writing descriptive paragraph. It takes 32.6% of the total errors.

The errors which occurred in this type are caused by two factor which are interlingual and intralingual. Addition is third type of grammar error that commonly made by grade X students in writing descriptive paragraph. there are 13.7% of the total error in this type. the errors that students made in this type come from intralingual. Ordering is the last type of grammar error that commonly made by the students in writing descriptive paragraph. in this type of error, there are 6.1% of total errors. Interlingual is the source error of this type of grammar error.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher would like to offer some suggestion in order to minimize the grammar error that students made in writing descriptive paragraph and improve the quality of English teaching. The suggestions are aimed to teacher and other researcher. Firstly, the suggestions are given to the teacher, the teacher should use interesting technique or method in teaching writing descriptive paragraph, so the students are more motivated to learn descriptive paragraph. The teacher also should give detail explanation about the language feature of descriptive paragraph and give many exercises in writing descriptive paragraph. Moreover, teacher should do the error analysis before doing teaching process in order to know the students' weaknesses in writing descriptive paragraph. Therefore, the teacher can minimize the error that the students produced in writing descriptive paragraph. Secondly, the suggestions are given to the other researcher. since this research is only focused on analyzing the common grammar error in writing descriptive paragraph and the cause of error, they might conduct the error analysis in another language skill.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## REFERENCES

Cant, C.C.,Strydom, and Jooste, C.J. 2007. *Marketing Management* . (5th Edition) Cape town, South Africa: Juta & Co

Corder, S.P. 1982. *Error Analysis and Intralanguage.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Crystal, D. 1987. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heydari, P. and Bagheri, M.S. 2012. *Error Analysis: Source of L2 Learners' Error.* [Online]. Retrieved: http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol02/08/06.pdf. [January 19th,2017]

Murcia, M.C. 1991. Teaching English as Second or foreign Language. Baston: Hinle Publisher

Richard, J.C. 1990. *Language Teaching matrix.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Richard, J.C, PLott J. Platt, H. 1996. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.* London: Longman.

Salkind, N.J. 2010 *Encyclopedia of Research Design.* California: SAGE Publication Inc.