

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN THE
STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AMONG THE SEVENTH GRADE OF SMP**

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at finding and analyzing errors in the use of simple present tense in descriptive texts written by seventh graders of SMP Swasta Pangeran Antasari Medan. The approach followed in this research was a qualitative method involving description and analysis. This data was collected through the student using tests that had been pre-prepared for them and interviews that were structured. In view of this, it is worth noting that there are only two main types of errors: intralingual errors and interlingual errors. These hindrances are caused by interference from their native language, Bahasa Indonesia thus making them disarrange sentences wrongly or even create new words. Meanwhile, intra-lingual errors, such as omission and addition, arise due to students' lack of understanding of English grammar rules. From the total 90 errors identified, omission errors were the most dominant with a percentage of 42.2%, followed by mis-formation (25.5%), mis-ordering (16.6%), and addition (15.5%). This study underscores the importance of more focused and interactive grammar teaching, as well as more frequent writing practice with constructive feedback to reduce errors in Simple Present Tense usage. The results are anticipated to enhance to standard of English language instruction in educational institutions, namely in the area of composing descriptive texts.

Keywords: *Simple present tense, Error Analysis, Descriptive text, Error Grammar*

INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary medium of communication worldwide. It is undeniable that English was the first international language that was extensively used until recently. Richards & Rodger (1986) state that English is widely utilized by individuals from different nations as a medium of communication during significant international gatherings. Mastery of English is critical because practically all sources of worldwide information in various facets of life use this language. This language is used in many different contexts. English is one of the subjects that are required to be taught in junior high school. Students who wish to study English effectively must master four crucial skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Writing is typically the final language skill discussed in any work, but it is not always the most important. The reason behind this is that writing is a fundamental skill that has the same importance as speaking, listening, and reading. According to Hellen and Al-Hafizh (2014), writing is a crucial skill that students must acquire to effectively communicate information, thoughts, and ideas with readers. Writing plays an important function in communication by facilitating the exchange and expression of ideas in written form among students. Descriptive text type is important to students, especially those who attend junior high school.

A descriptive text is a kind of writing that explains a detailed description or assessment of a particular object or subject. A descriptive text provides detailed information on a person, place, emotion, circumstance, and other related elements. Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue (2007, page 61). Descriptive writing differs from other texts in that it contains characters such as identification and description. Descriptive text differs from other text, where descriptive text has characters consisting of identification and description. Although identification stands for an introduction subject or object that will be described, the description is just a summary of who, and what concerning the topic. Students should also be conversant with the language structure especially, with regard to grammar when they try to write a descriptive paragraph.

Grammar proficiency is indispensable for students who are studying English. This is the cornerstone of effective communication, as it enables more effective interactions (Suryanto, 2018). The ability to precisely organize words is enhanced by students' comprehension of grammar, which in turn enhances their writing and speaking skills. The curriculum in Indonesia mandates the acquisition of grammar; nevertheless, numerous pupils continue to encounter difficulties in its practical application. Many students neglect to correctly employ grammatical rules in their English language acquisition, despite their significance. For individuals who aspire to excel in English, a comprehensive understanding of grammar is indispensable, as it enables them to construct sentences that are grammatically correct (Willis, 2021). Grammar is the field of study that examines all potential distinctions in meaning within sentences. Proficient knowledge of grammar enables individuals to effectively and logically convey their thoughts and ideas in the English language. Students are required to acquire a variety of language structures, such as various verb tenses, with a particular emphasis on the simple present tense, which is frequently employed in descriptive texts.

In common speech, the most common tense is the simple present tense, which is used to describe commonplace things, routine occurrences, or universal facts. It is vital for building descriptive works, as it acts as the typical tense for such compositions (Leo, 2021). However, students in Indonesia often make errors when creating descriptive texts. As a result, error analysis is a beneficial tool for studying and comprehending the errors that students make when learning a foreign language, as well as determining the factors that contribute to these errors.

The researchers were inspired by the research Prakoso, H. (2021) in his research entitled "An Error Analysis of Using Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text Written by The Eighth Grade Students of MTs Negeri Kota Sorong" used qualitative research methods to analyze the errors made by students in the use of simple present tense. The main findings of this study show that students often make mistakes in verb formation and the use of auxiliary words. This research highlights that students' understanding of tense rules is still low, which causes them to often

make mistakes in applying simple present tense in descriptive text writing. These errors include the use of inappropriate verbs and the use of inappropriate auxiliaries, which have an impact on the quality of students' writing. This study suggests the need for more effective teaching methods to improve students' understanding of tense usage in English.

Based on the explanation above, the purpose of the researchers is to investigate the mistakes in using simple present tense that occur in students' descriptive text written by seventh-grade students from Pangeran Antasari High Junior School in Medan.

The research problems are as follows:

1. What kinds of errors do seventh-grade students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan in using Simple Present Tense in the descriptive text?
2. What are the most common errors made by seventh-grade students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan when using the Simple Present Tense?
3. What are the main reasons for the errors in the use of Simple Present Tense by seventh-grade students at SMP Pangeran Antasari Medan in descriptive text?

The research aims to analyze the errors in using Simple Present Tense in descriptive texts made by seventh-grade students at Pangeran Antasari High Junior School in Medan. Both inter-lingual (including interference from the mother tongue) and intra-lingual (involving mistakes within the target language itself) sources of error are investigated in the study.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study analyzes the errors in the use of Simple Present Tense in descriptive writing of seventh-grade students at Pangeran Antasari Private Junior High School, Medan. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach as described by Doyle, et al., (2020). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to describe the phenomenon of Simple Present Tense usage errors in students' descriptive writing in detail and contextually.

The population in this study consisted of 90 grade VII students at Pangeran Antasari Private Junior High School in Medan, which were divided into three classes: grade VII-1 with 30 students, grade VII-2 with 30 students, and grade VII-3 with 30 students. The sample selection was purposive, which is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher selects respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. In this study, the sample selected was class VII-1, with a total of 30 students. The selection was made by considering the variation of students' writing ability to get a more comprehensive picture of the errors in using Simple Present Tense in descriptive writing. The purposive sampling technique allows researchers to focus on the most relevant subjects and provide more in-depth data. According to Thomas (2022), purposive sampling is an effective technique for studies where researchers want to collect information from individuals who have specialized knowledge or experience. Thus, the use of this technique in the study helps researchers analyze in more depth the types of errors made by students as well as the factors that influence them.

This study used instruments in the form of written tests and structured interviews. The written test asked students to write a descriptive text with the title "My Friend and Hobby" within 45 minutes, with a maximum limit of 300 words, which aims to evaluate their ability to use Simple Present Tense. The results of this test were analyzed to identify and classify the errors that occurred. In addition, structured interviews were conducted with 10 students who had the highest number of errors in the written test. The questions for the interview were designed systematically to investigate the elements that contribute to errors the utilization of Simple Present Tense. The purpose of recording these interviews was to facilitate a more comprehensive analysis to acquire a profound comprehension of the challenges students have while using English grammar accurately.

The following procedures were used to collect data for this study:

1. First, Students are given 45 minutes to write a descriptive text with the title "My Friend and Hobby". The results of the writing were then collected for analysis.

2. Finally, Interviews were conducted immediately after the written test to ensure students' memories of the writing process were fresh. The interviews were recorded to facilitate further analysis.

The data was analyzed by researchers in five distinct stages, as outlined below:

1. Error Identification

The researcher studied the students' work and underlined the errors she discovered. The mistakes were grouped according to the surface strategy taxonomy: omission, addition, miss-formation, and miss-ordering.

2. Classification of Errors

The errors that have been identified are then grouped by type. Each type of error is explained with a concrete example from the student's writing.

3. Frequency and Percentage Calculation

To determine which form of error is the most prevalent, the frequency and percentage of every type of error were calculated. The formula used was:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P: percentage.

F: frequency of occurrence of errors.

N: the total number of errors.

4. Explanation of errors

The researcher conducted an analysis of mistake causation by using interviews with students and pertinent theoretical frameworks. The sources of errors were classified as inter-lingual, which refers to errors caused by interference from the mother tongue, and intra-lingual, which refers to errors in the usage of the target language itself.

5. Error evaluation

The errors that have been identified and explained are then evaluated to provide constructive feedback to the students. This evaluation includes providing corrections and explaining the correct grammar rules.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

An error categorization system that is based on the surface strategy According to Londoño Vásquez (2008), taxonomy is effective in highlighting how the surface structure is transformed. Students have the ability to miss-form (selection) or miss-order them (miss-ordering), as well as omit necessary elements, which is referred to as "omission," and add necessary items, which is known as "addition."

1. Omission

The error of omission occurs when one thing is missing from a well-formed speech.

2. Addition

Addition errors occur when one item is included in a well-formed utterance but should not be there.

3. Miss formation

Miss-formation errors occur when a morpheme or linguistic structure is used incorrectly.

4. Miss ordering

A miss-ordering error occurs when a set of morphemes is incorrectly placed in an utterance.

Error analysis is about pinpointing where learners make mistakes. According S. P Corder as cited in (Puspita, 2019). Interlingual and intralingual are two types of errors that often occur in second language learning. Interlingual errors arise when learners apply rules or structures from their native language into the target language, such as the use of "I have no money" by native Indonesian speakers who apply Indonesian rules directly to English. Intralingual errors, on the other hand, occur within the target language itself and are usually caused by overgeneralization or rudimentary understanding of the rules of the language, such as the use of "She went to the market" instead of "She went to the market." There are four categories of these errors;

1. Over Generalization

Over-generalization occurs when learners employ too many common structures in the target language. This happens when the student has minimal familiarity with the language.

2. Ignore of rule limitations

In this context, the learner does not acknowledge the limitations of the current structure. This type of error happens when a rule is incorrectly applied to a context where it doesn't belong.

3. Incomplete application of rules

Incomplete application of rules results in errors caused by structural differences from the rules required to produce valid statements. As a result, students struggle to follow the basic guidelines and construct appropriate sentences.

4. False concept hypothesized

In this situation, the errors stem from an incorrect understanding of the differences in the target language.

A study conducted with seventh-grade students, at Pangeran Antasari Junior High School revealed that many students struggle with using the Simple Present Tense in writing. These mistakes can be categorized based on their nature and origin.

Interlinguistic errors stem from the influence of a student's language, which in this case was Indonesian. The majority of errors occurred when students applied the rules of their language leading to issues and occasional inaccuracies in translations from L1, to L2. Data illustrating errors resulting from linguistic factors are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Source of inter-lingual

Students	Error Identification	Correct Sentences	Type of Error	Error Explanation
Student 2	<i>My friend has a cat black</i>	<i>My friend has a black cat</i>	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learners'

				mother tongue
Student 4	<i>He does the homework best of everyone</i>	<i>He does the homework better than everyone</i>	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
	<i>She enjoys reading book interesting</i>	<i>She enjoys reading interesting book</i>	Miss ordering	The grammatical of interference of learner's mother tongue
Student 7	He now is 13 years old	He is now 13 years old	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 8	He birthday falls on	His birth is on	Miss formation	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 10	But she really this likes to paint	But she really likes to paint	Addition	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 11	He plays piano with skill amazing	He plays the piano with amazing skill	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue

	There are five people only his family	There are only five people in his family	Miss ordering	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 13	He often eats food delicious	He often eats delicious food	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 14	My friend and I often play at the field	My friend and I often play in the field	Miss ordering	The lexical grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 16	She enjoys swim in the morning	She enjoys swimming in the morning	Miss ordering	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 17	My friend has a dog brown	My friend has a brown dog	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of learner's mother tongue
Students 20	He has hair black	He has black hair	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of learner's mother tongue
	She does play the guitar beautifully	She plays the guitar beautifully	Addition	The grammatical interference of the learner's

				mother tongue
Student 23	The game exciting is fun	The exciting game is fun	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 27	She likes to read book interesting	She likes to read interesting books	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
	His favorite color is blue dark	His favorite color is dark blue	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 29	She has a voice beautiful	She has a beautiful voice	Miss ordering	The lexical interference of the learner's mother tongue
	My friend love to play games	My friend loves to play games	Miss formation	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue
Student 30	He always study hard	He always studies hard	Miss formation	The grammatical interference of the learner's mother tongue

Intra-lingual errors may occur due to students' limited comprehension of L2 rules, resulting in poor sentence formation. Table 2 presents the source of intra-lingual errors.

Table 2. Source of intra-lingual

student	Error identification	Correct sentence	Type of error	Error Explanation
Student 1	<i>He like fruit</i>	<i>He likes fruit</i>	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He very tall	He is very tall	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	<i>He is always very happy</i>	<i>He is always happy</i>	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	<i>He haves brother</i>	<i>He has brother</i>	Miss-formation	Ignore of rule restrictions
Student 2	He good play football	He is good playing football	omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 3	She always ready	She is always ready	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She has a very long hair	She has long hair	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	She is very kind and generous to everyone	She is kind to everyone	Addition	False concept hypothesized
Student 4	She do her homework	She does her homework	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
	<i>She maked a cake</i>	<i>She makes a cake</i>	Miss-formation	Over-generalization
Student 5	She love to read books	She loves to read books	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She is very much beautiful	She is very beautiful	Addition	False concept hypothesized
Student 6	She goed to the market	She goes to the market	Miss-formation	Over-generalization
	She haves a passion for playing piano	She has a passion for playing piano	Miss-formation	Ignore of rule restrictions

Student 7	She very cheerful	She is very cheerful	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She never tired	She is never tired	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She always happy	She is always happy	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She drink coffee every morning	She drinks coffee every morning	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 8	He is very much tall for his age	He is tall for his age	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	The park is very big and spacious	The park is big	Addition	False concept hypothesized
Student 9	She like chocolate	She likes chocolate	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She good at math	She is good at math	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 10	She my favorite friend	She is my favorite friend	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 11	He good at playing guitar	He is good at playing guitar	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He very strong	He is very strong	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He haves a lot of friends because he is very friendly	He has a lot of friends because he is friendly	Miss-formation	Ignore of rule restrictions
Student 12	The flower beautiful	The flower is beautiful	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The flowers bloom every spring	The flowers bloom every spring	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	The tree is very tall and high	The tree is tall	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	The sky is blue in color	The sky is blue	Addition	False concept hypothesized

	The flowers bloom every spring	The flowers blooms every spring	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
	The cat sleeps on the couch	The cat sleep on the couch	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 13	The cat very cute	The cat is very cute	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	They very happy	They are very happy	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The dog barks loudly	The dog is barking loudly	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 14	The cake is very delicious and tasty	The cake is delicious	Addition	False concept hypothesized
Student 15	He very kind	He is very kind	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He a doctor	He is a doctor	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He very careful	He is very careful	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He usually busy	He is usually busy	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 17	The car fast	The car is fast	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The city big	The city is big	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He drive a car	He drives a car	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
	He has a lot of friendses	He has a lot of friends	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 18	She live with her parents	She lives with her parents	Omission	Incomplete application rule

	She like chocolate	She likes chocolate	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 19	The park very clean	The park is very clean	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The baby cries loudly	The baby cry loudly	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 20	He always late	He is always late	omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 21	He taked the bus	He takes the bus	Miss-formation	Over-generalization
Student 22	She very smart	She is very smart	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She is the most beautiful girl and pretty in the class	She is the most beautiful girl in the class	Addition	False concept hypothesized
Student 23	He play soccer every weekend	He plays soccer every weekend	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He always worried	He is always worried	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He always wins the game	He always win the game	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
	He run very fast	He runs very fast	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 24	The sun bright	The sun is bright	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The sky clear	The sky is clear	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 25	She dance beautifully	She dances beautifully	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She very fast	She is very fast	Omission	Incomplete application rule

	She always helps me	She is always helps me	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	He likes to play football, and also soccer	He likes to play football	Addition	False concept hypothesized
	She haves long hair	She has long hair	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule
Student 26	He haves a motorcycle	He has a motorcycle	Miss-formation	Ignore of rule restrictions
Student 27	He writed a letter	He writes a letter	Miss-formation	Over-generalization
Student 28	She always hungry	She is always hungry	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	The food delicious	The food is delicious	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She often sad	She is often sad	Omission	Incomplete application rule
Student 30	The book interesting	The book is interesting	Omission	Incomplete application rule
	She teaches English	She teach English	Miss-formation	Incomplete application rule

The analysis of errors in the use of Simple Present Tense in the descriptive writing of grade VII students at Pangeran Antasari Private Junior High School shows some recurring patterns of errors. These errors are categorized based on surface strategies that include omission, addition, miss-formation, and miss-ordering. Omission errors occur when a necessary element in the sentence is missing, as data shown in Table 2 in the sentence "*He like fruit*" which should be "*He likes fruit.*" An addition error occurs when an unnecessary element is added, as in the sentence "*He is always very happy*" which should be "*He is always happy.*" Miss-formation errors occur when morphemes or linguistic structures are used incorrectly, such as "*He haves brother*" which should be "." Miss-ordering errors occur when morphemes or

words are placed incorrectly, as data shown in Table 1 the sentence "*My friend has a cat black*" which should be "*My friend has a black cat.*"

Interlingual errors, caused by the influence of the students' mother tongue, were dominant in the data. These errors reflect lexical and grammatical interference from Indonesian, as data shown in Table 1 the sentence "*He does the homework best of everyone*" which should be "*He does the homework better than everyone.*" These errors often occur because Indonesian sentence structures are translated directly into English without proper adjustment. In addition, miss-ordering errors such as "*She enjoys reading books interesting*" to "*She enjoys reading interesting books*" also reflect the influence of Indonesian sentence structure which is different from English. This phenomenon shows that students are still heavily influenced by their mother tongue's syntax patterns when writing in English.

Intralingual errors that arise from a limited understanding of English rules are also widespread. As data shown in the table 2 the sentence "*He like fruit*" which should be "*He likes fruit*" show the incomplete application of the rules. Students often do not add 's' to verbs for third person singular subjects. In addition, over-generalization errors such as "*She maked a cake*" which should be "*She makes a cake*" indicate that students over-apply morphological rules without paying attention to exceptions. False concept hypothesized errors were also found, such as in the sentence "*He is always very happy*" which should be "*He is always happy,*" indicating that students misunderstand more complex structures. This analysis suggests the need for pedagogical interventions that focus more on understanding basic grammatical rules and structural differences between Indonesian and English.

The findings of this research, seventh graders at SMP Swasta pangeran Antasari Medan had difficulty with descriptive writing in Simple Present Tense. The identified errors were classified into two primary categories: Inter lingual errors and Intra lingual errors. We found a total of 20 inter-lingual errors were detected, comprising 15 errors related to miss-ordering, 3 errors related to miss-formation, and 2 errors related to addition. These errors arose due to the interference of the student's mother tongue, Indonesian, where the sentence structure in Indonesian

was applied directly to English without considering the differences in grammatical rules. Furthermore, a total of 70 intra-lingual errors were detected, consisting of 38 instances of omission errors, 12 instances of addition errors, and 20 instances of miss-formation errors. These intralingual errors arise from a restricted comprehension of the rules of the English language. The majority of the 90 faults discovered were omission errors.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the data and discussions, it is possible to conclude that seventh-grade students at SMP Swasta Pangeran Antasari Medan frequently use the Simple Present Tense incorrectly when writing descriptive pieces. These errors can be divided into two categories: inter-language and intra-language errors. Inter-linguistic errors are caused by influence from the original language (Bahasa Indonesia), resulting in errors like miss-ordering and miss-formation. Meanwhile, intra-language errors, such as omission and addition, arise due to a lack of understanding of English grammar rules. Of the total 90 errors identified, the distribution of errors is as follows: omission by 42.2%, miss-formation by 25.5%, miss-ordering by 16.6%, and addition by 15.5%. The dominance of omission errors indicates the need for improved understanding and more effective grammar practice among students.

To address the identified issues, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Teaching Structural Differences of Language

Planning a special talk on how Indonesian and English are built differently can really help stop mistakes that happen when mixing up languages. In this talk, teachers can show sentences that are often messed up and compare them with how they should be in both languages. For instance, the teacher could show how in English, describing words come before the noun but come after in Indonesian. Knowing this difference well will help students make fewer mistakes from mixing their first language into English.

2. Practice and Feedback

Teachers should give more practice on usual mistakes like leaving things out, adding extra, shaping words wrong, and mixing up the order. Also, clear and

direct feedback is key. For example, after each task, teachers can point out typical errors and show how to fix them. This way, students will get a clearer idea of their errors and how to not make them again.

3. Interactive Teaching Methods

On other hand, teachers can develop more varied and interactive teaching methods, such as grammar games and technology-based exercises, and actively monitor students' progress and provide individualized guidance for those who often make mistakes. With the collaboration between students and teachers, it is expected that students' understanding of grammar can improve and errors in descriptive text writing can be minimized.

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