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An Error Analysis of Students’ Recount Text Writing at SMA Negeri 2 Kefamenanu

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the types of errors made by the tenth-grade students in writing recount text and to explore the problems they encountered during the writing process. This research used a mixed-method design (quantitative and qualitative) and involved 20 students of the tenth grade of SMAN 2 Kefamenanu in the 2024/2025 academic year. The data were collected through a writing test and semi-structured interview. Students’ writing errors were categorised using surface strategy taxonomy comprising omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The result revealed that students produced 318 errors. Misformation was the most frequent error, with 132 errors or 41.50%, followed by misordering with 70 errors or 22.01%, omission with 62 errors or 19.49%, and addition with 54 errors or 16.98%. The interview results revealed that problems students encountered were (1) limited vocabulary, (2) sentence construction (3) paragraph organisation comprehension, (4) grammar rules mastery, (5) inadequate writing practice time. It is advised that teachers are supposed to provide more guided writing practice with adequate time, vocabulary enrichment, and grammar enrichment to facilitate students’ writing skill.



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Introduction

Language is a complex and organised method of communication used by humans to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas (Brown, 2013), Language acquisition and use are complex processes that are impacted by a range of psychological, linguistic, and social factors. He highlighted that learning a language involves both cognitive and emotive domains, necessitating that students interact with meaningful communication and social interaction in addition to the language's structure and conventions. Language is composed of intonation in addition to words, grammar rules, and cultural background, all of which contribute to its meaning. Social connection and the advancement of knowledge in a variety of sectors are made possible by language. Every language has distinctive qualities that represent the history and culture of its speakers, making it a vital conduit for intercultural communication and knowledge transfer between generations. (Syam et al, 2023).

Adoption of English in learning and teaching becomes increasingly vital in many nations, especially with the growing demand for global communication. According to Richards, et al (2012), Approaches and methods in language teaching investigate the numerous instructional tactics employed in language education. These strategies involve using English to educate a variety of courses and improve international communication skills. Effective English teaching strategies, such as discovery learning and task-based learning, encourage students to be more active and engaged in the learning process (Nayak & Patel, 2024; Nugrahaningtyas et al., 2024). Students are required to learn not only English but also critical thinking and communication skills that may be used to a variety of settings (Alazemi & Gheisari, 2023; Efriza et al., 2023).

In actuality, many students still fail to write well, especially in recount texts, due to a lack of vocabulary and grammar expertise. Students that lack vocabulary are unable to convey their ideas, leaving them unsure of how to form sentences (Nadia, 2024). Grammatical errors are another major concern since they are intimately tied to learners' language use and commonly appear in students' writing (Giawa et al., 2024; Ariansyah & Rahayu, 2024).

Students in the tenth grade at SMAN 2 Kefamenanu often find it difficult to create recount texts, especially when it comes to proper vocabulary, sentence structure, and language use. These difficulties are evident in the frequent mistakes they make in their writing, which could point to more serious problems with their comprehension of English writing rules. These mistakes, which frequently appear in students' writing, can be divided into



four categories according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. However, it is still unclear what kinds of errors they commonly make and what causes them. Teachers could find it challenging to create instructional strategies that effectively address students' writing issues without this knowledge. Therefore, In order to enhance English writing teaching at the high school level, this study focuses on identifying the most frequent types of errors in students' recount text writing using Surface Strategy Taxonomy and investigating the origins of these errors.

The novelty of this research lies in its contribution to providing a more thorough and contextual error analysis of students' recount text writing at SMA Negeri 2 Kefamenanu by using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy which divides errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering, as proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). Unlike previous research that mostly focused on identifying grammatical errors, this study also investigates the root causes of students' writing problems. Additionally, this research offers a more practical and comprehensive perspective by linking the results of error analysis based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy with real classroom implications for teaching and learning.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study utilised a mix method design by integrating descriptive quantitative and descriptive qualitative design. Descriptive quantitative research focuses on events that research participants encounter, such as behaviour, perceptions, and learning errors (Sugiyono, 2018). In this research, quantitative design was used to analyse students writing test. Descriptive qualitative method is a research strategy that describes and interprets occurrences in their natural environment. It focuses on comprehending natural behaviours, experiences, meanings, and processes (Hall & Liebenberg, 2024). Qualitative design in this research was used to analyse students' interview data.

Population and Sample

1) Population

The population is the whole set of people who are relevant to the study and to whom the researcher hopes to apply the results (Roberts & Daw, 2024). The population of this research was the first-grade students of SMAN 2 Kefamenanu in the 2024/2025 academic year, there were 210 students.



2) Sample

A sample is a portion of a population chosen using a certain process to reflect the population and enable researchers to extrapolate results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Sampling in this research using simple random sampling techniques, meaning that researchers randomly taking students as the sample of this research. The sample of this research was a class that consisted of 20 students. Among these 20 students, 4 students were selected based on English teacher's recommendation to be involved in the interview session.

Instrument

A variety of tools are used as research instruments to gather information pertinent to the study's goals (Creswell, 2018). In this study, there were two main instruments. The first instrument was a writing test with an emphasis on personal recount texts was the tool utilised to gather data. The test was created to assess students' capacity to organise and articulate their prior experiences in a logical and grammatically sound way. One task made up the test. Students were to create a personal recount text based on a guided outline that included prompts about a memorable experience in their lives, like a family celebration, vacation, or school activity. This enables a more thorough evaluation of their writing skills, inventiveness, and capacity to successfully communicate personal experiences. The second instrument was interview. it was in a semi-structured interview. The use of this interview was to obtain the data regarding students' difficulties in writing recount text. The researchers used digital recorder to record the interview.

Technique of Data Collection

Data collection techniques are carried out in natural conditions, using primary data sources. The data collection techniques are mostly participant observation, in-depth interviews, test, and documentation Sugiyono (2018). The data collection technique used in this research were observation, test, and interview. This techniques involved collecting recount text writing from students. This research had students write recount texts based on the topics with maximum of 100 words. The time given to write the recount was 60 minutes. Students were not allowed to use dictionary or any application tools. In order to keep the data valid and reliable, reserachers invloved four university students, two students had the role to check students' errors in



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writing, and the others rated the results. The triangulation occurred at this stage by involving researchers, the students, and the raters. In order to obtain the data related to the second research question, four students who were selected based on the teacher’s recommendation were interviewed in a semi-structured format to gain supporting data.

Technique of data Analysis

Data were analysed through several stages: (1) Collecting Sample; in this stage, students’ were given a recount writing test with the topic “memorable experience”. Then, their writing test results were collected. (2) Identifying Errors; in this stage, students’ writing results were identified grammatically. (3) Describing and Explaining Errors; in this stage, students’ writing results were described and explained based on the surface strategy taxonomy (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). The students errors in writing were analysed using the following formula.

$$P = \frac{E}{T} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P : Percentage of error

E : Total error

T : Total unit analysis: Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misordering

Interview data analysis

Interview data were processed through several stages. The first was transcription; in this stage, the recorded data were transcribed to get the whole data. The second was reduction; in this stage, some unnecessary data were reduced before presenting them in the data findings. The third was triangulation; in this stage, researchers and the four students (chackers and raters) were involved to do the comparison for the validity checking process (Miles et al, 2019).

There were some abbreviations used in transcribing the data in order to keep the confidentiality of the participants. Those terms are:

Researcher : Rr

Participant 1 : Prt 1

Participant 2 : Prt 2

Participant 3 : Prt 3

Participant 4 : Prt 4



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Findings and Discussion

This part presents students recount writing results and the interview data. The students writing test results are presented in some tables, and the interview data are presented in transcriptin format.

Findings

Finding 1. Types of Errors found in Students' Recount Writing

Table 1. Types of Errors Found in Students' Recout Text Writing

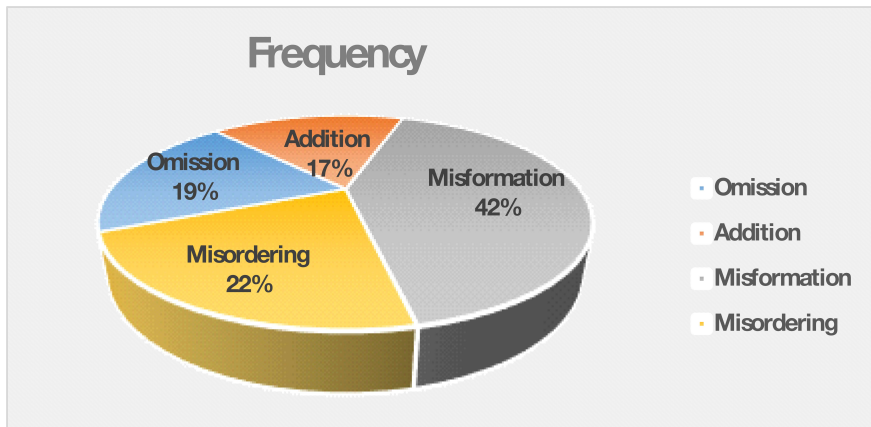
No	Types of Errors			
	Omission (Oms)	Addition (Add)	Misformation (Msf)	Misordering (Msd)
1	3	2	6	4
2	4	0	2	1
3	2	2	3	2
4	2	1	8	4
5	4	2	8	5
6	2	4	8	4
7	2	4	3	3
8	2	3	1	4
9	4	3	12	4
10	4	1	6	2
11	2	1	5	3
12	4	4	8	4
13	4	4	5	4
14	3	5	4	4
15	2	4	6	5
16	3	2	12	4
17	3	3	7	1
18	3	4	8	3
19	4	3	12	4
20	5	2	8	5
Total	62	54	132	70

Total Om+A+Msf+Msd = 318



The table illustrates the types of errors produced by the students. Based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, misformation was the most frequent error with a total of 132 errors. This was followed by misordering with 70 errors, then omission with 62 errors, while addition was the least common error, occurring 54 times.

Chart. 1. Each Error Type's Percentage



The table and pie chart above show the data of types of error and percentage of each of errors' type made by students according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. There were a total of 318 error discovered. The most common type of error was misformation, accounting for 132 errors (41.50% of total errors). This was followed by 70 misordering errors (22.01%), and 62 omission errors (19.49%). Meanwhile, the least prevalent sort of error was addition, which occurred 54 times (16.98%). According to these data, students struggled the most with applying acceptable word forms and grammatical structures when composing recount writings.

1. Data findings on Students' Problems when Writing Recount Text

Rr	: Do you know recount text?
Prt 1,2,3,4	: Yes.
Rr	: Have you ever written recount text?



Prt 1,2,3,4	: Yes
Rr	: Do you think that writing a recount text is difficult? Or not? Why?
Prt 1	: I think it is very difficult. I don't know how to connect sentences. Then, I don't have enough vocabulary.
Prt 2	: I think it is very difficult. I don't know much vocabulary. I don't know how to make a good sentence. Making a paragraph is very difficult to me.
Prt 3	: Well, I think I could write a recount text. However, I don't have much vocabulary. We had in class already. Our English teacher already explained it, and we had discussed it. However, the time seemed not enough. It was so fast. We need more time to practice writing.
Rr	: What kind of tense do you use to write a recount text?
Prt 1	: I am not sure. But I think it is past tense. However, to me simple past tense is sometimes confusing. Because the verbs change. I am confused to use verb two and tobe.
Prt 2	: I don't know tenses. I just write. Sometimes I use verb two some times I use tobe. I am not sure.
Rr	Do you often use verbs and tobe (was/were)?
Prt 2	: Yes. As I said before that I sometimes use verbs and tobe. Because I am confused I sometimes use verbs and tobe at the same time.
Prt 3	: I use simple past tense, but, making a good text needs a guide.
Prt 4	: I don't know tense. How can I write a text? it is really difficult how to connect sentences. The confusing thing is the use of tobe and verbs. I have no idea about that. I use tobe and verbs in my sentences.

Discussion

1. Types of Errors Found in Students' Recount Text

Having analysed the data of this research, it was found that there were 318 errors made by students. The most frequent error made was misformation (132 errors or 41.50%), followed by misordering (70 errors or 22.01%), omission (62 errors or 19.49%), and the least frequent error was addition (54 errors or 16.98%).



Misformation

As stated previously that there were 132 misformation errors. It happened due to difficulties in mastering English English past tense morphology, especially regular verbs and irregular verbs Fasikh (2020). Those errors could be seen in the following sentences:

- (1) *I go to see my grandmother last month* which is wrong form of verb tense, it should be *I visited my grandmother*.
- (2) *I clent the garden with my grandmother* should be *I cleansed the garden with my grandmother*.

The first sentence uses the verb *go* wrongly in its present form, but the sentence requires the simple past form *went* or a more appropriate verb, such as *visited*, depending on the intended meaning. This demonstrates that the learner has not completely grasped the rule of past tense construction in English. In the second sentence, the verb *clean* is partially formed but still exhibits spelling and morphological uncertainty, whereas the right past tense form is *cleansed*.

This suggests that participants commonly employed inappropriate grammatical forms, such as incorrect verb forms, tenses, or word structures. This is supported by Oktaviani and Hasibin (2021) who found out that EFL learners encountered difficulties in using regular and irregular verbs in simple past tense.

From these findings, it could be concluded that students still find it difficult to understand and use regular and irregular verbs, and also improper word structure. This is one of the basic grammatical knowledge that an EFL learner should master. The huge disparity between misformation and other categories demonstrates that grammatical precision is the primary problem faced by the participants.

Misordering

Misordering was the second most errors made by the students, with the total of errors 70 or 22.01%. misordering happened when students arrange words or phrase components incorrectly, it can result in grammatical misunderstanding or an awkward sentence structure. The misordering took place because students translated it directly from their first language, bahasa Indonesia.

The errors could be seen in sentences:



- (1) *I very like the beach* which should be *I liked the beach very much, and*
- (2) *I go to see my house grandmother* which should be *I went to see my grandmother's house.*

In the first sentence, the word *very* is positioned wrongly before the verb *like*. In English, intensifiers such as *extremely* are rarely used straight before the word *like*. Instead, English often employs terms such as "like very much." In addition, the student improperly utilised the present word *like* rather than the past form *liked*. This sentence exhibits both word-order issues and difficulty with tense usage.

The term "house grandmother" in the second sentence is a literal translation of the Bahasa Indonesia structure, specifically *rumah nenek saya*. Modifiers frequently follow nouns in Bahasa Indonesia, although possessive forms such as *grandmother's house* are commonly used in English. The noun phrase was incorrectly arranged, making the statement sound strange and grammatically incorrect.

These error examples demonstrate that students transfer phrase patterns directly from their native language to English. This phenomenon is often referred to as first language interference or language transfer. As Dewanto (2025) found out that students errors of misordering due to their limited knowledge of syntax as well as interference from their native language.

The comparatively high number of this part errors suggests that participants are still having difficulty organising sentence structure according to English grammar rules.

Omission

The errors happened of this type was 62 error or 19.49%. this omission error happened because students neglected some key points of a sentence such as main verb, tobe or linking verb, articles, preposition, and plural markers. This is supported by a study carried out by Fitrawati and Safitri (2021), they discovered that students omitted important components such as auxiliary verbs, articles, and tenses marker.

The omission errors differ across the 20 data samples. The scores vary from 2 to 5 errors per individual. The omission errors could be seen in the following sentences.

- (1) *I tired* which should be *I was tired,*
- (2) *There many people* which should be *there were many people,* and
- (3) *we lunch* which should be *we had lunch* or *we ate lunch.*



The omission of ‘was’ and the main verb ‘had’ or ‘ate’ made these sentences incomplete and error.

In the first statement, the student left off the linking verb was. In English grammar, an adjective like *tired* cannot function as a predicate without a linking verb. As a result, omitting the auxiliary verb makes the statement grammatically incomplete.

The removal of the auxiliary verb in the second sentence resulted in the loss of grammatical structure. To connect the subject and complement in English existential expressions, a form of "to be" is required. Without *were*, the sentence violates normal English grammatical norms.

The third sentence shows the absence of the primary verb *had* or *ate*. The term lunch was used immediately after the subject without a verb. A full sentence in English must have a predicate, which is usually a verb that expresses an activity or circumstance. The sentence is incomplete because it lacks a verb.

These examples demonstrate that students continue to struggle with understanding the mandatory elements required in English sentence building. Verbs, particularly auxiliary and linking verbs, are the most common omission errors. This indicates that students are having trouble recognising that English predicates frequently require additional grammatical markers. Sentences in many languages, including Indonesian, can function without explicitly linking verbs. As a result, pupils may transmit grammatical patterns from their native language to English, resulting in omissions.

According to the findings, students need more practice creating entire English sentences, notably correct use of auxiliary verbs, connecting verbs, articles, and main verbs. Teachers should emphasise the importance of mandatory grammatical components and include extra tasks that focus on sentence completion and grammatical accuracy. Furthermore, comparing English sentence patterns with students' first language structures can help learners better comprehend why these grammatical features are required in English (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982).

Addition

This was the least errors happened in students writing. There were 54 errors or 16.98%. Addition error happened when students add extraneous auxiliaries, articles, or verb markers to sentences. Al-Nawayseh (2024) found out in a study that when learners are unsure of grammatical rules, they typically steer



clear of complex English structures, which lessens the likelihood of needless additions. The errors of addition could be seen in the following sentences.

- (1) *We are arrived at 10 in the morning* which should be *we arrived at 10 in the morning*.
- (2) *I see a cows* which should be *I saw a cow*.

The addition of *are* and *-s* in these sentences contributed to the errors.

In the first sentence, the auxiliary verb *are* was inserted before the main verb *arrived*. In affirmative statements, the simple past tense does not require an auxiliary verb preceding the main verb. As a result, the addition of *has* rendered the statement grammatically wrong.

The student added the plural marker *-s* to the noun *cow* in the second sentence, despite the fact that it was already preceded by the singular article *a*. Because the article *a* must be followed by a singular noun, the addition of *-s* caused a conflict between the article and noun forms.

These findings suggest that students continue to struggle with following English grammatical rules, particularly in the areas of verb forms and noun agreement. Addition errors are widespread when learners overgeneralise grammar principles and apply them in inappropriate circumstances. Students may feel that adding auxiliary verbs or plural markers makes sentences grammatically accurate, even if they are unneeded.

According to the findings, students require further teaching and practice in recognising when and when not to employ grammatical elements. Teachers should explain sentence patterns in various tenses and emphasise the contrast between singular and plural noun forms. Focused grammar exercises and error-correction activities could help students eliminate excessive grammatical modifications in their writing (Peungcharoenkun & Waluyo, 2023). Continuous feedback, specific grammar instruction, and revision exercises have all been shown to improve learners' grammatical accuracy in writing, according to research on corrective feedback and process genre approaches.

In summary, the results of this study showed that students still had a lot of trouble using proper grammar when producing recount texts, especially when using the simple past tense. Misformation was the most common of the four types of errors found, followed by misordering, omission, and addition. Students' poor command of English sentence structure, their inadequate comprehension of regular and irregular verbs, and interference from their native tongue were the main causes of these errors.



2. Problems that Students Encountered in writing Recount text

Interview data revealed that students could identify recount text. They stated that they had ever written it in throughout their lesson. However, time for writing pactice was inadequate. They admitted that they had limited vocabulary and also they found it challenging to produce sentences. Combining sentences seemed to be a fundamental issue. As Pratiwi et al (2020); Xu et al (2022) found out in thei study that EFL students struggled with wriiting due tot the fact that they had limited vocabulary, difficult to construct sentences, and combine sentences to create a good paragraph.

From the interview data, student 1, 2,3 and 4 stated they could identify recount text. This statement revealed that they had obtained the knowledge. They had learned it in class. A study conducted by Nagao (2019) found that identifying the type of text could facilitate EFL learners to comprehend the structure, purpose, and language elements of texts, which improves their reading comprehension and writing abilities.

Vocabulary mastery was one of the main challenges that students faced in writing. Student a and 2 stated that they did not have sufficient vocabulary that could facilitate them to construct a sentence even a text. This findings supported by Fakhrudin et al. (2023). They found that students encountered difficulties in finding proper vocabulary to compose a recount text. Limited vocabulary also affect students writing improperly (Simbolon, et al, 2025).

Another difficulty was students encountered issue in constructing sentences and composing them to become a paragraph. Student 2 stated that creating a sentence and making a good paragraph was very difficult. Student 4 also found it confusing to create a sentence. This statements reflect that students still have limited understanding on connecting sentences properly in writing a recount text. Chandra et al (2024) students still need guidance to produce sentences effectively. However, Dirgeyasa (2016) proposed that understanding the genre of a text could help students to recognise, understand the structure of the text, and the language features of text could facilitate students in finding out ideas and construct sentences.

There is still a significant difficulty that most of students sruggled with, it was grammar rules, particularly the use of simple past tense. Student 1 explained that the verb changes and tobe (was/were) made him confused. Student 2 and student 4 stated that they frequently mixed up the use of verbs and tobe (was/were) in sentences due to limited understanding on simple past



tense rules. This finding alligns with other previous studies, Sulaiman (2023); Sadapotto & Usman (2022) students struggled with verb tense, tenses, and proper tobe in past tense sentences.

Furthermore, student 3 stated that insufficient time for writing practice also contributed to students' difficulties in writing recount text. This indicate that writing process need serious practice and more guidance. Another study found that continuous writing and more guidance are needed in improving students' writing ability (Wati et al, 2024).

To sum up, students' responses indicate that issues in writing recount text covered several factors, namely limited vocabulary, insufficient understanding of sentence structure, lack of paragraph organization undertanding, limited understanding of basic grammar rules (simple past tense), and inadequate writing practice. Therefore, teachers are supposed to provide more writing practice and adequate time, vocabulary enrichment, and grammar based task to facilitate students get better writing improvement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it is clear that there were still some major issues encounterd by students in writing. Delaing with errors encounterd by the students, there were 318 errors found. The most frequent error made was misforation with the total error was 132 or 41.50%, followed by misordering with the total errors was 70 or 22.01%, then followed by omission with the total errors was 62 or 19.49%, and the lest was addition with the total errors was 54 or 16.98%.

Students' interview revealed several challenges they encountered. They were (1) limited vocabulary, (2) lack of understanding in constructing sentences, (3) limited paragraph organisation comprehension, (4) insufficient grammar rules knowledge, (5) inadequate writing practice time.

Based on the findings, Teachers are recommended to provide students more writing practice, grammar-focused instruction, vocabulary enrichment to improve their writing abilities, particularly in terms of lowering misformation errors, in light of the research findings. Students should study grammar, increase their vocabulary, practise writing frequently to enhance their writing skills. Then, in order to obtain more comprehensive findings, future researchers are advised to investigate successful teaching techniques and carry out comparable experiments with other participants or educational levels.

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