

## Analyzing Writing Errors on Narrative Texts Made by Grade Nine Students' of SMP IT Qurrata A'yun Palu

Maghfira Maghfira<sup>1</sup>, Hastini Hastini<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>English Education Study Program, Teacher and Education Faculty, Tadulako University, Indonesia

---

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 2024-03-21

Revised 2024-04-29

Accepted 2024-05-01

---

#### Keywords:

Error Analysis

Grammatical Errors

Narrative Text

---

### ABSTRACT

Students often struggle with grammatical accuracy when writing in English as a second language. This study investigates the types and frequencies of errors made by ninth-grade Indonesian students in their English narrative compositions. The research objectives were to 1) identify common error categories within student-generated narrative texts and 2) determine which error type occurs most frequently. The study utilized a descriptive qualitative approach. Ninth-grade students at SMP IT Qurata'Ayun Palu were assigned a narrative writing task on a designated topic. The collected texts were analyzed using Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) surface approach error taxonomy. Results indicated a total of 70 errors across the students' work. The most prevalent error type was misformation (50%), followed by omission (36%), addition (13%), and misordering (1%). These findings suggest that difficulties applying correct grammatical forms are a significant obstacle to accurate narrative writing for these students.

*This is an open-access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.*



---

### Corresponding Author:

Hastini

English Education Study Program, Teacher and Education, Tadulako University

Email: [timi\\_firhansyah@yahoo.com](mailto:timi_firhansyah@yahoo.com)

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity to pour the mind that can convey meaning and purpose in written text. Writing demands a broad understanding and a deep contemplative process to select the appropriate words, phrases, and sentences for constructing paragraphs and texts. Harmer [1] highlights the challenging nature of writing, attributing it to the intricate process involving planning, organizing, and revising to achieve a higher writing standard. Troyka [2] argues the significance of having writing. First, writing is a way of thinking and learning. Second, writing is a way of discovering. Writing allows us to make unexpected connections between ideas and language. Third, creates reading; writing creates, per moment, a visible record of our ideas for other people to read and think over. Fourth, writing ability is needed by educated people. Our writing skills are often considered to reflect our level of education, and college work demands that we write many different

types of assignments. Riswanto et al. [3] said that one of the language skills that will never be left in education is writing because it is an essential part of the lesson, not only in a language class but also in other classes such as biology, mathematics, history, etc. Writing has many kinds of text: recount, spoof, report, description, narrative text, etc.

Narrative text is one kind of text that is frequently utilized in writing. An essay that tells a story or sequence of events is called a narrative essay. Its objective is to narrate a tale about an incident or sequence of incidents. Furthermore, Flippo [4] states, "Narrative text usually includes most story type of materials. The purpose of narrative text is to entertain, create, stimulate emotions, motivate, guide and teach" [5]. Jannah supports it [6]: "Narrative text is to amuse, entertain and to deal with an actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Its role in society is to tell stories or past events and entertain readers". It can be concluded that narrative writing describes an event or series of events by telling a story that aims to entertain the readers.

Writing narrative text is one of the learning materials in schools, from elementary until senior high school levels. In the 2013 curriculum, the junior high school writing narrative text became the material for ninth grade. Grammar is the main problem for students when producing a narrative text because English grammar rules are complicated. They usually write ungrammatical sentences mainly on the component of language features of narrative text. They still have difficulty in applying the laws of simple past tense. Therefore, students must understand grammar well to produce good narrative text because the readers can comprehend the context understandably if they make their text with good grammar.

Errors are crucial in providing insights into students' capabilities for teachers to address [7]. Additionally, Dulay et al. [8] suggest that errors serve to pinpoint inadequacies in the curriculum, which can be rectified once identified by learners and teachers alike. Moreover, second language proficiency, particularly a grasp of language structures, is imperative to avoid writing errors [9]. A lack of comprehension regarding the rules and norms of a second language, such as grammar and diction, can result in writing inaccuracies. Consequently, the issue of errors in writing skills remains pertinent and requires urgent discussion, particularly within the university setting, to uncover the sources of students' writing errors.

Numerous linguistic scholars have delved into the subject of writing errors to illuminate their occurrences and understand their underlying causes. Several global studies have examined errors in academic writing. For instance, Karim et al. [10] explored errors in EFL writing classrooms in Bangladesh, revealing common mistakes among elementary students related to grammar, misinformation, disordering, and over-generalization. Similarly, Nair & Hui [11] investigated errors in ESL descriptive writing in Chinese private schools in Malaysia, noting that students frequently erred in grammar and sentence structures.

Songsukrujiroad et al. [12] researched errors in Chinese essay writing, uncovering various mistakes in Chinese grammar. Xie [13] examined linguistic accuracy in writing among students in Hong Kong, finding errors in academic writing attributed to a lack of structural knowledge. Amiri & Puteh [7] focused on errors in academic writing by

---

Malaysian students, identifying common errors in sentence structures, articles, punctuation, and capitalization. These studies collectively confirm that students worldwide encounter challenges with errors in academic writing at various educational levels.

In an Indonesian context, several researchers have also addressed the issue of errors in academic writing. Fauzan et al. [14] and Gayo & Widodo [15] investigated errors in literary texts among students from different EFL junior high schools, highlighting errors in various aspects of grammar due to interlingua transfer and knowledge gaps. Fitria [16] examined errors in using the simple future tense among university students in Surakarta, discovering prevalent errors in sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. Similarly, Perlin et al. [17] focused on errors in using the simple present tense in paragraph writing among university students in Ogan Komering Ilir, finding a range of errors in their papers.

Other researchers have studied error analysis in writing narrative text. Riska [18] conducted research entitled “An Analysis of Students’ Grammatical Errors in Writing Narrative Text at State Junior High School 1 Keritang Tembilahan Indragiri Hilir”. This research focused on narrative text in the students. This research aims to discover the students’ narrative text writing errors and find the most common errors in writing narrative text at SMPN 1 Keritang and Safitri [19] conducted research entitled “Analysis of Students’ Grammatical Errors in Writing Narrative Text”. This research focused on narrative texts. This research aims to identify the types of common errors made by the third-semester students of the English Department in writing narrative text. Also, Gee [20] found that students made errors, including omission errors, misformation, misordering, and errors. The primary causes of these errors were identified as intralingual transfer and the context of learning.

Error analysis, which compares mistakes in the target language with that language itself, is designed to determine what learning outcomes students have attained by creating an interlinguistic system in writing and speaking. Errors found when writing and speaking, Taylor [21] states that ‘error analysis is the study and evaluation of uncertainty in measurement.’ It indicates that mistakes have a beneficial function in language acquisition since they are indicators of language learners not successfully mastering the rules of the target language. Erdogan [22] emphasizes that ‘error analysis deals with the learners’ performance in terms of the cognitive processes they used recognizing or coding the input they receive from the target language. Therefore, the key focus for error analysis is evidence that learners’ errors enable them to understand the underlying process of learning another language. Brown [23] error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. Observing, analyzing, and classifying deviations from the second language rules and then uncovering the systems the student operates. According to Dulay et al. [8], the error analysis movement can be described as an attempt to explain learner errors that behaviorist theory or contrastive analysis could not predict or explain. It also aims to bring applied linguistics into line with the current theoretical climate. In summary, error analysis emerged to shift the perspective of contrastive analysis regarding learner errors, as behaviorist theory impacted contrastive analysis. Experts share their thoughts on error analysis. According to Gass and Selinker [24], error analysis is a sort of language analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. Error analysis compares learners’

---

mistakes in creating the target language and the target language form. According to them, error analysis offers researchers and educators a more comprehensive range of explanations for errors than contrastive analysis, which solely assigns errors to the writer's native language (NL). This indicates that if a learner's mistake is a concern, error analysis can provide more information than a contrastive analysis can anticipate regarding the learner's error. Corder [25] points out that Error analysis is part of the methodology of the psycholinguistic investigation of language learning. It aims to reveal something about the psycholinguistic process of language acquisition. Corder's perspective is consistent with other specialists in EA, such as Ellis [26], who argues that error analysis is used to explore how learners acquire a second language. According to Ellis and Barkhuizen [26], error analysis is a collection of processes for detecting, characterizing, and explaining learner errors. Gorbet [4] more thoroughly states that the primary goal of mistake analysis is to define how learning happens by studying the learner's output. According to James [27], error analysis involves identifying the reasons and consequences of failed language usage. It appears that EA is a tool that explores a student's learning process when learning a second language by recognizing, characterizing, analyzing, and explaining the learner's errors. Norrish, J [28] classifies causes of error into three types: carelessness, first language interference, and translation.

Considering the phenomena above, the researcher researched Grade Nine Students of SMP IT Qurata A'yun Palu. The researcher wanted to analyze the kinds of errors and the most dominant errors in writing narrative text. Writing narrative text is one of the writing skills that students should acquire. One of the most inhibiting factors in learning and using a foreign language is the fear of making mistakes or errors. Making errors is a sign that students have not yet mastered the rules of the language being learned. To cope with this problem, one of the strategies widely used by linguists is error analysis.

This research employs error analysis to examine students' specific challenges when writing narrative texts. By identifying common errors and their potential causes, this study aims to support educators in developing effective writing instruction strategies tailored to student needs. The findings can potentially inform teaching materials and assessment practices and provide insights into second language acquisition processes in narrative writing.

## **2. METHOD**

For this study, the researcher used a descriptive approach. Based on the theory of surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. [8] in the narrative text, it focuses on finding out the facts and information about students' errors. This study focuses on the frequency of errors based on surface strategy taxonomy and possible causes of errors made. This shall be done using a quantitative, qualitative, or multimodal method design. A mixed method design performed quantitatively and objectively in this error analysis study is used [29]. The researcher used this design to analyze errors. The quantitative approach is used to count the frequent errors, while the qualitative approach is used to interpret and explain the results of the data analysis. To get the qualitative result, the data was calculated and drawn up in the table of percentages, which is the formula by Sudijono [30].

---

In collecting the data, the researcher gave the task to the students to make a narrative text with a title that has been decided according to the researcher's advice. The students had to write a story about the narrative text. That writing text is the instrument of this research. The errors will be classified according to surface strategy taxonomy, including omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Results

After the task, the researcher analyzed the result and classified the errors based on the four aspects. The percentage of students' errors in omission, addition, misformation, and misordering were as follows:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

where

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of error occurred

N = Number of cases (total frequent/total individual)

As previously stated, this study aims to explain the errors in narrative text writing by the grade nine students of SMP IT Qurata A'yun Palu. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher found that there were a lot of errors. The errors are classified based on surface strategy taxonomy. The result of the analysis can be tabularized as follows:

Table 1. Types of errors

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Omission	25	36%
2	Addition	9	13%
3	Misformation	35	50%
4	Misordering	1	1%
Total		70	100%

#### 3.2. Discussion

Based on the research results, it was found that seventy (70) errors were found, classified as 1. Errors in Omission = 25 errors, 2. Errors in Addition = 9 errors, 3. Errors in misformation = 35 errors, and 4. Errors in Misordering = 1 error. From these results, the dominant error made by the students is misformation errors, which occurred in 35 errors or 50%. Using the form of a morpheme or structure distinguishes misformation errors in the misformation category. Students misformed object pronouns. In pronouns, the students use subject pronouns instead of object pronouns. The student also misunderstood word spelling.

Omission errors become the second-highest errors produced by the students. According to the research results, there were 25 or 36%. In the omission errors category, errors happen when there are one or more missing words or elements in one sentence; as

stated before, an error of omission is a kind of error where there is an element, but it should be presented.

Omission errors become the second-highest errors produced by the students. According to the research results, there were 25 or 36%. In the omission errors category, errors happen when there are one or more missing words or elements in one sentence; as stated before, an error of omission is a kind of error where there is an element, but it should be presented.

The last category is misordering. In arranging the sentence, students can select the correct form but make the sentences incorrectly. In this research, the researcher found that the misordering error is caused by the grammar formation from the Indonesian language applied to English sentences that students construct.

These findings align with previous research in the Indonesian context and beyond. Studies by Fauzan et al. [14], Gayo & Widodo [15], Fitria [16], and others highlight similar grammatical challenges with tense usage, sentence structure, and punctuation exhibited by EFL learners. This suggests persistent areas of difficulty commonly experienced by those learning English as a foreign language.

The current study also supports the findings in Riska [18], Fitria [16], and Gee [20] related to the frequency of different error categories in narrative writing. All suggest challenges with language production accuracy among EFL learners. Consistent with the literature review, the errors observed appear to have multiple causes. Firstly, intralingual Transfer. The misordering errors, in particular, indicate potential interference from Indonesian grammatical structures when students construct English sentences. This highlights the need for instructors to be aware of common areas of contrast between the student's native language and English. Secondly, knowledge Gaps. Errors in pronoun usage and spelling suggest there may be gaps in students' fundamental knowledge of specific grammatical structures and vocabulary. Lastly, the context of Learning. Limited exposure to authentic English language use and a potential over-emphasis on rote grammar learning might also contribute to the observed errors.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

After individually analyzing the students' writing narrative tests, the researcher found the most common errors made by grade nine students of SMP IT Qurata A'yun Palu. The types of errors committed by the students were misformation, omission, addition, and misordering.

From the data results, it could be concluded that the students still had difficulties writing narrative text. It could be seen from the way they made it. This finding reflected that the students did not understand how to write sentences correctly. So, the researcher would like to propose a suggestion they hoped would be helpful for other English teachers and further research. The English teacher could choose the appropriate teaching method, technique, and strategy, especially in teaching grammar.

---

**REFERENCES**

- [1] J. Harmer, "Jeremy\_Harmer\_How\_to\_Teach\_Writing\_Longm.pdf." p. 6, 2004.
  - [2] L. Q. Troyka, "Defining basic writing in context," *A sourcebook for basic writing teachers*, pp. 2–15, 1987.
  - [3] Riswanto, T. Heydarnejad, E. Saberi Dehkordi, and B. Parmadi, "Learning-oriented assessment in the classroom: the contribution of self-assessment and critical thinking to EFL learners' academic engagement and self-esteem," *Language Testing in Asia*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 60, Dec. 2022, doi: 10.1186/s40468-022-00210-4.
  - [4] F. Gorbet, "'To Err is Human': Error Analysis and Child Language Acquisition.," *English Language Teaching Journal*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 22–28, 1979.
  - [5] N. B. Kareni, "Teaching narrative reading by using character quotes strategy to the eleventh grade students of MAN 1 Palembang," *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 173–184, 2016.
  - [6] R. Jannah, "Teaching narrative reading text by using SQ3R and ETR strategies to the eighth grade students of MTS Paradigma Palembang," *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 33–44, 2016.
  - [7] F. Amiri and M. Puteh, "Error Analysis in Academic Writing: A Case of International Postgraduate Students in Malaysia.," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 141–145, 2017.
  - [8] H. Dulay, *Language two*. ERIC, 1982.
  - [9] M. A. Salmani Nodoushan, "Toward a Taxonomy of Errors in Iranian EFL Learners' Basic-Level Writing.," *Online Submission*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 61–78, 2018.
  - [10] A. Karim, A. R. Mohamed, S. Ismail, F. H. Shahed, M. M. Rahman, and M. H. Haque, "Error analysis in EFL writing classroom," *International Journal of English Linguistics*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 122–138, 2018.
  - [11] S. M. Nair and L. L. Hui, "An Analysis of Common Errors in ESL Descriptive Writing among Chinese Private School Students in Malaysia.," *International Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 28–42, 2018.
  - [12] S. Songsukrujiroad, X. Chen, and W. Kaewyod, "Error Analysis in Writing Chinese Essay: A Case Study of Chinese Major Students of UBRU," *International Journal of Integrated Education and Development*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 5–18, 2018.
  - [13] Q. Xie, "Error analysis and diagnosis of ESL linguistic accuracy: Construct specification and empirical validation," *Assessing Writing*, vol. 41, pp. 47–62, 2019.
  - [14] U. Fauzan, S. F. Aulya, and W. N. Noor, "Writing error analysis in exposition text of the EFL junior high school students," 2020.
  - [15] H. Gayo and P. Widodo, "An analysis of morphological and syntactical errors on the English writing of junior high school Indonesian students," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 58–70, 2018.
  - [16] T. N. Fitria, "Error analysis found in students' writing composition of simple future tense," *Available at SSRN 3527851*, 2018.
  - [17] A. Perlin, D. Sartika, and R. Nery, "An error analysis on the use of Simple Present Tense in paragraph writing of the second semester at English Language Education at Islamic University of Ogan Komering Ilir Kayuagung," *Edu-Ling: Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–9, 2020.
  - [18] A. Riska, "An Analysis of Students'grammatical Errors in Writing Narrative Text at State Junior High School 1 Keritang Tembilahan Indragiri Hilir." Universitas Islam Negeri sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2019.
  - [19] E. Safitri, "Analysis of students' grammatical errors in writing narrative text." UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2019.
  - [20] W. Gee, "An Analysis of Error in Writing Narrative Text Made by Students of Ninth Grade of SMP Negeri 4 Fanayama," vol. 3, no. 1, 2024.
  - [21] J. R. Taylor, "Error analysis," *Univ. Science Books, Sausalito, California*, vol. 20, 1997.
  - [22] V. Erdoğan, "Contribution of error analysis to foreign language teaching," *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2005.
  - [23] H. D. Brown, "Principles of language learning and teaching. Englewood Cliff," *NJ: Pentice*, 1994.
  - [24] S. M. Gass, J. Behney, and L. Plonsky, *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*, 5th ed. New York: Routledge, 2020.
  - [25] M. M. Azevedo and S. P. Corder, "Error analysis and interlanguage," 1981. [Online]. Available: <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:154736980>
  - [26] R. Ellis and G. P. Barkhuizen, "Analysing learner language," (*No Title*), 2005.
-

- [27] C. James, *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. Routledge, 2013.
- [28] J. M. Norris and L. Ortega, *Synthesizing research on language learning and teaching*, vol. 13. John Benjamins Publishing, 2006.
- [29] M. Denscombe, *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. New York: Open University Press, 2010.
- [30] A. Sudijono, *Pengantar Statistik Pendidikan*, XXII. Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2010.
-