DIFFICULTIES IN WRITING IN VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMPN I SELONG EAST LOMBOK WEST NUSA TENGGARA IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2008/2009

Saiful Bahri

ABSTRACT

This research study aims at: (1) finding out the forms of difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second year students of SMP 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009, and (2) finding out the causal factors of difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second year students of SMP 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009.

The study was a case study. It used a qualitative positivistic descriptive approach. The participants consisted of 34 students. The main data were obtained from the 34 students' compositions. The other data were collected from observation, interviews, and recording.

The results show that (1) eight most common errors of students' writing were: verb-tenses, articles, word forms, capital letters, punctuation, missing words, spelling, and prepositions; (2) verb-tense errors occupied the first rank (23.76%), followed by article errors (20.85%), and word form errors (10.62%); (3) two kinds of direct factors caused the students to make errors in the writing skills were: negative interlanguage and intralingual transfers in the forms of adverb interference, copulative verb interference, word-order interference, tense-form interference, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules; and (4) five sources of indirect factors caused the students to make errors in the writing skills were: students' low motivation, lack of use of media, low frequency of the writing instruction, lack of parents' support, and loose control of students' learning.

A. INTRODUCTION

SMPN I Selong has used SBC as the main reference in the teaching of English, especially the writing instruction (Curriculum of SMPN 1 Selong, 2008). The perception of English teachers in SMPN I Selong about the importance of writing does not seem to completely match the curriculum. The English teachers' adherence

to the relevance of the textbooks with the curriculum makes them merely follow the textbooks. They sometimes do not follow the syllabus or the lesson plan which they develop. They think that following the textbooks is straightforward enough in terms of facilitating their students to face the final examination. Consequently, if there are topics or exercises for the writing skills in the textbooks, the teachers will teach them at a quick pace, or if the time is not available or limited, they usually ask their students to do them as homework. Further, it can be interpreted that they perceive the writing skills as not very essential as these are given a small portion in the textbooks.

Apparently some students possess the limited vocabulary and poor understanding of grammar. So, they get difficulties in doing their writing tasks. An example of a student's writing is related to his low understanding of grammar. It seems that he lacks the understanding of the grammar, in consequent he gets difficulty setting up his writing correctly. His low understanding of the grammar can cause difficulty in arranging his writing properly. The false phrases are underlined. The example is *'SMPN I Selong this big enough class also and adequate. Such as those which we know that SMPN I Selong have many room, such as RSBI room, small mosque, etc. SMPN I Selong also have friendly teacher and discipline'*. The underlined phrases point out that a student get difficulty compiling the phrasal compound and use the seemly tense. In short, they are the forms of *difficulty* relating to the phrasal compound and verb-tense.

Furthermore, an example is given that some errors are made by the students when they write a paragraph or a text. The students' errors indicate that they get difficulties arranging their composition. It corresponds with G.Hadler's statement (2005: http://www.tuition.com.hk/academic/difficulties.htm) that errors give us *evidence of difficulty*, although they do not provide us with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof. The example is given in terms of a student's writing. The student writes about the description of flowers in his school's garden. The wrong phrases are underlined. The example is *'In SMPN 1 Selong's garden, many kinds flowers that can found. They are rose, jasmine etc. But, the very beautiful is rose. The rose has parts. The part under ground are roots and the part up are the flowers. The rose has three color are red, white and pink. If we want pick it, we must be*

careful, because it has thorns is very sharp'. Those errors are related to the ungrammatical form of the English language. For example; *many kinds flowers that can found* should become *many kinds of flowers that can be found*.

Those phenomena, especially relating to the students' errors in writing, encourage the writer to investigate the difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar for students of SMPN I Selong. The study will try to seek the *forms* of difficulties (*errors, mistakes or lapses*) and also the causal factor of the difficulties of the students in doing writing.

The scope of this study focuses on difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar. The limitation of the study is focused on: (1) the forms of the writing difficulties. The *forms* of the writing *difficulties* emphasize *errors* without ignoring *the students' mistakes*. It is concerned with the choice of words (diction of vocabulary) and the usage of the descriptive grammar, and (2) the causal factors of the difficulties in writing, whether direct factors or indirect factors causes difficulties in writing.

Based on the problem limitation above, the writer formulates research questions namely: (1) What forms of the difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar do the second year students of SMPN 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009 experience? (2) What factors cause the difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second year students of SMPN 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009?

In line with the problem statement, the objectives of the study are directed to: (1) find out the forms of difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar for the second year students of SMP 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009, (2) find out the causal factors of difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar for the second year students of SMP 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Difficulty is a relative concept with objective and subjective validity. It is opposed to ease or facility and describes a task which implies effort. It is also a comparative

concept in that some starting point and a goal are indicated and unstated comparisons implied. It corresponds with Higa's notion (1966) in G.Hadler (2005) that states warns of the danger of 'circular argumentation' in assuming the existence of abstract concepts such as difficulty. When asked to define difficulty, a student or a teacher may quantify the difficulty in terms of the effort needed to complete a task. Cronbach (1984) in Levine (2006) looks at difficulty in terms of anxiety, which 'expresses motivation to avoid psychological failure'.

Based on the some points of view above, difficulty is an abstract concept which stuck in our mind. The students are known that they get difficulty in writing, when they practice to write on paper. There are many errors that they make, when they do writing. Errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which the students have problem in doing writing, although they do not provide him with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof (Hadler, 2005). Error is the realizationized forms of the writing difficulties which the real forms can be seen on paper. Thus, error can be one of the forms of difficulties in writing.

Therefore it is reasonable, the study emphasises on error analysis because errors constitute one of forms of the difficulties in writing. Besides that, it keeps in order that the research does not come about the deviation results further.

Various definitions of error have been presented by experts. Basically these definitions contain the same meaning while the difference lies only on the ways they formulate them. Therefore, the writer only puts forward two definitions of error in this research. The two definitions are (1) error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong (James, 1998: 77) and (2) errors are systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned (Corder in Gass & Selinker, 2001: 78).

Error analysis is an activity to reveal errors found in writing and speaking. Richards (1977:96) states that error analysis is the study of errors made by the second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to (a) find out how well someone knows a language, (b) find out how a person learns a language, and (c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in

teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials. This definition emphasizes on the functions of error analysis. Another concept of error analysis is given by Brown (1980: 166). He defined error analysis as the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner. It seems this concept is the same as the one proposed by Crystal (1987:112) i.e. error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone who is learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics. The three definitions above clarify that error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpreted or describe the errors made by someone in writing and it is carried out to obtain information on *common difficulties* faced by someone in writing English sentences.

Selinker in Richards (1977: 37) states that there are five sources of errors namely: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of linguistic material of target language.

On the other hand, Brown (2000:223-227) classifies sources of error into, 1) interlingual transfer, that is, the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner, 2) intralingual transfer, that is, the negative transfer of items within the target language. In order words, the incorrect generalization of rules is in term ofthe target language; 3) context of learning, which overlaps both types of transfer, for example, the classroom with its teacher and its materials in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning.; 4) communication strategies. It is obvious that communication strategy is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner for some reasons. They are avoidance, prefabricated patterns, cognitive and personality style, appeal to authority, and language switch.

Error analysis is carried out in four successive stages, as mentioned by Corder (1971) in Richards (1977). These are (1) identification, (2) description, (3) explanation, and (4) classification.

Firstly, to identify an error one should, first of all, know what is meant by the term 'error'. Corder uses the term 'erroneous' to mean those utterances which are either superficially deviant or inappropriate in terms of the target language grammar. He distinguishes between mistakes, lapses and errors. They correspond to what he calls pre-systematic, post- systematic and systematic errors. Pre-systematic errors are those committed by learners while they are trying to come to grip with a new point. Pre-systematic errors occur when learners temporarily forget a point that has been previously understood. Systematic errors are those which occur when learners has formed inaccurate hypothesis about the target language (i.e. English).

Secondly, there are some problems which prevent the proper description as a researcher needs an extremely good insight into the learners' mind. Corder (1971) stated that an object of the error analysis is to explain errors both linguistically and psychologically in order to help the learners to study. Errors should be looked for when they occur repeatedly, so that the rules can be observed which learners may be using and trying to describe them. Systematic errors should be taken into consideration. This is a difficult task because the learners may be highly inconsistent in their errors.

Thirdly, explanation is still largely speculative because of a limited knowledge of the psychological and neurological process involved in language learning. The same errors can be looked based on various points of view. For example, a learners' native language have only one way of referring to the future time while the target language has three ways of referring to the same. Learners gets problem to arrange the sentence and finally they commit some errors.

Fourthly, Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories: *omission* of some required element; *addition* of some unnecessary or incorrect element; *selection* of an incorrect element; and *misordering* of the

elements. He includes the linguistics level of the errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon (Corder, 1973).

The conceptual framework gives direction to determine the types of errors and the causal factors of errors. The theoretical framework used is schematized in the following figure.
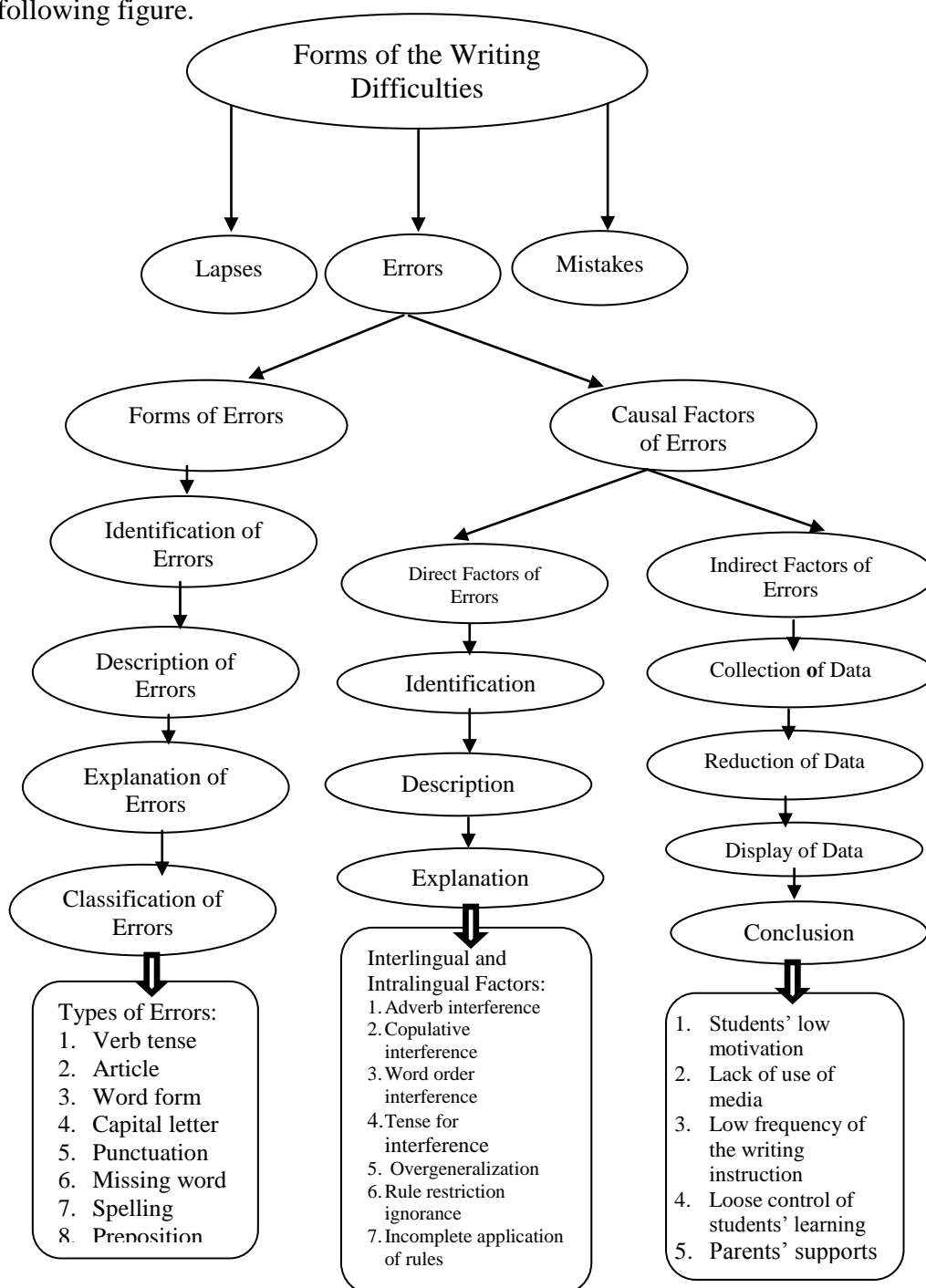
Forms of the Writing Difficulties

Lapses Errors Mistakes

Forms of Errors

Causal Factors of Errors

Identification of Errors

Direct Factors of Errors

Indirect Factors of Errors

Description of Errors

Identification

Collection **of** Data

Explanation of Errors

Description

Reduction of Data

Classification of Errors

Explanation

Display of Data

Conclusion

Types of Errors:
1. Verb tense
2. Article
3. Word form
4. Capital letter
5. Punctuation
6. Missing word
7. Spelling
8. Preposition

Interlingual and Intralingual Factors:
1. Adverb interference
2. Copulative interference
3. Word order interference
4. Tense for interference
5. Overgeneralization
6. Rule restriction ignorance
7. Incomplete application of rules

1. Students' low motivation
2. Lack of use of media
3. Low frequency of the writing instruction
4. Loose control of students' learning
5. Parents' supports

Figure 1. The schema of the conceptual theoretical framework

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a case study by using a qualitative positivistic descriptive approach, because it is aimed at finding out the forms of difficulties in writing and the causal factors of difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar and it is intended to ascertain the percentage of the degree of the forms of difficulties in writing and to reckon the numbers of the forms of difficulties in writing for the second year students of SMPN 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009.

This study was conducted at SMPN 1 Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara. This school is one of a favorite school in East Lombok. Besides that, it is pioneering the international standard school. It has a *RSBI* classroom. RSBI stands for *Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf International* (*International Standard School Pioneer*). He took one class which becomes respondents, a focus of the research, because the research is a case study.

Techniques used in collecting data are testing, observation, questionnaire, and interview. These techniques are used one after another like beads on a string and integratively.

Four instruments are used in the research such as: a guidance of unstructured interview, a questionnaire, a test, and a format of observation. Meanwhile techniques used to validate the data are triangulation, continuous observation, member-check, discussion with colleagues, lengthening the period of observation (Moleong, 2006: 327).

Three steps were used to analyze the data obtained from the students' hand writings. Firstly, the students' works were checked and read all. The incorrect sentences were given the checking marks by using stabilo ink. Secondly, the students' errors were classified into some types. The classification of errors was tabled based on Ellis and Barkhuizen's idea (2005: 63). Thirdly, the percentage of each error point was counted according to the determined formula.

The data obtained through interview and questionnaires were analyzed based on the model of the interactive analysis namely: data collection; data reduction; data display; and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994:12).

D. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As pointed out in an earlier section, the students are known that they get difficulty in writing, when they practice to write on paper. There are many errors that they make, when they do writing. Errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which the students have problem in doing writing, although they do not provide him with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof.

Data for error analysis are in the form of students' mistakes that are found in thirty four students' compositions. The thirty four compositions contain fifty one paragraphs. The longest paragraph consists of sixteen sentences, whereas the shortest paragraph consists of two sentences.

The descriptive technique uses clauses as the units of analysis. The clauses are derived from simple sentences and complex sentences. This means that at average each complex sentence consists of two clauses and at average each simple sentence merely comprises of one clause. The entire data consist of 249 sentences taken from 34 composition works. The 249 sentences comprise of 180 simple sentences and 69 complex sentences. Because the unit of analysis consists of clauses, 324 clauses are found in the data.

1. Common Errors

Thirteen common errors are depicted respectively below. Two types of article errors were found namely: absence of article and misuse of article. Absence of articles occurs when an article is not used before a noun (concrete noun). For example, *Kiki and Toni saw cat*. The noun 'cat' must have an article 'a'. Misuse of articles occurs when an inappropriate article is put before a noun (concrete noun). For example: *'They sat under <u>the tree</u>. Suddenly, they saw <u>the cat</u> on the tree'*. The article *'the'* before noun 'tree' is not suitable because it is never mentioned in the previous time.

Preposition errors were classified into three types namely: (1) preposition-overuse means that a preposition was used more than it should be required to use in a sentence. The examples of this kind namely: (1) *they put a ladder <u>to near</u> the tree*; (2) *they put <u>to on</u> the tree*; and (3) *Ori helps <u>as to</u> Wira give the cat*; (2) preposition-misuse means that a preposition was used on the false usage in a sentence. A preposition was sometimes put before a noun, but the wrong preposition was used. Some examples of this kind are performed in: (1) *they played <u>for</u> about 3 hours happily,* (2) *Arya go up <u>for</u> get the cat* , and (3) *they see the cat <u>above</u> a tree*; and (3) redundant use of preposition means that a preposition was put in the needless spot in a sentence. The examples of this kind as: (1) *Dava go up <u>on</u> the tree*, and (2) *they return go <u>to</u> home*. Some examples of the preposition errors are described through the following table.

The error analysis is focused on two kinds of punctuation namely: apostrophe and comma, because these kinds of errors were often found on the students' hand writing. Two kinds of errors were found relating to the apostrophe namely: possessive and contraction apostrophe.

The example of contraction error is *<u>Ardi's</u> take that ladder from Anton's hand*. Thephrase *'Ardi's take'* becomes true, if verb of this phrase is past participle *'taken'*. Phrase *'Ardi's take'* should be *Ardi has taken* or *Ardi is/was taken*, but according to the context of the sentence it is more precise to become *<u>Ardi has</u> taken that ladder from Anton's hand*.

The example of possessive error is *Arya go to <u>Abid home's</u>*, it seems that an apostrophe was put on the wrong noun. An apostrophe should be put on the proper noun, *Abid*, so that phrase *Abid <u>home's</u>* becomes *<u>Abid's home</u>*.

Two kinds of comma errors were made namely: (1) *A comma splice.* An example of this error is *'Gigih go up on the tree and Ewin wait under the tree'*. Between first sentence and second sentence separated by conjunction 'and' should be put 'a comma'. So, the sentence becomes *'Gigih goes up the tree, and Ewin waits under the tree'*; (2) A comma after an introductory element which it can be a sentence or single word. An example of this error is *'After Evan and Erik arrived <u>there they</u> didn't saw*

something'. The sentence should become *'After Evan and Erik arrived there, they didn't see anything'*.

Three kinds of errors were found in capital letters. Firstly, they didn't capitalize the first word of a sentence. An example of this error is performed in: *'when they played football, they listened a voice'*. Word *'when'* should be changed into *'When'*.

Secondly, the students didn't change the first letter of proper name into capital letter. An example of this error type is performed in: *'And kadek under the tree for help the cat'*. Word *'kadek'* should be altered into *'Kadek'*.

Thirdly, the students did not capitalize the names of the days of a week. An example of this error is performed in: *'Every sunday Gigih and Ewin always play football'*. Word *'sunday'* should be written to be *'Sunday'*.

Two kinds of errors were found in spelling. Firstly, errors were mentioned as a false addition of suffix *'–ed'* to verb to form a past participle. An example of this false spelling is *'Suddenly they heared a voice'*. Moreover, suffix *'-ed'* was added to adjective where it was intended to form past participle of the adjective. An example of this error is *'They were happed'*. Adjective *'happy'* is added *'-ed'* to be *'happed'*. Secondly, errors were called as a wrong spelling of a word. An example of this error is *'After one hour later them stop pleying football'*.

Some errors were found relating to the diction. Four examples of sentences are given namely: (1) *They saw a cat on tree which average afraid,* (2) *They listened that voice more,* (3) *at time they are absorbed played, they see cat on the tree, and* (4) *That cat not afraid more.*

According to Longman Dictionary, the word *more* in sentence (2) can function as adverb and can be placed in the end of a sentence. Its meaning is *'used to say that something happens a greater number of times or for longer'*. Adverb *more* indicates an event will last for long time. Therefore, based on the context of the above sentence adverb *more* is not suitable. It should be better if it is replaced with adverb

again. Word *'again'* means *'one more time - used when something has happened or been done before.'* So that sentence should become *'They listened to that voice again.'*

Missing word can also be mentioned *word omission*. These errors are categorized into three kinds namely: *be omission*, *verb omission*, and *object / subject omission*. An example of *be omission* is given namely: *'a cat so afraid there'*. This sentence should be *'A cat was so afraid there'*. An example of *verb omission* is given namely: *'Wend they played football they a voice'*. This sentence should be *'When they had played football, they heard a voice'*. An example of *object omission* is given namely: *'Erik give his friend'*. This sentence should be *Erik gives it to his friend'*.

Categorization of verb tenses' errors are inspired by the results of Richards' research (1974). Five types were found related to verb tenses. The five types are *be-verb stem for verb stem + ed*, *be-verb stem + ed for verb stem + ed*, *verb stem for verb stem + ed*, *wrong form after do,* and *wrong form after modal.* These errors types are explained respectively. *Be-verb stem for verb stem + ed* which this error occurs when the students use the basic form of a verb which is accompanied with to-be (am, is, and are) for past form of the verb.

Be-verb stem + ed for verb stem + ed which this error occurs when the students use the past form of a verb which is accompanied with to-be (am, is, and are) for past form of the verb. It can be also as a fatal error. For example, *'They are played football'* should become *They played football.*

Verb stem for verb stem + ed which this error occurs when the students use the basic form of a verb for past form of the verb. This error dominates the students' error. The students majored to apply this error type. For example, *she take a ladder* should become *she took a ladder.*

'Wrong form after do' which this error occurs when the students use the past form of a verb which is accompanied with auxiliary do. For example, *they didn't saw something* should become *they didn't see something.*

'Wrong form after modal' which this error occurs when the students use the past form or present participle of a verb which is accompanied with modals. For example, *Andi can getting and give to kadek* should become *Andi could get the cat and gave it to Kadek.*

The students' errors in word form occurred when they did not use one of word classes (parts of speech), i.e. verb, noun etc, on the right position. An example is *'He gave it to his friend under the tree <u>with so careful'</u>.* Adjective phrase *'so careful'* is functioned as an adverb, whereas this function is not admitted according to the grammatical rules. Adjective phrase *'so careful'* should become *'carefully'.* So that, that sentence is to be *'He gave it to his friend under the tree carefully'.*

An example of singular and plural form error is given namely: *'Iyan and Awan played football <u>two hour'</u>.* This sentence should be changed into *'Iyan and Awan played football <u>two hours'</u>.* The word 'hour' is abstract noun, so the students thought word 'hour' was not needed to attach suffix 's'. They did not think if word 'hour' is preceded by numbers, the word 'hour' changes its function as countable noun.

Apparently some of students produced unnecessary words in their compositions, so the sentences were complicated to understand. For example, *'<u>Finished played</u> football Kiki and Tony saw <u>cat</u> on the tree and that <u>cat</u> was afraid'.* This sentence is difficult to understand. It should be better to change the sentence into *'<u>After playing</u> football, Kiki and Tony saw a <u>cat</u> was afraid on the tree'.*

Word order refers to the misordering of word. Misordering is considered to be the incorrect placement of a word or group of words in a sentence. This error occurs when the students put a word or group of word in the wrong position in a sentence. For example, *they want to be <u>player football</u> like as Christian Ronaldo.* In the underlined part of this sentence, a student incorrectly ordered the words in this sentence. The correct syntactical order was "they *want to be <u>football player</u> like as Christian Ronaldo*".

Two kinds of errors were found related to agreement. These errors were subject-verb and pronoun agreement. The students only produced two wrong students related to subject/verb agreement error. Those sentences were as follows: (1) *They is belong to*

Ori, (2) *They was felt so happy.* These sentences should become (1) *They were belonging to Ori;* (2) *They were felt so happy.* It is only one error related to the pronoun agreement namely: *'Last Sunday* <u>Bayu and Jono</u> *played football in the park. And* <u>she</u> *went up to help,* <u>she </u> *took a ladder'.* Phrase *'Bayu and Jono'* should be replaced with *'they'.*

The following table shows the analysis of error based on type of errors, number of errors, percentage, and mean of errors committed by the students.

Table 1. Results of Error Analysis

Item	Type of Error	No. of Errors	Percentage (%)	Mean
1.	Verb tense	123	23.76	3.61
2.	Article	108	20.85	3.18
3.	Word form	55	10.62	1.62
4.	Capital letter	54	10.42	1.59
5.	Punctuation	53	10.23	1.56
6.	Missing word	41	7.92	1.21
7.	Spelling	27	5.21	0.79
8.	Preposition	25	4.83	0.74
9.	Redundant word	16	3.09	0.47
10.	Word order	6	1.16	0.18
11.	Singular/plural	6	1.16	0.18
12.	Word-choice	3	0.58	0.09
13.	Agreement	3	0.58	0.09
	Total	**518**	**100.0**	

2. The Causal Factors

As it has been described in an earlier chapter, two causes are analyzable in error analysis. These are direct causes and indirect causes. Two further categorizations are interlingual and intralingual transfers in direct causes. Interlingual factors apply adverb, copulative, word order, and tense form interference. Intralingual factors usually apply overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules. Meanwhile, indirect factors apply students, teacher, and parents. Students include their low motivation in learning. Teacher comprises lack of use of media and low frequency of the writing instruction. Parents embrace lack of parents' support and loose control of students' learning. The causal factors are explained as follows.

a. Direct Factors

'Adverb interference' which this cause appears when adverb patterns of native language (Indonesian) are transferred into foreign language (English). An example is given namely *'He give it his friend under the tree <u>with so careful</u>'*. nThis sentence looks like the pattern is typically Indonesian. The choice of the expression is naturally Indonesian. It seems that it is, in fact, a direct literal translation from Indonesian to English. The expression <u>*with so careful*</u> derives from Indonesian design namely: *dengan* (with) *begitu* (so) *hati-hati* (careful).

'Copulative verb interference' which this cause occurs because the foreign language is very different from the native language in accordance with copulative verb. It seems that learners tend to miss copulative verbs (be verbs) in the sentences. A sentence of the native language *'he begitu takut'* is to be equivalent with a sentence of the foreign language *'he so scared* without putting *to be.*

'Word Order Interference' which this cause emerges when the composition of word order, particularly noun phrase and adjectival phrase, of the foreign language is different from the native language. In the native language the modifier word should be placed after the modified word, but on the contrary in the foreign language modifier word should be put before the modified word. As example, in the native language word *'takut'* (afraid) is placed after word *'kucing'* (cat), so this phrase becomes *'kucing takut'*. Because of the word order, learners tend to arrange this phrase becoming *'cat afraid'*. An example is given namely: *'When they break, Gigih saw <u>a cat afraid</u> on the tree'*. It seems that the phrase in this sentence is naturally Indonesian formation. The modifier word is put after the modified word.

'Tense form interference' which this cause happens because the native language does not have verb tense. Therefore, learners tend to use the same verb tenses in all sentences. It seems that they apply the wrong tenses of the verbs in all sentences. Three examples are given namely: (1) On last Sunday Hiakru and Ryosuke <u>go</u> to park for played football, (2) They <u>break</u> and saw a cat on the tree, and (3) Andi <u>want</u> to help it. Verb *'go'* in sentence (1) should be changed into *'went'*. It looks as if learners regard that the verb *'go'* is static for present, past, and future tense. Whereas,

the foreign language verb *'go'* is dynamic. It means that verb *'go'* will be altered depending on its tense.

'Overgeneralization' which this cause emerges when learners tend to use their common senses and come to generalization of certain sets of grammatical rules. It seems that they mostly use their analogies. While so doing, they are unaware of the fact that their analogies do not always work as expected. They simply apply the newly-created rules in most circumstances, which result in overgeneralization. Two sentences are given as examples namely: (1) They were happed, and (2) They heared a voice. Sentence (1-2) *'the –ed marker'* is overgeneralization. It seems that learners generalize *the –ed marker* for all verbs, even for adjective word. They think that *the –ed marker* can be applied in all verbs. It turns out that their generalization is incorrect and misleading.

'Ignorance of rule restriction' which this cause appears when it is closely related to the generalization of deviant structures which learners fail to observe the restriction of existing structures, that is, the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply (Richards 1974: 175). Learners do not pay more attention to the restriction of the grammatical rules. As a result, they apply the rules in all cases without paying attention to their limitations. Three examples are given namely: (1) Ori wait under the tree, (2) He hope Tono will do that, and (3) They see a cat. Sentences (1-3) seem that the omission of the third person –s is ignorance of rule limitation for the same zero verbal ending. The students think that endingless forms can be applied for all persons.

'Incomplete application of rules' which this cause happens when learners do not apply all the rules they have learned, which is due to incomplete learning. In other words, they do not completely master the rules and their application, and therefore they do not implement those rules in accordance with the circumstances. (1) Hikaru so happy, (2) He so scared to do it, and (3) The cat very afraid. In sentences (1-3) point out that learners seem they do not comprehend about predication in foreign language (English) completely. In Indonesian language, adjective can be predication, but in English adjective cannot be predication directly. Between subject and

adjective must be put a copulative verb. As an example, *Hikaru so happy* should become *Hikaru is so happy.*

b. Indirect Factors

Much of what causes students to make mistakes seems to be their *low motivation* in learning. It seems that the students' low motivation can be caused by two factors. Firstly, learners have low motivation in learning because their parents give them a little motivation. Secondly, students have low motivation to study because they themselves have no spirit to learn although their parents give supports. It can be said that they have no intrinsic motivation to study. The other students have low motivation because they themselves have no high spirit to study. It seems that they are a bit lazy to learn English. They would rather take triffling than learn English.

It seems that a teacher is not creative to teach the writing. He does not utilize media maximally such as: overhead projector, cards, pictures, frames, symbols, and the word or sentence makers. If these media are not available at school, he can create these media *except* overhead projector. Apparently a teacher is still strict to textbook when he carries out the teaching-learning process. Because the provided media or teacher-made media are not utilized maximally and creatively, it influences the writing competences of the students. The teacher rarely uses the provided media or the teacher-media, when he does the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the English instruction runs monotonously and boringly. It is reasonable, if students are given the writing task, they get difficulties to settle it.

Apparently a teacher rarely teaches the writing skill. He focuses reading skill very much. And also there is no any lesson plan for the writing skill is found among eight kinds of lesson plans. These lesson plans were arranged on 15th January, 2009. It looks like that a teacher's supervisor admits the instruction process of the writing appears rarely. It seldom appears based on the recent curriculum, school-based curriculum. It depends on mapping that is made by a teacher.

It appears that some parents give a lack of support to learn at home. Their children are not excited to study more diligently at home. They are not given a reward, if they are successful to increase their English achievement. They are not also given an

extracurricular lesson of English. Harmer (2003: 52) claims that students' attitude to language learning will be greatly affected by the influence of people who are close to them namely: parents or older siblings. It seems that this circumstance will also affect the learners' competence in writing.

It sounds as if students' parents do not carry out the tight control towards the students learning. They give their children freedom in learning, especially learning English. Some students do not have the time schedules to learn at home. It seems that their parents do not suggest them to make the time schedules of learning at home.

E. Conclusion

Eight most common errors were found relating to basic grammars. These are (a) two kinds of errors were found relating to the use of articles, namely: misuse of preposition and absence of articles, (b) three kinds of the preposition errors were found namely: overuse, misuse, and redundant use, (c) punctuation error consists of two kinds namely: apostrophe and comma, (d) three types of errors were found relating to the capital letter namely: the first word of a sentence, the first letter of proper names, and the names of days, (e) two kinds of errors were found relating to spelling namely: a wrong addition of suffix *'–ed'* to past form of verb and a wrong spelling of a word e.g. wend, lader, Sanday etc., (f) five types of errors were found relating to verb tenses. The five types are *be-verb stem for verb stem + ed*, *be-verb stem + ed for verb stem + ed*, *verb stem for verb stem + ed*, *wrong form after do,* and *wrong form after* modal, (g) two types of errors were found relating to word form (parts of speech) such as: a wrong word class and a wrong prepositional phrase, and (h) three kinds of errors were found relating to missing words namely: be omission, verb omission, and object / subject omission.

There are two causal factors of errors in writing such as: direct and indirect factors. The direct factors are adverb, copulative, word order, tense form interference, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules. The indirect factors are students' low motivation, lack of use of media, low frequency of the writing instruction, lack of parents' support, and loose control of learners' learning.

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