

## Mistakes in Writing Narrative Texts Made by The Students of Senior High School

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**Abstract:** This study was aimed at describing the errors in writing narrative texts made by the students of SMAN 2 Lamongan. The study employed descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research design. The subjects of this study were students from grade X, XI, and XII of SMAN 2 Lamongan. The main instruments of the study were the writing prompt and narrative guidelines. The students' writings were scored based on the scoring scale adapted from Cohen and Coffin, et.al; Hyland. The findings showed that the students made errors in moral value, content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary. Grammar is a dominant error because it is found in each grade and each program. The most dominant error in grammar was simple past tense.

**Key Words:** error, narrative writing

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan kesalahan dalam menulis teks naratif yang dibuat oleh siswa SMAN 2 Lamongan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian *cross-sectional* kuantitatif deskriptif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa dari kelas X, XI, dan XII SMAN 2 Lamongan. Instrumen utama dari penelitian ini adalah *writing prompt* dan *narrative guidelines*. Tulisan-tulisan siswa dinilai berdasarkan skala penilaian yang diadaptasi dari Cohen dan Coffin, dkk.; Hyland. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa membuat kesalahan pada nilai moral, isi, organisasi, tata bahasa, dan kosa kata. Tata bahasa merupakan kesalahan yang paling dominan karena ditemukan di setiap kelas dan setiap program. Kesalahan yang paling dominan dalam tata bahasa adalah kesalahan bentuk *simple past tense*.

**Kata kunci:** kesalahan, tulisan naratif

Ramelan (1992) says that most learning problems are caused by different elements found between two languages. Writing is one of the most complicated skills for students to master. Students are required to produce letters, words, and sentences that can be comprehended by an audience. This means that students must know how to spell and use punctuation, as well as choose vocabulary and utilize syntactic structures. As the writing level increases, students must be able to effectively select topics, plan, and organize ideas. Levine (1993) explains this phenomenon might occur because both ESL and EFL students do not have enough vocabulary, fear of criticism, and want to avoid emotional confusion when they are facing a topic and blank paper. That phenomenon also occurs to students in Senior High School 2 Lamongan. After doing observation and interview

with English teachers and students, the researcher found that the quality of their writing was low.

Writing language is getting more and more essential today. It should be mastered in order to be literate. But, Indonesian students of senior high school commonly have only little enthusiasm for their writing tasks. Chomsky in Tarigan (1988) says that errors caused by the lack of knowledge about the language rules. The students get problems in learning English because there are many differences between Indonesian and English in terms of grammar, vocabulary, etc.

According to Heffernan (1982), writing is a solitary act as a means of communication. It has a big advantage over speaking. It gives time for the writer to think, to try out the ideas on paper, to choose words, to read what has been written, to rethink, revise, and

to rearrange it, and most importantly, to consider its effect on readers. In general, writing is divided into four types: exposition, description, narration, and argumentation.

Narrative is telling a story. The purpose of narration is to amuse or entertain the readers with actual or imaginary experiences in different ways. Cahyono (1997) stated that narration usually refers to telling story. The ideas in the narration are developed chronologically.

Writing narrative should include adequate details about the action and its context so that the readers can understand what is going on. In addition, selecting and emphasizing events and details that serve a purpose should be considered. Generally, there are three stages of organization in narrative: orientation, complication, and resolution. Narratives are written in past tense verbs because they tell stories that have already happened. There are many types of narrative: imaginary, factual, or combination of both. They may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths, and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, and personal experiences.

According to Cohen (1994) there are five aspects of writing: Content (main ideas stated clearly and accurately, opinion very clear), Organization (coherent and logical), Vocabulary (choices of words, use of idioms, and word forms), Grammar (control of structure), Mechanic (mastery of spelling and punctuation). In this study, the writer tries to combine the theory between Cohen (1994) and; Hyland (2004). The aspects used in this thesis are moral value, content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary.

This study did not only try to find out the error in writing narratives by the students of SMA 2 Lamongan, but also to find out the differences of errors made by the students from X grade until XII grade. To analyze the error of narrative writing, this study uses theory by Hyland (2004).

This study was aimed at finding the errors in writing narrative texts made by the students of SMAN 2 Lamongan. It focuses on answering one question; "What type of errors in writing narrative text are made by students of SMAN 2 Lamongan?"

This research helps English teachers to know which part of narrative text they should pay attention. In addition, by knowing the errors that the students make, the teachers will be able to select the most appropriate technique to overcome the students' problems in acquiring good quality of narrative.

## METHODS

This study tried to find out the kinds of errors in element of narrative writing by the students of Senior High School 2 Lamongan. This study tried to compare the errors that occur in compositions of written narrative text by grade X, XI and XII. This research used quantitative descriptive design, using simple quantification or called cross-section survey. The population of this study included tenth graders, eleventh graders and twelfth graders from the 2013/2014 academic year students of SMA 2 Lamongan. Each grade consisted of science, social, and language study program. One class of each study program was selected and 228 students were taken as the sample of this study.

The main instrument used in this study was the writing prompt and narrative guidelines. The writing prompt was used to get the result of the students' work especially in writing narrative. Narrative guidelines were used as the directions of writing correction suitable with good narrative writing criteria. Data were collected by assigning the students to write compositions based on the topic they were interested in. So, the topics to write about would vary considerably.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data of the study were taken from the students' writing narrative texts. The students' errors were classified based on moral value, content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary.

### Errors made by Tenth Graders

The science program students made the highest number of mistakes in stating moral value (32.5) followed by the social program students (30.43%) and the language program students (25%). Similarly, in expressing the content in their writing, the science program students made the highest number of errors (17.5%), followed by the social program (7.5%), and the language program students (5%). In organizing narrative texts, students of science and social programs had same frequency of errors (7.5%), while language program students made the least errors (2.5%). In using grammar in their writing, similar order of the number of mistakes were found, the highest number of errors was made by science program students (37.5%), followed by the social program students (20%), and the language program students (12.5%).

In selecting vocabulary, science program students and social program students made the same frequency of error (5%) while the language program students made fewer errors (2.5%).

In summary, within the tenth graders the science program students made the highest number of errors, followed by the social program students and the language program students. Concerning type of errors, the highest average frequency of errors in narrative writing made by the tenth graders was error in expressing moral values, the second was in using grammar and the lowest average frequency of error in narrative writing was in selecting vocabulary.

### **Errors Made by Eleventh Graders**

The highest number of errors in expressing moral value in narrative writing was made by the science program students, (27.78%), followed by the social program students (25.81%), and language program students (25%). Similarly, for the errors in content, the highest number of mistakes was made by the science program students (13.89%), followed by the social program students (12.9%) and the language program students (12.5%). The highest number of mistakes in organization was found in social program students (12.9%), followed by the language program students (12.5%) and science program students (11.11%). For the mistakes using grammar, the highest number of mistakes was found in the social program students (41.94%), followed by the science program students (38.89%), and the lowest was made by the language program students (37.5%). For the mistakes in using vocabulary, the highest number of mistakes was found in the language program students (12.5%), next in the science program students (7.5%), and the last in the social program students (6.45%).

Within the eleventh graders, the science program students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by social program students, and then the language program students. In expressing moral values, expressing the content, and in using grammar.

In organizing narrative writing the social program students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by the language students, and science students. In using vocabulary in narrative writing, the highest number of mistakes was made by the language students, followed by the science students, and social students.

The highest average frequency of mistakes in narrative writing made by the eleventh graders was

errors in grammar, followed by stating moral value, and vocabulary.

### **Errors Made by The Twelfth Graders**

The highest number of mistakes in expressing moral values was made by science program students (32.58%), and then social program students and language program students (25%). The highest number of mistakes in expressing content was made by social program students (17.68%), followed by language program students (16.67%) and science program students (13.16%). The highest number of mistakes in organizing the narrative text was made by science program students (10.71%), followed by social program students (10.53%) and language program students (8.33%). The highest number of mistakes in using grammar was made by language program students (41.67%), followed by science program students (36.84%) and social program students (35.71%). The highest number of mistakes in using vocabulary was made by the social program students class (10.71%), followed by the language program students (8.33%) and science program students (7.89%).

In short, for the twelfth graders, in terms of errors in expressing moral values and in organizing the narrative text the Science students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by social students, and then language program students.

In terms of mistakes in expressing content in narrative writing, the social program students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by language program students, and science program students. In terms of mistakes in using grammar in narrative writing, the language students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by science program students, and social program students. In terms of using vocabulary in narrative writing, the social students made the highest number of mistakes, followed by language program students, and science program students.

The highest average frequency of mistakes in narrative writing made by the twelfth graders was mistakes in using grammar, then in expressing moral value and the lowest in using vocabulary.

### **Errors in Narrative Writing Across Different Grades**

Students made mistakes in expressing moral value, in expressing content, in using organization, grammar, and vocabulary. The number of mistakes

in expressing moral value, content, in using grammar, and in using vocabulary tend to decrease from grade X to grade XI, but then increase from grade XI to grade XII. Mistakes in using grammar were mostly dominant. The students did not know about the tenses that should be used in narrative writing. The number of mistakes in vocabulary was relatively small in the students' narrative writing. It means that they can choose the effective words in their narrative writing.

The number of mistakes in organizing the narratives between the grades X, XI, and XII was similar. The students made mistakes in organizing and in using the generic structure in the narrative writing. Sometimes, one of the generic structure components is missing. The overall finding shows that grade XI achieved better than grade X and grade XII.

The students claimed that writing was difficult. Besides, the students thought that writing was not important to them. While, the teachers said that the students found it difficult to write because there was little time to practice writing.

### **Errors in Narrative Writing Across Different Department**

The highest number of mistakes in expressing moral value (32.50%) and in expressing content (17.50%) was found in science program students. In organizing the narrative writing and in using vocabulary, the science and the social program students have the same number of mistakes. The highest number of mistakes in using grammar was found in science program students. The mistakes in using grammar were related to the use of simple past tense. The students got difficulty when using simple past in their writing.

The mistakes in using grammar seem to be consistent as they were found with high frequency in all classes and all departments. The students got difficulty in using simple past tense in their writing. One possible reason of the mistakes is that the students translate their ideas using Indonesian sentence patterns which do not have past tense verb pattern. The implicit way of teaching grammar in schools may add the reason the students got difficulty in using correct grammar in their writing.

This study found that the students in SMAN 2 Lamongan still made a lot mistakes in narrative writing. The number of mistakes in each level increased. Besides, this study also showed that the most domi-

nant mistakes in students' writing narrative was on the use of grammar, especially on the use of simple past tense.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The number of mistakes mostly decreases from grade X students to grade XI students but increases again in grade XII students. From grade X until XII, the students made dominant mistakes in using grammar, especially in using simple past tense verbs which characterizes the narrative writing.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that English teachers use this finding as the references to the learning materials especially for writing, preparing learning strategies in learning writing, and for writing assessment. Besides, teachers have to motivate the students in writing class. They should not only assign grades on students' writing but also give feed-back on their writing. Students should do more practice in writing narrative composition by paying attention to the use of correct grammar to improve their skill in narrative writing. Teaching grammar explicitly is also recommended as the better alternative to teaching grammar implicitly like what has been done so far.

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