

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN
WRITING RECOUNT TEXTS AT SMAN 1
PANYABUNGAN SELATAN**

*(A Descriptive Qualitative Study at the Eleventh Grade Students of XI IPA 1
SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan in the Academic Year of 2025/2026)*

Thesis

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By:

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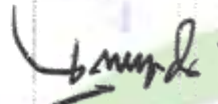
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ABSTRACT

Aspan Martua. 2026. *An Analysis of Students' Grammatical Errors in Writing Recount Texts at the Eleventh Grade of XI IPA 1 SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan*

This study aimed to find out the most common grammatical errors made by the eleventh-grade students of XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan in writing recount texts and to describe the sources of the errors. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data were obtained from students' recount texts and semi-structured interviews. The students' grammatical errors were analyzed based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which consists of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The interview data were analyzed to identify the sources of students' errors, including interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies. The findings showed that there were 300 grammatical error occurrences found in the students' recount texts. The errors consisted of 142 misformation errors (47.33%), 92 omission errors (30.67%), 38 addition errors (12.67%), and 28 misordering errors (9.33%). Therefore, misformation was found to be the most common grammatical error made by the students. The grammatical problems were mainly related to the use of simple past tense, verb forms, auxiliary verbs, subject-verb agreement, articles, plural markers, pronouns, prepositions, and word order. The interview findings indicated that the sources of students' grammatical errors included interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies. Among these sources, interlingual transfer was the most frequently identified, indicating that students' first-language and Indonesian language structures influenced their English grammatical production. In conclusion, the students of XI IPA 1 experienced various grammatical difficulties in writing recount texts, with misformation being the dominant type of error and interlingual transfer being the most prominent source of errors. These findings are expected to provide useful information for English teachers in identifying students' grammatical difficulties and developing appropriate instruction to improve students' accuracy in writing recount texts.

Keywords: *grammatical errors, error analysis, recount text, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, interlingual transfer.*

ABSTRAK

Aspan Martua (NIM : 20130002). 2026. Analisis Kesalahan Gramatikal Siswa dalam Menulis Teks Recount pada Siswa Kelas XI IPA 1 SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis kesalahan gramatikal yang paling sering dilakukan oleh siswa kelas XI IPA 1 SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan dalam menulis teks recount serta mendeskripsikan sumber kesalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data penelitian diperoleh dari teks recount yang ditulis oleh siswa dan hasil wawancara semi-terstruktur. Kesalahan gramatikal siswa dianalisis berdasarkan Surface Strategy Taxonomy yang dikemukakan oleh Dulay, Burt, dan Krashen, yang terdiri atas empat jenis kesalahan, yaitu omission (penghilangan), addition (penambahan), misformation (salah pembentukan), dan misordering (salah susunan). Sementara itu, data wawancara dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi sumber kesalahan yang meliputi interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, dan communication strategies. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 300 kesalahan gramatikal yang ditemukan dalam teks recount siswa. Kesalahan tersebut terdiri atas 142 kesalahan misformation (47,33%), 92 kesalahan omission (30,67%), 38 kesalahan addition (12,67%), dan 28 kesalahan misordering (9,33%). Dengan demikian, misformation merupakan jenis kesalahan gramatikal yang paling dominan dilakukan oleh siswa. Permasalahan gramatikal yang ditemukan terutama berkaitan dengan penggunaan simple past tense, bentuk kata kerja, kata kerja bantu, kesesuaian subjek dan kata kerja, artikel, penanda jamak, kata ganti, preposisi, dan susunan kata. Hasil wawancara menunjukkan bahwa sumber kesalahan siswa meliputi interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, dan communication strategies. Di antara sumber tersebut, interlingual transfer merupakan sumber yang paling sering ditemukan, yang menunjukkan bahwa struktur bahasa pertama siswa dan bahasa Indonesia memengaruhi produksi gramatikal mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas XI IPA 1 mengalami berbagai kesulitan gramatikal dalam menulis teks recount, dengan misformation sebagai jenis kesalahan yang dominan dan interlingual transfer sebagai sumber kesalahan yang paling menonjol. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan informasi yang bermanfaat bagi guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengidentifikasi kesulitan gramatikal siswa dan mengembangkan pembelajaran yang tepat untuk meningkatkan ketepatan siswa dalam menulis teks recount.

Kata kunci: kesalahan gramatikal, analisis kesalahan, teks recount, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, interlingual transfer.

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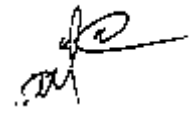
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The Researcher



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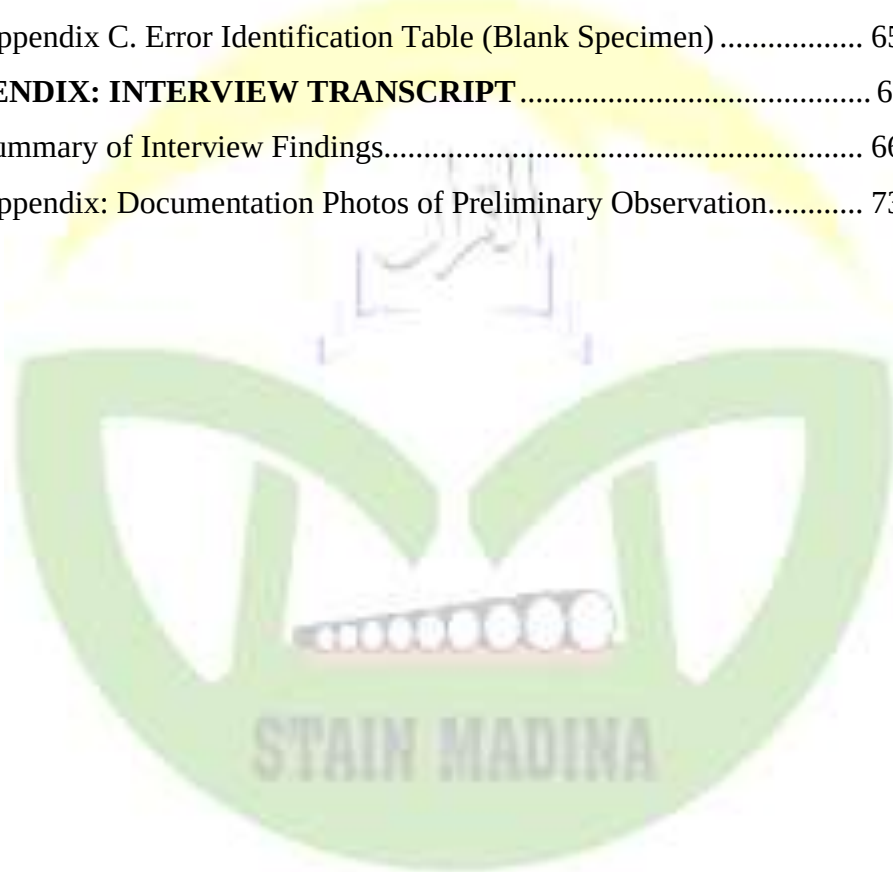
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Writing is frequently recognized as one of the most difficult linguistic abilities, especially for English language learners. As a productive skill, writing requires learners not only to generate and organize ideas but also to translate those ideas into readable text. To achieve this, learners must apply various language elements simultaneously, including vocabulary, punctuation, cohesion, and grammar. According to Hyland (2021), writing involves a complex cognitive and social process in which writers must manage organization, language structure, and grammatical accuracy to ensure that the text is understandable to readers. Therefore, grammar serves as the foundational guide for successful writing. Without a solid understanding of grammatical rules, students will struggle to construct coherent sentences, and the intended message of their writing may not be successfully conveyed.

In the context of English language learning in Indonesian senior high schools based on the current curriculum, students are expected to master various text genres. One of the essential texts taught at the eleventh-grade level is the recount text. A recount text aims to retell past experiences or events in chronological order. To write a successful recount text, students must understand its generic structure. This structure consists of orientation, events, and reorientation, along with its specific language features primarily the use of the simple past tense. However, transitioning from understanding the concept to actually applying it in writing remains a significant challenge for many students. As argued by Rao (2020), the difficulty in second language writing lies not only in generating ideas but also in applying appropriate grammatical structures accurately in the target language.

To identify the factual problems faced by students in the field, a preliminary observation was conducted in class XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan. During the English teaching and learning process, it was observed that students exhibited low enthusiasm and significant hesitation when assigned writing tasks.

When asked to compose a short recount text about their unforgettable experiences, many students struggled to initiate their writing. The observation revealed that students frequently relied on word-for-word translation from Indonesian to English. This direct translation method often disrupted the English sentence structure, leading to unnatural and confusing paragraphs. This phenomenon aligns with Saputra's (2025) research on error analysis, which states that structural differences between the students' mother tongue and English frequently lead to systematic grammatical errors in text production.

To gain deeper insights into this issue, a preliminary interview was also conducted with the English teacher of class XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan. The teacher confirmed that writing is indeed the most challenging skill for the students, primarily due to their lack of grammatical mastery. The teacher highlighted several recurring issues. First, students consistently fail to apply the simple past tense correctly, often substituting past verbs with present verbs (e.g., writing “I go to the beach last holiday” instead of “I went”). Second, the teacher noted frequent errors in subject-verb agreement and the omission of necessary auxiliary verbs (e.g., “He not happy” instead of “He was not happy”). The teacher emphasized that while the students understand the sequence of a recount text, their grammatical inaccuracies heavily obscure the meaning of their writing.

The findings from the preliminary observation and the teacher's interview indicate a clear gap between the expected learning outcomes of the curriculum and the students' actual writing proficiency. The students' recurring mistakes demonstrate that learning grammar and applying it to a specific genre like recount text requires more analytical attention. Therefore, an investigation into students' writing through Error Analysis (EA) is essential. As explained by Ur (2012), identifying and analyzing learners' errors is a pedagogical necessity to diagnose learning difficulties and design effective remedial instruction. Understanding the specific types of errors students make and the underlying sources of those errors will provide valuable feedback for both the students and the teacher to evaluate and improve future writing instruction.

Therefore, based on the problems identified above, the researcher is motivated to conduct an in-depth investigation to analyze these specific issues. This research is entitled “An Analysis of Students' Grammatical Errors in Writing Recount Texts at the Eleventh Grade of XI IPA 1 SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan.”

A further reason for examining grammatical accuracy in recount writing is that grammar and meaning are closely connected. Readers may often understand a learner's intended message even when a sentence contains an error, but repeated errors can make the sequence of events less precise and can obscure relationships among participants, actions, and time. In a recount text, the reader depends on language choices to understand what happened first, what followed, and how the writer evaluates the experience. Accurate tense marking and clear sentence structure therefore support both grammatical correctness and the communicative purpose of the genre.

The present study treats students' written texts as evidence of language use in a specific task rather than as a complete measure of their overall English ability. A writing sample reflects the interaction of several demands: recalling an experience, selecting relevant details, organizing events chronologically, and producing English sentences. When these demands occur together, a learner may concentrate on communicating the story and pay less attention to grammatical form. Error analysis makes these observable forms available for systematic examination and helps the researcher describe recurring patterns without assuming that every error has a single cause.

The value of the study is also connected to the local instructional context. Evidence from the writing produced by XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan can help make broad statements about students' grammatical difficulty more specific. Rather than relying only on a general impression that writing is difficult, the analysis identifies the forms that need attention and relates them to students' explanations in interviews. The results are intended as a diagnostic contribution for the class and setting studied; they should not automatically be generalized to every class or school without further evidence.

B. Focus of the Research

The focus of this study is to analyze the common grammatical errors made by the eleventh-grade students of XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan in writing recount texts based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy developed by Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen (1982), which continues to be widely used in recent grammatical error analysis studies, such as Sari and Putri (2022). The sub-focus is to describe the causes or sources of the errors that occur in their writing based on recent theories of error sources in second language learning discussed by Fitriani and Wahyuni (2021), which explain that students' errors commonly originate from interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, and incomplete mastery of grammatical rules.

C. Research Questions

Based on the focus stated above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the common grammatical errors made by the eleventh-grade students of XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan in writing recount texts?
2. What are the sources that cause the eleventh-grade students of XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan to make grammatical errors in writing recount texts?

D. Objectives of the Research

In line with the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the most common grammatical errors made by the eleventh-grade students of XI IPA 1 at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan in writing recount texts.
2. To describe the sources of the errors made by the students in writing recount texts.

E. Significance of the Research

The findings of this research are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this research is expected to serve as a foundational reference and offer a theoretical contribution to the development of English language pedagogy, particularly in the field of Error Analysis (EA) in writing text genres.

2. Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for educational institutions, especially for English teachers at SMAN 1 Panyabungan Selatan, as an empirical diagnostic reference for improving English language instruction on recount text material. For students, this research is expected to raise their awareness of common grammatical errors so they can avoid making the same errors in future writing tasks. For other researchers, this study can serve as a relevant reference for conducting similar research on error analysis.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and to give a shared reference for the reader, the key terms used in this research are defined as follows.

1. Grammatical errors refer to systematic deviations from the grammatical rules of standard English that appear in the written texts produced by the students. In this research, the term is limited to deviations in the use of tense, verb form, subject–verb agreement, auxiliary verbs, articles, plural markers, pronouns, prepositions, and word order, and it does not cover errors in spelling, punctuation, or vocabulary choice.

2. Recount text is a genre of text whose social purpose is to retell past events or experiences in the order in which they happened. In this research, the recount texts are personal recounts written by the eleventh-grade students about an unforgettable experience, for example an unforgettable holiday, a school event, or a family activity.

3. Error analysis is a procedure used by teachers and researchers to collect samples of learner language, identify the errors in those samples, describe and classify them, and explain why they occurred. In this research, error analysis is used as the main approach for examining the students' recount texts.

4. Surface Strategy Taxonomy is the classification of errors proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) that describes the way in which a learner's form differs from the target form. The taxonomy distinguishes four categories, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

5. Sources of errors are the factors that cause learners to produce errors. In this research, the sources are described through the four categories explained by Brown (2023), namely interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies.

