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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERROR IN WRITING PERSONAL LETTER

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a b s t r a c t

This study aimed to find out grammatical errors in writing personal letters and the most grammatical errors made by the eleventh graders of SMA Negeri 5 Ogan Komering Ilir. This study used descriptive qualitative research method. The subject of the study was the eleventh social one students of SMA Negeri 5 Ogan Komering Ilir in the academic year of 2020/2021. The technique of collecting the data was a writing test using google form. To check the validity and reliability of the test, a triangulation method was applied. The information was presented in a descriptive manner and assessed using a percentage calculation. The calculations presented that the students made 12.5% sentence pattern errors, 24.1% tense errors, 9.17% pronoun errors, 2.5% preposition errors, 20% punctuation errors, and 31.66% spelling errors.The most dominant grammatical errors made by students was error of spelling (31.66%).

INTRODUCTION

To have good English communication in writing, someone needs to master writing skills. As supported by Herlinawati (2011, p. 14), writing is an important skill to express an idea without sound. Writing is one of the English abilities taught in school, according to Wulandari (2015, p. 2), and the school should pay more attention to it. In other words, writing is one way of communication used by someone in written form so that the information stated in the written form can be shared with other persons.

The ability to write is a key aspect of English language instruction. Writing is also significant, according to Hamdani, Kristiawan, and Ramadhani (2017, p. 137), since it is a productive skill that demands students to produce a language in order to communicate and is able to enhance other language skills like listening, speaking, and reading. In short, writing is crucial in English language teaching for several reasons such as it aids students' academic and future employment success, is a productive skill that needs students to communicate, and improves listening, speaking, and reading abilities.

Writing, despite its importance in our lives, is regarded as the most difficult talent for students to master. Writing in English is challenging, according to Sahara (2017, p.2), and some students will struggle with it. Students struggle to write because they lack the necessary

vocabulary, spelling skills, grammar standards, and writing experience. Furthermore, Hidayah (2019, p. 2), clarified that writing is one of the English talents that is more challenging than others. To accomplish the writing task, you must also be able to understand language patterns such as rules, grammar, structures, and so on. It may be inferred that students' writing skills are more complex and harder to develop due to several factors that must be considered, such as grammatical understanding, mechanics, and vocabularies. Furthermore, the kids rarely engage in writing activities, thus they are not accustomed to writing.

Maharani (2017, p. 474) also claimed that some students are exceedingly insecure and hesitant to write for many reasons. The main reason is that they believe they have nothing to write about, and even if they do have something to write about, they often lack vocabulary, syntax, and sentence organization, making their ideas difficult to convey. It can be stated that students have problems in writing because of having no ideas, limited words, lack of grammar, and lack of sentence organization. As a result, they tend to be lazy to express their idea in written form.

In writing, one of the English language aspects that must be considered is grammar. Grammar is defined as a method of forecasting a speaker's or hearer's knowledge of a language using a systematic approach (Purpura, 2014, p. 6). This is accomplished through a set of rules or principles that can be utilized to generate all grammatical or well-formed utterances in the language. As stated by Brinton and Brinton (2011, p.7) grammar refers to the rules or principles by which a language operates, i.e., its system or structure. Whether or whether they can articulate the norms of the language, all speakers of a language have internalized grammar (competence). Grammar, according to Richards and Schmidt (2012, p. 25), is a description of a language's structure and how linguistic components such as words and phrases are produced into sentences. Finally, grammar is a set of rules that control how phrases, sentences, and paragraphs are created.

Moreover, without grammar, the sentence was meaningless. Writing, according to Syarif (2014, p. 1), necessitates extensive knowledge and critical thinking when students produce words, phrases, and paragraphs simultaneously while adhering to proper English grammar. Grammar is also a crucial feature of a language, according to Effendi, Rokhyati, and Rachman (2017, p. 42). It can be said that grammar is very important in writing. Using good grammar, it is expected that the student's writing will have meaningful sentences so that the reader will understand what the writer writes. Therefore, the knowledge of grammar must be mastered by the students so that they can combine words into sentences and sentences into paragraphs meaningfully.

According to the Eleventh Grade Curriculum for 2013, students must learn how to write a personal letter. According to Harni and Dewi, "a personal letter is also known as a private letter because it contains private information involving experience in the written form to be delivered to a specific individual" (2016, p. 3). Personal letters are frequently used to provide news, maintain social relationships, and achieve a specific discourse aim related with specific occasions, according to Crane (2016). As a result, the precise communicative aims pursued by letters are frequently related to the development of relationships between the writer and the reader. In other words, a personal letter is a private letter expressing certain information about something that has a function to share news, to have good social relations, and to reach special purposes.

In fact, most of the students make errors when they write a personal letter. According to Sasmiasih (2014, p. 5), error is a systematic deviation that occurs when a learner has not learned something and regularly gets it wrong. It means that error is something done by the students repeatedly and systematically because they do not know how to write the correct one and forget about the rules of the language.

Considered the students' errors in writing, Ikrima (2020, p.78) discovered that the use of prepositions is the most prevalent error committed by students while writing a personal letter, accounting for 30 errors (or 54.54%). The second rate is the article's use, which has a total of 22 mistakes, or 40%. The use of pronouns comes in third, with a total of three errors, or 5.54%. In this scenario, the students continued to make errors in grammar when writing personal letters, such as using an article, a preposition, and a pronoun incorrectly. In short, in writing a personal letter, students still have errors especially in the aspect of a language, that is grammar, such as an article, a preposition, and a pronoun.

The previous researcher looked at a personal letter and concentrated on the grammar, specifically the article, preposition, and pronoun. In the meanwhile, this study looked at a personal letter's sentence structure, tense, pronoun, preposition, punctuation, and spelling. As a result, the goals of this study were to discover grammatical errors in writing a personal letter and the most common grammatical errors committed by SMA Negeri 5 Ogan Komering Ilir eleventh graders.

METHOD

Descriptive qualitative research was employed in this study. The subject involved was the eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Ogan Komering Ilir. To obtain the data, a written test was used. In the written test, students were asked to write a personal letter based on the chosen topic. The written test used google forms so that the students could write a personal letter based on the time given, which was for 90 minutes.

To check the reliability and validity of the data, a triangulation technique was utilized. The sample students were given a writing test that was based on numerous textbook sources. To analyze the data, students' writing personal letter were assessed based on grammatical problems that were classified into sentence structure, tense, pronoun, preposition, punctuation, and spelling which was based on a theory of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) in terms of errors in linguistics taxonomy. The categorization was grouped into a table, and the percentages of errors made by sample students were estimated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data on grammatical errors in students' writing was analyzed using the linguistics strategy taxonomy developed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982).

Error of Sentence Pattern

It was discovered that there were 15 sentence errors of sentence pattern after examining the errors of eleventh-grade students in writing a personal letter based on types of grammatical errors. The error of sentence pattern included 2 sentences with a subject error (13%); 7 sentences with a verb error (47%); and 6 sentences with an object error (40%). This might be inferred that students made 7 sentences with verb errors (47%). For example, I try to help me parents as much as possible (I try to help my parents as much as possible) and mother and my father really like cake (my mother and my father like cake).

Error of Tense

There were 29 tense errors identified after studying the errors made by eleventh grade students while writing a personal letter. The error of tense included 20 sentences error of simple present tense (70%), 2 sentences error of past tense (7%), 3 sentences error of present progressive tense (10%), 2 sentences error of present perfect tense (7%), 1 sentence error of past progressive tense (3%), and 1 sentence error of present perfect progressive tense (3%). It could be concluded that 20 sentences error in simple present tense (70%) made by the students. For example, I'm so happy that my boss appoints me on join this trip (I'm so happy that my boss appoints me help to join this trip) and I should help parents (I should help my parents).

Error of Pronoun

There were 11 sentence errors of pronoun observed after examining the errors of eleventh-grade students in writing a personal letter.The error of pronoun included 9 sentence errors of subject (82%), 1 sentence error of verb (9%), and 1 sentence error of adverb (9%). It could be concluded that 9 sentences error in the subject (82%) made by the students. For example, work ethic will take you place (work ethic will take your place) and you faithfully (yours faithfully).

Error of Preposition

Three sentences errors of the preposition were found after analysing the errors of eleventh-grade students in writing a personal letter. The error of preposition included 2 sentence error of phrase preposition (67%), and 1 sentence error of verb Preposition (33%). It could be concluded that 2 sentences error in the phrase preposition (67%) made by the students. For example, helping is the last we do for them (helping in the last we do for them) and my fault being sleep late the night (my fault for being sleep late the night).

Error of Punctuation

After assessing the errors made by eleventh-grade students when writing a personal letter, it was revealed that 24 sentences contained punctuation errors. The error of punctuation included a comma missing in 15 sentences, an apostrophe missing in 6 sentences, a question

mark missing in 2 sentences, and a hyphen missing in one sentence. It was discovered that the students produced 15 sentences containing comma errors. For example, of course I did not give up until finally (of course, I did not give up until finally) and collage seniors who are handsome right (collage seniors who are handsome, right?).

Error of Spelling

After examining the errors made by eleventh-grade students while drafting a personal letter, it was discovered that 38 sentences had spelling errors. The error included 4 sentences of adjective error, 2 sentences of adverb error, 2 sentences of auxiliary verb error, 2 sentences of conjunction error, 22 sentences of noun error, 4 sentences of pronoun error, and 2 sentences of verb error It may be determined that the students made noun errors in 22 sentences. For example, halping (helping), I cant say that (I can't say that) and then I ever have in my life (than I ever have in my life).

These kinds of errors were counted, and the total number of errors was translated to a percentage. The table listed the grammatical faults that students made when writing a personal letter. See Table 1 for more information.

Table 1. The Percentage of Grammatical Errors Types

No	Types of Errors	Components	Total Error	Percentage
1	Spelling	Adjective, adverb, auxiliary verb, conjunction, noun, pronoun, verb, noun	38	31.66%
2	Tense	simple present tense, past tense, present progressive tense, present perfect tense, past progressive tense, present perfect progressive tense	29	24.17%
3	Punctuation	Comma, apostrophe, question mark, hyphen	24	20%
4	Sentence Pattern	Subject, verb, object	15	12.5%
5	Pronoun	Subject, verb, adverb	11	9.17%
6	Preposition	Verb preposition, phrase preposition	3	2.5%
	Total		**120**	**100%**

Table 1 showed some grammatical errors made by students in writing personal letter, namely 15 error of sentences pattern (12.5%), 29 errors of tense (24.17%), 11 errors of pronoun (9.17%), 3 errors of a preposition (2.5%), 24 errors of punctuation (20%), and 38 errors of spelling (31.66%). It could be concluded that most students made errors of spelling 31.66% consisted of an adjective, an adverb, an auxiliary verb, a conjunction, a noun, a pronoun, and a verb.

Based on the findings, the grammatical errors done by students were sentence pattern, tense, pronoun, preposition, punctuation, and spelling. First, in terms of sentence pattern, 5 sentence error of sentence pattern (12.5%) made by social eleventh-grade students. Some students made mistakes in sentence patterns, according to Hendrawaty (2018, p. 69), and each phrase pattern described a different manner to combine clauses. If students favor one pattern, their writing may become monotonous if every phrase follows the same pattern. Students usually made errors in a subject, verb, or object. For examples, (1) Students made errors in the

subject: "Him made a great team". It should be "He made a great team. (2) Students made errors in the verb: "Two dogs is sitting in the grass". It should be "Two dogs are sitting in the grass."(3) students made errors in the object: "I want to help me parents." It should be (I want to help my parents." In terms of sentence pattern that included errors in subject, verb, and object, most students made errors in the verb.

Second, there are 29 tense mistakes in the sentences (24.17%). Tense is an important aspect of grammar that students learn in order to explain how an accident or tale occurred. According to Susanti, tense is a mechanism used by English speakers to convey time in their language and to think like a native speaker (2017, p.3). As a result, students were required to comprehend the role of tenses in writing personal letters, paragraphs, and essays. It meant that tense was always used to organize the concepts into the paragraph while expressing them in writing. Furthermore, when composing personal letters, the majority of students employed both current and past time. The majority of students committed mistakes in the simple present tense in this scenario. Simple present tense is used to express routine tasks, state generic facts, and state daily routines, according to Azar and Hagen (2017, p. 21). When it comes to tense, most students struggle to use the basic present tense. For example, "I gets up at seven every morning". It should be "I get up at seven every morning".

Third, in terms of pronoun, nine sentences error in terms of pronoun (9.17%). Personal pronouns alter form for person (first, second, and third), case (subject, object, possessive), number (single, plural), and gender, according to Nurjanah (2012, p. 145). (masculine, feminine, neuter). In this case most students made errors in the subject, for example, "My give them ring". It should be "I give them ring".

Fourth, in terms of preposition, three sentences error in terms of preposition (2.5%). Preposition illustrates the relationship between a noun or pronoun and a verb, an adjective, or another noun or pronoun, according to Nawangsari and Wijanah (2019, p. 57). In short, despite their seeming simplicity, prepositions play a significant role in the structure of a sentence, such as indicating particular relationships between people, objects, and places. In this case, most students made errors in phrase preposition.

Fifth, in terms of punctuation, 24 sentences contained errors of punctuation (20%). Punctuation errors arise when one of the punctuation marks is omitted or misused, according to Nurlaili (2018). Slash, comma, apostrophe, period, exclamation point, colon, semicolon, question mark, dash, and many others are examples of punctuation. In brief, punctuation has essential role in communicating the writer's idea. In writing personal letter, most students made error of punctuation especially in comma. For example, "Of course I did not give up". It should be "Of course, I did not give up".

Sixth, in terms of spelling, 38 sentences contained errors of spelling (31.66%). Spelling errors, according to Kusuran (2016, p. 5), occur when a learner produces the same misspellings over and over again because they do not know what is correct. Adjectives, adverbs, nouns, pronouns, verbs, and other words can all have spelling mistakes. In this research, most students made error of spelling especially in noun. For example, "A latter is sent by Andi". It should be "A letter is sent by Andi".

Based on the analysis of the data, it was discovered that the most prevalent error committed by students was a spelling error, which accounted for 31.66% of all errors (38 sentences). Students' writing errors can arise in paragraphs, punctuation, articles, spellings, and conjunctions, according to Sari (2015, p. 35). Fanani (2012, p. 10) adds that it is fairly uncommon for L2 learners to write words as they hear them, for example, a student might write "Spel it rait" for "Spell it right" or "Shi is my teacher" for "She is my teacher". Students are more likely to use their first language skills to learn to read, write, and spell the foreign

language, which in this case was English. In summary, when writing a personal letter, students made various mistakes, particularly in terms of spelling.

To sum up, the students made grammatical errors in writing personal letter in terms of spelling (31.66%), tense (24.17%), punctuation (20%), sentence pattern (12.5%), pronoun (9.17%), and preposition (2.5%). The most dominant grammatical errors in writing personal letter made by the student is error of spelling, 38 sentences contained error of spelling (31.66%). The most dominant grammatical error made by students was spelling.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that the eleventh-grade students of SMA N 5 Ogan Komering Ilir made errors in their writing personal letters based on the data collected and discussed in the preceding chapter. Students wrote a personal letter based on the data collected and the results of the researcher's study. The majority of them made errors in sentence pattern, tense, preposition, pronoun, punctuation, and spelling. This claim was backed up by statistics, which demonstrated that students produced 12.5% sentence pattern errors, 24.17% tense errors, 9.17% pronoun errors, 2.5% preposition errors, 20% punctuation issues, and 31.66% spelling errors. From the data, it indicated that the eleventh-grade students of SMA N 5 Ogan Komering Ilir had problems of sentence pattern, tense, preposition, pronoun, punctuation, and spelling in writing a personal letter. The most dominant error made by the students was spelling.

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