



Students' Errors in Using Language Features in Writing a Personal Recount Text at SMPN 5 Padang Panjang

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Article History

Published: 2024-06-06

Abstract

This research aimed to find out students' errors in using language features in writing a personal recount text. This research employed a descriptive research. The researcher adapted the theory of language features from Gerot and Wignell (1994), Barwick (1998), and Derewianka & Jones (2016). The participants were 42 eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Padang Panjang. According to the research findings, the errors made by the students in using language features from the three language features; specific participants, simple past tense and adverbial phrases and connectives were the absence of specific pronouns and verbs, the incorrect use, form and order, the addition of another verbs.

Keywords:

Language features, personal recount text, student's errors

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How to Cite: Kifli, R. N., & Rani, Y. A., (2024). Students' Errors in Using language Features in Writing a Personal Recount Text at SMPN 5 Padang Panjang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 13. (2): pp. 687-694, DOI: [10.24036/jelt.v13i2.128797](https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v13i2.128797)

INTRODUCTION

The variety of texts presented in the curriculum is essential for students to train and further develop their literacy abilities in English language learning. One of the texts being learned by the eighth-grade students is recount which described a real-life event that happened in the past in chronological order to inform someone of our actions. Once they understand the text structure, they try to identify the purpose and interpret any unspoken information in the text. Furthermore, language features are taught regarding how such features contribute to the broader meaning of the texts they are reading or writing (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). As a result, students make an effort to include basic information, use more diverse vocabulary, and link ideas using conjunction in their writing. Hence, learning recount text in junior high school may support students' development in literacy by establishing the nature of the texts they are learning.

The significance of recount text corresponds to students' ability to engage and communicate in a wider range of situations in the spoken and written form. As students' earliest writing attempts tend to closely resemble their speaking, recounts may potentially help them improve their writing skills (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). It can be seen through a discussion about various general interest topics related to daily

life activity at home and at school where they communicate their thoughts by using simple sentence structures and verb tenses (Kemendikbud Ristek, 2022).

Corresponding with the curriculum goals, students should be able to comprehend and produce text by considering the nature of the text such as social function, generic structure, and language features of the text being learned. Eventually, the generic structure of the personal recount begins with the orientation which provides background information about the event, followed by a series of events about what happened and what comes after, and concludes the string of events that is called re-orientation. Furthermore, the language features of the text include the use of (1) specific participants such as first-person pronouns, (2) simple past tense, and (3) adverbial phrases to identify place and time and connectives to sequence events (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Barwick, 1998; Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

Based on the preliminary research done by interviewing an English teacher at SMPN 5 Padang Panjang, students still had a limited level of proficiency when it came to writing a personal recount text. By paying attention to the generic structure and language features, the students were still unable to produce the text properly. Other significant issues that the students faced including the inability to organize ideas coherently in a simple sentence, lack of English vocabulary, and committing errors of language features in writing a personal recount text were also pointed out by the teacher.

The main language features are as follows: specific participants, simple past tense, and adverbial phrases and connectives. From the result of their analysis, it is expected for teachers as a reflection for teachers in the teaching and learning process such as implementing a learning material and choosing an effective teaching approach that is suited to students' needs and interests and for students to help them improve their writing by paying attention to the language features of personal recount text to produce a text. Therefore, the researcher will be carried out an analysis of students' errors in using language features in writing a personal recount text.

METHOD

The design of this research was descriptive. The population of this research was the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Padang Panjang. The total number of populations was around 210 students from 7 classes. The researcher took a 20% sample of the population which was 42 students as the sample of this research. The instrument of this research was in the form of a document. The documents were taken from the personal recount texts written by the eighth-grade students of SMPN 5 Padang Panjang.

In this research, the researcher adapted the theory of error analysis. The following process of error analysis was as follows: identifying errors, describing errors, explaining errors, and evaluating errors (Ellis, 1997). The data analysis began with collecting all of the students' personal recount text writings. In the identification of errors, the researcher read all the students' personal recount text writing, broke down the paragraphs into sentences, and took notes on the errors that occurred in each student's writing. In the description of errors, the researcher used the theory of language features from Gerot and Wignell, Barwick, and Derewianka in terms of

specific participants, simple past tense, and adverbial phrases and connectives. The error-containing sentences were classified according to those categories above. The researcher described further the errors that occurred in detail. The last step was the evaluation of the errors where the researcher reconstructed those sentences made by the students into the correct ones in a table.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The table below showed the types of errors made by the students in using language features in a personal recount text.

No.	Name	Errors in Language Features			Total
		Specific Participants	Simple Past Tense	Adverbial Phrases & Connectives	
1	Olivia Azzahra (OA)	1	0	0	1
2	Siti Nur Fadhillah (SNF)	1	2	0	3
3	Zahara Nurul Fadilla (ZNF)	0	2	0	2
4	Habibah Khalisa (HK)	0	0	0	0
5	Wadhha Arisa (WA)	0	0	0	0
6	Allyya Asyara (AA)	3	2	0	5
7	Velisita Rianti Adibra (VRA)	2	2	2	6
8	Hamidatun Niswah (HN)	0	2	0	2
9	Qorisya Aulia Wido (QAW)	0	2	0	2
10	Rafeyla Azzahra (RA)	0	3	0	3
11	Nayla Fitri Ramadhani (NFR)	0	0	0	0
12	Adilla Barizatul Fitri (ABF)	1	4	0	5
13	Nadhifa Aulia Frandhiny (NAF)	0	0	0	0
14	Khoirun Nisaq Putri (KNP)	1	4	0	5
15	Reysya Mustika Putri (RMP)	0	0	0	0
16	Nawra Ozari Hadi (NOH)	0	0	0	0
17	Windy Farsya Cantika	0	0	0	0

	(WFC)				
18	Alvino Pranata (AP)	2	5	2	9
19	Muhammad Al Fattih (MAF)	0	1	1	2
20	Fadiya Kurnia Putri (FKP)	0	0	1	1
21	Abdina Latifah Riandira (ALR)	2	3	1	6
22	Ivander (IV)	1	3	0	4
23	Muhammad Arifin (MA)	0	9	2	11
24	Filzah Firanda (FF)	0	4	2	6
25	Fatimah Az Zahra (FAZ)	0	1	0	1
26	Riri Handayani (RH)	0	0	0	0
27	Fachri Mayza Hakim (FMH)	0	1	0	1
28	Aqila C. (AC)	0	2	0	2
29	Wafda Zikra (WZ)	0	0	0	0
30	Syafira Rahmannisa (SR)	1	3	0	4
31	Nasywaa Khanza Fadiyah (NKF)	0	1	0	1
32	M. Rakha Alfathir (MRA)	0	2	0	2
33	Aura Quanaisha (AQ)	3	4	0	7
34	Wahdatul Futhri ZN. (WFZN)	0	2	0	2
35	Olivia Putri Handayani (OPH)	0	1	1	2
36	Naurah Hayaty (NH)	0	0	0	0
37	Nadia El Jezira (NEJ)	0	0	0	0
38	Habil (HA)	3	7	2	12
39	Farrel Oktyoni (FO)	2	5	2	9
40	Reina Almira Fitri (RAF)	0	1	0	1
41	M. Ardhyansa Pamungkas (MAP)	2	4	0	6
42	Maulidyna Anindri Putri (MAPU)	0	4	0	4
Total		25	86	16	127
Percentage		20%	68%	13%	100%

From the table above, the students' errors in using language features in personal recount texts focused on these three aspects namely specific participants, simple past tense, and adverbial phrases and connectives. First, there were around 25 or 20% of the total errors occurred in the aspect of specific participants. Second, there were around 86 or 68% of the total errors occurred in the aspect of simple past tense. The last one, there were around 16 or 13% of the total errors occurred in the aspect of adverbial phrases and connectives. Further description and analysis of errors in language features were described throughout this section.

1. Specific Participants

In the specific participants, there are two main errors found in the students' personal recount text writing.

a. Missing of subject pronoun and possessive adjective

There were 12 students with a total of 13 errors in using specific participants. The absence of specific participants was found in the student's personal recount text writing such as missing subject pronouns and possessive adjectives in a sentence. As in the sentence "go on a tour in Batu City" where a subject pronoun is required as the doer of the action. The subject pronoun *I* should be put before the verb, so the correct sentence was "*I* went on a tour in Batu City".

b. Incorrect form and order of subject pronoun, object pronoun and possessive adjective

There were 9 students with a total of 13 errors found at this point. The ones listed above were the table of incorrect form and order of subject pronoun, object pronoun, and possessive adjective found in students' personal recount text writing. The incorrect form of the subject and its possessive adjective pronoun and object pronoun as in "When I took care my sister, I did some activities, like giving my **sister** the breast milk available in the freezer, change *his* diaper when she goes potty, and put *him* to sleep when she is slepy or crying". The subject was the sister that being talked about in the sentence, hence, the students used the wrong possessive adjective *his* in *his* diaper and object pronoun *him* in put *him* to refer the sister. Since the student talked about her sister, therefore the possessive adjective and the object pronoun was *her*.

2. Simple Past Tense

There are four major errors of simple past tense found in the students' personal recount text writing.

a. Missing of verbs

There were 7 students with a total of 8 errors as represented in the table above. There was no existence of past verbs in the sentence from the students' writing. The past verbs went missing in the sentence as in the examples "We holiday to a playground in Medan" and "We very excited". Moreover, the structure of a sentence consisted of a subject, a verb, and an object or complement. In the personal recount text, simple past tense was used in a

sentence. Thus, to make a correct sentence, it was required a verb in the past tense.

b. Incorrect form of irregular verb, regular verb, and verb of “be”

There were 28 students with a total of 69 errors in using incorrect form of regular, irregular, and verb of be found in students’ personal recount text writing. In a personal recount, past tense was used in the writing. There were two types of verbs in past tense, they were irregular and regular. The characteristic of irregular verbs was that they didn’t follow the usual rules of what should be done in the base form, past form, and past participle. From the list above, it could be seen that these irregular verbs such as *think, go, drink, wake, come, make, feel, takes,* and *have* weren’t in the correct form in past tense. The students used the verbs above in the present tense which was wrong in writing a personal recount text. Thus, the verbs should be written in the past forms such as *thought, went, drank, woke, came, made, felt, took, and had.*

c. Incorrect use of infinitive and action verb

There were 8 students with a total of 9 errors found in this section. The students mostly didn’t fully understand the rule of simple past tense in general. The error detected in this section was the student tended to use past tense in a to-infinitive sentence structure. As in the example “I and my family go *to ate*” the students failed to follow the rule of making the to-infinitive sentence structure. The past tense couldn’t be used in the infinitive structure. The correct form was “My friend and I went *to eat*”.

d. Addition of another verb.

There were 5 students with a total of 6 errors found in the students’ writing. The typical error found in this section was that students tended to add other verbs which resulted in doubled verbs in one sentence. The students used two verbs or two verbs be in one sentence. The students added another verb or to be in the form of the present tense (verb 1) as in “It *is* was my birthday”. Furthermore, the student also added another verb in the past tense (verb 2) as in “I *was* woke up”. Meanwhile, in the last example “I walk out from my room *gotta ate* breakfast”, the student used another tense that wasn’t suitable in the sentence.

3. Adverbial Phrases and Coonectives

The last error in using language features that occurred in the students’ writing were presented below.

a. Incorrect use of adverbs of time

There were 4 students with a total of 5 errors found in the students’ writing. The students used the wrong adverb of time in the past. The common time expressions used in past tense were yesterday, (week, month, year) ago, last (week, month, year, hour, or day of the week) night, the day before yesterday, or in (year that already passed). As in the example, “It 05.00 *WIB*” where the student used the wrong time indication. In English, the time indication was divided into two periods, AM and PM. AM referred to the time before noon,

whereas PM indicated the time after noon. The next example was the students used incorrect prepositions of adverb of time as in “I was sick back *at the Monday*”. The preposition of at or in would never be applied before a day of the week.

b. Incorrect use of adverbs of place

There were 7 students with a total of 8 errors that used the wrong preposition in the adverb of place. The prepositions of at, in, and on had slightly different functions on how to locate persons, things, or places. They provided more information related to the location of an object, person, or place. As in the example “We came *at grandparent’s house*”, the students used the wrong preposition to indicate a place. Since the verb was “came”, it was best to follow with “to” to indicate where they would go.

c. Incorrect use of connectives.

There were 3 students with a total of 3 errors in using incorrect use and form of connectives. The students had difficulty in using connectives to sort the ideas and sequence events to make a proper sentence in writing a personal recount text. The connector to make events in chronological words such as but, and, then, when, first, finally, etc.

Discussion

Based on the findings, the highest errors in using language features found in the students' personal recount text writing were from simple past tense, whereas the least number of errors in using language features that occurred in students' writing were from adverbial phrases and connectives. The errors found in using simple past tense were the absence of the verb; the incorrect form of irregular verb, regular verb, and verb of be; the incorrect use of infinitive and action verb; and the addition of another verb in the sentence. Meanwhile, the errors found in using adverbial phrases and connectives were the incorrect use of adverb of time, incorrect use of adverb of place and incorrect use and form of connectives.

The findings of this research were similar to the research conducted by Listiani & Megawati (2023). The result showed that errors occurred in simple past tense was the use of present tense or verb 1 instead of applying the irregular or regular verb of past tense in a sentence. The errors that occurred were the consequence of weak teaching materials, thus the students' comprehension of the target language was not particularly good. Due to their inadequate understanding, the errors made by the students while delivering their messages in the target language was influenced by the grammar rules of their native language, Indonesian.

Meanwhile, the findings of error in using adverbial phrases and connectives with the research conducted by Suyatmi (2023). Based on the result of this research, the students' errors in using adverbial phrases and connectives exhibited minimal errors in this area. The students applied connectives like *in*, *on*, and *at* inappropriately in a sentence since Indonesian language influenced them the most. Their sentences were not grammatically wrong since they did not make any major errors. This suggested that using adverbial phrases and connectives in a sentence was not a big challenge for students.

CONCLUSION

The errors made by the students in using language features in a personal recount text can be concluded into three major points as follows:

The errors found in specific participants were the absence of subject pronoun, object pronoun, or possessive adjective. The specific participants went missing in a sentence. Then, incorrect form and order of subject pronoun, object pronoun or possessive adjective. The students could not apply the correct form of a pronoun according to the person chosen. Moreover, the students could not place subjects in the correct order in a sentence.

The errors found in simple past tense were the absence of verbs, one of the important aspects of making a good sentence, which was nowhere to be found in a sentence. Next, incorrect forms of regular verbs, irregular verbs, and verbs of be. The students still had difficulty recognizing the correct form, especially the regular and irregular verbs, as a result of their lack of understanding of the past verb. Then, incorrect use of infinitives and action verbs. The students tended to use past forms in the infinitive sentence. Last, the addition of another verb. The students tended to double the verb because they barely recognized the form changing in the past tense.

The errors found in adverbial phrases and connectives were incorrect use of adverbs of time. The students used the wrong time indication in English. Next, incorrect use of adverbs of place. Since the prepositions; in, on, and at, in the adverbs of place had similar functions to locate a place. The students had difficulties using the correct prepositions to give information about time or place in a sentence. Then, incorrect use and form of connective. The students still found it hard to arrange the idea properly using connectives like and, but, or, so, when, and, then, etc.

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