



## **AN ANALYSIS ON SPELLING ERRORS MADE BY THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT OF SMK N 3 PADANG IN WRITING A PERSONAL LETTER**

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### **Abstract**

This research discusses about spelling errors which are committed by the students in writing a personal letter. Participants in this research are Office Administration Students in SMK N 3 Padang, XI AP 1 class which consists of 24 students. The identified problems of this research are what kinds of spelling errors—insertion, omission, substitution, and transposition errors—which are committed by the students in writing a personal letter, and what kinds of parts of speech from spelling errors which are committed by the students. The objectives of this research are to find out what kinds of spelling error which are committed by the students, and what kinds of part of speech from spelling errors which are committed by the students. Writing test is an instrument that is used in this research. The result of this research shows that students commit all kinds of spelling errors in their writing, and students' spelling errors also occur in all kinds of parts of speech. Students' spelling errors mostly occur in substitution error in their writing. Then, noun part is the highest part which occurs from students' spelling errors.

**Key words:** spelling, spelling errors, personal letter

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

As stated in KTSP, high school students study English at school. That is why English is one of compulsory subjects in Senior High School in Indonesia, including in Vocational High School. One of Vocational High Schools which oblige students to study English is SMK N 3 Padang. Usually, vocational high school's goal is students are going to work in work field after they graduated; it also includes SMK N 3 Padang's goal. Hence, students are taught English during their school life; English skill can be useful when they work later.

One of majors in this school is Office Administration. For Office Administration students, they are expected to work as a secretary. Secretary's job

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actually is related tightly to writing. They are going to convey their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and ideas to their boss, co-workers or clients through writing. It can be in the form of memos, messages, letters, timetables, lists, and so on. Therefore, Office Administration students, who will be a secretary, have to master writing skill and need to write these writing correctly because it will influence their professionalism in work field.

Office Administrations students can work professionally because they learn about how to write a memo, message, invitation letter, lists, timetable, and also personal letter during their school life. As stated in syllabus based on KTSP, personal letter is written in the indicator of fourth basic competency (Kompetensi Dasar). The fourth basic competency states, “Tell about events in the past and planning in the future.” Then, one of indicators states, “Personal letter which tells about events in the past and planning in the future.” It has been stated in syllabus that students will study about this letter. Students will study about it in the second grade and in the first semester.

Students will be able to make personal letter if they follow the teachers’ guidance which leads them to write in a correct way. However, it is not just enough to write this letter in the correct way, but also they need to produce a good writing. There are other aspects that should be considered for producing a good writing such as content, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics—spelling and punctuation—, and organization of ideas (Brown, 2000:335). Students need to consider these aspects while they are writing; these aspects prove whether students produce a good writing or not.

There were some studies which had been conducted related to the analysis of components of students’ writing. One of them was the study conducted by Hilmi, Rozimela, and Tiarina (2013) that focused on the use of passive voice in students analytical exposition text. However, Spelling is also stated as one of these considerations. Students’ writing can be acceptable and readable as a good writing if it also has a good spelling. It can be concluded that to compose a good writing, students have to determine spelling as an essential aspect.

In addition, Fageberg (2006:1) says spelling is one factor to consider producing a good writing. If one single word misspelled, it can change the word and the whole meaning of a sentence. In addition, it also can cause a misunderstanding due to alteration of word or meaning. It means that spelling errors bring a big impact in students’ writing because it will show students’ proficiency in writing.

For example, “How are you todie?” which should be “How are you today?” The message that asking ‘how the person is’ change into ‘how you die.’ This example shows the alteration of the meaning in the sentence. It also causes a misunderstanding communication due to the alteration of words.

Beside spelling errors can change the meaning of a word or the whole sentence, it also impedes students to write. Students can be confused because they try to ensure that they do not do spelling errors. As a consequence, students can take a long time to write. For example, based on the writer’s experience, she was getting confused how to spell a word like discussion; where “s” should be put double—between “i\_c” so it became “disscusion” or between “u\_i” so it became

“discussion.” The writer takes a long time for writing a word because she should make sure the correct spelling.

In SMK N 3 Padang, some of students do not write some letters in the correct order. When students in grade X studied in the class, the writer did an observation and found students’ spelling error in students’ writing activities. They misspelled words in their writings. For instance, students did omission error; they wrote fin which should be fine in “I am fine.” The other error is substitution error; they wrote bet which should be bad in “I feel bad.” From the examples, it shows that spelling errors which were done by the students make their writing lose the meaning. It does not appropriate anymore with the context of their writing at that time.

Based on the problem above, the writer is interested to analyze students’ spelling errors in SMK N 3 Padang, especially Office Administration students. Students’ spelling error will be analyzed in students’ personal letter writing. The writer chooses SMK N 3 Padang because this school has Office Administration major which those students are expected to be a secretary. To be a secretary, they have to have a good writing skill which is useful for their job later on.

Then, the writer chooses personal letter because students have also learned about this letter. It has been written in KTSP that this letter is studied by the students in third semester; it means that the second grade students study about this letter. It is stated in the fourth basic competency. Moreover, students have already studied about this letter, so they can write this letter and express their idea freely. They have known how to make this letter with proper format and grammar.

This research is carried out to see how about the students’ spelling errors are. Therefore, the writer will analyze kinds of spelling errors are made by the second grade of Office Administration of SMK N 3 Padang in writing personal letter.

Based on the problem in the background above, there are some possible problems that can be identified. First, students do spelling error in a word, so it changes the meaning of that word and the whole meaning of sentence. Second, it can make the word not have meaning. Third, it can cause misunderstanding. Fourth, it is not appropriate to the context; and fifth, it shows students’ poor quality of their writing, so it causes students’ writing cannot be acceptable to read.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was a descriptive research because it described about the phenomena of spelling errors which were made by the second grade of Office Administration students of SMK N 3 Padang in writing personal letter. Gay et al. (2012:625) explain that descriptive research that determines and describes the way things are; involves collecting numerical data to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current subject of study. Thus, this research answered question about what kinds of spelling errors which were committed by the students in their writing.

This research was taken the sample from SMK N 3 Padang. This participants of this research consisted of 24 vocational high school students; there were 3 males and 21 females. These participants were in one group because they

were in the same class, XI AP 1. They were taken as a sample because the students of this class were expected to be secretary in the future; therefore, these class members were suitable choosing as samples for this research. These 24 students were selected as a group for the written composition test.

In this research, writing test was used as instrument. Students were asked to compose personal letter to get the data. Personal letter was chosen because students have already learnt about this letter in the end of third semester. So, students can be easier to write this letter. In this test, students at least wrote about 200 words. Then, this test took 90 minutes; it was counted as one meeting, 2 x 45 minutes. Students were given a topic to compose this personal letter. The topic was about an invitation for clients to join One Day Trip to Bukittinggi. This topic was chosen because it was suitable to the students' major; they were Office Administration students, which were expected to be secretary in the future. So, this topic was suitable to the students' job expectation, which was one of their duty wrote an invitation letter to their clients.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Findings

After describing and analyzing the data, several findings were found. This research concerns on kinds of spelling errors which commit in students' writing and on kinds of part of speech from that spelling errors.

#### a. Kinds of Spelling Errors are Made by the Students in Writing a Personal Letter

Based on the data analysis, it is found that students commit all categories of spelling errors in their writing. As stated by Cook, spelling errors have four categories; they are insertion error, omission error, substitution error, and transposition error. Then, students commit insertion errors, omission error, substitution error, and transposition error. Furthermore, substitution error mostly occurs in students' writing. Figure 2 shows substitution error has the highest bar than the others; it is slightly under the 40%. However, transposition error less occurs in students' writing. At the same figure, it shows transposition error has the smallest bar than the others. The bar is under 5% line.

Based on the data, students' spelling errors occurs in three positions, in the beginning, in the middle and in the end of a word. In insertion error, students insert redundant letter in the middle of a word or in the end of a word. Students write a vocal and a vowel in the middle of a word; however, students mostly write a vowel in the end of a word. In omission error, it is not really different with insertion error because this spelling error also occurs in two positions; in the middle and in the end of a word. Students omit letter(s) in the middle position more than a half. Then, students usually omit vowels in the end of a word, but they also omit vowel in the middle of a word.

Next, in substitution error, students substitute letter(s) in three positions; in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of a word. Students substitute vowel with another vowel in a word; in addition, they also substitute vowel with vocal and vocal with vocal. In another case, students substitute a vowel with a digraph. However, it is different with transposition error. Only two students write this

error, so students transpose letter only in the end of a word. From the data, both of the data show that students transpose a vowel and a vocal in the end of a word.

These are all of the findings that can explain by the researcher.

### **b. Kinds of Part of Speech from Spelling Errors Which are Made by the Students**

Based on the data analysis, it is found that students' spelling errors occur in all kinds of part of speech. Students spelling errors occur in noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. In addition, based on the figure 3, it explains that spelling errors mostly occur in noun part. Total number of students' spelling errors that exist in noun part is under 45%. It has the tallest bar than the other parts. However, conjunction part has the smallest bar that the other parts. It just up above 0% line a little.

Students' spelling errors usually exist in noun part because students usually write noun in their writing. It happens because the topic that are given to them. However, spelling errors occur just one error in conjunction part because students hardly ever use conjunction in their writing. It can be students do not familiar with the others conjunction.

## **2. Discussion**

Based on the finding above, there are four kinds of spelling errors which are made by the students in their writing. There are 133 spelling error which commit by the students. The highest number of spelling error is substitution error. There are 51 (38.3%) substitution errors which are written by the students. In addition, transposition error has the lowest numbers of spelling error. There are two (1.50%) spelling errors which are made by the students.

Based on the data, substitution error can be the highest error which is made by the students because of interference of their mother tongue. Students substitute letter(s) with another letter because they do not know how to spell a word, and they try to take a guess how to spell it. It influences how they spell a word, so it makes substitution error exists in their writing. It occurs because alphabets in English accommodate 44 English phonemes. Even English has 26 alphabetic symbols; they have several ways how to pronounce them (Montmogery, 2007:8). Thus, it brings confusion because of the unclear sounds when it is pronounced or heard, and then it compares to the written form. However, it is really different with Indonesia spelling. Indonesia also has 26 alphabetic symbols, and it is pronounced how it is written. That is why substitution error has the highest number of spelling error in students' writing.

The result of this research is also found that substitution error also the highest number of spelling error in students' writing purposed by Wahyuni (2013), the highest number is substitution error and followed by omission error. The numbers of spelling errors are 89 and 67 respectively. The number of insertion error was 28 errors which commit by the students. Transposition error also decreases dramatically to 6 errors. However, this research also seeks other kinds of error which committed by the students, such as confusion of apostrophe, sound based, overgeneralization, and splitting or joining.

However, the result of the research conducted by Alhaisoni et al. (2015) is different with the result of this research. The result of Alhaisoni's research found

that the highest error occurrence was omission error, and it was followed by substitution error. Whereas this research found that students' spelling errors mostly occur in substitution error and omission error. Look more detail the result between Alhaisoni's research and this research in the table below,

**Table 8:** *Percentage of students' spelling errors*

<b>Spelling Errors</b>	<b>Saudi Arabia Students</b>	<b>Padang Students</b>
Insertion error	19.1%	23.3%
Omission error	<b>39.6%</b>	36.8%
Substitution error	34.9%	<b>38.3%</b>
Transposition error	6.4%	1.50%

This table shows percentage of spelling errors between Saudi Arabia students and Padang students. This table showed that spelling errors which were committed by Saudi Arabia students the most was omission error. It was different with Padang students' spelling errors mostly occur in substitution. Alhaisoni explains that this could happen because strong correlation between the articulation and the spelling of words. It also involves the participants' own habit of manipulating standard pronunciation of word which resulted writing a wrong spelling. Actually, it also happens to Padang students, substitution error mostly occur because of the difference articulation of a word in English with the spelling of a word. That is why students commit spelling error in their writing.

In addition, spelling errors which commit by the students can give some impacts to the word or the sentence. If the writers do misspelled, of course it will disconnect the idea in the sentences (Al-zuoud and Kabilan, 2013:165), and it changes the whole meaning of a text (Frageberg, 2006:1). It is proved by the data. These spelling errors can make the meaning of the words change or lose. As a result, the idea of the sentences in students' writing became vague. For example, student writes,

*“You **cant** call me Amel.”*

This example has disconnected the idea of the sentence. Students just add redundant letter, and it changes the meaning of that word. It affects to the meaning of the sentence. The other example student writes,

*“I will **invit** you to go for a One Day Trip to island.”*

This example shows that spelling error do not just disconnect the idea of the sentence, it also lose the meaning of that word. So, the word does not have meaning anymore because student deletes a letter in the target word.

In addition, Granham and Harris (in Alhaisoni, et al., 2015:185) state that the writer will seem careless or less intelligent if they did inaccurate spelling. It is also proved by the data. Students write spelling errors because they are careless while writing the letter. It is shown like in

*“It will be the **interesing** event.”*

It is one of example to show how careless students while they were writing. Student forgets to put a letter in the target word. Of course, it gives impacts to the word itself and also the sentence.

Moreover, Khuwaileh and Al-Shoumali (in Alsaawi, 2015:57) state that spelling is an important consideration in writing because spelling error can lead misunderstanding of the written script. It is also proved with the data. Some

spelling errors which do by the students have change the meaning, so it can cause misunderstanding to the reader. Just like student 6 did,

*“You **cant** call me Amel.”*

It can give a misunderstanding to the reader because the meaning of the word has changed, and it has the opposite meaning.

## **D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **1. Conclusions**

As mentioned in the Chapter 1 that the purposes of this research are to find out kinds of spelling errors which committed by the students in their writing. There are four types of spelling errors based on Cook’s classification; they are insertion error, omission error, substitution error, and transposition error. Next, it also finds out what parts of speech from spelling errors which committed in students’ writing. Spelling errors are grouped into Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, and Interjection.

Based on the collected data through the research instrument which was a test, and the analysis of the data, it showed that students did 133 spelling errors in their writing. From the four categories based on Cook, students commit all kinds of spelling errors categories. Students commit insertion error, omission error, substitution error, and transposition error in students’ writing. Furthermore, from the spelling errors which are committed by the students, there are all kinds of part of speech Students’ spelling errors occur in all kinds of part of speech.

### **2. Suggestions**

From the findings and the conclusion of the research, there are some suggestions offered to the teachers, and students. For the teachers, they can prepare their planning instruction in teaching spelling to their students. Teachers can make instruction which is suitable based on the types of spelling errors or part of speech. Teachers can give more practice about spelling in order to make students get more understanding of spelling. Teachers have to emphasize the correct spelling, so students can aware to write the correct spelling which will lead them to make a good text. Teachers have to have clear hand writing, so teachers have to be more careful when writing a word in the board because from teachers’ writing, students can also learn about spelling. Furthermore, for the students, it is suggested to be more aware of spelling. Sometimes, students do not aware of silent letter, double consonants/vowels, add redundant letter, delete letter, substitute letter, or transpose the letters; thus, they have to pay more attention on it. It can help them to have a good display of their text.

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