

**AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN LEARNERS'  
DESCRIPTIVE WRITINGS AT  
SMA AL-KAUTSAR BANDAR LAMPUNG**

**(A Script)**

**By**

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2017**

## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN LEARNERS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITINGS AT SMA AL-KAUTSAR BANDAR LAMPUNG

By

**Muhammad Fajri Abdillah**

Writing is simply regarded as the most complex language skill to study. This stands to reason for it has some crucial elements covering content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Therefore, it is not uncommon that learners often make errors in learning writing. In view of this, this research intentionally intended to study the learners errors in their writings under the base of two major purposes: (1) to investigate the error types the students made in their descriptive writings in terms of surface strategy and communicative effect taxonomies; and (2) to find out which error types that most and least frequently appeared in their writings on the basis of both taxonomies.

This study was designed in qualitative form. The subjects of the study were 24 learners of Class XI IPA 2 of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung. To gain the data, the study applied writing test, specifically writing test of descriptive model. The data collected were analyzed to find out the error types the learners committed in terms of surface strategy and communicative effect taxonomies in their descriptive compositions. The errors were then related to some aspects of word order.

The findings evidently revealed that the learners made all error types, either in terms of surface strategy taxonomy covering: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering; or communicative effect taxonomy including: global and local errors. In terms of surface strategy taxonomy, the most prominent error type appearing in the learners' writings was misformation; and being least frequent error type was misordering. On the other side, in terms of communicative effect taxonomy, the most dominant error type was local error; while global error was the least frequent error type the learners made. Furthermore, their errors dealt with word order aspects; and they were mostly in regard with agreement of subject and predicate. In light of this, English teachers are suggested to give students much exercises concerned with English grammar in order to be able to minimize grammatical errors, particularly the error types that most frequently emerge.

**Keywords:** descriptive writings, surface strategy taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy.

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**A Script**

**Submitted in a Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for S-1 Degree of Education  
in English Education Study Program,  
Linguistics and Arts Education Department**

**By**

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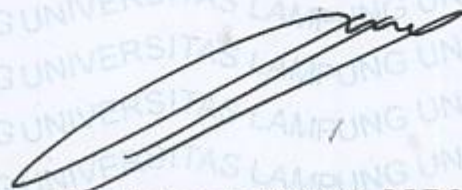
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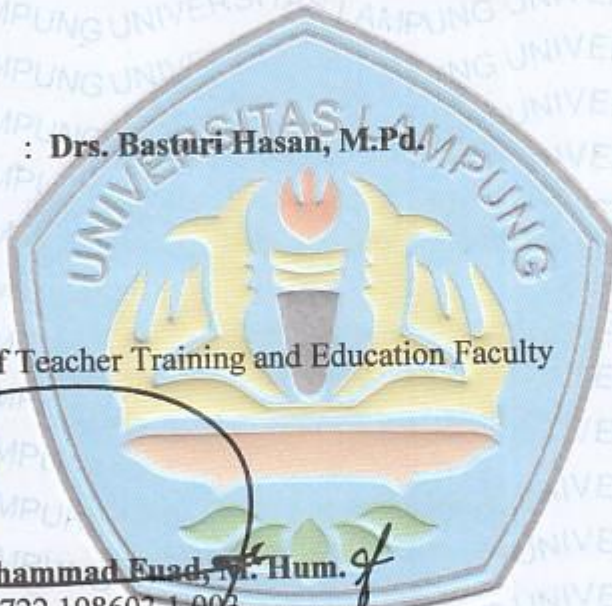
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## CURRICULUM VITAE



Muhammad Fajri Abdillah was born on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994 in Kotabumi, Lampung Utara. He is the third child of a harmonious couple, Muhammad Na'iim and Etimidrawati. He has three lovely siblings, namely Ahmad Affandi, Ade Ilham Saputra, and Rizki Fadhila Rahman.

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## **DEDICATIONS**

*This script is wholeheartedly dedicated to:*

*My beloved parents, Muhammad Na'iim and Etimidrawati,*

*My loving brothers, A. Affandi, Ade I. Saputra., and Rizki F. Rahman,*

*My honorable lecturers in English Education Study Program, and*

*My unforgettable almamater, Lampung University.*



## MOTTO

“The strongest rope to hang is the rope of Allah’s help”

(عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ)

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All praises are merely rendered to Allah SWT, The Most Beneficent and Merciful God, who has bestowed blessing, inspiration, strength, and everything upon the writer so he could accomplish this script entitled *An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Learners' Descriptive Writings at SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung* completely. Then, peace and salutation be always upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad SAW who has brought us out of the dark to the light.

Here, the writer should like to acknowledge that this script would never have come into existence without any help, guidance, suggestion, and encouragement from several outstanding people and institutions. Hence, the writer, in this great opportunity, would like to express his heartfelt gratitudes and appreciations, among others, to:

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16. The other parties who also have, knowingly or otherwise, assisted whose names cannot be singly mentioned here.

In the end, the writer sets hope on this script to be worthwhile contribution, especially for further researchers and English teachers who intend to learn or carry out relevant studies. The writer, nonetheless, makes no pretense to any expertise since he is fully aware that this script has many limitations. Therefore, future researches are considerably expected to extend this study so anyone reading it will have complete understanding in relation to the study.

Bandar Lampung, October 2017

**Muhammad Fajri Abdillah**



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter specifically presents the introduction of the research by dealing mainly with the reasons for having this research, research questions, objectives of the research, significances of the research, scope of the research, and definition of terms. Each of the points will be clearly described in a particular unit in this chapter.

### **1.1. Background of the Problem**

Writing is, in nature, a significant means which is used to communicate an intention of a writer letterally to intended readers. As stated by Bynre (1980: 24), writing is a primary device of recording speech, even though it must be acknowledged as a secondary medium of communication. Writing, too, is an action form that people apply to convey their thoughts or express their feelings then transform them into a composition of words. This also means that people, in this manner, should be able to create reading that can contain worthwhile informations, entertainment, or other purposes.

In the schools, particularly in Indonesia, English has been established as one of the compulsory subjects. Hence, every learner is simply acquainted with and seriously taught about English at school. In other words, the learners have to master English as a target language, either in spoken or written forms. However,

as writing is regarded as the most complex language skill to study, therefore, it becomes the main concern for English teachers to teach students how to construct sentences correctly, or to compose any English composition effectively.

One of the composition types is descriptive model. It is needed very much to give a clear description of a place, person, or object. As pointed out by Tolkien in Jeniar (2016: 24), descriptive writing text, sometimes called “showing writing”, is writing that describes a particular person, place, or event in great detail. To make readers understand the content or meaning of each single sentence in the paragraphs forming a descriptive composition, the sentences a learner constructs must, of course, be clear and grammatically correct.

In order to be able to write well-ordered sentences, every student should recognize and completely understand the aspects of grammatical writing, particularly in regard with word order. Word order itself is, as Leech (1991: 550) defines, the order of the elements in a sentence or clause. The elements consist, among other things, of (1) agreement of subject and predicate, (2) agreement of pronoun and antecedent, (3) case, (4) linking and auxiliary verbs, (5) tense and tone, (6) voice, (7) adjectives and adverbs. Upon understanding the word order aspects, learners will know the function of each aspect used in English sentences.

The learners, moreover, should also fully understand and employ the crucial elements of writing in their composition such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. It certainly intends in order the composition the learners make can be clear, complete, and correct. However, even though the learners have learned English in years, particularly in learning writing, they still

find difficulties to express their ideas in proper words or sentences (Badudu, 1985: 7).

In order to find out what the main problems that every learner encounters during the learning process of English writing skill, the researcher administered a pre-observation in SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung, one of private upper secondary schools in Bandar Lampung. From the pre-observation, it revealed that the students still had difficulties specifically in composing an English composition effectively. Consequently, they still committed many grammatical errors during the learning writing process. Besides, they were still difficult to develop main idea in their paragraphs, and their compositions still appeared disorganized. The main causes of those problems were the students lacked comprehension of English grammatical rules as well as they were poor in vocabulary mastery.

It turned out that the problems cited above are almost the same as the problems found in some related studies such as conducted by Indarti (1998). The finding of her study showed that the students still made errors in the use of tenses. The reason was that the students did not comprehend English structure such as the transformations of certain verb influenced by the use of certain tenses. In view of this, it is not uncommon that learners learning English as a target language always confront serious problems in learning English writing skill.

As a matter of fact, every student tends to make errors when learning a target language, particularly in writing form. This is also acknowledged by Dulay *et al* (1982: 138) that making errors is a part of learning language. Students often commit errors as they lack comprehension about the target language. As confirmed by Hubbard *et al* (1983) that errors are caused by lack of knowledge



about target language or by incorrect hypothesis about it. Hence, it is undeniable that learners frequently commit errors during the learning process of writing in English form.

Since the phenomena as noted above become crucial concern for most of researchers, therefore, a kind of study has been made to observe and analyze those errors further, namely error analysis. Error analysis definitely has an important role to reveal what kinds of error the students most do. As mentioned by Hendrickson (1979: 206), Error analysis is a study of learners' errors by observing, analyzing, and classifying the errors to reveal something of the system operating within the learners.

In reference to the errors themselves, Dulay (1982: 146) emphasizes that the errors can be classified into four taxonomies, i.e. linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative analysis taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. This study intends specifically to analyze learners' errors only based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. Each of both typical taxonomies, too, is classified into several types based on features of the errors. Surface strategy taxonomy is categorized into four types: omission, addition, misordering, and misformation; while communicative effect taxonomy is categorized into two kinds of error, namely global and local error.

Actually, there are plenty of studies having been done to investigate error types that students made in their English writings, such as a study conducted by Halimah (2014) at the third semester students of English Department of Suryakencana University. She analyzed the learners' errors in their descriptive writings in terms of surface strategy taxonomy. The findings revealed that the

students committed errors in all types, i.e. omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. However, the most severe error type emerging in their writings was omission. Besides, the students made the errors related to some grammatical aspects, i.e. subject and verb agreement, tenses, formation, articles, pluralization, and pronoun.

With respect to the reasons clarified above, the writer thereby was considerably interested in conducting a study concerning error analysis on descriptive writings made by students based on surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy with the title “An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Learners’ Descriptive Writings at SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung.”

## **1.2. Research Questions**

Considering the background of the problem above, some research questions arose and were formulated as follows.

1. What types of grammatical errors are made by the learners in their descriptive writings in terms of surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy?
2. Which types of the errors are most and least frequently committed by the students in their compositions based on the both taxonomies?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Research**

With reference to the problem formulations, this research, intentionally, addresses some specific objectives as can be seen below.

1. To find out the types of grammatical errors the students make in their descriptive writings in terms of surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy.
2. To investigate which types of the errors that are most and least frequently made by the students in their compositions under the base of both taxonomies.

#### **1.4. Significances of the Research**

Hopefully, the findings of the study can be beneficial contribution to the parties paying attention on learners' errors in their English writings. To be more specific, the followings are some uses expected from the results of the study.

1. Theoretically, the significances of this study are:
  - a. To be worthwhile information to confirm or verify the previous theories dealing with the theories in this research.
  - b. To be used as a reference for future researchers who want to conduct some related studies.
2. Practically, the advantages of the research are:
  - a. To be beneficial inputs for English teachers to identify the various forms of errors committed by learners in learning writing; thus, the teachers can establish the appropriate technique of teaching how to construct English sentences grammatically.
  - b. To help students to enrich their knowledge in relation to errors in writing as well as they can finally learn how to use English in written form correctly.
  - c. To be advantageous for readers who like writing in order to be capable of making a good composition and to know the importance of English learning process, particularly in learning writing.

### **1.5. Scope of The Research**

This research takes a concern on analyzing grammatical errors found in learners' writings. The subjects of the study are the second year students of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung. These subjects are chosen as they, according to KTSP curriculum for SMA, have learned about (1) grammar, (2) vocabulary, and (3) some kinds of text, such as descriptive text, narrative text, and recount text. The study identified and analyzed the learners' errors in their descriptive writings. The errors were analyzed only in terms of surface strategy and communicative effect taxonomies. In addition, the errors found were then related to some aspects of word order, i.e. agreement of subject and predicate, agreement of pronoun and antecedent, linking and auxiliary verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

### **1.6. Definition of Terms**

In the attempt to avoid misunderstanding, hence, definitions of related terms employed in this study are clearly illustrated as follows:

1. Writing is a language skill in which we express ideas, feelings, and thoughts which are effectively arranged in words, sentences, and paragraphs (Raimes in Jeniar, 2016: 10), and certainly have or contain the crucial elements of writing such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Jacobs *et al*, 1981), so the writing will be clear, complete, and correct.
2. Word order is arrangement of words certainly coming from different kinds of words that grammatically form a phrase (words grouped without subject and predicate), clause (words arranged with subject and verb as subordinate or

independent clause) sentence (words combined with subject and verb and can often be more than one clause) which are used to express ideas.

3. Descriptive writing is a writing which appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds (Oshima and Hogue 1997: 50).
4. Grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of every single word in a sentence (Brown, 2001: 362).
5. Error is systematic and consistent deviation, which is the characteristic of the learners' linguistic system at a given stage of learning (Corder, 1976: 166).
6. Grammatical error is a term used in prescriptive grammar to describe an instance of faulty, unconventional, or controversial usage, such as a misplaced modifier or an inappropriate verb tense. It is also called a usage error.
7. Error analysis is a study of learners' errors by observing, analyzing, and classifying the errors to reveal something of the system operating within the learners (Hendrickson, 1979: 206).
8. Surface strategy taxonomy is the type of error that emphasizes on the way surface structures are altered. The learners may omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones; they may misform items or misorder them (Dulay *et al*, 1982: 155).
9. Communicative effect taxonomy is the type of error that deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the listeners or readers. It focuses on the distinguishing between errors that seem to cause the miscommunication and those that do not (Dulay *et al*, 1982: 189).

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter is concerned mainly with the theoretical foundations which are employed in this study. They are review of previous related studies, notion of writing skills, notion of grammatical aspects of writing, notion of descriptive writing, concept of error analysis, classification of errors, procedure of error analysis, and benefits of error analysis. Those points will be widely elaborated in this chapter respectively.

### **2.1. Review of Previous Related Studies**

There actually have been many foregoing related studies concerned with analyzing errors on written productions made by language learners. To compare the findings of this research, here is a few of previous studies related to error analysis on learners' writings:

1. Error Analysis in the Students' Writing Descriptive Text at English Department of Suryakencana University

This study was administered by Halimah (2014). It was aimed at (1) describing the common grammatical errors found in descriptive writings made by the third semester students of English education, and (2) describing the causes of the errors. The participants were 35 of the third semester students of English Department of

Suryakencana University in Cianjur. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study. To collect data, the researcher applied writing test. The data collected was analyzed based on the types of errors using Dulay's theory.

The results of the study showed that the students tended to make errors in all types of errors in term of surface strategy taxonomy, i.e, addition, omission, misformation, and misordering. Omission form, however, was the most persistent error emerging in the students' writings. Besides, the students made the errors related to some grammatical aspects, i.e. subject and verb agreement, tenses, formation, articles, pluralization, and pronoun. The reason why they made the errors was since they had poor knowledge of English grammatical rules.

## 2. An Error Analysis of Grammatical Errors on Students' Writing of Recount Text at the Second Grade Students of SMP Dharma Karya UT Pamulang

This research was undertaken by Istibsyaroh (2014). The aim of this study was to analyze the most frequent errors made by the second grade of junior high school students in composing recount text. The error modification in this study was divided into four categories: omission, addition, selection, and misordering. The respondents of this study were 20 of the second grade students of SMP Dharma Karya UT Pamulang. Descriptive analysis method was used in this research. To gather data, the research applied writing test.

The reseach findings revealed that the students committed errors in all types of errors in their recount text. The most dominant error type made by the students was selection form. It was followed by omission, addition, and then misordering as the least error type which prominently appeared in their writings. Moreover, the

students committed the errors dealing with some elements of writing, such as tenses, agreement of subject and predicate, auxiliary verbs, past participle verbs, infinitive verbs, articles, and word choice.

With reference to those researches presented earlier, there are differences between this research and the previous researches. In those studies, both researchers analyzed errors in the students' writings under the base only on surface strategy taxonomy. Meanwhile, this present study analyzed the students' errors on the basis of two taxonomies: surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy.

## **2.2. Notion of Writing Skills**

Humankind has been, undeniably, recognizing well two kinds of way they apply to communicate with one another or with a group of people since long time ago. Both of them are, undoubtedly, speaking and writing. Speaking is an oral communication we most frequently find in the human interaction. It certainly seems to become tendency for those who want to communicate directly or face to face. Nonetheless, writing just will be exactly a paramount way in communication when people cannot convey something in their mind orally because of far distance or particular situations. They, in this way, can thoroughly express their feeling and organize every single word orderly. They even, moreover, can produce an interesting story when they have a lot of awesome imagination then distort it into form of a good composition.

In principle, writing is, as Tarigan (1987: 2) contends, a language skill that is used in indirect communication. People, thereby, can more effectively communicate



their ideas and thought to others in a written form such as a letter, message, or invitation. As affirmed by Raimes in Jeniar (2016: 10), writing is a language skill in which we express the ideas, feelings, and thought which are arranged in words, sentences, and paragraphs using eyes, brain and hand. This also means that writing, if properly understood, is virtually a way to produce language that people do naturally when they communicate in spoken form (Meyers, 2005: 2).

In addition, writing too becomes an action or a process of discovering and organizing ideas in our mind, putting them on a paper, then reshaping and revising them. As pointed out by Boardman *et al* (2002: 11) that writing is a continuous process of thinking and organizing, rethinking, and reorganizing. In other words, writing is recursive activities; thus, it goes back and forth we plan a little, put words on paper, stop plan when we want to say next, go back and change a sentence, or change their minds altogether (Palmer in Jeniar, 2016: 11).

With respect to this language skill, each person actually has a potential to create reading to share certain informations to others. As confirmed by Voss and Keene (1992) that writing creates permanent, visible record of our ideas for others to read and ponder. Sharing information to others in written form, as mentioned earlier, is actually one of purposes for writing. As assured by Voss and Keene that there are four objectives of writing: (1) to express ourselves, (2) to provide information for readers, (3) to persuade or convince readers, and (4) to create a literary work. To be more concrete, the following example shows one of the functions of writing:

*Last weekend, my friends and I went camping. We reached the camping ground after we walked for about one and a half hour from the parking lot. We built the camp next to a small river. It was getting darker and colder, so we built a fire*

*camp. The next day, we spent our time observing plantation and insects while the girls were preparing meals. In the afternoon we went to the river and caught some fish for supper. At night, we held a fire camp night. We sang, danced, read poetry, played magic tricks, and even some of us performed a standing comedy. On Monday, we packed our bags and got ready to go home.*

(Source: [www.freeenglishcourse.info.com](http://www.freeenglishcourse.info.com))

Briefly, writing skill has significant role to facilitate people to communicate letterally in some particular circumstances. In this manner, they can, for examples, express themselves, convey something in their mind, or share their experiences to readers. Nonetheless, a good writing can be understandable and acceptable if the sentences are grammatically correct. As a consequence, grammatical rules must be seriously paid attention by writers in writing a composition.

### **2.3. Notion of Grammatical Aspects of Writing**

Basically, grammar is a set of rules by which people speak or write (Suter and Cook, 1980: 1). Further, Brown (2001: 362) points out that grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of every single word in a sentence. No language, definitely, has no grammar and grammatical rules as considering how important the role of grammar in a language is. By nature, grammar is a kind of organism, filled and constantly developing and changing. Thus, the primary purpose of grammar then is to describe the change and development (Shaw in Hasan, 2016: 104).

In writing skill, or when we use written language form to communicate, there are virtually some particular aspects of grammar for writing in which we have to notice and fully understand the usage of each aspect. In his book *Refining Sentence Writing Skills for Professional and Academic Purposes; A practical*

*Application of Modern Rhetoric*, Hasan (2016: 109-120) mentions that there are some grammatical aspects of writing: agreement of subject and predicate, agreement of pronoun and antecedent, case, linking and auxiliary verbs, tense and tone, voice, adjectives and adverbs.

As those aspects linguistically function as the components in sentence or clause, or arrangement of words, to show connections of meaning within the sentence, hence, they are included in *word order*. To understand exactly what is meant by word order, the following is the illustration.

### **2.3.1. Concept of Word Order**

When discussing about the word order, some linguistics give several own views. Leech (1991: 550), in his book entitled *An A-Z of English Grammar and Usage*, describes word order as the order of the elements in a sentence or clause. On the other side, Weigle (2002: 216), with the same point, states that word order is the order in which words come in clauses and sentences. In other words, word order is a group of words that correctly forms a clause or a sentence, or forms a minor combination of words, i.e. phrase.

With respect to this, Verma in Huong (2013: 9), too, points out that word order refers to the order in which words appear in sentences across different languages. The traditional perception of word order is based on the description of syntax that is an arrangement of words in sentences. As affirmed by Rozental and Telenkova in Huong (2013: 8) that word order in a sentence is the arrangement between sentence components together. Likewise, Greenbaum in Huong (2013: 9) also claims that word order is the order of components in a phrase, clause, or sentence.

As a matter of fact, order relations are actually used to distinguish the compounds, the fixed combinations and freedom combinations (Nguyen Tai Can in Huong, 2013: 9). A part from that, Nguyen Kim Than in Huong (2013: 9) considered word order is one of means of syntax expression. According to him, using of word order is principled arrangement of a language to aim at syntax expression.

In short, word order is simply combination of words, or arrangement of words certainly coming from different kinds of words that create a phrase, sentence, or clause which are used to express something, either or both verbally and letterally. So, that is why the aspects of writing mentioned earlier denote the components of word order that form phrases, sentences, or clauses.

However, this study mainly focuses only on four aspects: agreement of subject and predicate, agreement of pronoun and antecedent, linking and auxiliary verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The reason of selecting only those aspects is because most students, learning English as a foreign or target language, frequently commit many grammatical errors on those areas or concerning the four aspects. Therefore, this study intends to investigate the error frequency made by the learners that occur on each aspect. To comprehend further those aspects, the following is the explanation.

#### ***2.3.1.1. Agreement of Subject and Predicate***

When a subject agrees with its predicate, both subject and predicate verb have the same *person* (first, second, third) and *number* (singular and plural). Here are some valuable considerations, as proposed by Shaw in Hasan (2016: 109), to be taken into account in the case:

- a. A predicate (verb) virtually agrees with its subject in person and number, for examples:
- (1) *He agrees* to pay the asking price. Clearly, *he* and *agrees* are in the third person and are singular in number.
  - (2) *We always clean* our school environment every morning at Friday. Surely, *We* and *clean* are in the first person and are plural in number.
- b. Singular pronouns require singular verbs. Logically, the following pronouns are singular: *another, anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, one, somebody, or someone*. Here are examples:
- (1) Anybody *knows* who she is.
  - (2) Each *has* his duty to perform.
  - (3) Neither *attends* his birthday party.
- c. Relative pronouns referring to plural antecedents ordinarily require plural verbs, for examples:
- (1) Each of *those* who *are* there should listen carefully.
  - (2) Each of *the women* who *attend* the meeting can go home earlier.
- d. After the expletive *there*, the verb is singular or plural according to the number of the subject that follows. For examples:
- (1) *There is* a kitten inside that shoe.
  - (2) *There have* been many of your fans waiting for your coming out there.
- e. A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group is regarded as a unit, a plural verb when the individuals of the group are regarded separately. Here are examples:
- (1) The family *was named* William.
  - (2) The family *were stated* at the dinner table.

### 2.3.1.2. *Agreement of Pronoun and Antecedent*

This part specifically deals with a pronoun which, theoretically, does not always agree with its antecedent in case, but it should agree in *gender, number, and person*. As Van Valin (2001: 42) describes that English reflexive pronouns must agree with their antecedent in person, number and gender. Here are some valuable considerations to be taken into account in the case:

- a. Singular pronouns refer to singular antecedents. For examples:
  - (1) The *man* waved *his* hand. Here, as can be seen, *everybody* may refer to men or women. Yet, since in grammar – and in few other situations and places – men are considered more important than women.
  - (2) *Everybody* is expected to do *his* share.
- b. A pronoun agrees with the nearer of two antecedents. For examples:
  - (1) Either Jack or his sisters will lose *their* chance to go.
  - (2) Either Jack’s sister or he will lose *his* chance to go.
- c. A collective noun used as antecedent ordinarily takes either a singular or plural pronoun, depending upon the sense of the sentence. For instances:
  - (1) The group of girls was shouting *its* praises. Certainly, the group, in this construction acts as a unit.
  - (2) The group of girls raised *their* umbrellas. Clearly, the group acts as individuals.

### 2.3.1.3. *Linking and Auxiliary Verbs*

It goes without saying that most verbs assert (indicate) action, but some express a static condition or state being, not action. Nearly all such “inactive” verbs are *linking* verbs also called *copulative*. This is so since a linking verb can “couple”

two nouns or pronouns or a noun and an adjective (Shaw in Hasan, 2016: 115). In principle, the most common linking verb is *to be*. Other linking verbs are *appear, become, feel, grow, look, prove, remain, seem, smell, sound, stand, taste, and turn*.

Here are examples of the case:

- (1) The dog *looks* sick.
- (2) His sweaty body *smells* so bad.

Another variety of verb which can cause trouble is the *auxiliary* verb. Usually an auxiliary verb has little meaning of its own, but it does change the meaning of the main verb it accompanies (Shaw in Hasan, 2016: 115). The most common auxiliary verbs are *to be, to have, and to do*. Other auxiliaries are *can, could, dare, let, may, might, must, need, ought, shall, should, used, will, and would*. To be clearer, here are the examples of the case:

- (1) She *should* tell the truth.
- (2) My grandpa *used* to be an explorer.

#### **2.3.1.4. Adjectives and Adverbs**

Actually, it is not difficult to determine when an adjective or adverb should be used. This stands to reason for *adjectives* “go with” nouns and pronouns; *adverbs* “go with” verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. To be clearer, the illustrations of both them are described below.

##### **a. Adjectives**

An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun by describing, limiting, or in some way making meaning more nearly exact. An adjective, mostly may indicate quality or quantity, may also identify or set limits (Leech *et al* in Hasan, 2016: 121).

Accordingly, adjectives are of three general types: (1) *descriptive*, e.g. We have to stop this *boring* talk; (2) *limiting*, e.g. It is the *seventh* time he has been late; (3) *proper*, e.g. How beautiful that *Minang* house is!

Some adjectives, indeed, most have endings that mark them as adjective. In particular, the more important of these include: (1) *-y*, e.g. It is not *funny*; (2) *-ful*, e.g. This ill is so *painful*; (3) *-less*, e.g. Someone *careless* must never succeed; (4) *-en*, e.g. Neither wants to taste this rotten food; (5) *-able*, e.g. This way is *favorable* indeed; (6) *-ive*, e.g. Do you have any *effective* way?; (7) *-ous*, e.g. That couple looks so *amorous*; (8) *-ish*, e.g. Who cares about that *selfish* guy?; (9) *-al*, e.g. The young man is so *cordial*; (10) *-ic*, e.g. This handwriting is *authentic*; (11) *-ary*, e.g. Studying is *primary* need for everyone; (12) *-some*, e.g. His broken arm is *troublesome*.

#### b. Adverbs

Theoretically, an adverb modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverbs by describing or limiting to make meaning more exact (Leech *et al* in Hasan, 2016: 122). Adverbs usually tell *how*, *how often*, *where*, and *when*. For example, in “The kid walks *carefully* on muddy road,” the adverb modifies the verb ‘walks’ and tells ‘*how*,’ whereas, in “He abused his wife *so rudely*,” the adverb, practically, modifies the adverb *rudely*.

Essentially, adverbs have the following characteristics :

- a. Adverbs are commonly used to modify manner *how* someone or something else acts. For examples:

- (1) He ate all the dish *so greedily*.



- (2) Slice this carrot *lengthwise*!
- b. Certain adverbs are used to express frequency concerning *how often* someone does something. For examples:
- (1) She *always* works nicely.
- (2) He has *never* been there.
- c. Adverbs can also be used to describe *where* someone does something. For examples:
- (1) He spends his all day time *only at home*.
- (2) I saw the accident *right here*.
- d. Certain adverbs can be used to emphasize *when* someone exactly does something. For examples:
- (1) She has been working there *since her dad passed away*.
- (2) We both went to the cinema *last night*.

As can be noticed from the explanation above, we finally know that in writing a composition, we should recognize and completely understand the grammatical aspects of writing, such as agreement of subject and predicate, agreement of pronoun and antecedent, case, linking and auxiliary verbs, tense and tone, voice, adjectives and adverbs. Therefore, the piece of writing we make can be called grammatically correct composition.

#### **2.4. Notion of Descriptive Writing**

Descriptive writing means, simply, a writing which presents information of something in detail. In language teaching-learning process, every learner should master this typical writing in term of how to compose it effectively. As confirmed

by Emilia and Christie (2013: 1), learning descriptive genre is essential in order that students can describe vivid and proper information. Concerning the definition of descriptive text, Fawcett and Sandberg (1984: 6) defines it as a kind of text that describes something, a person, a scene, or an object into words so others can imagine it. Also, Wishon and Burks in Jeniar (2016: 23) illustrate that descriptive text is a description reproducing the way things look, smell, taste, feel, or sound; it may also evoke moods, such as happiness, loneliness, or fear.

Absolutely, someone who wants to write a description of something, definitely, has to have detailed informations about it. As acknowledged by Wyrick (1987: 227), the writer of description creates a word-picture of persons, places, objects, and emotions using a careful selection of detail to make an impression on the reader. Furthermore, Tolkien in Jeniar (2016: 24), in the similar intent, also claims that descriptive writing text, sometimes called “showing writing”, is writing that describes a particular person, place or event in great detail.

In line with the meaning of description, that is picturing in words what something is like, the purpose of descriptive writing is, primarily, to give information about something in detail. A good description is like a “word picture” in which the reader can imagine the object, place, or person in his or her mind (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). Accordingly, in order to achieve its purpose, the descriptive model of writing has its own elements and linguistic features which will be clarified as follows.

### **2.4.1. Elements of Descriptive Writing**

Every single genre of writing definitely has a discrete structure or stages in order to get something done through language (Emilia, 2014: 86). This statement, of course, equally applies to descriptive writing. As affirmed by Knapp and Watkins (2005: 149), there are two elements as requirement for a text to be identified as descriptive text, i.e. identification or general statement and description element. The following is the elaboration of the elements, also functioning as schematic structure, of descriptive writing.

#### **a. Identification**

The identification element aims at introducing and identifying specific participant (a person, thing, place, animal or event) to be described in the descriptive writing. Generally, this part is wholly described in the first paragraph or few earlier sentences.

#### **b. Description**

The description intends to describe the specific participant in the text. It contains descriptive details or information of the specific participant by providing the description of its characteristics, appearances, personality, habits or qualities. This part, in common, is specifically described in the second paragraph and so on.

### **2.4.2. Linguistic Features of Descriptive Writing**

Linguistically, a descriptive writing, according to Emilia and Christie (2013), employs some particular linguistic features as could be seen below.

#### **a. It focuses on specific participants as the main character.**

- b. It employs simple present tense as dominant tense, but sometimes it uses simple past tense when the object described no longer exists.
- c. It uses linking verbs or relational process frequently (such as *is, are, has, have, belongs to*) in order to classify and describe appearance or qualities and parts or functions of phenomena.
- d. It applies action verbs or material process and behavioral process in giving additional description regarding action and behavior done by the participants in text.
- e. It makes use of mental verb or mental process when describing feelings.
- f. It employs adjective to add information to nouns and use adverbs to add information to verbs to provide more detailed description about the topic.
- g. It uses adverbial phrases to add more information about manner, place, or time and sometimes realized in embedded clause which functions as circumstances.

To be more concrete, the example below shows the case:

#### *My Handbag*

Identification

*Three years ago at a flea market, I bought a small, white-beaded handbag, which I have never since carried in public but which I would never dream of giving away. As the purse is small, about the size of a paperback bestseller, it is thus totally unsuited for lugging around such paraphernalia as a wallet, comb, compact, checkbook, keys, and all the other necessities of modern life.*

Description

*Hundreds of tiny pearl-colored beads dot the outside of the handbag, and on the front, woven into the design, is a starburst pattern formed by larger, flat beads. Creamy white satin lines the inside of the bag and forms a small pocket on one side. Inside the pocket someone, perhaps the original owner, has scrawled the initials "J.W." in red lipstick. At the bottom of the purse is a silver coin, which reminds me of my teenage years when my mother warned me never to go out on a date without a dime in case I had to telephone home for help. In fact, I think that's why I like my white beaded handbag. It reminds me of the good old days when men were men and ladies were ladies.*

(Source: [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com))

It can be noticed thoroughly that the piece of writing above is indicated as a descriptive composition for it has components and linguistic features characterized as a descriptive model. The parts of the writing that show the components and linguistic features of a descriptive passage are mentioned as follows:

1. In the first paragraph, the writer intends to identify a specific object, i.e. *handbag*, to readers as an introduction of the writing.
2. The writing noticeably uses present tense as a dominant tense in describing like what the object is, for instance: *Creamy white satin lines the inside of the bag and forms a small pocket on one side* (line 3 and 4 of paragraph 2).
3. Besides, it applies linking verbs to describe appearance or qualities of the object as shown in clause *the purse is small* (line 3 of paragraph 1).
4. In addition, it uses mental verbs in giving additional description regarding action done by the participant in text, e.g. *Inside the pocket, someone has scrawled the initials "J.W." in red lipstick* (line 4 and 5 of paragraph 2).
5. The writer also uses mental verbs when describing feelings as shown in sentence *I think that's why I like my white beaded handbag* (line 8 and 9 of paragraph 2).
6. Certain adjectives and adverbs also appear in the passage to illustrate the object to be more imaginable as noticed in sentence *It is thus totally unsuited for lugging around such paraphernalia as a wallet* (line 4 of paragraph 1).
7. Moreover, the writer also uses adverbial phrases to add more information about, for example, time place as seen in sentence *Three years ago at a flea market, I bought a small, white-beaded handbag* (line 1 and 2 of paragraph 1).

In short, a piece of writing could be characterized as a descriptive writing if it has two principal elements, namely: identification, as identifying a specific object; and description, as describing the object more specifically and vividly. Besides, it has to have some linguistic features thoroughly indicating that it is a descriptive model, such as: using present tense, linking verbs, action and mental verbs, adjectives, adverbial phrases, and other components as cited earlier.

## **2.5. Concept of Error Analysis (EA)**

There is none of humankind who never makes errors during his process of acquiring a foreign or target language. This stands to reason for making errors during the process of learning language actually is an unavoidable part of the learning itself. As acknowledged by Dulay *et al* (1982: 138) that error is a part of learning language. With reference to the meaning of error itself, Brown (2001: 258) defines it as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter language competence of the students.

Indeed, most language learners, or we can say non-native speakers, frequently commit errors in producing a foreign or target language, in this regard English, in both spoken and written forms. The errors which occur during their language learning process, nowadays, become serious attention especially for English teachers and researchers, then finally encourage them to conduct studies dealing with those errors. Therefore, the most appropriate way has been established to be used to investigate the errors which is called "Error Analysis".

Richards & Schmidt (2002) defines error analysis (hereinafter EA) as a technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms of a language in the production data of someone learning either a second or foreign language. In other words, EA makes a scientific study of errors made by a group of people who share the same mother tongue when they study a second or a foreign language.

In line with this, Hendrickson (1979: 206) also illustrates that EA is a study of learners' errors by observing, analyzing, and classifying the errors to reveal something of the system operating within the learners. Furthermore, Ellis (1985: 296) almost similarly explains that EA is a work procedure used by the researcher or language teacher by describing, classifying, and evaluating errors committed by learners. By utilizing EA, researchers can, eventually, indicate all errors produced which are common to the group of people (Sobahle, 1986).

In view of this, studying learners' errors, apparently, is fundamentally carried out for particular purposes. As confirmed by Dulay (1982: 138) that there are major purposes of studying errors. First, it provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. Second, it indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which errors types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively.

From the theories clarified earlier, it is clear that errors made by learners in the process of foreign language acquisition need to be seriously studied. Therefore, EA arises as the most appropriate way to identify and analyze the learners' errors accurately. Moreover, in this way, we can reveal the learners' problems or areas of difficulties in producing the target language in both spoken and written forms.

## 2.6. Classification of Errors

Many kinds of errors we can, actually, recognize after carrying out identification on learners' errors in, particularly, written language productions. In accordance with this, Dulay *et al* (1982: 146) has classified errors into four taxonomies: linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative analysis taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. To understand the meaning of each taxonomy, the explanation below provides understanding of those taxonomies.

### 1. Linguistic Category Taxonomy

This taxonomy, as Dulay *et al* (1982) illustrate, classifies errors according to either or both the language component or the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. The language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). While the linguistic constituents include the elements comprising each language component.

### 2. Surface Strategy Taxonomy

This taxonomy works on mechanisms in which surface forms are modified or altered in erroneous utterances. In other words, it highlights the ways the surface structures are distorted. Learners, for instance, may omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones; they may misform items or misorder them. Accordingly, there are four main ways in which learners alter target forms: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Dulay *et al*, 1982).



### 3. Comparative Analysis Taxonomy

This taxonomy classifies errors based on comparison between the structures of target language errors and certain other types of construction (Dulay *et al*, 1982). When learning a target language and a learner has already mastered his native language, such as Indonesian, its features accordingly tend to interfere in the process of learning the target language. The error identification is traced back by looking for the synonym or translating the words into the learner's mother-tongue to look for the similarity of the phrases or sentences.

### 4. Communicative Effect Taxonomy

While the surface strategy taxonomy focuses on the aspects of the errors, the communicative effect taxonomy deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the listeners or readers. It mainly focuses on the distinguishing between errors that seem to cause the miscommunication and those that do not. This taxonomy, accordingly, classifies errors in two types: global and local errors (Dulay *et al*, 1982).

Among the four taxonomies illustrated above, this study focuses only on two taxonomies, i.e. surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. The reasons why the research chooses both taxonomies are because (1) they are the most suitable to apply for this typical research only focuses on learners' errors in English writings; while linguistic category taxonomy is necessary to involve phonology, meaning learners need to speak, and comparative analysis taxonomy need compare two or more languages in term of structure, so they do, acutely, not correspond to the study; (2) the research intends to see errors emerging on the surface construction the learners make, and on the perspective

of the errors' effect to readers. To understand further both taxonomies, the following is the elaboration.

### **2.6.1. Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

As mentioned previously, surface strategy taxonomy is described as being based on how learners alter surface structures of the language when they use it incorrectly. Errors can occur because of change in surface structure in specific and systematic ways (Dulay *et al*, 1982: 150). Besides, this taxonomy classifies four ways in which learners modify target forms in specific and systematic ways, as clarified below:

#### **2.6.1.1. Omission**

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. It means that there is a sentence in which there is one of its aspects (word) or more is omitted, e.g. *The monkey on the back*. As can be noticed from the sentence, we know that helping verb "is" is omitted. Accordingly, this incorrect sentence should be rewritten as *The monkey is on the back*.

#### **2.6.1.2. Addition**

Addition errors are the opposite of omission. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. There are three terms of addition as could be seen below.

### 1) *Double Marking*

This typical error occurs when a concept or a part of speech that language requires its expression only once is expressed twice. For examples:

- *I am get best score.* This sentence has double predicates. Consequently, this incorrect sentence should be revised by omitting needless word *am* as *I get best score.*
- *He did not met his children.* This sentence has double past markings; thus, the sentence should be revised as *He did not meet his children.*

### 2) *Regularization*

This is an item requiring special rules which is indicated by the application of a regular rule or an error, e.g. *The Hortatory Exposition text is readed by Fahmy.* Following correct grammatical rule, this sentence should be revised and read as *The Hortatory Exposition text is read by Fahmy.*

### 3) *Simple Addition*

Simple addition error is an error that does not belong to double marking. For example: *On over there/In over there.* The preposition *in* and *on* must be omitted; hence, this sentences should be rewritten as *over there.*

#### **2.6.1.3. *Misformation***

Misformation is indicated by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme. This also means that one or more of sentence's aspect has wrong formation. There are three types of this typical error as described below:

### 1) *Regularization*

Regularization is an item in which a regular marker is used in an irregular one. For example: *The dog eated the chicken*. Following correct grammatical rule, this sentence should be revised as *The dog ate the chicken*.

### 2) *Archi form*

The selection of one number of a class of forms to represent others in the class is a common characteristic of all stages of second or target language acquisition. We have called the form selected by the students an archi-form. Here is an example of the case: *I saw her yesterday. Her danced with my brother*. Subject in the second sentence is, grammatically, not as the third personal pronoun; thus, this sentence should be rewritten as *I saw her yesterday. She danced with my brother*.

### 3) *Alternating form*

In this error type, the students know a lot more about various members of a class of words and the different usages among them. However, this fact sometimes confuses them to which one to use. Here is an example to show the case: *They have gave it*. This sentence is grammatically incorrect; hence, the sentence should be revised as *They have given it*.

#### **2.6.1.4. *Misordering***

Misordering is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in an utterance. It means that the sentence structure is ordered incorrectly. For example: *I do not know what is that*. The auxiliary verb “is” is placed incorrectly; therefore, this sentence should be rewritten as *I do not know what that is*.

As can be noticed from the concept of surface strategy taxonomy above, it could be summed up that the surface strategy taxonomy itself highlights the ways the surface structure are altered. Furthermore, this error category classifies errors into four terms: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

### **2.6.2. Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

Communicative effect taxonomy, as previously clarified, deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on recipients, either the listeners or readers. It focuses simply on the distinguishing between errors that seem to result in the miscommunication and those that do not (Dulay *et al*, 1982: 189). This taxonomy categorizes errors into two types, i.e. global and local errors. The following is the detailed description of each error type in communicative effect taxonomy.

#### **2.6.2.1. Global Error**

The existence of this typical error is most able to affect overall sentence organization then significantly hinder communication. Because of the wide syntactic scope of such error, Dulay *et al* (1982) labeled this category “global”. These systematic global errors include various types of errors that will be described as follows:

##### *1) Wrong order or major constituents*

This typical error occurs when the structure of a sentence is incorrectly constructed so that can lead the reader to have different interpretation about the meaning of the sentence. For example: *English use many people*. Absolutely, this sentence is semantically incorrect for, actually, the writer’s

intent is that the sentence is in passive voice, which it grammatically gets some particular additions. Yet, the sentence should just be adequately revised as *Many people use English*. This sentence, accordingly, has a similar point with the writer's mind.

## 2) *Missing and wrong misplaced sentence connectors*

This error is characterized by the absence, misuse, or misplacement of sentence connector that should properly function to relate two incidents or clauses. For examples:

- *He has no job, every day he always gets food sufficiently*. Clearly, the sentence connector “*but*” in this sentence is missing; the sentence, thus, should be rewritten as *He has no job, but every day he always gets food sufficiently*.
- *The man never knows whenever his wife is back*. Certainly, the sentence connector “*whenever*” is absolutely wrong. It should be “*when*”. Therefore, the correct sentence is *The man never knows when his wife is back*.
- *Because I could not get asleep, I drank a cup of coffee*. Of course, the sentence connector “*because*” is misplaced; consequently, this sentence should be revised as *I could not get asleep because I drank a cup of coffee*.

## 3) *Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules*

This error occurs when one or two cues of pervasive syntactic rules in a sentence is missing. It can finally bring the readers to have different interpretation for the sentence is confusing, e.g. *The students' proposals looked the principle*. In this sentence, *were* and *by* are missing that indicate the sentence is in passive form so that the sentence is quite confusing. As a

consequence, the correct sentence should be *The students' proposals were looked by their principle.*

#### 2.6.2.2. *Local Error*

The presence of local error does, significantly, not influence the structure and the meaning of the overall sentence. It is because this typical error tends to only affect a single element or constituent in a single sentence. There are four categories included in the local errors as illustrated below.

##### 1) *Errors in noun and verb inflection*

This typical error occurs when inflection of noun or verb in a sentence is not applied appropriately, e.g. *When I was six years old, I live in Paris, but then I move to Bandar Lampung.* In this sentence, inflectional '-d' on the verbs *live* and *move* indicating past form are left out. Accordingly, the incorrect sentence should be revised as *When I was six years old, I lived in Paris, but then I moved to Metro.*

##### 2) *Errors in article*

This error is characterized by misuse of article in a sentence, e.g. *I bought a apple with my sister yesterday.* In this sentence, article *an* should be used instead of *a*. Therefore, the correct sentence should be *I bought an apple with my sister yesterday.*

##### 3) *Errors in auxiliary*

This error is characterized by misuse of auxiliary in a sentence, e.g. *She have heard that information from her teacher.* In this sentence, auxiliary *has* should

be used instead of *have*; as a consequence, the incorrect sentence should be rewritten as *She has heard that information from her teacher*.

#### 4) *Errors in the formation of quantifier*

This error is characterized by misuse of quantifier word in a sentence, e.g. *I have much friends in the school*. The use of quantifier *much* in the sentence is wrong. It should be *many* because the word “*friends*” is countable. Thus, the correct sentence should be *I have many friends in the school*.

Considering the clarification already discussed above, it could be summed up that communicative effect taxonomy concerns with errors deriving from the perspective of their effect on the listeners or readers. It focuses simply on the dissimilarity between errors that seem to cause the miscommunication and those that do not. This taxonomy classifies errors into two types, namely global and local errors.

### **2.7. Procedures of EA**

A linguist, most generally, always has own concept concerning an understanding, particularly related to linguistics, which tends to be different from concepts belonging to other linguists. With respect to this, many kinds of concept concerned specifically with procedure of EA emerge among the linguists. They have own specific ways or steps in identifying and analyzing linguistic errors committed by learners. Nonetheless, they, fundamentally, have the same purpose.

In the concept of Hubbard *et al* (1996: 135), for example, he describes how to identify and analyze learners’ errors. The initial step requires the selection of a



corpus of language followed by the identification of errors. The errors are then classified. The next step, after giving a grammatical analysis of each error, demands an explanation of different types of errors. In contrast to Hubbard *et al*, Abbot (1981: 218) claims that the process of EA is divided into 5 stages: (1) recognition, (2) interpretation, (3) reconstruction, (4) classification, and (5) explanation.

Gass and Selinker (1994: 67), on the other hand, identify six steps followed in conducting EA: (1) collecting data, (2) identifying errors, (3) classifying errors, (4) quantifying errors, (5) analyzing source of error, and (6) remediating for errors. Almost similarly but more detailed, Sridhar (1980: 222) suggests the steps for EA as follows:

1. Collection of data (either from a 'free' composition by students on a given theme or from examination answers).
2. Identification of errors (labeling with varying degree of precision depending on the linguistic sophistication brought to bear upon the task, with respect to the exact nature of the deviation, e.g. dangling preposition, anomalous sequence of tenses, etc.).
3. Classification into error types (e.g. errors of agreement, articles, verb forms, etc.).
4. Statement of relative frequency of error types.
5. Identification of the areas of difficulty in the target language.
6. Therapy (remedial drills, lessons, etc.).

With reference to the concepts of EA procedure suggested by some linguists, it could be summed up that EA can, after being integrated, be applied through some

stages: (1) identification, (2) interpretation, (3) reconstruction, (4) classification, (5) quantification, and (6) explanation. If English teacher, additionally, intends to employ EA on his students' linguistic errors, he accordingly needs to add one more as the last step, that is remedial action. Thereby, the learners can finally recognize and learn from the errors they ever commit. As completely knowing the benefits of EA, many English teachers or even researchers are, thereafter, considerably interested in administering various studies of EA.

## **2.8. Benefits of EA**

There is a lot of benefits we can, actually, gain by studying learners' errors in producing foreign or target language in both spoken and written forms. It is because errors are, as Selinker in Touchie (1986: 76) indicates, significant in three respects: (1) errors are important for the language teacher since they indicate the learner's progress in language learning. As also confirmed by Mei Lin Ho (2003: 1), the result of EA becomes an indicator of the learners' stages in their target language development; (2) errors are also important for the language researchers as they provide insights into how language is learned; and (3) finally, errors are significant to the language learners themselves as they get involved in hypothesis testing.

In line with this, Ellis (2003: 15) claims that there are good reasons for concerning on the learners' errors. First, it is a conspicuous feature of learner language, raising the important question of "Why do learners make error?" Second, it is useful for teachers to know what errors learners make. Third, it is possible that

making errors may, actually, help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make.

Furthermore, Corder (1974: 25) also acknowledges that by employing EA, teachers not only can detect the students' difficulties in learning the target language, but they also can determine the affectivity of their teaching methods. The teachers will, eventually, recognize the learners' problems, how far they have learned and what remains for them to learn by analyzing their errors. Therefore, it is undoubtedly significant to conduct EA for there are plenty of benefits in analyzing the errors, such as:

1. It can be as a device by which the learners can learn.
2. It is useful to fully grasp and understand the nature of the errors made.
3. It is instead of just being able to explain the rules and correct the errors.

In brief, EA eventually provides useful insights about the system operating in the learners' mind and evidently reveals their knowledge about the grammatical systems of the target language. By identifying what is exactly lacking in the learners' competence, EA brings the learners' problem areas to the attention of teachers, syllabus designers, and textbook writers; and suggests remedial actions to overcome the mismatch between knowledge of the learners and the demands of the situation.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODS**

This chapter deals particularly with several essential components related, in particular, to the methodology of this study. They are research design, subjects of the research, instrument of the research, research procedure, data collecting technique, data analysis, and credibility of the data. Those points will be discussed separately in some units in this chapter.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The design of this study is qualitative research that employs descriptive method. According to Leedy (1974: 79), descriptive method is a method of research that simply looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and describes exactly what the research has observed. In line with this, Selinger and Shohamy (1989: 116) also convey their notion that descriptive research is concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally without the intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment.

This descriptive method, in this study, was exactly applied to describe errors committed by the subjects in their descriptive writing, and it certainly was done after the researcher already identified and analyzed the errors under the base of surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy. Specifically, the researcher, by this method, described the types of errors, certainly included in

both taxonomies, which were committed by the subjects; and also described what type of error that had the most and the least frequency of the emergence in the subjects' written productions.

### **3.2. Subjects of the Research**

In this study, the subjects chosen are specifically the second grade students of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung in academic year of 2016/2017. These subjects, the second grade of senior high school, are chosen as they, according to KTSP curriculum for SMA, have learned about (1) grammar, (2) vocabulary, and (3) some kinds of text: descriptive text, narrative text, recount text, and factual report text.

In the population of the second year students of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung, there are exactly nine classes which consist of two concentrations: class IPA consisting of 5 classes and class IPS comprising 4 classes. Each of the classes consists of 32 to 36 students. This research, in particular, requires only one class for the sample. On the basis of recommendation of an English teacher in SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung, Class XI IPA 2 is the most appropriate to be the sample of the research as the students more likely could give the objective data. However, since there were 8 students had, coincidentally, been joining in a competition outside the school when the researcher was gathering the data, thus, there were only 24 students that could be the subjects.

### **3.3. Instrument of the Research**

By nature, instruments refer to the tools or means by which researchers attempt to investigate variables or items of interest in the data-collection process. Arikunto (2002) claims that research method is a manner that is used to collect data, and instrument is a tool to collect it. Therefore, instrument has paramount role in research activity for it is the tool used by researcher to collect data and to make the work easily.

This study, in its administration, needed special instrument to gain the data which then to be analyzed. The instrument employed in this study was writing test; and the following is the description of the instrument:

#### **3.3.1. Writing Test**

The writing test meant in this study is writing a descriptive composition. This typical test was applied to see what types of error the learners made in their English writings. This genre, i.e. descriptive writing, was chosen because not only the learners have, according to KTSP curriculum for SMA, learned this typical writing, but also it is regarded as the simplest type of writing so made the learners easily to express their ideas in their composition.

In order to obtain the desired data, the researcher accordingly determined some criteria that the participants were expected to be able to fill. The criteria meant, among other things, are (1) the composition comprised at least two paragraphs, (2) the paragraphs contained at least 100 words or consisted approximately of 15 to 25 sentences, and (3) the composition should, of course, be written in the respect of the topic provided.

Regarding the topic of the composition the learners composed, there are actually five topics provided as could be seen below.

- One of family members
- A close friend
- One of teachers
- Home
- Junior or senior high school

The reason why the researcher selects those five topics for the learners is because the topics are people or things around the participants and they, definitely, have known so well; as a result, they could (1) imagine as well as describe the topics clearly; (2) use vocabulary items they have known and might often be used, and being simple, of course; and (3) describe the objects vividly and enthusiastically since they have recognized the objects so properly.

In addition, each of the topics cited above was inserted in a direction printed on the head of each working sheet. It means that the topic, direction, and working sheet became the whole unity which then was provided to the students randomly. In other words, each five-student got different topics. Then, they composed descriptive model in conformity with the provided topic. Furthermore, this writing test was carried out only once in its administration.

To observe clearly how the physical appearance of the writing test is, the following is the detailed illustration:

*In this test, you are assigned to compose a descriptive model consisting at least of two paragraphs and more or less 100 words based on the provided topic and directions. Here are certain points you should consider in your composition:*

1. *You should write suitable topic of your passage.*
2. *Topic: (for example) One of your close friend*

3. *Purpose: To illustrate the physical appearance, characteristics, habits, and hobbies of the person you are familiar with.*

*In so doing, follow these steps:*

*Step 1. Write prewriting notes.*

*Step 2. Begin by telling who the person is.*

*Step 3. Use the notes about the physical appearance, characteristics, habits, and hobbies the person constantly does.*

*Step 4. You may use the vocabulary items provided in the table to help you write.*

*Step 5. Reread carefully your composition from the beginning and revise it then.*

*To do so, ask yourself this question: Did I illustrate my story clearly and effectively?*

**General notes:** *Make sure that your composition is clear, complete, and correct.*

### **3.4. Research Procedure**

In order to be able to carry out this research systematically and organizingly, the researcher, hence, did need to arrange and administer the research procedure. The following is the research procedure employed to undertake this study:

1. Determining research problems

The problems of this research are accurately determined under the base of the problems that the students, particularly in Indonesia, encounter during the learning process of writing English composition. The problems can be seen clearly in the background of the problem in Chapter 1.

2. Determining the subjects of the research

The subjects of the research are the second year students of SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung. The writer needed, more specifically, only one class of nine classes belonging to the second grade students, namely class XI IPA 2.



3. Administering the writing test

Basically, the first principal step to get data is upon applying the instrument properly. The writing test here is the instrument. The writing test given to the students, specifically, was writing a descriptive composition related to the topic already provided. The test was administered for once, specifically on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at SMA Al-Kautsar Bandar Lampung.

4. Collecting data

The researcher, thereupon, collected the data after the students already finished their writing test. The data here were the results of the students work.

5. Analyzing data

After the data was completely collected, the researcher started to identify and analyze errors the students committed in their descriptive writings.

6. Reporting the research findings

The last step was reporting the research findings and drawing an inference based on the results which were, certainly, already got.

### **3.5. Data Collecting Technique**

In the attempt to gather the data, this study utilized an instrument in form of written test as already mentioned earlier. This instrument hugely contributed in several major steps the research employed to obtain the objective data. The steps will be explained as follows.

1. Firstly, it was necessary to prepare the instrument of the research. The instrument was taken the form of working sheets consisting of relevant points

of direction to lead the students to compose a typical descriptive passage developed by using topic provided.

2. Thereafter, the working sheets were distributed to the students and the time in 90 minutes was provided for them to perform the writing test.
3. After the time was up as well as the students already finished their test, the results of their works were then collected.
4. The last, the data analysis was undertaken to find out the errors the students committed in their descriptive compositions.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

There are various kinds of data analysis that have been suggested by some linguistic experts, particularly concerned with error analysis (EA) on English foreign language learners' writings. After the researcher got some references with relation to EA, he then could establish several main steps to analyze the data as described below:

#### **1. Identification**

To find errors in each of the students' compositions, the researcher, definitely, had to read every single sentence carefully. When the error was found, it was necessary to identify by underlining it.

#### **2. Classification**

Identifying the errors, the researcher then grammatically classified the errors into some types in terms of both surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy by employing special codes such as OM, AD, MF, MO, GE, and LE. To be clearer, the codes will be described as follows:

OM deals with omission,  
AD relates to addition,  
MF denotes misformation,  
MO refers to misordering,  
GE explains global error, and  
LE describes local error.

### 3. Calculation

In this step, the researcher computed the errors already classified in order to know the frequency of each error type. The researcher, in addition, also needed percentage of each error type so that he could easily identify the emergence frequency of error types in the students' writings from the most up to the least. In calculating the percentage of each error type, the researcher employed a formula proposed by Nation in Sudjiono (2005: 43) that could be seen below.

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

The formula can be further illustrated as follows:

P refers to percentage of each error type,  
F deals with frequency of each error type, and  
N denotes number of overall errors.

### 4. Tabulation

After getting the results of calculations, either of the entire errors or each error type, the researcher then presented the results in form of table in order to be easier to determine what error type that appeared dominantly in the learners' writings and to draw the inference. There were exactly two kinds of table that

were applied to show the results, specifically in case of the frequencies of error types. Each of those tables was built on the basis of both error taxonomies, i.e. surface strategy taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy, as could be seen below:

Table 1. Frequencies of learners' errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

No.	Grammatical Aspects of Word Order	Surface Strategy Taxonomy				Total of Each Related Aspect
		Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	
1	Agreement of subject and predicate					
2	Agreement of pronoun and antecedent					
3	Linking and auxiliary verbs					
4	Adjectives and adverbs					
<b>Total of each error type</b>						
<b>Percentage</b>						
<b>Whole number</b>						

Table 2. Frequencies of learners' errors based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy

No.	Grammatical Aspects of Word Order	Communicative Effect Taxonomy		Total of Each Related Aspect
		Global Error	Local Error	
1	Agreement of subject and predicate			
2	Agreement of pronoun and antecedent			
3	Linking and auxiliary verbs			
4	Adjectives and adverbs			
<b>Total of each error type</b>				
<b>Percentage</b>				
<b>Whole number</b>				

## 5. Inference

The last step was the researcher drew the inference from the results of data analysis having been presented in each variety of tables which was, of course, followed by proper and accurate reason. Eventually, the inference descriptively revealed the error types that had the most and the least frequency of the emergence in the students' descriptive writings.

### **3.7. Credibility of the Data**

In qualitative research, the capability of the researcher in collecting data is considerably necessary because the researcher's role, such as analyzing and interpreting data, does determine the quality of the collected data (Setiyadi, 2006: 237). In order to be able to reveal the findings in accordance with the real fact, this study applied triangulation. According to Setiyadi (2006: 246), triangulation is, in nature, combination of two or more methods in collecting qualitative data. Indeed, it is very useful to enhance authenticity and credibility of the data.

In reference to the triangulation, Cohen and Manion (1980) categorize it into some types, i.e. time triangulation, place triangulation, theory triangulation, method triangulation, and researcher triangulation. The appropriate type of triangulation for this study is researcher triangulation. The concept of this typical triangulation is commonly used to collect the same data performed by a few researchers. By involving more researchers, the research findings could relatively have higher credibility.

In order to obtain the desired data, i.e. in the forms of error types found in the learners' descriptive writings, this study hence needed to identify and analyze the learners' errors. Furthermore, to make the data more trustworthy, the study accordingly employed more than one rater in analyzing the learners' errors. There were only two raters in the study, i.e. the researcher himself and Nur Choironi, S.Pd. Her experience in investigating students' errors in their recount text when studying in her college makes Nur Choironi chosen to be the second rater in this study. In the attempt to make this collaboration able to smoothly carry out, the study then established several steps as can be noticed below:

1. Firstly, the researcher, as the first rater, asked Nur Choironi's readiness to become the second rater for analyzing the data. The researcher then explained and trained her how to analyze the data as already described clearly in Data Analysis section.
2. After the both raters analyzed the data they had done independently, they then noticed and looked for the sameness in cases of (1) the error types the learners made, for example, the first rater regards a single error item a learner made in his writing as a misformation, then he asks the second rater whether she also considers it is so. If the error is considered as a misformation by the both raters, thus the error is truly credible to be as misformation; and (2) the order of error types seen from the most to the least frequency.
3. When the both raters' results had those similarities, the raters afterwards discussed to decide which result was proper to use and report as the research findings. This means that the researcher could decide to use his own results or the second rater's wholly; or in another way, he could decide to use some results of his and some other results of hers.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter specifically presents the conclusions of the research results and the suggestions for further researchers and English teachers who want to take a concern on learners' errors in their English writings.

### 5.1. Conclusions

In line with the research findings and discussion provided in the previous chapter, some conclusions are drawn as follows:

1. Learners, particularly in Indonesia, who are learning English as a foreign or target language tend to frequently commit all types of grammatical errors either in terms of (1) surface strategy taxonomy covering omission, addition, misformation, misordering; or (2) communicative effect taxonomy including global and local errors in their English writings.
2. In terms of surface strategy taxonomy, the most persistent error type the learners commit in their writings is misformation. It is then followed by omission, addition, and misordering as the least frequent error type the learners make in their writings. While in terms of communicative effect taxonomy, the learners more dominantly commit local error than global error in their English writings.

3. Moreover, the learners commit the grammatical errors dealing with some grammatical aspects of writing, such as (1) agreement of subject and predicate, (2) agreement of pronoun and antecedent, (3) linking and auxiliary verbs, and (4) adjectives and adverbs. However, they mostly made the errors in relation to agreement of subject and predicate.

## **5.2. Suggestions**

In reference to the discussion of the findings and limitations of this research, several worthwhile suggestions are hence proposed for English teachers and future researchers as mentioned below:

### **1. Suggestions for English Teachers**

In the attempt to minimize or even prevent students to make errors, and improve their English writing proficiency, some valuable suggestions below are seriously recommended:

- a. English teachers should have serious concern on learners' errors in their writing, especially in terms of surface structures of their sentences and the perspectives of their errors to readers, and provide relevant remedies as attempts to prevent the students from fossilizing the wrong concepts of language usage.
- b. Besides, the English teachers should give learners material about English grammar, especially in regard with agreement of subject and predicate, in order to make them understand the rules of the grammar then finally can apply it properly in the real context of writing. Perhaps a quiet atmosphere in



classroom will help the students comprehend easily the material that the teachers explain.

- c. Most importantly, English teachers should make learners often practice writing English by constantly giving them much exercises in order to make them habitual in writing English correctly, then they eventually can minimize making grammatical errors, particularly the types of error that most frequently emerge, such as misformation and local error.

## **2. Suggestions for Further Researchers**

To extend this research more extensively, some following worth suggestions are considerably recommended:

- a. Since this study only dealt mainly with four aspects of word order in relating the learners' errors in writing, future researchers are hence suggested to add other aspects of word order such as case, tense, and voice to be related to learners' errors in their English writing.
- b. Likewise, as this study only employed two raters for analyzing the learners' errors in order to make the results more trustworthy, therefore, future researchers are strongly suggested to use at least three raters. If the number is more than three raters, ensure that they are in odd number. It actually intends to avoid any controversion among the raters caused by different opinions.
- c. Furthermore, since this research was undertaken on small number of respondents so makes the findings not able to generalize, accordingly, the future studies with more respondents are seriously recommended.

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