

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PUNCTUATION IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

¹Dini Hadi Pratiwi, ²Tenia Ramalia

^{1,2}English Education Department, Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Tangerang,
Indonesia

Corresponding author's email: tramalia@unis.ac.id

Abstract

The aims of this research are to investigate the types of errors' punctuation and the dominant errors' punctuation in students' writing recount text at the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang. Using descriptive qualitative as a method, this research carried out on 32 students in class XI Bahasa 2 at the eleventh grade. The data were collected from the results of students' writing of recount text. The result of the research shows that types of errors of punctuation marks made by students are 88 or 91,67% errors in omission, 3 or 3,12% errors in addition, and 5 or 5,21% errors in misformation. Meanwhile, the types of punctuation errors that dominant occur in writing recount text were period with 53,1% or 51 errors made by the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang. It can be concluded that the eleventh grade students of SMAN 14 Tangerang have difficulty in using punctuation.

Keywords: Error analysis, punctuation, recount text, writing.

INTRODUCTION

As a universal language, English is used for communication between countries. We are expanded to be able to use English effectively. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are the four skills that are crucial for learning English. Students need to master a precise set of skills to study and comprehend English effectively. English is one of the courses studied from elementary school through highschool in Indonesia. Each skill has a dissimilar complexity level, and the most complexity skill in language is writing (Richards & Renandya, 2002). According to Celce-Murcia & Elite (2000) Writing is the hardest skill to master to be learned because writing requires more effective language control than listening, speaking, and reading. Students typically have more time to reflect in writing than when speaking in front of the class. They can review what they already know and seek clarification from dictionaries, grammar guides, and other reference resources. Writing is an essential ability for learners studying English since it allows them to express their thoughts on a particular object and develop it into good writing. To do a good writing, students not only need a lot of vocabulary, but also have to understand grammatical structure, punctuation. Three principles guide in writing: mechanics, or even the convention that a sentence should start with a capital letter and conclude with a full stop (punctuation); usage, on the appropriate use of the language in specific circumstances; and grammar, the principles that provide language structure (Kane, 2000).

The writer conducted observations and interviews with English teacher. The observation is conducted in the practice of writing a text that has been done by the writer. It shows that students make many mistakes in writing the text. The results revealed that student errors occur due to several things, including a lack of students' knowledge about punctuation, lack of students' understanding of grammatical structures, and misuse capitalization. As explained that one of the problems that occur in student errors is punctuation, a crucial thing in writing. Therefore, the writer tried to find out types of students' error in using punctuation.

Punctuation marks are symbols that represent the structure and order of written text, as well as intonation and pauses that should be observed when reading aloud (Jane, 2008). Punctuation marks have been applied to avoid expressions from being misunderstood and to allow full comprehension of written language (Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017). Furthermore, Lauchman, (2010) states that punctuation is a writing code that is frequently required for meaning and emphasis. Punctuation works as a code for identifying markers in a sentence or paragraph.

There are several types of punctuation. According to (Hamilton, 2007), (Straus & Kaufman, 2014), (Mitchell et al., 2007), (Harmer, 2004), (Abdulkhaleq, 2019), (Stillman, 1997), (Kirkman, 2006) there are several types of punctuation, they are: 1) Full Stop/Periods (.) to signal the end of a declarative phrase. It also serves other purposes besides being a sign, 2) Commas (,), to signal list of nouns, used in quotation, and used before a coordinating conjunction, 3) Semicolons (;), like commas, it indicates an audible pause that is a little longer than a comma but not quite a full stop, 4) Colons (:), used to separate hours and minutes and to separate a title from subtitle The punctuation mark known as a colon serves a variety of purposes, 5) Quotation Marks (" ") commonly used in direct speech, 6) Parentheses (()) is used to enclose an interrupting word or word group that adds information and to clarify an idea, 7) Brackets ([]), Brackets are only used in specific situations. Only within quoted material are brackets (like single quotation marks) used. Parentheses are used much more frequently than brackets, 8) Apostrophes (') is used for contractions and possession, 9) Hyphens (-) to divide a word that is too long to fit on one line; to separate syllables of words to illustrate pronunciation; and as a leader in tabular work. 10) Dashes (—) is used to show a break in thought in a sentence, to summarize or provide information, or a sudden stops in speech, 11) Ellipses (...), to indicate an omission of a word or words within a sentence, to show that the speaker has been interrupted, and to indicate a trailing off in speech or thought, 12) Question Marks (?) is used after a direct question, 13) Exclamation Marks (!), the exclamation mark denotes a strong emotional response, 14) Slash (/) to express alternatives and indicates when a unit of one physical quantity is divided into units of another physical quantity, e.g. m/s.

These usages in writing is essential. As one form of communication, writing is used as a media to convey thought, ideas, or feelings. Safitri (2019) states that The purpose of writing is to provide information from the author to the reader. Convey to readers the meaning of letters, words, phrases, and paragraphs used to express thoughts, experiences, and statements. In line with this, Diestch (2003) also argue that the primary purposes of writing may generally be to express ideas, persuade readers, and entertain readers. In order to fulfill a specific writing demand, the specific purpose needs writing. In order to make the message well received, the components in the message must be written well, whether from the idea, sentence structure, punctuation. Therefore, writing is known to be a complex skill. Ramalia (2019) states that writing as a productive skill is considered a complex skill as it involves multiple elements such as vocabulary, grammar and paragraph structure. It also has the necessary mechanics to

create good writing, including punctuation, capitalization, spelling, uniformity, coherence, and structure. Moreover, Ananda et al, 2014) argued that writing is the most difficult of the essential abilities for teaching English in an EFL (Ananda et al., 2014). Both native and non-native speakers find writing to be a challenging skill since professional writers are expected to understand various writing rules, including content, structure, purpose, audience, vocabulary, and mechanics like capitalization, punctuation, and spelling (Shweba & Mujiyanto, 2017). For these reasons, students must acquire the mechanics used in writing, one of them is punctuation.

Recount text was selected by the writer as a method for gathering data for this research since the text describes past experiences. Recount texts list and describe past experiences by retelling events in the chronological order in which they occurred (Yusnita, Sada, & Novita, 2011). In line with this, Hyland (2003) argued that recount text are used to recreate the past by remembering happenings in their original order. Furthermore, Knapp & Watkins (2005) stated the genre's simplest text type is recount. Recount is a type of sequential writing that primarily provides to order a sequence of happenings (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). The writer makes the case that since they are experiencing the event, students can easily recount their experiences when using recount text. As a result, students can readily communicate their feelings memorable experiences or other intriguing events.

Some related researches have been conducted to found out the the use of punctuation in writing. The first research from Sarif, Hidayati, and Humaira (2018) entitled "An Error Analysis of Using Punctuation Made by Students in Descriptive Text at the Second Year Students of SMPN 3 Wera in Academic Year 2017/2018". The research focused on analyzing students' error in using punctuation marks on period and comma. It reveals that there are two types of punctuation and two types of errors (comma, omission, addition, and period) that are classified. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher came to the conclusion that students continued to often misuse punctuation.

Kartika Supriyani (2020) also wrote an article entitled "An Error Analysis on the Use of Punctuation Marks in Announcement Text Made by the First Year Students of SMKN 1 Bancak". The result of this research showed, the most common forms of punctuation mistakes made by students are omission (369 errors, or 88.7% of all errors), addition (28 errors, or 6.7% of all errors), misformation (18 errors, or 4.3%), and misordering (1 error, or 0.3%). period mistakes account for the majority of punctuation problems, totaling 153, or 36.8%.

METHOD

This research aims to analyze the punctuation that students usually use in writing. The writer applied it to the eleventh-grade students. The writer conducted research at SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang in academic year 2022/2023. The writer used a qualitative technique and descriptive research design with error analysis processes in this research. Descriptive analysis is research that seeks to describes a situation phenomenon without manipulating the data or paying special attention to the research issue (Sukmadinata, 2016). Descriptive research produces and describes what exists. This indicate that descriptive study concentrated only on describing the phenomenon rather than treating the students (Gay & Airasian, 2000). This research was conducted from December 2021.

To collect the data, the writer explains the material about recount text, then give instructions to the students to make a recount text with a free topic. After the students finished making the recount text, the writer analyse the students' writing based on the theory of Miles and Huberman (1984) and classified the punctuation errors in the recount text that had been made by the students based on theory of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) . The writer describe

the number of errors and make a percentage of each type of error, to find out the most frequent errors.

While in analyzing the data, The writer will be analyze the data with several steps based on theory of Miles and Huberman (1984), they are:

a. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the act of identifying, focusing on, and picking patterns and themes while eliminating the unneeded ones. In this step, the writer focused on the students' writing recount text at the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang.

b. Data Display

It is possible to display data in the form of graphs, matrices, and charts for easy understanding and connection. The writer presented the facts in a second phase by explaining it with graphs and charts.

c. Conclusion Drawing/Verification

The writer reached the conclusion about the relevant problems based on the data collected in the final phase, making it clearly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to examine punctuation errors in writing recount text made by the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang. The writer requested the students to write a recount text about their experiences or memorable occasions as part of a writing test in order to collect the data. 32 students in class XI Bahasa 2 took the writing test that the writer created. The writer analysis the results and points out the punctuation error that was found in student written recount text. In categorize the punctuation mistakes, there are four types of errors according to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) they are; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

The percentages of the findings of the study above showed errors are classified by the writer as omissions, additions, misformation, and misordering. The writer found that omission is the most common error students make, which has 91,67% or 88 cases of the total errors. This type of error happened because students cannot distinguish between an old sentence and a new sentence, as shown by the table, which showed the percentage of each error based on the classification. The second type of error, misformation, which has 5,21% or 5 cases of the total errors, and it happened when students cannot tell which kind of punctuation to used. The next error type is addition, which has 3,12% or 3 cases of the total errors. This error type happened when students utilized punctuation that should not be used in the phrase. The last error type, misordering. In this case the writer did not find this type of error in the students' writing.

The writer presented examples of student error construction after categorizing errors into the types of errors described by Heidi Dulay and displaying their percentages.

Omission

The absence of a part that should be present in a complete sentence is referred to as an error of omission. Punctuation omission mistakes are described in the explanation that follows. As omission errors, punctuation falls into three types:

1) Period

A complete concept of a sentence finished without a period when a period is missed. The sentence was ambiguous because there was no punctuation at the end of it. Following is an illustration of omission of period:

Student DNP

We looked around in the Zoo and took pictures of the animal, then we felt hungry, so we bought some food.

It illustrated the error in applying period after a complete idea. Each sentence contained a complete thought, which was followed by a subsequent sentence that did the same. Each ending needed to have a period to avoid having the incorrect sentence structure. The correct form is as follows:

We looked around in the Zoo and took pictures of the animal. Then we felt hungry, so we bought some food.

2) Comma

The comma that must be present in a sentence is referred to as being absent. The sentence became unclear as a result of these omissions. The following example of comma omission is provided:

Student SF

When I was in 10th grade with my classmate Jihan.

It illustrated the error in applying comma to set off words that interrupted the main idea of a sentence. The correct form was as follows:

When I was in 10th grade with myclassmate, Jihan.

3) Apostrophe

A comma that must be in a sentence is absent when the apostrophe is missing. The sentence became unclear as a result of these omissions. Here is an example of apostrophe omission:

Student DVL

After the evening prayer I ate relaxedand just played at my friends house.

It illustrated the error in applying apostrophe to show possession or ownership. So, the correct form was as follows:

After the evening prayer I ate relaxedand just played at my friend's house.

Addition

An item that should not be present in sentences that are appropriately formed is referred to as an addition error. In opposite to the omission, the students in this case used a punctuation mark that was inappropriate for a sentence. Two different forms of punctuation marks were categorized as addition errors. There was no comma, because the writer missed to find a comma when analyzing the data

1) Period

The addition of a period indicated that the phrase is not finished and was tried to end by a period. The following shows an example of the addition of period based on data analysis:

Student MO

Indeed. My father's hobby is playingbadminton.

The example from MO illustrated the period that separated the previous sentence made it seem unclear. Because the word is still in a unified whole, so it does not need to be separated by a period. The correct form was as follows:

Indeed my father's hobby is playing badminton.

2) Apostrophe

When students did not understand the purpose of the addition of the apostrophe, they frequently added it themselves. The illustration is shown below:

Student ASO

Edit songs together, pumping movement, we discussed each other, corrected each other's, movements together, and we also took photos together.

Apostrophe can be used to show possession or ownership, but in example from ASO showed the word "other's" does not possession. So, there was no need for an apostrophe, as in:

Edit songs together, pumping movement, we discussed each other, corrected each other, movements together, and we also took photos together.

Misformation

Misformation errors involved using the incorrect morpheme or structural form. Although it is incorrect, the students inserted the punctuation in this statement. Two types of punctuation occurred to the errors of misformation, based on the writer's analysis of the data. Because the writer failed to identify an apostrophe when analyzing the data, there was no apostrophe.

1) Period

Misformation of period indicated that students put the wrong punctuation marks in a sentence. Here is an example of the misformation of period:

Student NH

First. I went cycling to school in the morning.

It illustrates that the sequence is separated by a period, and it is not correct. So, we can revise as:

First, I went cycling to school in the morning.

2) Comma

The following is an illustration of how a comma should not be used in a sentence:

Student JNH

In my opinion this film is very exciting and scary, This film is the best horror film I have watched this year.

It illustrates that the sentence separated after the comma is a complete sentence, preferably ending with a period. The correct form was as follows:

In my opinion this film is very exciting and scary. This film is the best horror film I have watched this year.

Those are some example of error in using punctuation. It was found that a high percentage of the recount text was written by the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang with punctuation errors. The writer presented the important details gathered from the students' works in this part. The research findings showed that students made a variety of errors, which the writer has identified.

Based on the result in writing recount text, the dominant errors made by students in using punctuation marks occurred in period errors with a total of 51, followed by 43 total comma errors, and 2 apostrophe errors.

CONCLUSION

The writer seeks to draw some conclusions from the data analysis and discussion in the previous chapter. The writer discovered three different types of errors that students of the eleventh-grade in SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang make in writing recount text: omission, addition, and misformation. To sum up, there were 96 cases of errors made by the students, with 88 or 91,67% errors in omission, 3 or 3,12% errors in addition, and 5 or 5,21% errors in misformation.

The writer also observed that the students made mistakes when using the period, comma, and apostrophe. Period errors are the cause of most punctuation errors in recount text written by students of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang in eleventh grade, with a total of 51 errors or 53,1%. Then the total number of errors that occur in comma is 43 or 44.8%. The last error, an apostrophe, has a total of 2 errors, or 2.1%. From the results of the research, it can be concluded that omission is the most frequent error with 91,67% or 88 occurrences of errors made by students in writing recount text. Then the types of punctuation errors that dominant occur in writing recount text were period with 53,1% or 51 errors made by the eleventh grade of SMAN 14 Kabupaten Tangerang.

REFERENCES

- Abdulkhaleq, A. (2019). *Punctuation Marks in English*. 1–14.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Elite, O. (2000). *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching : A Guide for Language Teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2000). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Hamilton, F. W. (2007). *Punctuation (A Primer of Information about the Marks of Punctuation and their Use Both Grammatically and Typographically)*. United Typothetae of America: Chicago, ILL.
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing* (K. Rigley, I. Evans, & J. Harland (eds.)). Pearson Education Limited.
- Jane, S. (2008). *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation (10th Edition)*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Kane, T. S. (2000). *The Oxford Essential Guide to Writing*. Berkley Books. Lauchman, R. (2010). *Punctuation at Work: Simple Principles for Achieving Clarity and Good Style*. New York: AMACOM, American Management Association.
- Kirkman, J. (2006). *Punctuation Matters: Advice on Punctuation for Scientific and Technical Writing Fourth Edition*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mitchell, S., Baugh, L., & Kelly, J. (2007). *Punctuation* (M. Morris & K. Restson (eds.)). British Columbia.
- Ramalia, T., & Nirmala, N. (2019). Using Clustering Technique in Teaching Writing. *JIPIS*, 28(1), 19-23.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shweba, A. A. A., & Mujiyanto, Y. (2017). Errors of Spelling, Capitalization, and Punctuation Marks in Writing Encountered by First Year College Students in Al-Merghib University Libya. *English Education Journal*, 7(2), 92–102. <http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eej>
- Stillman, A. (1997). *Gramatically Correct The Writer's Essential Guide to Punctuation, Spelling, Style, Usage, and Grammar*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books.
- Straus, J., & Kaufman, L. (2014). *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation* (T. Stern (ed.); Eleventh). Jossey-Bass.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Yusnita, E., Sada, C., & Novita, D. (2011). Improving Students' Recount Text Writing Ability by Using Picture Series.3.