

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

According to Ramadan (2019), writing is considered an active skill as it requires students to generate their own words through practice. Institutions have been teaching writing to enable students to express their viewpoints on specific topics within the classroom, fostering flexibility and exploration (Anae, 2014). The ability to write is an essential skill in any profession, as it serves as a central medium of communication and activity. In today's job market, job postings frequently emphasize the importance of soft skills, with preferred requirements often including descriptions such as "strong capability in writing skills" or "excellent written communication skills" (Messum et al., 2016). Writing also serves as an effective means of expressing one's identity in society and conveying one's imagination within the conventions of written language. For this reason, individuals should strive to improve their writing skills to effectively convey their ideas and create written texts that align with the established conventions of written communication (Sena & Hayrettin, 2021). In reality, however, non-native English speakers often find writing to be the most challenging aspect of learning the language (Ramadan, 2019). A study on students' writing revealed a lack of interest and motivation compared to other language skills, leading to anxiety and negative attitudes towards writing (Avcı & Iseri, 2014). Grammar is a crucial aspect of writing in English, and many students struggle with grammatical errors, such as subject-verb agreement and incorrect word usage (Alfiyani, 2013; Sadiyah, 2019).

As one of the productive skills (Jabali, 2018; Toba et al., 2019), writing is important for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, especially high school students. In an academic setting, improving students' writing skills is the main goal of teaching (Al-Kazuraj, 2019). For the students to improve their writing skills, they are expected to write a well-structured text (Ceylan, 2019). In

addition, mastering writing organization and regulation, essay review, and reader awareness have also become important factors in creating good texts (Bakry & Alsamadani, 2015). Okpe & Onjewu (2017) point out that mastering essay writing skills can be very important. It helps students to improve their daily communication, get better grades, and be an exceptional professional. As a result, the essay writing course becomes a notable subject for students at the tertiary level.

But still, many students perceive writing as a complex and difficult activity; teachers should concentrate on the grammatical ideas necessary for the clear expression of meaning (Chin, 2000). When studying a foreign language, learners cannot avoid making mistakes that may increase their understanding of the language. Making mistakes when learning a foreign language is a typical problem that Indonesian students confront while learning to write an essay. They must be familiar with the grammatical rules. Yet, various variables, such as negligence, first language interference, and translation, contribute to the inaccuracies. Highlighted the previous studies by Chen (2020) that numerous Malaysian Chinese students are still weak in English writing aspects. It was discovered that both participant groups committed the same kinds of grammatical errors in response to the first research question. Omission, misuse, mis-formation, repetition, structural errors, vocabulary errors, errors of coherence/cohesion, errors of expression, mis-ordering, and sentence errors are the main forms of errors. This can be a result of the learner's imperfect grammar. Certain errors in learners' application of the foreign language will result from the negative transfer of their mother tongue L1 or the overgeneralization of an interlanguage norm.

Numerous studies have focused on analyzing grammatical errors in writing. Nujaree (2013) concludes that grammar encompasses the study of tenses, sentence structure, and parts of speech. Consequently, English tenses are taught at all levels of English classrooms in Thailand. However, despite this instruction, many errors made by students are influenced by their first language (L1) and confusion in learning. Notably, the grammatical system poses a greater challenge than lexical issues, particularly regarding verbs, articles, and parts of speech (Moore, 2016).

The difficulties arise from the students' lack of adaptability in using English in daily contexts. Al-Murshidi (2014) notes that non-native English speakers in Iran still employ Arabic to teach English subjects. This practice has led many EFL students to struggle with verb forms, appropriate articles, preposition punctuation, countable and uncountable nouns, subject-verb agreement, and spelling in their writing. Consequently, Iranian students face challenges in understanding the grammatical aspect. Similarly, Mohamed's study (2020) at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University reveals that the most common errors made by students were related to verb tense, articles, word placement, noun endings, and sentence structure. The fewest errors were observed among senior students. In Indonesia, grammar also plays a vital role in writing and is mandatory for all students. Fitrawati's study (2020) concludes that the most common mistake made by Indonesian students is related to verb usage. Overall, errors are prevalent in nouns, pronouns, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. Many Indonesian students lack sufficient knowledge of grammar rules, leading to confusion in their usage. As a result, they tend to approximate grammatical rules and may even omit words in sentences to ease the burden of essay writing.

Previous studies have primarily focused on analyzing grammatical errors among college students, but fewer studies have especially been focused on high school students (Nujaree, 2013; Yaweh, 2018; Raifu, 2021). Nujaree (2013) specifically examined the errors in using tenses among college students. His research identified errors in twenty-two grammar rules across seven tenses, with the most frequent errors occurring in the use of past perfect tense followed by past simple tense. Yaweh (2018) who researched errors in verb usage found that these errors could be categorized into all three types in Corder's taxonomy, with the majority falling under "word selection" followed by "omission". In Raifu's (2021) notable study on grammatical errors in adjectives, he highlighted the differences in grammatical structure and adjective phrase usage between English and Okpameri languages. While English adjectives usually pre-modify the headword, Okpameri adjectives tend to post-modify the headword. Additionally, English distinguishes between "beautiful" and "handsome" for feminine and masculine

genders, respectively, whereas the Okpameri language offers the option to use the uni-gender term "shemilushe" which is equivalent to both "beautiful" and "handsome" in English. In this current study, however, the researcher solely focuses on analyzing the types and causes of grammatical errors in articles among junior high school students.

In this research, Daarul Ukhuwwah Boarding School is selected as the research setting. The school was chosen because, based on the result of a preliminary study, it was found that the students were not capable of applying various grammar rules. Additionally, as students tend to predominantly use Arabic rather than English, they might not be well-acquainted with the functions of English grammar. These observations strongly indicate the likelihood of students making a substantial number of errors when writing English public-speaking scripts.

1.2 Statement of Problems

1. What types of errors in using articles do Junior High School students make in writing public speaking texts?
2. What are the causes of the errors in using articles made by the students in writing public speaking texts?

1.3 Research Purposes

The objective of this study is to identify the types and causes of errors in using *articles* made by Junior High School students in their written public speaking texts. Specifically, the study aims:

1. To describe the types of errors in using articles made by Junior High School students in writing public speaking texts.
2. To describe the causes of errors in using articles made by Junior High School students in writing public speaking texts.

1.4 The Scope and Limitation

The researcher acknowledges that conducting a study without limitations can pose challenges in data collection. To ensure a focused and detailed outcome, the study is limited to specific assignments, particularly public speaking texts. The researcher believes that assessing students' language abilities through public

speaking skills is appropriate, especially considering that the participants are accustomed to bilingual language usage throughout the day. The research will be conducted among the third-grade students at Daarul Ukhuwwah Boarding School, who have prior experience with this type of assignment.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give some contribution to English teachers, students, and further researchers. For English teachers, it is expected that they employ this study as a model that encompasses teachers in assembling learning methods. For students, it is hoped that they will understand the importance of comprehending grammatical rules. For further researchers, these findings can be used as a valuable reference for future studies on English writing skills.

1.6 The Definition of the Key Terms

For the prevention of misconceptions of the main terminology used in this research, the following key terms are defined.

1. An essay is a form of writing where the author presents and defends their argument or viewpoint (*Holman, William (2003)*). In this study, an essay refers to the primary form of a public speaking script text, encapsulating the speaker's ideas, viewpoints, and intended message.
2. An error refers to the incorrect use of a word, speech act, or grammatical item, indicating a deficiency in learning or inadequate knowledge (Richard, 2002). Norrish (1983, p. 7) defines it as a consistent deviation that occurs when a learner fails to acquire a specific aspect and consistently makes mistakes. In this study, an "error" refers to inaccuracies in students' writing, resulting from various factors including unfamiliarity, misinterpretation, and challenges in applying English grammar rules.
3. Grammatical errors are deviations or mistakes from the established rules and conventions of grammar in a particular language. They can manifest in different elements of language, such as syntax, morphology,

punctuation, and word choice. In this study, grammatical errors refer to *article* misuse made by students in writing texts. *Article* errors involve inappropriate or missing *articles* such as "a", "an" or "the".

4. Public speaking script is a written speech text that conveys an idea to public speaking speakers. There are four types of public speaking scripts, they are Informative, Entertaining, Demonstrative, and Motivational. In this study, the public speaking script refers to essays made by students. It can be in a descriptive, narrative, and argumentative form of script.

