

SYNTACTIC ERROR ANALYSIS IN INDONESIA LANGUAGE DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS OF SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 1 SINDUE TOBATA

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk-bentuk kesalahan sintaksis yang terdapat dalam karangan deskripsi siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan sumber data berupa tulisan siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan siswa dalam menerapkan struktur sintaksis bahasa Indonesia masih perlu ditingkatkan. Kesalahan yang paling dominan meliputi kesalahan struktur frasa, seperti penggunaan frasa yang tidak baku, tidak efektif, dan tidak sesuai fungsi sintaksis. Selain itu, ditemukan pula kesalahan struktur kalimat berupa kalimat berlarut, kalimat tidak lengkap, serta ketidakteraturan unsur kalimat yang menyebabkan makna menjadi kabur. Kesalahan ejaan, terutama penggunaan huruf kapital dan tanda baca, turut menghambat kejelasan tulisan. Temuan tersebut mengindikasikan bahwa siswa masih cenderung menulis dengan pola bahasa lisan sehingga struktur bahasa tulis tidak terbentuk secara optimal. Faktor penyebab kesalahan mencakup kurangnya pemahaman mengenai konsep frasa dan kalimat efektif, minimnya latihan menulis yang terarah, serta kurangnya pembiasaan penggunaan kaidah PUEBI. Dengan demikian, diperlukan pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih sistematis untuk meningkatkan kemampuan sintaksis siswa dalam menulis karangan deskripsi.

Kata Kunci: kesalahan sintaksis, frasa, kalimat efektif, karangan deskripsi, PUEBI

Abstract

This study aims to describe the types of syntactic errors found in the descriptive essays of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method, with students' written works as the data source. The findings show that students' ability to apply Indonesian syntactic structures still needs improvement. The most frequent errors include phrase structure errors, such as the use of nonstandard phrases, ineffective phrases, and phrases that do not align with their syntactic functions. In addition, sentence structure errors were also identified, including run-on sentences, incomplete sentences, and disorganized sentence elements that obscure meaning. Spelling errors, particularly in the use of capital letters and punctuation marks, further reduced the clarity of students' writing. These findings indicate that students tend to write using patterns of spoken language, resulting in poorly structured written language. The contributing factors to these errors include limited understanding of phrase concepts and effective sentences, a lack of structured writing practice, and insufficient habituation in applying the rules of Indonesian orthography (PUEBI). Therefore, a more systematic instructional approach is needed to enhance students' syntactic skills in writing descriptive essays.

Keywords: syntactic errors, phrases, effective sentences, descriptive writing, PUEBI

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing skills are among the language skills taught in school with the aim of enabling students to understand the meaning of what they read so that they can comprehend the content of the reading material. According to (Nurhamsih et al., 2019) teaching reading and writing is very important for students in order to train them to use language actively.

Reading is one of the most important skills for students. In line with the opinion of Pandreas, (Pandreas et al., 2020) reading is very important. In addition to reading comprehension, reading comprehension must also be improved because reading comprehension aims to obtain information contained in the reading text. According to Muhafidin (2016), reading is the activity of processing words, information, and ideas presented by the author in relation to knowledge and experience in observing written symbols, connecting words, and interpreting the observed writing. However, many students do not receive adequate reading instruction because learning to read is the first step for them to become familiar with the systematic teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is only natural for teachers and parents to encourage children to learn to read and make them enjoy reading. Reading can broaden one's knowledge and way of thinking. Reading is also an aspect of language skills that is inseparable from everyday life. All the activities we do involve reading skills.

According to Chandra, Mayarnimar, & Habibi (2018), reading is a physical and psychological process. Reading can maintain brain health and improve logical and linguistic intelligence, so children who read regularly will tend to understand various issues better (Irwan & Kamarudin, 2021) Reading and writing skills are the foundation for achieving success in other skills. According to Pratiwi (2020), reading and writing skills need to be based on cognitive abilities. These two skills are the most important and inseparable parts of learning, especially in

lower grades. Students entering the early stages of school need to be physically and psychologically prepared. In first grade, reading and writing are skills that students must have. In lower grades, reading and writing are taught at a beginner level.

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Language errors are an inherent part of every use of language. As a means of communication, errors in language use often occur. Language errors frequently occur and are found in our daily lives, a phenomenon that cannot be avoided and is better known as typos or spelling mistakes in words when speaking. The rules of proper and correct language according to the KBBI (Big Indonesian Dictionary) are sometimes not applied correctly in today's social environment.

The presence of globalization certainly has a significant impact on language. This effect will bring about an influence on language that is usually caused by the mixing of languages. Globalization brings a rapid flow of information, enabling the exchange of languages and the habit of mixing Indonesian with foreign languages. And because the pronunciation and spelling of foreign languages differ from their written form, this often results in typos in the writing of words by the community, which leads to changes in

meaning and becomes a bad habit (Noviyani et al., 2022)

As time progresses, the use of language also evolves (Rachman, 2016). The use of language in various aspects of society makes it very possible for errors in Indonesian to occur. When communicating, whether verbally or in writing, everyone has experienced errors. These errors can occur unintentionally, mistakenly, or simply because they do not conform to the relevant grammar rules. The impact of these errors also ranges from minor to significant, obscuring the communication process.

Language ability is one of the fundamental skills that every individual must master, particularly in the field of education. Language plays an essential role not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for thinking, conveying ideas, expressing feelings, and developing knowledge. In the Indonesian context, Indonesian holds a strategic position as the national language and the medium of instruction in education. Therefore, mastery of correct and appropriate Indonesian is a key factor in students' academic success, both in oral and written communication.

One important aspect of language skills is writing. Writing activities enable students to develop logical, systematic, and coherent thinking. Among various types of writing, descriptive essays occupy a significant position because they train students to describe objects, events, or situations clearly and in detail, allowing readers to experience what is being described. However, in practice, writing descriptive essays remains a challenge for many students. A considerable number of students still experience difficulties in constructing sentences that comply with the rules of Indonesian grammar.

These difficulties are closely related to students' limited understanding of grammar, particularly in the area of syntax. In the learning process, students are often directed to produce

written texts without sufficient emphasis on sentence structure. As a result, they tend to write based on spoken language habits, which do not always conform to syntactic rules. This is evident in sentences that deviate from standard structures, such as the use of sentences without clear subjects, for example, "*Pergi ke pasar membeli sayur*" ("Went to the market to buy vegetables"), or sentences containing double plural forms, such as "*Anak-anak itu pada bermain di lapangan*" ("Those children are all playing on the field"). This condition indicates a gap between the grammatical theory taught in the classroom and the actual writing practices of students. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the forms of syntactic errors appearing in students' writing is necessary.

Syntax is a branch of linguistics that studies the rules governing the arrangement of words into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Errors at the syntactic level can cause sentences to become ineffective, obscure the intended meaning, and even prevent readers from understanding the message conveyed. Such errors include improper phrase structures, omission of essential elements such as predicates, excessive use of conjunctions, or the construction of sentences lacking subjects or predicates.

Several previous studies have examined writing errors. Saragih & Situmorang (2022) emphasize that mastery of sentence structure plays a crucial role in students' ability to write descriptive texts. Meanwhile, (Rosita et al., 2023), report that the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model in teaching descriptive writing encourages active student participation and significantly improves learning outcomes. However, these studies mainly focus on the effectiveness of instructional methods, while research specifically examining syntactic errors in descriptive essays written by junior high school students remains limited.

Most previous studies have emphasized teaching methods for developing writing skills,

whereas research that examines in detail the forms of syntactic errors in descriptive essays by junior high school students, particularly in the Sindue Tobata area, is still scarce. Therefore, this study offers novelty by specifically analyzing Indonesian syntactic errors in descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, which has not been the focus of prior research. Identifying syntactic errors is essential for mapping students' weaknesses so that teachers can design more targeted instructional strategies.

Common errors include sentences without subjects, such as "*Pergi ke sekolah membawa buku*" ("Went to school carrying books"), double plural forms like "*Beberapa siswa-siswa sudah mengumpulkan tugas*" ("Some students-students have submitted their assignments"), and excessive use of conjunctions, such as "*Walaupun hujan turun deras, tetapi pertandingan tetap dilanjutkan*" ("Although the rain fell heavily, but the match continued"). These findings indicate that students' understanding of sentence structure remains low, making further research necessary to analyze these errors in depth. The specific factors causing these syntactic errors have not yet been clearly identified.

The significance of this study is further emphasized by the fact that writing proficiency is a fundamental skill needed by students to support academic success and everyday communication. Without an adequate understanding of syntactic rules, written messages may be difficult for readers to comprehend. This study also offers practical contributions to Indonesian language teaching by providing input for teachers in designing more effective instructional approaches, such as remedial programs, systematic writing exercises, and the use of interactive learning media. In line with (Wahyuni et al., 2020), the integration of digital media has been proven to enhance student engagement and

strengthen their understanding of learning materials.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze Indonesian syntactic errors in descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. The research focuses on identifying the most frequently occurring syntactic errors at the phrase, clause, and sentence levels, as well as examining the factors contributing to these errors. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to syntactic studies and practically to Indonesian language teachers in developing students' writing skills. Thus, this research has high urgency both for the development of linguistic knowledge and for the practical improvement of Indonesian language instruction in schools. This study does not cover all types of language errors but is limited to the analysis of syntactic errors in phrases, clauses, and sentences found in students' descriptive essays. Accordingly, it is expected to provide a clearer picture of students' weaknesses in syntactic structures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW (IF ANY)

In line with this view, Rahmadi (2017:201) It explains that error analysis is a method used to systematically identify, classify, and interpret various errors made by students, particularly in second language (L2) learning. This method draws on linguistic theories and procedures to examine error forms in a more structured manner.

Huda (1981), It views language errors as forms of "errors" or lapses. These errors emerge when learners are still in the process of acquiring and learning a second language; therefore, the errors they make are considered natural due to their limited mastery of language rules.

Alfin (2018) It states that language error analysis is a common procedural step carried out by both researchers and language teachers. This process involves collecting samples of errors, identifying, explaining, classifying, and

evaluating the severity of the errors. Thus, language error analysis serves not only to identify mistakes but also to provide insight into students' level of language proficiency and to indicate which aspects require greater attention in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the various perspectives discussed above, it can be concluded that language errors are forms of deviation in learners' spoken or written production resulting from limited mastery of language rules. Language error analysis is a systematic method used to identify, classify, and interpret such errors, and it can serve as a foundation for improving language instruction. In other words, language errors should not merely be viewed as shortcomings, but also as valuable sources of information for teachers and researchers in enhancing the effectiveness of language learning.

To reveal the forms of these errors, techniques such as data collection, identification, classification, and evaluation of error severity are employed. Therefore, errors in the use of Indonesian, whether in oral or written form, represent deviations from the established norms of communication and linguistic rules of the Indonesian language.

According to Ghufron et al. (2016), Language error analysis is a strategic method for revealing, understanding, and correcting deviations in learners' language use. The steps developed in this textbook are structured to guide students in systematically identifying and examining learners' linguistic errors in depth.

According to Supartini et al. (2022) Syntactic structure does not merely function as a grammatical arrangement, but serves as a primary device for clarifying the intent and direction of a main idea in academic sentences. Sentence construction that takes into account syntactic functions such as subjects, predicates, objects, and complements enables readers to follow the conveyed logical flow coherently. The coherence and cohesion of ideas depend greatly on this

syntactic order; therefore, errors in structure can obscure the meaning and purpose of academic writing.

This study specifically examines various forms of errors that occur in the domain of syntax. Syntax refers to the branch of linguistics that deals with the syntactic level of language. It is a field within linguistics that focuses on the study of words and units larger than words, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences. In addition, syntax examines how relationships among these units are formed and organized within a structure to produce coherent and accurately interpretable utterances. By understanding syntax, we can identify the rules governing the arrangement of linguistic elements in order to construct sentences that are grammatically correct and communicatively meaningful.

According to Rahima & Ardinah (2022) Syntax, as a major field within linguistics, cannot be separated from morphology because syntactic units are formed from words that result from morphological processes. In morphosyntactic studies, the relationship between word structure and sentence structure is crucial for producing precise and grammatical meaning. Phrases, clauses, and sentences are constructed through the combination of morphemic forms and syntactic rules; therefore, errors at one level may disrupt the integrity of meaning as a whole.

Syntactic errors can be defined as any forms of deviation, inaccuracy, or violation of grammatical rules that govern how words are combined into phrases, clauses, or sentences appropriately. These errors may occur due to improper word order, the omission of essential elements, or the inappropriate use of components within sentence structures. Therefore, a thorough understanding of syntax is essential to enable speakers or writers to construct grammatically correct sentences that are easily understood by interlocutors or readers.

To ensure that the process of analyzing errors in the syntactic domain proceeds systematically,

the first step that must be undertaken is the classification of the types of errors that appear in sentence structures. This identification serves as an essential foundation for focusing the analysis on specific error types, such as errors in phrases, clauses, and the use of conjunctions.

According to Agkris & Simorangkir (2023), syntactic errors in students' academic writing commonly occur in phrase structures and in the construction of compound sentences that do not conform to the rules of the Indonesian language. With clear mapping of these errors, the evaluation process becomes more focused and meaningful.

Errors in the Phrase Domain

A phrase is a linguistic unit consisting of two or more words that form a single unit of meaning but do not contain a predicative element; therefore, a phrase is not a sentence and does not function as a complete predicate. In syntactic structure, a phrase performs only a single grammatical function within a sentence, such as serving as a subject, object, complement, or adverbial. For example, phrases may take the form of noun phrases (*a big house*), verb phrases (*is studying*), or prepositional phrases introduced by a preposition (*at school, to the market*). Although a phrase consists of more than one word, it does not form a clause because it lacks a subject–predicate relationship.

According to Deasy Supartini et al. (2023) several types of language errors at the phrase level include: (a) incoherent phrase structures resulting from illogical word combinations; (b) the use of double prepositions that violate linguistic rules; (c) the formation of phrases with invalid plural forms, such as “*anak-anak-anak*”; and (d) unnecessarily complex phrase constructions that cause sentences to become unclear. An understanding of phrase functions and their formation is essential to ensure that written communication remains accurate and effective.

The Influence of Regional Languages on Diction (Word Choice)

The bilingual situation in Indonesia, in which people generally use two languages side by side—regional languages and Indonesian—has a significant impact on everyday language use. In this context, regional languages often function as the first language (L1), while Indonesian is positioned as the second language (L2).

One clear manifestation of this influence can be seen in the use of phrases that do not conform to the rules of standard Indonesian. In such cases, sentence structures and word choices tend to follow regional language patterns, resulting in syntactic and semantic errors in sentence construction.

“Later this afternoon I will go to the market to buy **gembung** fish.” And Do not forget to bring that item; I have already placed it **on top of the cupboard**.

In formal usage, the italicized elements in sentences (1) and (2) represent incorrect phrase usage influenced by regional languages. The word *gembung* in the first sentence is a term commonly used in Betawi to refer to a certain type of fish, which actually corresponds to *ikan kembung* in standard Indonesian. Therefore, in formal contexts or academic writing, this term should be replaced with the nationally recognized form, namely *ikan kembung*.

Inappropriate Use of Prepositions

The use of prepositions in prepositional phrases often does not conform to the rules of standard Indonesian. Such errors typically occur in phrases indicating place, time, or purpose. This phenomenon is quite common, both in everyday spoken communication and in written texts, especially when speakers are accustomed to sentence structures influenced by regional languages or informal speech logic that does not adhere to formal grammatical rules. Consider the following examples to observe how prepositional misuse can occur in sentences:

“He sat beside me during the examination and *We will go on vacation to Jakarta next month.*”

Inappropriate Phrase Structure (Word Group Arrangement)

One of the effects of foreign language influence, particularly in the process of translation or habitual use of foreign terms, is the deviation in the arrangement of phrase structures or word groups in Indonesian. This often results in phrases that do not conform to standard Indonesian grammar, either in terms of word order or semantic appropriateness. The following examples illustrate errors caused by such influence

My mother is a very good person.

They watched the interesting movie last night.

The italicized word arrangements in sentences (1) and (2) do not fully conform to standard Indonesian grammatical patterns. In sentence (1), the phrase *orang yang sangat baik* is influenced by the literal translation of the English phrase *a very good person*, which affects the natural structure of Indonesian phrasing.

Excessive Use of Linguistic Elements

In both everyday language use and written texts, it is common to find the use of two or more words with similar meanings (synonyms) simultaneously within a single sentence. This habit often occurs unconsciously and, although it does not always hinder comprehension, it makes sentences inefficient and unnecessarily verbose. This excessive use of synonyms is known as redundancy or pleonasm, which contradicts the principles of effective and economical language use in Indonesian. Consider the following examples:

“All participants who were present were required to fill in the attendance list.”

“The child fell down from the stairs while playing.”

The italicized words in the sentences above are synonymous. In sentence (1), the words *all*

and *who were present* convey overlapping meanings, as participants who are present already include everyone who attended. Therefore, the simultaneous use of both elements is inefficient.

Excessive Use of Superlative Forms

Superlative forms in Indonesian indicate the highest degree of a quality in comparison. Generally, this form is created by adding degree adverbs such as *amat* (very), *sangat* (very), *sekali* (extremely), or *paling* (most) to an adjective. However, in practice, speakers often use two superlative markers simultaneously within a single adjectival phrase, such as *sangat paling indah* or *amat sekali baik*. This results in excessive superlative constructions that do not conform to standard Indonesian grammar. Such usage not only makes sentences sound awkward but also violates the principle of linguistic economy. Consider the following

examples:

“This place is the most extremely beautiful at sunset.”

“The incident was truly very shocking to everyone.”

The italicized expressions in the sentences above represent excessive superlative forms. In sentence (1), the words *paling* and *sekali* are both used to intensify the adjective *indah* (beautiful). Since each word independently functions as a superlative marker, their combined use leads to redundancy and is grammatically inappropriate.

Double Pluralization (Errors in Plural Forms)

In everyday language practice, speakers often make mistakes in forming plural expressions in Indonesian, resulting in ineffective or confusing sentence structures. A common error is excessive plural marking, where two or more plural indicators are used simultaneously within a single phrase or clause. This phenomenon is known as double pluralization, which occurs when elements that already express plurality are combined unnecessarily. As a result, sentences become inefficient and violate standard

Indonesian grammatical rules. Consider the following examples:

“The children were playing among their friends-friends.

Several students-students have completed the assignment on time.”

In these sentences, excessive plural markers are used. In sentence (1), *anak-anak* is already plural through reduplication, while the phrase *para teman-temannya* also contains plural markers through the word *para* and the reduplicated form *teman-teman*, resulting in redundancy.

Inappropriate Use of Reciprocal Forms

Reciprocal forms in Indonesian express mutual or reciprocal actions between two or more participants. This meaning is typically conveyed through the use of the word *saling* (each other) or through affixed reduplicated verbs such as *berpelukan* (hug each other) or *berbalas-balasan* (exchange repeatedly). Each of these forms independently conveys reciprocity. However, errors occur when speakers use *saling* together with reduplicated verbs that already carry reciprocal meaning. This combination results in unnecessary repetition of meaning and violates principles of effective language use. Consider the following examples:

“The students mutually debated-debated during the discussion.

We all mutually exchanged-exchanged opinions in yesterday’s meeting.”

The italicized expressions in both sentences demonstrate excessive reciprocal forms, as they combine two elements that already express reciprocity, namely *saling* and reduplicated verbs. In sentence (1), both *saling* and *debat-berdebat* convey reciprocal meaning, resulting in redundancy.

Errors in the Clause Domain

A clause is a grammatical unit consisting of a group of words that minimally contains a subject and a predicate and has the potential to form a sentence. According to Ayomi (2019), clauses in Indonesian can be classified based on their syntactic processes, one of which is the relational clause. This type of clause expresses a relationship between two entities, typically a subject and a complement, with a copulative verb functioning as the predicate. This concept emphasizes that clauses are not merely formal structures but also carry important relational functions in constructing sentence meaning. Based on a review of the literature, several previous studies have examined language error analysis.

Munashirah & Arifin (2025) This study is relevant to the present research due to its focus on syntactic error analysis in junior high school students’ descriptive texts, particularly in phrase and sentence structures. The difference lies in the research location: the previous study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Surakarta, whereas the present study is conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi. Additionally, the earlier study analyzed errors across all seventh-grade classes, while the present research focuses on a single class consisting of 30 students.

Baginta et al (2024) This study is relevant because it examines the same object of analysis, namely syntactic errors in descriptive texts written by seventh-grade students. It identifies various errors such as subject–predicate mismatch and illogical use of conjunctions, which are also the focus of the present research. The difference lies in the research context and location: the previous study was conducted at SMP Pangeran Antasari, while the present study is conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. Moreover, the previous research emphasized general field data analysis, whereas the present study adopts an in-depth qualitative descriptive approach focusing on a single class.

Alfin et al. (2018) This study is relevant due to its focus on syntactic error analysis in secondary school students' writing, particularly sentence structure and the appropriate use of sentence elements according to Indonesian grammatical rules. The difference lies in the type of text analyzed: the previous study examined expository texts written by tenth-grade students at an Islamic senior high school, while the present study analyzes descriptive texts written by seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi.

3. METHOD

This study aims to examine the syntactic errors found in descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. The approach employed in this research is a qualitative approach, namely a type of research that describes or explains written data obtained from the students' descriptive compositions.

The population of this study consisted of all seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata in the 2025/2026 academic year, totaling 28 students distributed across three classes. This population was selected because it aligns with the focus of the study, which examines syntactic errors in descriptive writing at the junior high school level, particularly among seventh-grade students who, at this stage of development, are in the process of learning basic writing skills.

The research sample was determined purposively, namely a seventh-grade class consisting of 28 students. This class was selected because all students had received instruction on writing descriptive essays, the number of students was considered representative for analysis, and the selection was recommended by the Indonesian language teacher to ensure that the research did not interfere with the learning process in other classes.

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, located in Sindue Tobata District,

Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. The selection of this research site was based on preliminary observations indicating that a considerable number of syntactic errors were still found in students' descriptive writing, particularly among seventh-grade students.

The study was scheduled to be carried out over a period of approximately one month during the 2025/2026 academic year. The subjects of this study were the 28 seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata in the 2025/2026 academic year. This class was purposively selected because the students had already received instructional material on writing descriptive essays in Indonesian language classes. These students served as the primary data source of the study, specifically through their descriptive compositions, which were analyzed to identify various forms of syntactic errors.

According to (Huda., 1981) In qualitative research, the primary instrument in the research process is the researcher themselves. As a human instrument, the researcher plays a direct role in determining the research focus, selecting data sources or informants, collecting data, evaluating data quality, analyzing and interpreting the findings, and drawing final conclusions. Based on this perspective, the present study employs a single instrument in the form of the researcher, who is actively involved in all stages of the research process.

The research design of this study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono (2017) this approach aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the facts and characteristics of the population or object under investigation. In the context of this study, a qualitative descriptive design is employed to analyze the types of syntactic errors found in students' descriptive essays and to identify the factors contributing to these errors..

The data analysis techniques employed in this study are based on the model proposed this study (Sugiyono, 2017), which consists of four main

stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data of this study consist of 28 descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. Each student was asked to write an essay consisting of three to five paragraphs on the theme "Free Topic." The collected essays were analyzed using syntactic error analysis techniques based on categories of phrase structure errors and sentence structure errors.

This study discusses the syntactic errors found in descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata. Based on their forms, syntactic errors are classified into two types: errors in the use of phrase structures and errors in the use of sentence structures.

The following are samples of descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, which were analyzed using syntactic error analysis techniques.

Analysis of Student Essay 1 (Nabil Fahri)

Essay Data

Title: My school

Number of paragraphs: 3 paragraphs

Number of Sentences: 8 sentences

The following is the analysis of syntactic errors found in the student's essay:

Phrase Structure Errors

Sentence:

"In a village, there is one smp, namely SMP Negeri Satu Sindue Tobata ..."

Error:

The use of the term "smp" is non-standard and inconsistent. It should be written in a standardized and consistent form, such as "SMP", to conform to Indonesian orthographic conventions.

Revision:

"In a village, there is one junior high school, namely SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata ..."

Sentence:

"...there are beautiful trees such as a mango tree."

Error:

The phrase is used inappropriately because the term "trees" (pepohonan) already refers to various types of trees, yet it is followed by an example of only one type.

Revision :

"...there are beautiful trees, one of which is a mango tree."

Clause Structure Error

Sentence:

"In a village, there is one junior high school, namely SMP Negeri Satu Sidabutar, the school has 9 classrooms, toilets, a science laboratory, a library, a multipurpose room, and a prayer room."

Errors:

"A run-on sentence occurs because two independent clauses are combined without an appropriate connector or punctuation."

"The second clause is ineffective because the predicate "has/there is" is preceded by the subject "the school", resulting in an inappropriate clause structure"

Revision:

"In a village, there is one junior high school, namely SMP Negeri Satu Sidabutar. The school has 9 classrooms, toilets, a science laboratory, a library, a multipurpose room, and a prayer room."

Sentence:

"The school there is 9 classrooms, toilets, a science laboratory, a library, a multipurpose room, and a prayer room."

Error:

The clause is inappropriate because the predicate "there is/there are" should not be preceded by the subject "the school."

Revision:

"At the school, there are 9 classrooms, toilets, a science laboratory, a library, a

multipurpose room, and a prayer room.”
or *“The school has 9 classrooms, toilets, a science laboratory, a library, a multipurpose room, and a prayer room.”*

Sentence:

“There are also beautiful trees such as mango trees.”

Error:

The clause lacks a clear subject or reference, resulting in an incomplete or dangling clause.

Revision:

“At the school, there are also beautiful trees, such as mango trees.”

Sentence:

“At the school, there are extracurricular activities such as scouting and soccer, there are also active semester activities such as solo singing, tug of war, soccer, dancing.”

Error:

“A run-on sentence occurs due to the combination of two clauses without proper separation.”

“Repetition of the clause “there are also” causes a lack of cohesion.”

“Repetition of the word “soccer” within the same list.”

Revision:

“At the school, there are extracurricular activities such as scouting and soccer. In addition, there are semester-based activities such as solo singing, tug of war, and dancing.”

Sentence:

“Every Friday, by doing group exercise and community service.”

Errors:

“The clause lacks a clear subject.”

“The use of the word “by” (secara) is inappropriate and disrupts the clause structure.”

Revision:

“Every Friday, students do group exercise and participate in community service activities.”

Sentence Structure Errors

Sentence:

“At the school, there are extracurricular activities such as scouting and soccer. there are also semester activities such as solo singing, tug of war, soccer, dancing.”

Error:

“Run on sentence.”

“Incorrect capitalization at the beginning of the second sentence (“there are also ...”).

“Repetition of the word “soccer” in the list.”

Revision:

“At the school, there are extracurricular activities such as scouting and soccer. In addition, there are semester activities such as solo singing, tug of war, and dancing.”

Sentence:

“Every Friday students do group exercise community service.”

Error:

The phrase is unclear because the relationship between “group exercise” and “community service” is not properly connected.

Revision:

“Every Friday, students do group exercise and then continue with community service activities.”

Student Essay Analysis 2 (Auxilia Ramadani)

Essay Data

Title: The Beautiful Garden

Number of paragraphs: 3 paragraphs

Number of sentences: 8 sentences

Syntactic Error Findings

Phrase Structure Errors

Sentence:

“In a village, there lived a peaceful community, and in that village, there was a beautiful park...”

Error:

The phrase “rakyat yang damai” is inaccurate; it should be “rakyat yang hidup”

damai” or “masyarakat yang hidup dengan damai”.

Two clauses are joined with a comma, even though they form a compound sentence.

Revision:

"In a village, there lived a community that lived in peace. In that village, there was a beautiful park..."

Sentence:

"...a beautiful park that is much loved by the local people..."

Error:

The repetition of the word “yang” twice in a single phrase makes the sentence ineffective.

Revision:

"a beautiful park that is greatly admired by the local people..."

Clause Structure Errors

Sentence:

"In a village, there lived a peaceful community; in that village, there was a beautiful park that was greatly loved by the local people, and many visitors came from other villages."

Errors:

"The sentence is a run-on because it consists of several independent clauses joined without proper sentence separation."

"The repetition of the clause “in that village” makes the sentence structure ineffective."

Revision:

"In a village, there lived a peaceful community. In that village, there was a beautiful park that was greatly loved by the local people. In addition, many visitors came from other villages."

Sentence:

"In the park, there was a large tree, but the tree was very beautiful, and there were beautiful colorful flowers decorated with lovely butterflies."

Errors:

The conjunction “but” (originally “bukan tetapi”) is incorrectly used within the clause structure.

*The sentence is a **run-on** because too many clauses are combined without clear separation.*

The explanatory clauses are not arranged logically.

Revision:

"In the park, there was a large tree. The tree was very beautiful and surrounded by plants and colorful flowers. The park was also decorated with lovely butterflies."

Sentence:

"That is why the park was called a beautiful park, and the local community was pleased."

Error:

The causal clause (“that is why” / “karena itulah”) is combined with another clause without an effective sentence structure.

The use of the conjunction “and” makes the sentence less coherent.

Revision:

"Therefore, the park was called a beautiful park. The local community was pleased."

Sentence:

"And the park has been maintained from generation to generation until now."

Errors:

The sentence begins with a conjunction (“and”), making the clause incomplete. The clause stands alone without a clear main sentence.

Revision:

*"The park has been maintained and developed from generation to generation until now."
Sentence Structure Errors*

Sentence:

"...and many visited from other villages."

Errors:

The clause is incomplete; there is no clear subject (“many who?”).

It appears to continue from the previous sentence, but the structure is incorrect.

"...and many residents from other villages visited the park."

Sentece:

"In the park, there was a large tree, only but the tree was very beautiful..."

Errors:

The sentence is confusing due to the use of two conjunctions simultaneously ("only but").

The phrase "taman taman" is repetitive (should be.)

The clause structure is irregular.

Revision:

"In the park, there was a large tree. Although it was the only one, the tree looked very beautiful..."

Sentece:

"...and there were beautiful plants, colorful flowers..."

Errors:

The subject is unclear (plants or flowers?).

The phrase combination is incorrect.

Revision:

"...and there were beautiful, colorful flowers..."

Sentece:

"Karna itulah taman itu di juluki taman yang indah..."

Errors:

"Karna" is misspelled (should be "Karena").

"di juluki" is incorrect (should be "dijuluki").

The sentence structure is ineffective.

Revision:

"That is why the park was called a beautiful park."

Sentece:

"...and the local community was pleased."

Errors:

The word "and" repeats from the previous sentence, causing dependency without an independent subject.

Revision:

"The local community was also pleased."

Sentece:

"And the park has been maintained from generation to generation until now."

Errors:

The sentence is non-standard and unclear (what has maintained?).

Sentences should not begin with "And".

Revision:

"The park has been continuously cared for and maintained from generation to generation until now."

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of two descriptive essays written by 28 seventh-grade students, it can be concluded that syntactic errors consistently appear in almost all of the students' texts. The most dominant errors occur in phrase structure, particularly in the use of non-standard phrases, ineffective phrases, phrases that do not correspond to their syntactic functions, and inappropriate word choices. Many students still construct phrases without considering the relationship between the head and its modifiers, resulting in ambiguous and difficult-to-understand phrases.

In addition, sentence structure errors are also highly prominent, including run-on sentences, incomplete sentences, improper subject-predicate construction, excessive or inappropriate use of conjunctions, and the combination of multiple ideas within a single sentence without correct punctuation. Spelling and orthographic errors, such as the misuse of capital letters, commas, periods, and the incorrect writing of the prepositions *di* and *ke*, further undermine the clarity of the sentences.

Overall, the results of the analysis indicate that the students' syntactic competence remains at a low to moderate level, as reflected in their limited mastery of sentence-forming elements and their inability to organize ideas coherently. These findings highlight the need for greater attention in writing instruction, particularly with regard to the accuracy of phrase structure, sentence

completeness, and the proper use of spelling and punctuation, so that students are able to produce descriptive compositions that are clear, logical, and in accordance with the rules of standard Indonesian.

Based on the results of the analysis of descriptive compositions written by seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, it was found that the syntactic errors identified were quite varied, indicating that students' ability to construct phrases, clauses, and effective sentences still needs improvement. The most dominant errors occurred in phrase structure, particularly in temporal adverbial phrases, adjectival phrases, and verb phrases that were not arranged appropriately according to the rules of standard Indonesian. Many students continued to apply spoken language patterns in their writing, resulting in phrases that were non-standard, non-parallel, or contained unnecessary lexical elements. In addition, instances of redundancy were also evident, namely the repetitive or uneconomical use of phrases, which caused sentences to become lengthy and less effective.

Based on the results of the analysis, clause-related errors were still frequently found in the compositions of seventh-grade students, particularly in the form of incomplete clauses that lack either a subject or a predicate, inappropriate use of interclausal conjunctions, and the combination of multiple clauses without clear logical relationships. These errors cause sentences to become ineffective and difficult to understand. The main factor contributing to these errors is students' limited understanding of clause structure and the functions of conjunctions in complex sentences. Therefore, more focused instruction is needed, especially through exercises that emphasize the correct and integrated construction of clauses.

Errors in sentence structure also constitute a considerable proportion of the findings. Many students tend to use run-on sentences, in which multiple clauses are combined without proper

punctuation or appropriate conjunctions. This practice causes the intended meaning of the sentences to become unclear and difficult to comprehend. Another frequently observed problem is the use of **incomplete sentences**, such as paragraphs consisting only of phrases without a subject or predicate, which therefore do not meet the criteria of a complete sentence. In addition, several sentences display an improper S-P-O-A (Subject-Predicate-Object-Adverbial) arrangement, resulting in unclear relationships among sentence elements. This pattern indicates that students still experience difficulties in understanding the basic sentence structure of Indonesian.

Another type of error that consistently appears is the misuse of punctuation and capitalization. Almost all of the students' compositions show incorrect use of capital letters, such as the use of lowercase letters at the beginning of sentences or unnecessary capitalization within sentences. Errors in punctuation are also frequently found, particularly in the use of commas after conjunctions, commas to mark pauses between clauses, periods at the end of sentences, and quotation marks in dialogue. These findings indicate that students have not yet developed the habit of writing in accordance with proper spelling and punctuation rules as prescribed in the *General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling* (PUEBI).

In general, the errors found in the students' compositions are caused by several factors. First, the dominance of spoken language in the writing process leads students to rely on everyday sentence patterns that are less formal. Second, a limited understanding of basic concepts related to phrases and effective sentences causes many students to have difficulty constructing coherent and clear sentences. Third, the lack of structured writing practice results in students being less skilled in developing coherent paragraphs that conform to syntactic rules. In addition, limited vocabulary and insufficient attention to spelling

and punctuation also contribute to the occurrence of these errors.

The findings of this study have important implications for the teaching of Indonesian language. Teachers need to place greater emphasis on teaching phrases and effective sentence construction through direct practice rather than relying solely on theoretical explanations. Instruction should also be carried out gradually, starting from recognizing phrase structures, constructing simple sentences, and progressing to developing coherent descriptive paragraphs. In addition, the habitual use of proper punctuation and capitalization should be reinforced through direct feedback on students' written work. In this way, students' writing ability, particularly in terms of syntactic accuracy, is expected to improve and to align with the rules of standard and proper Indonesian.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and the analysis of descriptive essays written by seventh-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Sindue Tobata, it can be concluded that students' ability to use Indonesian syntactic structures still needs improvement. The most frequently identified errors include phrase structure errors, such as the use of non-standard phrases, ineffective phrases, and phrases that do not function appropriately within sentence structures.

Clause-related errors were also commonly found in the students' compositions, particularly in the form of incomplete clauses lacking a subject or predicate, improper use of interclausal conjunctions, and the combination of multiple clauses without clear logical relationships. In addition, sentence structure errors appeared frequently, including run-on sentences, incomplete sentences, and improper sequencing of sentence elements, which obscured the intended meaning. Errors in the use of capitalization and punctuation further reduced the clarity of the students' writing.

Overall, these errors indicate that the students have not yet fully understood the concepts of phrases, effective sentences, and orthographic rules in accordance with the Indonesian Spelling System (PUEBI).

The syntactic errors identified in this study also indicate that students still tend to write using patterns of spoken language, resulting in poorly structured written language. A lack of writing practice, insufficient guided exercises, and limited fundamental understanding of phrases and sentences contribute significantly to the occurrence of these errors. Therefore, a more systematic instructional approach is required to enable students' syntactic competence to develop optimally.

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