

ERROR ANALYSIS OF COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS ON PROCEDURE TEXT WRITING AT THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMAS HKBP SIDORAME MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the problem encountered was the incorrect use of countable and uncountable nouns in procedural texts written by 10th-grade students at SMAS HKBP Sidorame Medan. Students often had difficulty distinguishing between these two types of nouns, especially in using quantifiers and forming plurals. The purpose of this study was to identify the types of errors made by students and determine which errors occurred most frequently. This study referred to the Error Analysis theory proposed by (Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, 2013). The errors were classified into four categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The research used a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected from students' procedural texts and analyzed based on the error classification. The results showed that out of 100 identified errors, misformation was the most frequent error, accounting for 37%. This was followed by addition errors (29%), omission (21%), and misordering (13%). In addition, errors in using uncountable nouns were higher (70%) than countable nouns (30%). These findings indicate that students still face difficulties in understanding and applying the rules of countable and uncountable nouns. The dominance of misformation errors shows that students do not fully understand noun forms in English grammar. Therefore, teaching countable and uncountable nouns needs more attention and a structured approach to improve students' grammatical accuracy in writing.

Keywords: Countable nouns, Error analysis, Procedure text, Uncountable nouns

ABSTRACT

Dalam penelitian ini, masalah yang ditemukan adalah penggunaan *countable* dan *uncountable nouns* yang tidak tepat dalam teks prosedur yang ditulis oleh siswa kelas 10 di SMAS HKBP Sidorame Medan. Siswa sering mengalami kesulitan dalam membedakan kedua jenis kata benda tersebut, terutama dalam penggunaan *quantifier* dan pembentukan bentuk jamak. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis kesalahan yang dilakukan siswa serta menentukan kesalahan yang paling sering muncul. Penelitian ini mengacu pada teori *Error Analysis* yang dikemukakan oleh Dulay, H., Burt, M., dan Krashen (2013). Kesalahan

diklasifikasikan ke dalam empat kategori, yaitu *omission*, *addition*, *misformation*, dan *misordering*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan dari teks prosedur yang ditulis siswa dan dianalisis berdasarkan klasifikasi kesalahan tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari 100 kesalahan yang ditemukan, *misformation* merupakan kesalahan yang paling dominan dengan persentase 37%. Kemudian diikuti oleh *addition* (29%), *omission* (21%), dan *misordering* (13%). Selain itu, kesalahan dalam penggunaan *uncountable nouns* lebih tinggi (70%) dibandingkan dengan *countable nouns* (30%). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami dan menerapkan aturan penggunaan *countable* dan *uncountable nouns*. Dominasi kesalahan *misformation* menunjukkan bahwa siswa belum sepenuhnya memahami bentuk kata benda dalam tata bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, pembelajaran *countable* dan *uncountable nouns* perlu mendapatkan perhatian lebih serta pendekatan yang lebih terstruktur untuk meningkatkan ketepatan gramatikal siswa dalam keterampilan menulis.

Kata kunci: Analisis kesalahan, kata benda dapat dihitung, kata benda tidak dapat dihitung, teks prosedur.

1. PENDAHULUAN

Background of the Study

English Language Learning (ELL) is very important in Indonesian education because English is used globally. In schools, the focus is not only on grammar, but also on communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The main goal of ELL is for students to be able to use English in academic and everyday situations. Learning English also helps students develop critical, logical, and creative thinking, while appreciating their local identity.

English is very important in today's era of globalization. It serves as a medium of communication between countries and as a language for science, technology, economics, and culture. English language skills provide many opportunities for the younger generation to access global information, continue their studies abroad, and compete in the international job market. In schools, English is an important subject that helps students understand how to think and communicate broadly, as well as increase their knowledge and confidence.

Difficulties in learning English usually arise because of the differences between

Indonesian and English. In Indonesian, there are no changes in verb forms based on time, but English has a complex tense system. In addition, Indonesian does not use articles (a, an, the) and does not clearly distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns, whereas English relies heavily on these rules. These differences often cause students to feel confused when constructing sentences, choosing the correct word forms, and following English grammar rules correctly.

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning English because it allows students to convey their ideas, opinions, and experiences in a structured format. When writing, students need to have a good command of grammar, vocabulary, and spelling so that their message can be understood by the reader. Writing skills also demonstrate how well students understand English as a whole. Unfortunately, many people consider writing to be the most challenging skill

because it requires a great deal of attention.

When researchers teach writing, many students have great ideas but face difficulties in expressing them with the correct language structure. Therefore, writing instruction must be planned in stages, starting with an introduction to sentence structure, then moving on to paragraph composition and more complex types of text.

Writing skills in English are often considered one of the biggest challenges for students. This is because students must master various elements of the language simultaneously, such as sentence structure, vocabulary, tense selection, and the correct placement of grammatical elements. The difficulty of writing becomes even more complicated when students have to understand countable and uncountable nouns, as many of them do not yet know the basic differences between these two types of nouns. This deficiency results in various errors in their writing, whether at the word,

phrase, or sentence level. In practice, many students' writing shows weaknesses in sentence structure, such as missing important elements like to be. Sentences like "She very beautiful" are not only structurally incorrect, but also show that students often imitate Indonesian language patterns in their writing.

Consistency in mastering tenses also affects students' ability to use nouns correctly. For example, a student wrote, "Yesterday I go to market and buy many waters," which contains errors in the verb form "go should be went" and the incorrect use of nouns, because water is an uncountable noun that cannot be used with a quantity marker without a measure word. This example shows that problems in grammar and understanding of noun categories are interrelated and cannot be separated.

In the English curriculum for high school students, various types of texts, such as descriptions, narratives, recounts,

reports, and procedures, are taught.

Procedure texts aim to provide instructions or steps for performing activities, such as cooking or using tools. The structure of these texts includes the purpose, ingredients, and steps. When teaching procedural texts, students are enthusiastic because of their relevance to everyday life, such as "How to Make Fried Rice." However, they often lack understanding of grammar, especially the correct use of nouns and verbs in each step.

There are four types of errors: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, 2013). Teachers can use error analysis to identify common errors, understand why they occur, and improve teaching methods. The researcher discovered that students continue to make errors in their use of countable and uncountable nouns, based on early data gathered from initial learning process observations. These errors result

from students' incomplete understanding of the difference between countable and uncountable nouns. For instance, some students think that because money is a countable noun, it may be used with the articles a/an or in its plural form. According to these preliminary results, students continue to struggle with the grammatical aspects of nouns, even if they already grasp what they signify. As a result, there is a need for a more thorough investigation into errors made by pupils when using countable and uncountable nouns in their writing.

The study is entitled “Difficulties, Differentiating Countable Nouns and Uncountable Nouns in Procedure Text at VII Grade”. The theory applied is the Interlanguage Theory. The purpose of his study was to identify errors made by students when using countable and uncountable noun when they wrote procedure text in English (Lubis & Faculty, 2020). The study

conducted by (Syafutri, 2022), is titled “Analysis of Noun Phrase Errors in Students' Academic Writing.” The theory used is the Linguistic Category Taxonomy. It focuses on linguistic aspects such as morphology and syntax when analyzing errors.

2. KAJIAN TEORI

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory framework developed by (Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, 2013). Identifying types of errors in the use of countable and uncountable nouns.

2.2 Definition Errors

When learning English as a foreign language (EFL), errors are a natural thing to happen. These errors show how hard students are trying to understand the language system they're learning, even if the results

aren't always grammatically correct. That's why analyzing errors is very important for figuring out how well students know English generally. Errors can be defined as regular deviations in language usage that occur because students do not yet fully understand the rules of the target language. Errors indicate the natural process in language learning, where students gradually develop their knowledge through repeated experimentation, use, and refinement.

In his work on Error Analysis in Second Language Acquisition: Types and Frequency of Grammatical Errors, it is explained that errors are inconsistencies in the use of language structures that occur when learners are unable to correctly apply the grammatical rules of the language they

are learning. For example, a learner may write "She go to school every day." This type of error indicates that the learner does not yet fully understand the rules of subject-verb agreement in the present tense. Muftah emphasizes that identifying these errors is very useful for teachers in recognizing the grammatical aspects that are most difficult for students to understand.

In a publication on "Students' Grammatical Errors in Writing Descriptive Texts", it is explained that errors are a type of deviation that occurs consistently due to students' lack of understanding of the target grammar (Murti et al., 2022). These errors do not occur by chance, but rather because students do not yet fully understand the structure of English. For example, students

often write “She is very beautifuls,” which shows an error in the addition of adjectives, even though adjectives do not require plural forms in English. Errors like this make it easier for teachers to determine what needs to be taught next.

From these various opinions, it can be concluded that errors are a form of deviation that occurs regularly because students have not yet fully mastered the language they are learning. These errors illustrate the extent of students' language development, rather than being mere coincidental errors. By analyzing these errors, teachers can identify aspects of the language that students find difficult to understand, find out the causes of the errors, and design more effective teaching methods to improve writing skills, especially in procedural texts.

2.3 Error Source

Errors in second language learning originate from two main categories, namely interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. These two categories explain where students' errors come from when they construct sentences in English (Corder, 2018). This component relates to the origin or cause of the error divide the sources of errors into four categories:

1. Interlanguage Transfer

Interlanguage transfer errors occur when learners apply patterns from their first language native language when learning a second language. This causes the sentence structure in English to mimic the patterns found in Indonesian.

Example:

1. Incorrect: She very beautiful.
2. Correct: She is very beautiful.

This error occurs because in Indonesian, the sentence “Dia sangat cantik” does not use the word “to be.” As a result, students use the same pattern when communicating in English. This error is called negative transfer from the first language (L1) to the second language (L2). By adding “is,” the sentence becomes correct and conforms to English structure.

2. Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer errors occur when students overgeneralize rules in English without considering exceptions. These errors usually arise because students try to apply the same rule in all situations.

Example:

1. Incorrect: He goes to school yesterday.
2. Correct: He went to school yesterday.

This error is caused by students incorrectly applying the simple present tense rule to a past tense context. They believe that the addition of -s is always used for singular subjects without considering the time indicator yesterday. This error falls into the category of overgeneralization, which is the overly broad application of a rule. By changing the verb goes to went, the sentence becomes consistent with the past tense context

3. METODOLOGI PENELITIAN

3.1 Research Design

The errors students made while writing procedural texts using countable and uncountable nouns were described, explained, and analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach in this study. Rather than counting numbers, this method focused on understanding the meaning

and context of the errors in students' writing. The qualitative approach aimed to investigate in depth the experiences of the research subjects by using descriptions in words and language related to the natural context, as stated by (Creswell et al., 2016).

This approach provided an opportunity for the researcher to understand how students thought, the origins of the errors, and the factors that influenced these errors. The descriptive qualitative approach was selected because it supported the goals of this research, which were to describe the kinds and patterns of students' errors without attempting to prove any hypotheses. By using this approach, the researcher was able to explain linguistic phenomena as they

occurred and analyze them using appropriate error analysis theories.

3.2 Population And Sample

Saturated sampling is a method of sampling that uses every member of the population as a sample (Sugiyono, 2017). This method was used when the population size was comparatively low, generally fewer than 30 individuals, or when the research sought to produce generalizations with very little error. Census sampling, in which every member of the population was included as a sample, was another name for saturated sampling.

The whole population for this study was all 25 tenth-grade students in SMA Swasta HKBP Sidorame Medan, based on this claim. Since the population was comparatively small

and could be assessed as a whole, the total sampling approach, which utilized the entire population as the sample to be analyzed, was used in this study. Therefore, every tenth grader authored procedural texts, which were then examined for mistakes in the use of countable and uncountable nouns.

3. 3 The Instrument of Collecting Data

The data collection tool in this study was a writing test that was used to collect data in the form of procedural texts written directly by students. Each student was asked to write a procedural text based on a theme related to their daily lives, such as “How to Make Fried Rice” or “How to Use a Smartphone.”

There were four categories of errors covered by this theory: omission, addition, misformation,

and misordering. This writing test was the most effective tool because it was able to genuinely identify the kinds of errors that occurred in students' writing

3. 4 Technique of Collecting Data

Listed observation, interviews, documentation, and triangulation as the four main data collection methods (Sugiyono, 2018). The researcher was able to gather data for the study that was well-structured, comprehensive, and trustworthy using these methods. Nevertheless, in this study, only the methods that were pertinent to the study's goals were employed.

The data were collected by observation because this approach allowed the researcher to better identify and comprehend students' errors when using countable and

uncountable nouns in their procedural writing.

1. Observation

The observation data gathering approach was employed when the study focused on human behavior, work methods, and natural events, and when the number of participants being observed was not too high based on (Sugiyono, 2018). The researcher carried out the following steps:

1. Observation Preparation

The researcher went to the institution at this point to ask the headmaster and the English instructor for permission to do the observation. The researcher also discussed the study's goals, the kinds of data that were required, and the methods that would be employed to gather data. Following authorization, the researcher created observation sheets

to document the students' actions, writing process, and difficulties they encountered while writing procedural texts that included both countable and uncountable nouns.

2. Instructing the students

Before the observation began, the researcher gave the students a short overview of their task, which was to write a procedural text based on the provided subject. At this point, the researcher made sure the students wrote without the aid of dictionaries or computers.

3. Gathering students' written work

At the conclusion of the writing session, the researcher collected every procedural text produced by the students. Using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the sorts of mistakes were found after the materials were evaluated.

4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

This study adopts the Error Analysis Theory proposed by (Dulay, H., Burt, M. and Krashen, 2013), particularly known as the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This theory classifies errors in language into four types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Of the total 100 errors found in this study, misformation errors appeared most frequently, accounting for 37%. Next, addition errors accounted for 29%, followed by omission at 21%, and misordering at only 13%. The most frequent errors, with 37 occurrences in total, is misformation, according to the results of this study. Errors in creating noun structures that do not adhere to grammatical norms are referred to

as misformation. Interestingly, errors related to uncountable nouns were recorded as being much higher (70%) than those related to countable nouns (30%). These findings indicate that high vocational school students still face challenges in constructing noun structures correctly, especially when using uncountable nouns in procedural texts that often require quantifiers and instructions.

Meanwhile, a study (Hutasoit et al., 2025) at SMK Tanjung Morawa applied Dulay's Theory (Surface Strategy Taxonomy) to investigate errors in descriptive texts. The findings of this study reveal that the most common error is omission (41.46%), followed by misordering (24.39%), addition (21.95%),

and misformation (12.19%). The difference between this study and others lies in the type of text and the dominant error patterns. Omission as the most common error, while this study shows that misformation is the most common error.

Another study conducted by (Culty & Tarbiyah, 2015) can be linked to the Theory of Overgeneralization in Second Language Acquisition, described by (Brown & Houston, 2012). This theory states that second language learners often apply a rule without considering exceptions. The findings from Culty and Tarbiyah's study show that the most common errors are additions (38.17%), followed by form errors (35.88%), and omissions (25.95%). The high number of addition errors indicates that students

often add unnecessary elements, such as adding -s to uncountable nouns or using incorrect articles.

This study offers several novelties that distinguish it from previous studies. First, this study was conducted at SMAS HKBP Sidorame Medan, a location that, according to the researcher's search, has never been the subject of research related to error analysis in the use of countable and uncountable nouns. Therefore, this study provides a new context in upper secondary education at the school. Second, the main focus of this study is high school students, whereas previous studies have covered junior high school and vocational high school levels. Although high school students should have better grammar

knowledge, the results of this study show that there are still quite a lot of errors, especially in misformation and uncountable nouns. This shows that grammar problems continue into high school.

Third, this study conducted a more specific and measurable analysis of errors between countable and uncountable nouns, with results showing that 70% of errors occurred with uncountable nouns. This type of analysis has not been a major focus in existing research. Fourth, there is a change in the most common error patterns found compared to previous studies. While in other studies the most frequent errors are addition or omission, in this study, misformation is the most frequent. This reflects the complexity

of errors that vary according to the level of education and context of language use. Fifth, this study focuses on the use of nouns in procedural texts at the high school level, which provides insight into how text types can influence grammatical errors.

Thus, this study not only reinforces previous findings that errors in the use of countable and uncountable nouns still occur frequently, but also adds new insights through the previously unstudied research location context, more detailed error analysis, and findings about the dominance of errors at the high school level.

5. KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

5.1. Conclusion

Based on research conducted at SMAS HKBP Sidorame, it was found that students still face considerable challenges in using

countable and uncountable nouns in procedural texts. From an analysis of 100 errors collected, four categories of errors were found: omission (21%), addition (29%), misformation errors (37%), and misordering errors (13%). The most common error is misformation error (37%), which indicates that the main problem for students is not only the omission or addition of elements, but also related to their ability to form correct noun structures according to English grammar. These findings confirm that students still have difficulty learning the basic concepts related to noun formation, especially in distinguishing between countable and uncountable nouns.

The results show that errors in uncountable nouns (70%) are much higher than those in countable nouns

(30%). This is an important focus of the study because it illustrates a significant problem area in the use of uncountable nouns, especially in relation to the incorrect use of quantifiers and plural forms. This high percentage indicates that students' understanding of the characteristics of uncountable nouns is still not optimal, even though they are in high school.

Overall, this study confirms that the understanding of countable and uncountable nouns at SMAS HKBP Sidorame Medan still requires special attention. The prevalence of errors in word formation and the high number of errors related to uncountable nouns indicate that grammar learning must be conducted in a more in-depth, contextual, and continuous manner so

that students can use English language structures more accurately and systematically.

5.2 Suggestion

To help students better grasp countable and uncountable nouns and make fewer errors in their English writing, several recommendations are made based on the results of this research.

1. For Students

Students are encouraged to improve their knowledge of the fundamental principles governing countable and uncountable nouns, especially with respect to plural forms, articles, and quantifiers. They should become knowledgeable about nouns that cannot be pluralized and learn how to convey amounts appropriately.

Students may internalize correct grammatical rules via repeated exposure and correction, on going writing and editing practice is strongly advised. Additionally, students are encouraged to actively check dictionaries or grammar resources to confirm the usage and forms of nouns in order to prevent frequent errors.

2. For Teachers of English

English instructors should focus on teaching countable and uncountable nouns in a straightforward and methodical manner, according to advice. Teachers should give a variety of examples and activities that allow students to use grammatical principles in meaningful situations. Clearly explaining why some forms are wrong and providing direct feedback

on students' mistakes can help them learn from their errors. Additionally, educators are urged to employ error analysis as a teaching technique in order to pinpoint recurring challenges and address them via specialized instruction and corrective measures.

3. For School

School is expected to offer sufficient educational resources pertaining to English grammar and writing abilities in order to foster the teaching and learning process. Teacher training programs can also help teachers improve their teaching methods, particularly when it comes to grammar instruction. In addition, the school may foster an English-rich learning environment by sponsoring writing assignments, peer discussions, and academic support

initiatives that help students improve their grammatical proficiency.

4. For Researchers

Future researchers are encouraged to do more research on grammatical mistakes at various educational levels or in various learning environments. A more thorough understanding of why mistakes continue to be made in the usage of countable and uncountable nouns may result from studies that concentrate on instructional strategies, learning techniques, or students' cognitive processes. The effectiveness of different instructional strategies in enhancing students' grammatical correctness might also be assessed using comparative or experimental research.

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