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Syntactic Errors in Observation Report Texts of Grade VIII Science 4 Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe syntactic errors in observation report texts focused on grade VIII Science 4 students. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This study uses the theory of Keraf (2008) as the basis for analysis. Data in the form of text documents from student observations collected through classroom learning activities. Data analysis techniques are carried out through a content analysis approach including the stages of identification, classification, description, and conclusion of syntactic errors. The results of the study showed various forms of errors in the use of redundant elements, incomplete object clauses, incoherent sentences, imprecise sentences, and errors in word order. Factors causing errors include students' lack of understanding of the syntax field and the influence of spoken language in writing.

Keywords: Syntax errors, Indonesian language rules, observation report text

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari studi ini yaitu untuk mendeskripsikan kesalahan bidang sintaksis dalam teks laporan hasil observasi yang difokuskan pada siswa kelas VIII Sains 4. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori dari Keraf (2008) sebagai landasan analisis. Data berupa dokumen teks hasil observasi siswa yang dikumpulkan melalui kegiatan pembelajaran di kelas. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui pendekatan analisis isi mencakup tahap identifikasi, klasifikasi, deskripsi, dan penyimpulan kesalahan bidang sintaksis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya berbagai bentuk kesalahan penggunaan unsur mubazir, klausa objek tidak lengkap, kalimat tidak koheren, kalimat tidak cermat, kesalahan susunan kata. Faktor penyebab kesalahan di antaranya adalah kurangnya pemahaman siswa terhadap bidang sintaksis serta pengaruh bahasa lisan dalam penulisan.

Kata kunci: *Kesalahan bidang sintaksis, kaidah Bahasa Indonesia, teks laporan hasil observasi.*

Introduction

Indonesian plays a very important role as an official communication tool and unifier of the nation. Indonesian is the official language used in all forms of formal communication, both in education, government, and broader social relations (Muslich, 2008). This language is used in various areas of life, such as education, government administration, mass media, and daily communication between citizens. Indonesian not only functions as the official language of the country, but is also used in everyday life by the Indonesian people in various communication situations (Chaer, 2012). The use of Indonesian according to the rules, both in terms of structure and meaning, is very crucial to support the achievement of effective and targeted communication.

Effective communication is highly dependent on a person's ability to use language appropriately, both in terms of word choice, sentence structure, and accuracy of spelling and punctuation. A person's language skills include four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which must be mastered in an integrated manner so that communication runs effectively and on target (Tarigan, 1986). In the context of education, this ability is very important because language is the main means of conveying knowledge, explaining ideas, and building interactions between individuals. When language is used correctly, the message conveyed will be easier to understand and will not cause misunderstandings. Using language well and correctly means using language according to grammatical rules (correct) and according to the situation and purpose of communication (good) (Keraf, 2004). Mastery of good Indonesian language rules is one of the basic competencies that students must have.

One of the skills that must be mastered by students in the learning process at school is the ability to compose report texts, including observation report texts. The ability to compose observation report texts shows the extent to which someone can identify facts, classify information, and convey observation results systematically and objectively according to the correct text structure (Kosasih, 2014). This text aims to convey objective and structured information about an object or phenomenon that has been observed. Observation report texts must be composed objectively and structured, because the main purpose of writing them is to convey factual information based on direct observations that can be accounted for (Dalman, 2015). In the context of schools, observation report texts are often used to report observations of the school environment, cleanliness, or other activities.

Writing observation report texts by students often encounters various obstacles, especially related to the use of correct grammar. The main obstacle in using correct grammar is often caused by a lack of understanding of correct language rules, the influence of everyday language that tends

to be non-standard, and the habit of using words that are not in accordance with the context or applicable sentence structure (Rahardi, 2005). Good and correct grammar is very important so that the message to be conveyed in the text can be clearly understood by the reader. Good grammar is grammar that not only refers to formal rules, but is also able to convey messages clearly and precisely to the recipient of the message, according to the situation, context, and purpose of communication (Suwandi, 2010). In writing observation report texts, errors in the use of grammar, although they seem trivial, can reduce the quality and credibility of the text being composed.

Grammatical errors in observation report texts can also affect students' ability to communicate effectively. Effective communication does not only depend on good language skills, but also on the ability to convey messages in a clear, precise, and appropriate manner to the needs and understanding of the recipient (Suryani, 2013). Given the importance of report texts in education, it is crucial for students to master good grammar rules in order to convey information clearly, precisely, and easily understood. Mastering good grammar rules means understanding and applying the rules that apply in language to construct sentences that are clear, easy to understand, and in accordance with the desired communication goals (Sibarani, 2011).

Several previous studies have shown that grammatical errors are common errors made by junior high school/Islamic junior high school students. Damayanti (2019) stated that "Syntactic errors such as mismatched subjects and predicates and inappropriate use of affixes are still the main problems in junior high school students' writing, especially in observation report texts." These results are in line with the findings of research on students at MTs Negeri Surakarta 1 which showed similar error patterns. Likewise, a study by Wulandari (2020), which observed high school students' report texts in Yogyakarta. High school students still make many mistakes in the use of morphemes, especially in the formation of verbs and derived nouns, which causes the meaning of the sentence to be unclear.

This study will discuss grammatical errors that are often found in observation report texts written by students. Grammatical errors often occur due to ignorance or negligence in applying applicable rules, both in the form of spelling, word usage, and sentence structures that are not in accordance with standard Indonesian language rules (Alwi, 2017). This study specifically focuses on syntactic errors. In this study, the author uses the approach from Keraf (2008) as a theoretical basis. This theory includes errors in phrase, clause, or sentence structure, as well as inaccurate use of particles. By using this theory, the researcher attempts to identify and analyze syntactic errors in students' observation report texts.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This approach is used to describe systematically and in depth the grammatical errors in the texts of students' observations. The focus of the study lies in the forms of errors that appear in sentence structure, word usage, and spelling. This study uses the theory of Keraf (2008) which includes errors in the structure of phrases, clauses, or sentences, as well as inaccurate use of particles. With this theory, the analysis is carried out based on the real structure of the text written by students, such as Syntactic patterns in sentences.

The subjects in this study were students of class VIII Science 4, while the objects of the study were observation texts that they wrote as part of a learning assignment. The data analyzed were sentences in the text that contained grammatical errors. The data source was a document of student observation texts collected from learning activities in the classroom. The data collection technique was carried out through documentation, namely by collecting texts from student

observations collected during learning activities. The researcher selected and reviewed sentences that contained grammatical errors. The analysis process was carried out by classifying the forms of errors based on syntactic categories. Peer validation was carried out through discussions with fellow researchers who had a linguistic background to review the results of error identification and classification and ensure the objectivity of the analysis. With this approach, the reliability and credibility of the research results can be improved.

Result and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis of 10 observation report texts written by students of class VIII Science 4 MTs Negeri Surakarta 1, various forms of syntactic errors were found. This is in line with Keraf's (2008) view regarding the types of syntactic errors found in students' observation report texts.

Table 1. Syntax Error Recap

No	Error Type	Number Of Errors
1	sentence structure errors	11
2	word order errors	7
3	use of wasteful elements	6
4	sentence structure errors	5
5	incomplete object clause	3
6	incoherent sentences	2

1. syntax field error

Syntax is a branch of grammar that regulates how words are arranged into phrases, clauses, and sentences that are structurally correct. In the observation text of Class VIII Science 4, a number of syntactic errors were found that reflect the students' lack of understanding of standard sentence structures in Indonesian.

Table 2. Classification Of Syntax Errors on Sentence Structure Errors

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	“This makes the environment look less beautiful and uncomfortable to look at.” (text 1)	“This condition causes the environment to look less beautiful and uncomfortable to look at.”
2	“but when it's noon” (text 2)	“However, when noon comes,..”
3	“The environment at our school is actually quite good” (text 3)	“The environment at our school is actually quite good”
4	“Our school has a fairly large environment and there are many open spaces. However, not all parts of the school are clean.” (text 4)	“Our school has a fairly large environment with lots of open spaces. However, not all of its parts are clean.”

The 4th International Conference on Language, Literature and their Teaching 2025

5	“Our school has a beautiful and comfortable environment.” (text 5)	“Our school has a beautiful and comfortable environment.”
6	“Birds can also often be heard chirping in the trees, making the atmosphere even more comfortable.” (text 6)	“The chirping of birds in the trees also makes the atmosphere more comfortable.”
7	“The school environment must be maintained so that it remains sustainable and comfortable for everyone.” (text 7)	“The school environment must be maintained so that it remains sustainable and comfortable for everyone.”
8	“This can reduce the beauty and freshness of the school environment.” (text 7)	“This can reduce the beauty and freshness of the school environment.”
9	“Schools should make stricter rules about cleanliness and environmental care.” (text 7)	“Schools should make stricter rules about cleanliness and environmental care.”
10	“However, there are some students who do not care about environmental sustainability.” (text 8)	“However, there are some students who do not care about environmental sustainability.”
11	“However, after conducting observations, there was still a lot of rubbish scattered in several places.” (text 10)	“However, after conducting observations, we saw that there was still a lot of rubbish scattered in several places.”

The sentences in the observation text contain inaccurate sentence errors that cause the information to be delivered less precisely and less clearly. A good sentence must be able to convey ideas clearly, not give rise to multiple interpretations, and have a logical structure (Keraf, 2004). The sentence "This makes the environment look less beautiful and uncomfortable to look at" is less specific and formal, so it is more appropriate to be corrected to "This condition makes the environment look less beautiful and uncomfortable to look at". Presentation of data in research reports must be done systematically, coherently and clearly so that readers do not experience difficulties in understanding the research results (Sugiyono, 2017). Improvements like this are important so that the information delivered is clearer, more effective, and in accordance with the language rules that apply in writing observation texts. Observation report results must use effective sentence structure, appropriate word choice, and comply with language rules such as the use of conjunctions, passive sentences, and technical words according to the object being observed (Kosasih, 2014).

Table 3. Classification Of Syntax Errors on Word Order Errors

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	“There is starting to be a lot of rubbish around the park and yard.” (text 2)	“There is a lot of rubbish scattered around the park and yard.”
2	“especially during rest time” (text 3)	“especially during breaks”
3	“Students do not take off their shoes when entering during the rain” (text 4)	“Students do not take off their shoes when entering, especially when it rains”
4	“The school building is painted in bright colors which creates a cheerful atmosphere.” (text 5)	“The school building is painted in bright colors which creates a cheerful atmosphere.”
5	“there are colored pebbles arranged neatly” (text 5)	“there are colored pebbles arranged neatly.”
6	“all school residents must take responsibility” (text 7)	“all school residents must take responsibility”
7	“this makes visitors feel uncomfortable.”	“This makes visitors feel uncomfortable.”

In the text of the observation results, there are often errors in word order that do not comply with Indonesian language rules, resulting in unclear meaning. The word order in Indonesian greatly determines the clarity of meaning. Deviations from the standard pattern can lead to misunderstandings (Alwi dkk., 2003). In the sentence "Students do not take off their shoes when entering when it rains," the word order is confusing and can lead to a different understanding from the original meaning. Clarity of meaning in writing will only be achieved if the arrangement of words in sentences pays attention to the correct syntactic structure (Zuchdi, 2008). So it can be changed to "Students do not take off their shoes when entering, especially when it rains" showing that the right word order can clarify the meaning and make the information conveyed more effectively. Thus, correcting errors in word order is very important so that the sentences in the observation report are more coherent, clear, and easy for readers to understand.

Table 4. Classification of Syntax Errors on Use of Wasteful Elements

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	“...The school environment is still not maximally clean.” (text 1)	“...The school environment is not yet maximally clean.”
2	“In addition, there are also plants that are not cared for and look wilted.” (text 1)	“In addition, there are plants that are not cared for and look wilted.”
3	“Schools should pay more attention to	“Schools should pay more attention to

	cleanliness, and students should be reminded of the importance of keeping the school environment clean to keep it comfortable and healthy.”(text 2)	cleanliness, and students need to be reminded about the importance of maintaining a clean environment to keep it comfortable and healthy.”
4	“There are still many leaves that have not been swept” (text 3)	“there are still many leaves that have not been swept”
5	“It makes the garden look less tidy.” (text 5)	“It makes the garden look less tidy.”
6	“lots of rubbish thrown away carelessly” (text 8)	“lots of rubbish thrown away carelessly”

The sentence explains that the error in the form of a redundant word occurs when a word or phrase is used excessively and is not needed because its meaning has been implied in the previous sentence. Excessive or repetitive words without additional meaning will only reduce the efficiency and clarity of the language (Sugono, 2011). In phrases such as "not yet clean to the maximum" is not structurally and meaningfully correct because it contains a repetition of meaning that does not add new information. This error makes the sentence ineffective, lengthens the writing for no clear reason, and confuses the reader. Sentences that are too long due to repetitive and unnecessary elements tend to make readers lose focus on the main idea (Sudaryat, 2009). Therefore, the use of the word redundant should be avoided so that the sentence becomes more concise, dense, and efficient in conveying the results of observations clearly. Repetition of words in one sentence should be avoided if it does not provide emphasis on meaning, because it will only blur the focus of the sentence (Samsuri, 1985).

Table 5. Classification of Syntax Errors on Sentence Structure Errors

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	<i>“Students often throw garbage in the wrong place. this shows a lack of awareness of cleanliness.” (Text 1)</i>	“Students often throw garbage in the wrong place. This shows a lack of awareness of cleanliness.”
2	(From the results of observations that have been carried out, it can be concluded that there is a need to increase awareness to maintain environmental cleanliness.” (text 1)	“From the results of observations that have been carried out, we conclude that there needs to be increased awareness to maintain environmental cleanliness.”
3	“Many students throw away trash...” (text 2)	“Many students throw away trash...”

4	“However, there are some students who sometimes sit on the grass and pick flowers in the garden.” (text 6)	However, there are some students who sometimes sit on the grass and pick flowers in the garden.
5	“It is very important to keep our school environment clean so that it is comfortable for learning.” (text 10)	“It is very important to keep our school environment clean so that it is comfortable for learning.”

In several sentences quoted from the observation text, errors in sentence structure were found that caused the delivery of information to be less effective and not in accordance with Indonesian language rules. Sentence structure errors such as incomplete sentences or overlapping sentences can interfere with the effectiveness of conveying information in writing (Mulyono, 2011). In the sentence "Students often throw garbage in the wrong place. This shows a lack of awareness of cleanliness," there is an error in the use of capital letters at the beginning of the second sentence. Capital letters are used as the first letter of a word at the beginning of a sentence (Language center, 2017). So it can be corrected to "This shows a lack of awareness of cleanliness" to mark the beginning of a new sentence correctly. Correction of sentence structure like this is very important so that the observation text becomes clearer, more logical, and easier to understand. The correct sentence structure supports clarity of ideas, while the wrong structure will obscure the meaning and confuse the reader (Sudaryat, 2009).

Table 6. Classification of Syntax Errors on Incomplete Object Clause

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	“we see that the school environment.” (text 1)	“we see that the school environment.”
2	“Behind the school building, you can see rubbish piled up and not cleaned up for several days.” (text 4)	“Behind the school building, there is visible piles of rubbish that has not been cleaned by officers for several days.”
3	“There are also those who play in the park and damage the flowers that have been planted by teachers and janitors.” (text 7)	“Some students also played in the garden and damaged flowers planted by teachers and janitors.”

In several sentences from the observation, errors were found in the form of incomplete clause objects, which caused the information to be unclear and confusing to the reader. A good and correct sentence must have a basic S-P-O-K structure. If the object clause is incomplete, then the relationship between elements in the sentence becomes unclear and confusing (Chaer, 2009). In the sentence "Behind the school building, garbage was seen piled up and had not been cleaned for several days," there is a structural ambiguity because the subject and object are not clearly explained. Ambiguity in sentences usually arises because the sentence structure does not clarify the function of the subject, predicate,

or object. This ambiguity can confuse readers in interpreting the meaning (Ramlan, 2005). The correction is: "Behind the school building, there was a pile of garbage that had not been cleaned by officers for several days," which clarifies the object "pile of garbage" as the center of the clause information. Incomplete clause object errors like this are important to correct so that sentences become more coherent, informative, and in accordance with the rules of good and correct Indonesian language structure. Good grammar in writing includes correct sentence structure, logical relationships between sentences, and consistent use of standard words (language center, 2017).

Table 7. Classification of Syntax Errors on Incoherent Sentences

No	Wrong Sentence	Correct Sentence
1	“There is a lot of plastic waste scattered in the school yard and the gutter next to the school building.” (text 1)	“There is a lot of plastic waste scattered in the school yard and in the gutter next to the school building.”
2	“The janitors have tried hard to maintain cleanliness, but because students often don't care, the trash quickly piles up again.” (text 9)	“The janitors have tried hard to maintain cleanliness. However, because students often do not care, the trash quickly piles up again.”

In several sentences quoted from the observation text, there are errors in the form of incoherent sentences so that the relationship between parts of the sentence becomes unclear and disrupts the smooth delivery of information. Sentences that are not well structured will result in information not being conveyed clearly and can even mislead the reader (Keraf, 2004). In the sentence "The janitor has tried hard to maintain cleanliness, but because students often don't care, the trash quickly piles up again" which is less coherent due to the combination of two ideas without a clear separator. Paragraph incoherence usually occurs because there are two main ideas in one sentence or paragraph without adequate transition or connection (Tarigan, 2009). By replacing the conjunction "but" with a sentence separator and using "However," the sentence becomes more coherent and structured, namely "The janitor has tried hard to maintain cleanliness. However, because students often don't care, the trash quickly piles up again." Correcting incoherent sentences like this is important so that information is conveyed clearly, coherently, and easily understood in the observation report. Clarity and coherence in text is the key so that information can be received by readers correctly. Ambiguous or ambiguous language will only cloud the message (Alwasilah, 2005).

Several previous studies have been conducted to examine grammatical errors in students' writing, especially at the junior high school level. Widodo (2020), who examined language errors in descriptive texts and identified errors in morphology and syntax. The research conducted by Widodo has similarities with the research conducted by this study, namely having the same object in the form of junior high school/MTs students' writing and focusing on the analysis of syntactic errors. However, there are differences in terms of text type and scope of analysis. Widodo's research uses subjective descriptive text, while this

study uses factual and scientific observation report text. In addition, Widodo's research examines two linguistic aspects at once, namely morphology and syntax, while this study specifically examines syntactic errors only.

Another previous study conducted by Yuliani (2019) specifically examined the text of observation reports of grade VII junior high school students and found that common errors occurred in sentence structure, use of conjunctions, and inaccuracy of subject-predicate patterns. This study is very relevant because it uses similar types of texts and objects. The research conducted by Yuliani has strong similarities with this study, both in terms of the type of text in the form of observation reports and in terms of the focus of analysis on syntactic aspects. However, Yuiana's research differs from this study in terms of class level and depth of analysis. In Yuliana's study, she studied grade VII students in general, while this study focuses on grade VIII students with a more in-depth study of syntactic structures. Therefore, this study can expand and complement Yuliani's findings through a more focused and detailed approach in the context of madrasah students' scientific texts.

Studies on grammatical errors in students' writing have been widely conducted by previous researchers. Several other related studies have also examined syntactic and morphological errors in students' written texts and found that errors in phrase structure and affixation still occur frequently (Ningsih, 2021). The similarity between Ningsih's research and the research conducted by the author lies in the focus on syntactic errors, especially in terms of phrase structure. In addition, both of them examine the written language skills of junior high school/MTs students. However, Ningsih's research has a broader scope because it covers two aspects of language, namely syntax and morphology, while this study specifically focuses on syntactic errors only. In the research conducted by Ningsih, the observation report text was not specifically examined, while the author's research examined syntactic errors in scientific factual texts, namely observation reports of grade VIII students.

Errors in writing report texts are often caused by a lack of mastery of text structure and inaccuracy in the use of effective sentences (Rahmawati, 2020). The similarity with Rahmawati's research lies in the same object, namely the text of the report of students' observation results, and the focus on linguistic problems in writing. However, Rahmawati highlights the general aspects of text structure and sentence effectiveness, while this study specifically analyzes grammatical errors at the syntactic level. Thus, this study provides more depth to the grammatical aspects of sentences, especially in the syntactic context of students' scientific texts.

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that grammatical errors in students' writing are a problem that is still often encountered, both in narrative, descriptive, and report texts. This is an important basis for this study to specifically examine grammatical errors in the observation report texts of grade VIII Science 4 students.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the observation report text of grade VIII Science 4 students, it can be concluded that students' understanding of the use of syntax still needs to be improved. The errors found include the use of redundant elements, incomplete object clauses, incoherent sentences, sentence structure errors, imprecise sentences, and word order errors. These errors indicate that students are not yet fully able to construct sentences that are in accordance with good and correct Indonesian language rules, especially in the context of scientific writing such as observation report

texts.

These errors are caused by a lack of understanding of the field of syntax and the influence of spoken language. To improve students' ability to write observation texts that are in accordance with the rules of Indonesian syntax, various systematic efforts are needed. Teachers should place more emphasis on learning grammar, spelling, and correct sentence structure, and provide structured and ongoing writing exercises. These exercises need to be accompanied by guidance and constructive feedback so that students can understand and correct the mistakes they make.

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