

## **Error Analysis on the Use of “Be” in the Students’ Composition**

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### ***Abstract***

This study aims to identify, analyze and describe the structure of the use of some errors in the writing of English sentences in the text and the aspects surrounding the Student Semester 3 of English Department STAIN Surakarta. In this study, the researcher describes the error use of 'be' both as a linking verb or auxiliary verb. This is a qualitative-descriptive research. Source data used is a document that is the writing assignment undertaken by the Students taking Writing course. Writing tasks are in narrative, descriptive, expositive, and argumentative forms. To analyze the data, researcher uses intra lingual and extra lingual method. This method is used to connect the linguistic elements in sentences, especially some of the elements either as a linking verb or auxiliary verb in English sentences in the text. Based on the analysis of error regarding the use of 'be' it can be concluded that there are 5 (five) types of errors made by students; error about the absence (omission) of 'be', error about the addition of 'be', the error on the application of 'be', errors in placements 'be', and a complex error in the use of 'be'. These errors occur due to inter lingual transfer, intra lingual transfer and learning context.

***Keywords:*** *Error Analysis, Students Writing*

### ***Abstrak***

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi, menganalisis, dan menggambarkan pola kesalahan dalam penulisan kalimat bahasa Inggris dalam teks dan aspek-aspek lainnya pada mahasiswa Semester 3 Jurusan Bahasa Inggris STAIN Surakarta. Dalam studi ini, peneliti meneliti tentang kesalahan penggunaan 'be' baik sebagai kata kerja penghubung atau kata kerja bantu.

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Sumber data yang digunakan adalah dokumen berupa tugas menulis yang dilakukan oleh Siswa yang mengambil mata kuliah Writing. tugas tersebut berbentuk narasi, deskriptif, ekspositif, dan argumentatif. Untuk menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan metode intra lingual dan ekstra lingual. Metode ini digunakan untuk menghubungkan unsur-unsur linguistik dalam kalimat, terutama beberapa elemen baik sebagai kata kerja penghubung atau kata kerja bantu dalam kalimat-kalimat bahasa Inggris pada teks. Berdasarkan analisis kesalahan mengenai penggunaan 'be' dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada 5 (lima) jenis kesalahan yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa ; kesalahan tentang tidak adanya (penghilangan) 'be', kesalahan tentang penambahan 'be', kesalahan pada penerapan 'be', kesalahan dalam penempatan 'be', dan kesalahan yang kompleks dalam penggunaan 'be'. Kesalahan ini terjadi karena adanya transfer interlingual, transfer intra lingual dan konteks pembelajaran.

**Kata Kunci :** *Analisis Kesalahan , Tulisan Mahasiswa*

## **Introduction**

As a means of communication, language consists of form and meaning. Forms of language can be divided into elements such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and even at a higher level called discourse or text. In general, language users often use a form of language to convey information. Therefore, for the meaning of the information submitted is not false and easily understood, language users need to understand the aspects of linguistics, particularly grammatical aspect in formulating phrases, clauses or sentences, and non-linguistic aspects, especially socio-cultural aspects that surround the language.

Just as in preparing the English sentence, the writer should understand the broad sense of sentence, which includes a sentence pattern or elements, sentence structure and functions of sentences. Understanding these differences

thus need to be considered by the writer because grammatical structures of one language to another language tend to differ.

Callow (in Baker, 1995: 180) states that “Each language has its own patterns to convey the interrelationships of persons and events....” To illustrate the differences in grammatical structure, the following is a comparative examples of English sentences and Indonesian:

Ind : Mahasiswa-mahasiswa STAIN Surakarta rajin dan cerdas.  
Eng : The students of STAIN Surakarta are diligent and smart.

From the comparison of the two sentences, it can be stated that there are differences in grammatical structure between English and Indonesian languages. In this context, the Indonesian sentence structure does not recognize linking verb between the subjects with the predicate that follows it. However, the English sentence requires a linking verb that is to link the subject with the predicate that follows it. The use of ‘be’ in the sentence is a must because without it, the sentence will not be acceptable according to the grammatical English. In more remote, the use of ‘be’, covering is, am, are, was, and were depends on the type of subject. For example, for the third singular and third plural pronoun, each is followed by ‘is’ and ‘are’, while the subject is first person singular or plural, each is followed by ‘am’ and ‘are’, and the subject is second person (you) is followed by are.

Therefore, the accuracy of using them in the writing of English sentences such as this must be considered, especially by students who are developing writing skills in English as a foreign language. They should understand the difference between grammatical structure of English and Indonesian. This is because they assume that grammatical aspects of the two languages are similar. By writing English sentences according to the

grammatical structure, the meaning of it will be accurate, easily understood and acceptable.

Based on the background of the problems above, the formulation of the problem in this research are 'How are the use of "be" in writing English sentences mistaken by the students? and what are the aspects surrounding it?'

### ***Error Analysis***

Error analysis is a procedure used by researchers and educators that includes sampling, identifying errors in the sample, evaluating the seriousness of the error. Teachers should understand better about the mistakes made by students. Ellis said in her book *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* that *Error Analysis is a procedure used by researchers and teachers which involves collecting samples of learner, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness (1994: 50 – 57).*

The sentence, which is free from error must have two criteria namely acceptability and appropriateness. Acceptance means the sentence is spoken or written by students must be understood by native speakers as the owner of that language. Acceptance here is not referring to the rules of grammar but in the context of suitability. While appropriateness refers to the ability of constructing sentence that fits the context. Lyons in James (1998: 67) says that *an acceptable utterance is one that has been, or might be, produced by a native speaker in some appropriate context and is, or would be, accepted by other native speakers as belonging to the language in question. To decide on the acceptability of a piece of language we refer not to rules, but the contexts, trying to contextualize the utterance in question.*

### ***The importance of error analysis***

Analyzing the errors made by students provides many benefits in teaching and learning. For this reason, understanding errors is a very valuable feedback to evaluate, plan teaching materials, and implement teaching strategies. By knowing the similarity type of error will be greatly useful in determining the sequence of teaching and the emphasis in the classroom. Alatis (1977: 138) states that *'familiarity in the types of errors that students actually make is as a valuable guide for determining the sequence and emphasis of instruction in the English foreign language (EFL) classroom.'*

Dulay, Burt and Krashen in Fauziati (2002: 75) said that *'Error Analysis has several major purposes. The first is providing data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. And, it is to indicate teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively.'*

Error analysis also provides insights about the process of foreign language acquisition, which further contributes to the practice of classroom teaching. In other words, the theoretical error analysis goal is to understand the process of learning a foreign language as well as strategies for making teaching a foreign language better and more efficient.

### ***The difference between error and mistake***

The difference between errors and mistakes are often confusing because these two seem similar. However, both are two terms that can be clearly distinguished. Error will always be made by foreign language learners. This is the first step in order to master the language and each learner will experience

and pass through this stage for success of learning. James (1998:83) says that an error can not be corrected by himself until there is an explanation (input) have been given clearly. In other words, the error requires further learning before the learner can correct his own mistakes. *“errors cannot be self-corrected until further relevant (to that error) input (implicit or explicit) has been provided and converted into intake by the learner. In other words, errors require further relevant learning to take place before they can be self-corrected.”*

Mistake is also an error but rather caused by fatigue, excitement, forgetting, fatigue, attention distraction, and so forth. Mistake can be corrected by the learner. According to Corder in Freeman (1992: 59) *‘a mistake is a random performance slip, therefore, caused by a fatigue, an excitement, etc and it can be self-corrected. A mistake is caused by performance factors, such as limitation, or forgetfulness, tiredness or some situation of stress or when our attention is divided.’*

### ***Writing skills***

Writing is one of the four language skills. As a means of communication, writing is a process to convey information, or ideas on the reader. However, conveying information or ideas is not an easy activity. The writer must be able to convey with easily understood language for the information or ideas that are intended to the reader. Therefore, for his work can be understood easily by readers, writer must master linguistic aspects, particularly the aspect of grammatical and non-linguistic aspects.

From the aspect of linguistics, the author should understand all aspects surrounding the information or ideas that he realizes in the form of text, such as grammatical aspect and the use of punctuation. Grammatical errors and the

use of punctuation can cause the writing difficult to understand or even not at all meaningful.

Harmer (2004: 111) states that the linguistic aspects of the work of writing errors can include spelling error, mistake in word order, grammar mistake, wrong verb tense, concord mistake, unclear meaning, punctuation mistake, something unnecessary, and too formal or informal. Of the non-linguistic aspects, the author should consider the readers. The reader can be seen from the elements such as age, educational level, profession, gender, and even family backgrounds. Regardless of such elements, the result of writing that he made would be less beneficial or even not at all be useful to readers.

### ***Types of Sentences***

According to the form or structure, the sentence can be divided into single sentences (simple sentence) and compound sentence (complex sentence). Frank (1972: 223) argues that the sentence is divided into four types, as in his statement:

*Simple sentences are such sentences have only one full predication in the form of and independent clause, 2) compound sentences are such sentences have two or more full predications in the form of independent clauses, 3) complex sentences are such sentences also have two or more full predications. One of these is an independent clause (or, main clause) that is similar to the form of the simple sentence, and one or more of these are dependent clauses (or, subordinate clauses), 4) compound-complex sentences are contain two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.*

While Frank divides sentence into four different types, the second sentence (compound sentence), third (complex sentence), and fourth (compound-complex sentence) can be classified into one sentence, that sentence compound (complex sentence).

Waldhorn and Zeigar (in Mas'ud, 1998: 18) distinguish sentences into simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. Simple sentence is the sentence that contains only one main verb (one main clause or sentence stem), which reflects the existence of one idea.

SimakBaca secara fonetikComplex sentence is the sentence that contains one main clause and one or more independent clause (subordinate clause, that is - the clause which rely on main clause), which between them related by using the relative pronoun, such as who, whom, the which, that, and whose. Compound-complex sentence is a perfect compound sentence containing one or more main clause and one or more dependent clause.

### **Research methodology**

Related to the goal achieved, namely to identify and analyze, and describe the precise use of 'be' in the English sentences, this type of research is qualitative-descriptive. In this study, researcher will describe the accuracy and error use of 'be' as linking verb and as an auxiliary verb.

### ***Data sources and data***

In this study, source of data used is document. Sources of data are a writing assignment undertaken by the Student Semester 3 STAIN Surakarta. Writing assignment here is that students are asked to make a good essay in the form of narration, description, exposition, and argumentation within 90 minutes without opening the notebook or dictionary. The data in this study is English sentences that contain 'be' (is, am, are, was, were, be, being, or been) in their writing.

In this research, data collection techniques used by the researcher refers to technical note. The researcher reads and then records all the sentences that contain 'be' written by the students of Semester 3 STAIN Surakarta. The results, researchers find out the accuracy and errors in the use of 'be' in English sentences. In addition, to simplify the analysis, each sentence is numbered in sequence and coded and retrieved 3 last digits of the Students Index number.

### ***Data analysis method***

According to Mahsun (2005: 112), there are methods of language analysis in the study of languages, namely intra lingual method and the extra lingual method. Intra lingual method is a method of analysis by comparing the connecting elements that are lingual, both contained in one language or in several different languages. Extra lingual method is used to analyze the elements that are extra lingual, namely linking the language problem with things that are beyond language.

To analyze the data in this study, the research uses intra lingual and extra lingual methods. These methods are used to connect the linguistic elements in sentences, especially some of the elements either as a linking verb or auxiliary verb in English sentences in the text, and language problem with things that are beyond language.

### **Discussion and finding**

Having collected the data, the researcher compiles the following points;

1. Broadly speaking, students are able to express ideas and thought into writing in English. It was proven that the average student are able to write as much as one sheet of full page, even some of them more than one page.

2. Most of their writing are narrative that they share the experience they've ever experienced. Stories are arranged vary from campus life problems to vacation stories, family, as well as funny and thrilling events.
3. Almost of all the existing writings, we always find sentence/sentences which contain a 'be' both as a linking verb or auxiliary. While the tenses are used mostly in the form of past tense because they talked about what had happened.

Based on the analysis of error regarding the use of 'be' it can be concluded that there are 5 (five) types of errors made by students; error about the absence (omission) of 'be', error about the addition of 'be', the error on the application of 'be', errors in placement of 'be', and a complex error in the use of 'be'. These errors occur due to intra lingual transfer, extra lingual transfer and learning context.

#### ***Error in omission of 'be'***

Here are the findings of errors in the removal/omission of 'be'. Omission here means that the student intentionally or unintentionally has made a sentence that does not put 'be' that should exist in the sentence.

Datum 045: *We very happy in there so much*

The sentence pattern is Subject + Adjective Phrase. Here, we can see that the writer tries to express that *we are very happy*. The sentence is not equipped with 'be', where between Subject and predicate in English must be accompanied by conjunctions (linking verb). In other words, the fault lies in the absence of 'were' because the sentence tells about the experience of the past.

Table 1  
Omission of 'be'

No	Data Code	Erroneous sentence
1	042	Around the yard there is a pool that can use to wash our hand or wash our face.
2	045	In there we very happy so much The first day we went to museum Bali, we guide by Mr. Dewa.
3	057	First we made nastar because nastar more easier than cake
4	061	I'm the first person who ready to explain my material
5	073	Because it so far and the route not flat
6	080	I still fasting When I sick, I had experience which I like I absent in my class
7	043	It usefull for the student when they want to continue their study at university.
8	076	I spoke to the police while crying because I still very afraid.
9	081	You can go there by following students who crossing here
10	094	I really tired, because I had to walk along the way of my boarding house
11	008	Now I still happy in here.
12	091	So I confused when I would parking my motorcycle.
13	092	I proud with my mother.
14	107	I far away from my parents. I proud with them.
15	109	My parents hungry with me I driver motorcycle and must ready to face examination.
16	111	I very happy. I very hungry.
17	113	She very beautiful. She very hungry.

### ***Error in the addition of 'be'***

Analysis of erroneous sentences in the form of the addition of 'be' is as follows.

Datum 008: *But, anything was happen.*

In this sentence, the student tries to express that something has happened. This incident has been going on so that the pattern of 'past tense', as shown by the use of 'be' form was. However, the use of 'be' is to connect between the subject and predicate when the predicate is not an active verb. In the above sentence structure 'happen' is an active verb, and thus connective word 'be' is unnecessary. The sentence is incorrect because it adds unnecessary 'was'. As in 'past tense', 'happen' is replaced by a second form 'happened'.

Table 2  
Error in addition of 'be'

No	Data Code	Erroneous Sentence
1	008	But, anything was happen.
2	054	I am very love my campus
3	055	Ragunan zoo is another place that I was visited
4	056	All of the member OSIS were had to attend that event
5	063	The end of July was come
6	068	They can be to celebrate of Iedul Fitri with happiness
7	072	So, I worked while I was studied. They have been give me an unforgettable experience.
8	083	The concert was started
9	036	When I was clean it, all my friends laughed loudly.
10	049	It was happened when I was in Senior High School.
11	062	The woman got a hurt in her legs and her baby was fell.
12	066	That was happened one year ago in September 2007.

		I did it because want not to be come late to campus.
13	082	Then I was fell down in the road.
14	090	Finally, I decided to go there and proof what my friend was said
15	094	I knew that something was happened
16	118	I am still remember it until now.
17	059	They are usually helped me, if I get a problem in the work. Our body is listen the alarm sound
18	088	My grand father was pass away five years ago.
19	097	I would like to tell you about my experiences when I was study about music.
20	102	That was happen when I was studying in Senior High School.
21	104	When holiday was arive, I had so many planning. My holiday was come.
22	106	He was suggest me to lisen music.
23	112	They were very loves me.
24	115	I was became private teacher for her. it is can make my skill well.
25	121	I was very like because my uncle was very humble to me.

### ***Error in application of 'be'***

Application error 'be' here means that the sentences have been prepared by the students 'be' inappropriately.

Datum 008: *I moved to a class D Because I am not join mid semester test.*

In this sentence there is 'am' specifically used by the first person singular in the pattern of 'present tense'. At first glance there is no problem in this sentence. However, when carefully considered, the use of auxiliary 'am' as inappropriate. The sentence tells about events that already took place (I moved to class D). So clause (Because I am not join mid semester test.) should not use 'am' but 'did' as auxiliary.

Table 3  
Error in application of 'be'

No	Data Code	Erroneous Sentence
1	008	I moved to class D because I am not join mid semester test. I am not come to mid semester test
2	063	The agenda be held for 3 days
3	068	So I'm confuse when I would choose clothes
4	073	I were not finded
5	084	I'm confuse to made a good condition I scream "stop it" and the new comers be silent The day was fast and I am fasting
6		When I was in Junior High School at SMP 19 Surakarta, I ever be a librarian But now, the head of the librarian was not keep the library again.
7	082	But It didn't matter because The situation didn't serious
8	108	Last 2 week there is a new friend
9	052	My school had study tour to Bali island, I am very happy
10	087	My friends in here is very kind with me.
11	110	But some of them is still serious in studying.
12	116	It are about skill English.
13	120	After that we forgotten about the schedule train, we are running until station.
14	124	I hope I can to be a good student.

***Errors in the placement of 'be'***

The use of 'be' in English structure must consider the subject and the form of time (tenses), it should also be noticed the correct placement. In this research we find some form of 'be' where the placement is not appropriate. The following is the error in the placement of the phrase 'be'.

Datum 042: *Near the mosque there is a high tower That We Can see how our world is beautiful.*

This is a significant positive sentence pattern 'Near the mosque there is a high tower where we can see how beautiful this world'. There are two 'be' in this sentence, 'be' the first refers to the 'there', while 'be' the second one refers to our world. The use of 'be' is correct. The error lies in the 'be' the second. The placement of 'be' in front of a designated object is incorrect because this is not a question but a statement. This could be corrected to be 'Near the mosque there is a high tower That We Can see how beautiful our world is'. So 'is' is placed after the noun 'our world'.

Table 4

Error on the placement of 'be'

No	Data Code	Erroneous Sentence
1	042	Near the mosque there is a high tower that we can see how is beautiful our world.
2	046	Andrea makes me confuse about how is God working and what is God willing
3	103	You can imagine how is hard to keep a baby.

***Complex errors in the Use of 'be'***

Error made by students regarding the use of 'be' does not cover only in terms of addition, omission, or placement, but also errors in the complex error.

Datum 063: *The event started after Dzuhur, beginning with a built camp in every place the which was provide by the presenter*

In the long sentences there is 'was' as a 'be' in past form. Complex error occurs that 'was' is not as an auxiliary or linking verb, and it makes the sentence incorrect. When it is passive form of the verb, 'provide' should be in past participle of 'provided'

Table 5  
Complex errors in the use of 'be'

No	Data Code	Erroneous Sentence
1	063	The event started after dhuhur, beginning with built camp in every place which was provide by the presenter
2	112	We weren't spoken about study.
3	118	Many exercise that I must be done.

From the above data analysis, there are three main factors causing the errors in the use of 'be' by the students in the sentence which they set. The three main factors are inter lingual transfer, intra lingual transfer, and context of learning.

Errors caused by inter lingual transfer factor can be seen from the interference of mother tongue into a foreign language learned. To know this error, researcher has to translate the grammar studied in the target language and compare them so that the intended meaning can be known by students.

Negative transfer between the elements in the foreign language can lead to intra lingual error. In other words, the students have not mastered English grammar well. There are four types of errors; overgeneralization,

ignoring rules of grammar, incomplete grammar application, and false concepts.

Context of learning factor refers to the fact that the learners commit errors in their context of learning as the result of misleading clarification from the teacher, faulty presentation of structure or word in a text book or even because of pattern that was memorized in drill, not in contextualized.

## **Conclusion**

In general, the text made by students in the form of the English language is already good. Although this study is only limited on the analysis of errors in writing, the complete thought as outlined in the text is clearly understood. The result of error in general is not so conspicuous both in quantity and quality. Meanwhile, based on error analysis on the use of 'be' it can be concluded that there are 5 (five) types of errors made by students that is, error about the absence (disappearance) of 'be', a error about the addition of 'be', the error on the application of 'be', errors the placement of 'be', and a complex error in the use of 'be'.

Such errors occur due to several factors; inter lingual transfer factor, intra lingual transfer factor and factor of learning context. Errors due to inter lingual transfer factor is still affected by the intervention of mother tongue in the structure of English. While intra lingual transfer factor caused by negative transfer in the elements of English. This transfer includes the four things. They are overgeneralization, ignoring rules of grammar, the application of improper grammar, and false concepts.

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