

STUDENTS' ERROR IN USING CAPITAL LETTERS AND PUNCTUATION IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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ABSTRACT

The paper entitled "Students' Error in Using Capital Letter and Punctuation in Writing a Descriptive Text" was written to find out error in using capital letter and punctuation in writing a descriptive text and the cause of it. The method used in this research is descriptive method. The research was conducted to the third semester students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training and Educational Sciences, Pakuan University. The sample of this research is selected by using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through students' work, questionnaire, and interview. The result of the data shows that the most common error in using capital letter is in writing the names of places and persons. For comma, students make error before or after coordinating conjunction and comma at the end of the sentence. For apostrophe, most of students make errors by omitting a letter or letter in contractions. The writer also finds that carelessness is the cause of students' error in using capital letter and punctuation in writing a descriptive text.

Keywords: capital letter, punctuation, descriptive text, error analysis

ABSTRAK

Penelitian yang berjudul "Students' Error in Using Capital Letter and Punctuation in Writing a Descriptive Text" bertujuan untuk mencari kesalahan siswa dalam menggunakan huruf kapital dan tanda baca dalam teks deskriptif dan penyebab dari kesalahan tersebut. Adapun metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif dengan sasaran penelitian mahasiswa semester tiga jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pakuan. Pemilihan sample dalam penelitian ini menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data penelitian diperoleh dari hasil kerja siswa, kuisioner, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa membuat banyak kesalahan dalam menggunakan huruf kapital untuk nama tempat dan nama orang. Dalam penggunaan koma, mahasiswa banyak melakukan kesalahan saat menggunakan koma sebelum atau setelah kata penghubung dan koma di akhir kalimat, sedangkan dalam penggunaan tanda apostrof mahasiswa banyak melakukan kesalahan di huruf yang dihilangkan atau penyingkatan kata. Peneliti juga menemukan bahwa kecerobohan adalah penyebab dari kesalahan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan huruf kapital dan tanda baca dalam teks deskriptif.

Kata Kunci : Huruf kapital, tanda baca, teks deskriptif, analisa kesalahan

INTRODUCTION

When people utter their intention orally, it can be easier to be understood by someone else. It is because their words come with sound. However; it is not the same condition when people deliver it in written language. Brown (2007:363,391) stated that written language have some characteristics that make it different from spoken language. It needs different set of competencies in its process. Written language deals with some rules that people should be considered in order to make a good writing. A good writing can be seen when the reader understand the

information or the idea of what has been written. To make a good writing, the writer should have ability in constructing his/her writing such as the way delivering the content, choosing appropriate vocabulary, organizing the sentence, using the grammatical and mechanical consideration. A correct usage of grammatical and mechanical rule determines the meaning of the sentence. It can avoid misunderstanding between the author and the reader.

Unfortunately, we cannot avoid the possibility of error made by the learners in using language. It is normal because learners cannot learn without making

errors. Lengo (1995:1) said that errors are a stage of development in learning target language. In other words, error can bridge learners to be successful in learning language. Some learners often make error in using mechanical rules when writing a text. It happens because learners do not pay attention to the usage of capital letters and punctuation when writing a text. They also lack of knowledge about using the correct punctuation and capital letters rules. The questions of this research are: "What are the errors that students made to use capital letters in writing a descriptive text?", "What are the errors that students made to use punctuation in writing a descriptive text?" and "What is the cause of students' errors in using capital letter and punctuation in writing a descriptive text?"

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The writer uses descriptive method to analyze the error in using capital letter and punctuation in writing descriptive text. In qualitative research, writer does not test the students, but find out the behavioral pattern. There are no treatments applied in this research (Herawati, 2015:5). The writer chooses Class 3B as the participant because they have the lowest score in mechanics aspect when writing a text. To gain the data, the writer uses documentation, questionnaire and interview. These are the way how the researcher collects the data:

- a. Documentation
Documentation is taken from the students' works. It is the descriptive text which the students made in writing subject.
- b. Questionnaire
The writer distributes the questionnaire to get more information related to the cause of error. Open-ended questionnaire are used in this research.
- c. Interview
The writer chooses some students who get the lowest score to be interviewed.
The result finding of every instrument should be analyzed to get the answer for every research question. These are how the researcher analyzes the data:
 - a. Data Analysis of Documentation
The writer analyzes the students' assignment to find out errors that students made in using capital letter and

punctuation. She counts the sum of error of each student. Then she analyzes the most error done for every category.

- b. Data Analysis of Questionnaire
The results of questionnaire are analyzed and presented based on the indicators. The writer then concludes the result of the questionnaire for each indicator.
- c. Data Analysis of Interview
The writer analyzes the data of interview by transcribing then summarizing it.

RESEARCH FINDING

1. The Result of Students' Work

Based on the data description, the writer finds that 60% of students still make error in placing capital letter, 68% of students make error in using comma, and 24% in using apostrophe. In capital letter, most of errors are to put capital letter in the name of place and person. There are 22 errors found in capital letter and 12 of them (54.5%) are error to put capital letter in the name of place and person. In punctuation, the students' errors are to put comma before or after coordinating conjunction. Moreover, they tend to put comma rather than full stop in every end of the statement. There are 8 of 30 errors (26.6%) found for each category. The last is apostrophe. Most of students' errors are to use apostrophe of an omitted letter or letter in contractions.

2. The Result of Questionnaire

The writer makes the questionnaire based on three indicators; students' interest, students' error and cause of error.

The students admit that mechanical rule is one of the important things in writing a text. However, it becomes one of the difficult aspects in writing because they have to memorize some rules and be able to put it automatically in their text. Although they think that mechanical rule is one of the important things in writing, learning about mechanical rules is not really interesting for them.

Most error that students made in using capital letter are to write capital letter for the name of place, while in punctuation is to use comma.

The writer finds three causes of error. The first is carelessness. The students say that they sometimes forget to put capital letter and punctuation when writing a text. Second is first language interference.

English has different way to use some punctuation which Bahasa Indonesia does not have in writing form. The third is translating. Translating word by word will be different from translating by its meaning.

3. The Result of Interview

Interview is conducted to get the further information about the cause of students' error. The writer asked 4 questions and recorded their answer. For the first question, all respondents admit that they sometimes make error in using capital letters and punctuation in writing a descriptive text. The second question asked whether they like to ignore mechanical rules or not. All respondents admit that they sometimes do not really pay attention to mechanical rules. The third question asked about the interference from students' first language. Does students' first language interfere their writing or not? Two respondents say that the difference between mechanical rules in Bahasa Indonesia and English does not interfere their writing. It has no relation with their error in using capital letters and punctuation in writing a descriptive text. The last question, all respondents admit that translating the text word by word can be the cause of error in using capital letter and punctuation.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis, most of students make error in using capital letter for name of place and person. The students probably do not recognize the name of some places or person, so they do not make it in capital letters. The students also make error to use comma before or after coordinating conjunction and comma at the end of the sentence. Moreover, in apostrophe, students still make error to put it for omitted letter.

All of these errors come from student's carelessness. It happens because they do their writing in hurry so that they not follow the stage of writing correctly. Besides, Richard and Renandya (2003:316) stated that there are four stages of writing; planning, drafting, revising, and editing. In editing stage, students can recheck their writing to find out whether there is a mistake or not deals with punctuation, grammar, diction, sentences, etc.

CONCLUSION

The writer finds that the most common error in using capital letter is in writing name of place and person. In comma, students' error is to put it before or after coordinating conjunction and comma at the end of the sentence. In apostrophe, most of students make error in using apostrophe of an omitted letter or letter in contractions.

The writer finds that carelessness is the cause of students' error in using capital letter and punctuation in writing a descriptive text. They like to write the text in a hurry and miss one stage in the process of writing, which is editing stage.

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