GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON ARTICLE USAGE IN EFL STUDENTS' WRITING OF REPORT TEXT

THESIS

RIZQI LESTARI
NIM 2318003

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS PESANTREN TINGGI DARUL 'ULUM
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RIZQI LESTARI
NIM 2318003

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITAS PESANTREN TINGGI DARUL 'ULUM
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i

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Thesis Advisors

1. <u>Adi Yusuf, S.S., M. Pd</u>   (   )
   (First Advisor)

2. <u>Trikaloka H. Putri, S.S. M.Pd</u>   (   )
   (Second Advisor)

ii

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2318003

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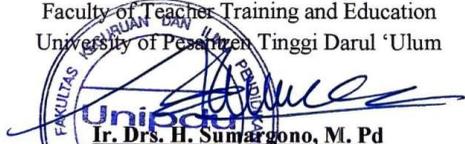On 7ᵗʰ August 2022

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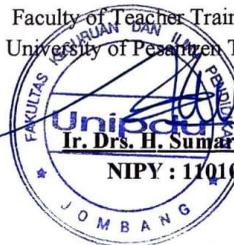3. Muhammad Saifuddin, S.Pd., M. Pd (   )
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Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
University of Pesantren Tinggi Darul 'Ulum

Ir. Drs. H. Sumargono, M. Pd
NIPY : 11010901015

iii

iii

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Nama : Rizqi Lestari
NIM : 2318003
Major : English Education
Faculty : Training and Education

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Rizqi Lestari

iv

iv

MOTTO

Be Hard on Yourself, Easy on Others

-Imam Syafi'i

DEDICATION

This thesis is proudly dedicated to:
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ABSTRACT

Article is one of difficult parts in writing esspecially for EFL students. Different use of articles often leads the students to make errors. This study is intended to know the types of article errors made by students in writing report text and to explain why the errors occur. This study used descriptive qualitative method. The subjects of this study were the students of class nine at X Junior High School in Jombang. Based on the analysis, it had been found that there were 3 types of article errors: the definite article, the indefinite article, and no article. The results of this study indicated that the students made errors on all types of articles. The errors happened because of both interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Finally, it can be concluded that the students had lack of knowledge in English article.

Keywords: *Grammatical Errors, Article, EFL Students' Writing, Report Text*

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Phuket & Othman (2015) define that writing as one of the English skills that are taught by teachers to students in Indonesia. Mastering English writing skills is a very difficult task for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (p. 99). In writing class, students learn how to put ideas in sentences. An idea is an important thing but it is still not enough to write a good writing. Students must learn syntax, grammar, and vocabulary that will help them to compose good foreign language writing. Belo et al., (2017) stated that from all subjects, grammar is the most complicated subject to be mastered (p. 20).

Grammar is one of the main parts of learning English. Swan (2009) states that *"The rules that show how words are combined, arranged or changed to show certain kinds of meanings"* (p. xix). It means that from grammar, we learn about how to construct sentences well. Therefore, the sentence will be organized neatly and easy to understand. It will be easier for us to communicate with each other. Every word is a part of speech. It has its role when composing a sentence in which there is a missing word or less or more.

One of the parts of speech is articles. The articles are used widely and frequently; intentionally or unintentionally in all four skills. Har (2011) argues that articles have a key role in learning the language as it helps to achieve accuracy and fluency in the English language and to achieve communication skills (p.129). According to Swan (2009) *"Articles are small words that are often used at the beginning of noun phrases"* (p. 51). The English articles belong to a word group called 'determiners'.

1

In the English articles, there are the definite article and the indefinite article. Mitteager (2010) explains that The definite article is used when the noun is either singular or plural and has already been specified. Whereas, the indefinite article is used when the noun is not specific and used in a general sense (p. 1-2). For example, Someone said that I didn't like "the film". It means that the speaker and the listener knew the film or has seen the film. It would be different when someone said that Let's go and see "a film". The speaker didn't say which film so the listener didn't know what a film (Swan 2009, pp. 51-53).

The EFL students learnt about the articles in seventh grade without exception the ninth grade students of State Junior High School in a city that located in Jombang. The students had learnt English article in seventh grade and eighth grade. They had learnt it during two years and still had applied the material in ninth grade. However, many students did not understand and could not use the articles in writing text.

Sholihatun (2017) stated that she did the research of English article since she found the students felt difficulties in using articles. The students did errors when using articles in the sentences such article "a, an, the". The most errors were in substitution where the students put the wrong article. For example: I have a old car instead I have an old car. (p.6). The reseacher also got the rellevant fact from the previous study that the students still do the errors in using articles. They were still confused in differentiating indefinite article 'a' and 'an' because they had not differentiated between vowel pronunciation and consonant pronunciation.

One of the writing texts that is learned by junior high school students is report text which learnt in ninth grade. According to Barker (2000), report text is a writing text whose purpose is to describe something in general terms (p. 23). Report

text use simple present tense. Report text usually contains: information that describes something based on facts. When writing a report text, the students need to describe something with using articles.

Such kind of phenomenon encourages the reseacher want to analyse more about grammatical errors in using articles to know what they still do errors on article errors and why they do the errors. The researcher uses grammatical errors theory, Erlangga et al., (2019) explain that Grammatical Error is a deviation of incorrect pattern, semantics meaning, and uses of a foreign language because of incomplete comprehension from learners about foreign language's rules and it makes someone's writing become not nifty to be seen by the readers (p.22). Analysing the grammatical errors of articles in report text writing is important. Because the results of this research can be used as an evaluation by the English teachers in teaching English articles effectively. It is because by knowing and understanding the grammatical errors the students commonly use articles correctly, the teachers can prepare the best teaching materials, methods, and strategies to handle the problems.

Research Question

Based on the background above, the problems are formulated as follows:

1   What types of article errors are made by EFL students in report text writing?
2   Why do the errors occur?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statements of the pgroblems above, this research is aimed at:

1. Knowing What types of article errors are made by EFL

students in report text writing

2. Explaining why the errors occur

1.4 Significances of the Study

Theoretical significance, The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of real examples of errors that are often made by students, in this case regarding the types of article errors in writing Report text.

Practical significance, hopefully, they are more motivated to improve the comprehension of the articles It can be helped by their teacher after analyzing the errors that have been made. In addition, the writer hopes to widen his view on this matter as well as for readers who are concerned with this problem can contribute with complement knowledge.

1.5 Scope and Delimination

The scope of this study is Grammatical Error. This study would like to focus on the analysis of article errors the definite and the indefinite article in report text writing made by ninth grade students of junior high school in a city that located in Jombang using the theory proposed by (Brown, 2000)

1.6 Operational Definition of Key Terms

1. Grammatical Error

Erlangga et al. (2019) say that Grammatical errors can be explained by students' incomplete understanding of foreign language rules, resulting in incorrect templates, semantic meanings, and deviations from foreign language use, which can make someone's writing less elegant for readers (p. 22).

2. Articles

According to Swan (2009), An article is a small word often used at the beginning of a phrase. (p. 51).

3. EFL Students' Writing

Phuket & Othman (2015) defines that writing is one of the English skills. Teachers teach writing skill to the students in Indonesia. Mastering English writing skills is a very difficult task for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (p. 99).

4. Report Text

According to Barker (2000) report text is a writing text that aims to describe something in general terms. Report text always uses the present tense (p. 23).

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Grammatical Error
2.1.1. Definition of Grammatical Error

Grammar is one of a crucial part in learning English. Swan (2009) notes that Grammar is the rules that dictate how words are combined, arranged, or modified to express certain types of meaning" (p. xix). with grammar, we learn how to make sentences if composed well, they will have a clear meaning. Every word -is a part of speech. Every part of speechs has own role when composing a sentence. If there is a missing word or less or more, the sentence will be weird and hard to understand. We can call it 'Grammatical Error'.

According to Erlangga et al. (2019)Grammatical Error is "a deviation of wrong pattern, semantics meaning, and uses a foreign language by reason of incomplete comprehension from learners about foreign language's rules and it makes someone's writing become not effective to be seen by the readers" (p. 22). Hsu (2013) cited in Erlangga (2019) explains that error is a deviation due to little understanding about foreign language's rules. A foreign language has its own rules to be known by students. The EFL students should be understand the rules before trying to use a foreign language. Applying foreign language may be unsucessful if the EFL students have little knowledge about the rules of a foreign language (p. 22).

From the definition, Grammatical error is a deviation made by EFL students because the lack of understanding when using foreign laguage. the consequently of the deviation, it makes the bad writing that difficult for readers to understand.

6

7

2.1.2. Source of Error

Learning foreign laguange is difficult, esspecially for the Indonesian EFL students. In process learning English, there are grammatical errors that happened. Many source that makes Indonesian EFL students do the errors. According to Brown (2000) there are some source of errors that are Interlingual Transfer and Intralingual Transfer (pp. 232-233).

1. Interlingual Transfer

The native language or interference is occured in Interlingual transfer. In these early levels, before the system of the second language is acquainted, the native language is the handiest linguistic system in preceding experience upon which the learner can be used. therefore, mother tongue is influential when learning a new foreign language. One of the effects also occurs when learning English, especially in the use of articles. the use of articles in Indonesia is often omitted, like "Saya membaca buku" which if interpreted directly it will be "I read book". But in English, article must be included before singular noun. Thus, it should be "I read a book".

2. Intralingual Transfer

Intralingual transfer the transfer inside the target language itself. Researcher have found that the early levels of language getting to know are characterized by using a predominance of interference interlingual transfer, however as soon as learner have started to accumulate components of the new system, increasingly more intralingual transfer-generalization in the target language-is manifested. negative intralingual transfer, or overgeneralization, has already been. Illustrated in such phrases as "An university?" other instance like "The Surabaya." And "Scenery"?

2.2 Articles
2.2.1. Definition Of The Articles

Swan (2009) defines that articles are small words commonly used before noun phrases (p. 51). Mas'ud (2005) said that it is possible to use the articles the, a/an, or 35 with countable nouns which represent class types (p. 303) There are two of English articles: the definite article (the) and the indefinite article (a /an). Articles can show whether they are (obviously) known to both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader (definite), or unknown to both (indefinite). Both of them are alike though it is different. It also makes articles become one of the most difficult parts of English grammar to correct. Fortunately, most postal errors are not crucial. Omit all articles from the sentence, but generally understandable. However, we recommend that you use the article appropriately as much as possible. Especially when it comes to writing text.
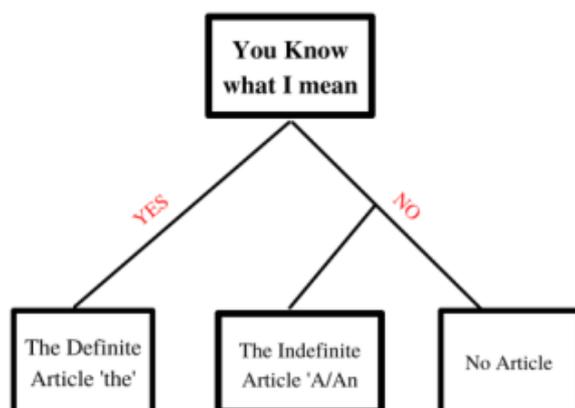
There are Two points that will make EFL students understand about articles easier than before:

1. You know what I talk about, so it means we use the definite article (the). So we put the before a noun. Example:
    a. Have you fed the cats? (you know which one: I mean)
    b. Could you close the window? (you can see the window are opened)
2. You do not know what I talk about, so it means we can put the indefinite article (a/an) before the noun if a noun is a singular noun.
    a. I eat an apple.
    b. There is a mouse in the garden.
  But, if the noun is a plural /uncountable noun, we can use no article.
    a. I love eating some apples.
    b. I need help.

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                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  You Know    │
                    │ what I mean  │
                    └──────────────┘
                     /      │      \
                  YES       │       NO
                  /         │         \
      ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────┐
      │The Definite│ │The Indefinite│  │No Article│
      │Article 'the'│ │Article 'A/An'│  │          │
      └──────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────┘
```

Swan (2009), P.52

Picture 1 Article

2.2.2. The Definite Articles (The)

According to Thomson & Martinet (1986) The definite articles can be applied to the singular and plural, and all genders (p. 11). Swan (2009) clarifies that 'the' can be used before a noun (singular, plural, or uncountable) when our listener/reader knows the specific person(s), topic(s), etc., to which we are talking (p.53). The definite article can be used in some cases, such as:

1. The object is unique or considered be unique. It means that there is only one and in the world like the sun, the sky, the moon, the earth, the world, the universe, the future. For example:
    a. I have seen **the sun** for three days.
    b. People used to think that **the earth** was flat.
    c. Siti loves watching **the moon** at the night.
2. Before a noun that became definite after the second mention:
    a. His bike hit a tree; the bike was still left under the tree.
    b. I have two siblings: a boy and a girl. The boy is seventeen and the girl is nine.

3. Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause. A phrase or clause has function to say which one(s) we mean.
   a. Who are **the girls over there** with James?
   b. I saw **the boy that I met** yesterday.
4. Before a noun which by reason of locality can represent only one particular thing. So it is clear situasion which one(s) we mean.
   a. Ann is in **the kitchen.**
   b. Could you feed **the dog?**
5. Before superlatives and ordinal number used as adjectives or pronouns, and only:
   a. The second performance is balet dancing.
   b. Kapuas river is the longest river in Indonesia.
   c. It is the only way to go school.
6. Before a noun is used after an adjective:
   a. The red pen
   b. The latest news
7. To show the location and direction of the wind.
   a. The top, the bottom, the center, the inside, etc.
   b. The north pole, the middle east, the west coast, etc.

2.2.3. The Indefinite Articles (a/an)

Swan (2009) points out that we usually only use a/an with singular countable nouns. Countable nouns are the names of specific things, people, ideas that we can count (pp. 55-56). Azar (1989) explains that generally countable nouns can be preceded by a/an in the singular and s/es in the plural (p. 204). For example, a chair – chairs, a cat – two cats, a secretary – some secretaries, a plan – many plans. on the other hand, Swan (2009) said that uncountable nouns are the names of substances, liquids, and other things that we do not recognize as separate objects (p. 55). Uncountable nouns do not come immediately before a/an and

have no plural form. Last s/es (Azar 1989, p. 204) likes, wool – not a wool, two wools, water – not a water, three water, furniture –not a furniture, some furnitures.

According to Swan (2009), The in[22]inite article a/an has one meaning but is a little different. likes the indefinite article 'a' is followed[22] y a consonant. For example: a tiger, a blouse. Sometimes, the indefinite article 'a' is followed by a vowel but it pronunciatio[22] s consonant. Such as: a university, a uniform. Meanwhile, the indefinite article 'an' is followed by a vowel. For example: an apple, an orange. But in difference cases, it can be followed by a consonant with a pronounced vowel word. i.e: an hour (p. 57).

Both of them have the same functions. i.e:
1. When we talk about one person or thing,
    a.   There is **a fire truck** outside
    b.   Joko lives in **an old house**.
2. When we talk about anyone member of a class,
    a.   An actrees must like people.
    [43]   I would like to live in an old house.
3. When we classify or define people and things –when we say what they are, what job they do, or what they are used for,
    a.   She is a doctor.
    b.   I am looking forward to being a grandmother.
    c.   Use your handkerchief as a mask.
4. Descriptions, A/an is common to use before nouns that are used in description:
    a.   She is a good person.
    b.   It is an extremely hot day.

2.2.4. No Article

Sometimes, articles is not used in noun phrase. According to Mas'ud (2005)there are three conditions that don't use articles (p. 305). i.e:
1. No article is used with a noun that shows a certain place.
    a. Go to school

b. Go to church

c. Go to class

d. Go to mosque

e. Go home

f. Go to market. Etc

2. No article before the name of the streets and avenue.

   a. Fifteenth street

   b. Six avenue

3. No article before the names of city and country, with a few exceptions such as : The Hague. The Soviet Union, The United States, The Congo, and The Sudan. Besides the these names always no article.

   a. Indonesia

   b. Japan

Swan (2009) explains that there are three conditions that don't use articles (pp 52-63). Such as:

1. No article when adjectives alone.

   a. It is nice not it is a nice.

   b. She is pretty not she is a pretty.

2. No article when using a noun together with my, this, or other determiners.

   a. My assignment not the my assignment.

   b. This book not the this book.

3. No article when the noun is plural noun and uncountable noun—show general things.

   a. There are cats in my room not there are a cats in my room.

   b. Her coat is made by pure wool not Her coat is made by a pure wool.

Thomson & Martinet (1986) states that there are four conditions that don't use articles (pp. 8-14)

1. No article when the noun is plural noun and uncountable noun—show general things.
   a. I have books in my library not I have a books in my library.
   b. Sita drinks water not Sita drinks a water.
2. No article before names of meals, except when a noun is added by an adjective:
   a. We have breakfast at eight.
   b. He gave us a good breakfast.
3. The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something or in someone's honour:
   a. I was invited to dinner (at their house, in the ordinary way) but I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.
4. No article before games
   a. Roni likes playing football.
5. No article before home, church, hospital, prison, school, work, sea and town
   a. Vina is at home.
   b. We go to sea as sailors.
   c. He is at work.
   d. They were in town last Monday.

2.3 EFL Students' Writing
2.3.1. Definition of writing

Pardiyono (2006) defines that one form of embodiment of linguistic competence which is expressed in the form of written language, other than in the form of spoken language. In English categorization, a writing is considered as the most difficult skill between another skills, likes speaking and reading. In Listening, may be have difficult as same as with writing. Whatever the form of language use, both spoken and written, language users will

always have to do with semantics and pramantics, as well as problems with structure and texture. (p. ix).

Sokolik (2003) explains that at the most primary level, a writing is the mental work of inventing thoughts, considering a way to specific them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs a good way to be clear to a reader. The goal of writing is both to express idea and impress the readers. Each types of writing has a different level, depend on goal. In writing, we have processes and a product. "This process of writing is often cyclical, and sometimes disorderly". a product is like an essay, a letter, a story, or research report (p.88).

From the definition above, we know that a writing is a linguistic competence which is poured in written form to convey an idea or impress the reader. Writing is difficult. Therefore, writing is not enough with one step but requires several steps so that the purpose of the writing can be conveyed properly.

2.3.2. EFL Students' Writing

Phuket & Othman (2015)explains that Writing is one of the English skills that are taught by teachers to students in Indonesia. Mastering English writing skills is a hard work for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) (p. 99). In writing class, students learn how to get ideas and put it in sentences. An idea is a key thing but it is still incomplete to write good writing. Syntax, grammar, and vocabulary must be learnt by students. It will help them to arrange good foreign language writing.

Hogue (2008) states Academic Writing is the types of writing that done in the class. Every types of writing have a specific goal and a specific audience. Giving explanation about something or to give information about something is the goal of academic writing. Certain skills is required in academic writing. These skills are sentence structure, organization, grammar and

punctuation (p. 2). It means that in academic writing, we learn about how to arrange words in a sentence well (sentence structure). We also learn about how to combine idea in sentences into paragraph (organization). The last, we need grammar and punctuation so the writing will be a good writing.

From the explanation above, we know that in writing we need learn about sentence structure, how to arrage idea, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. If all aspects is met, a writing will be an excellent writing. It is one of reason why writing is laborious task for Indonesian EFL students. Because there many aspects in writing must be understood.

2.4 Report Text

Barker (2000) states that report text is a writing text whose aims is to describe something in general terms (p. 23). Simple present tense is always used in Report text. Report text usually contains: information that describes something based on facts, Sources such as; natural, artificial, social phenomena in our environment. When writing a report text, the author must observe the object. According to Pardiyono (2006)), report text contains a presentation of current information about a matter or fact supported by data presentation, description of characteristics, and grouping or tabulating. The focus of this text lies in the completeness of the presentation of general data for readers (p. 166)

Based on the explanation above, we know that report text is a text that describes something in general. This text is written based on fact so the writer must observe the object first before writing it. Report text also is always written using simple present tense because it shows the current information. The text contains natural, artificial, social phenomena in our environment. The

purpose of the text is to provide information about something complete with a description of its characteristics.

2.4.1. Generic Structure of Report Text

According to Pardiyono (2006) in writing a report text, there are several structures in it, which consist of General Statement and Description (p.167). This will make easier for students to make report text as well as described below:

1. General Statement: The first structure is the first part that contains various general information based on the observations made by the author, the results of these observations can be in the form of animals, natural phenomena, plants and other topics in detail.

2. Description : The second structure of the report text is in paragraph two and has the same function as descriptive text, namely to describe more in detail the results of the author's research in detail.

2.5 Previous Study

Some previous studies were relevant to this study. They were as follows: Sholihatun (2017) carried out a study entitled "*An Error Analysis On The Use Of English Article In Descriptive Texts Written By The Eight Grade Of SMP Nurul Iman Palembang*". This study classified and described kinds of articles errors in noun phrase that are found in the descriptive texts that written by Eight students. In this study, there are three types of article errors; omission, addition, and substitution. The researcher found 105 article errors. They are found in omission; 52 errors, in addition; 32 errors, and in substitution; 21 errors. It means that the most dominant error was an error of omission.

Another study was conducted by Swasti (2016), entitled "*An Error Analysis On The Use Of English Articles In The Students' Written Descriptive Text (A Case Of Class X MIA Of SMAN 1 Binangun Cilacap)*". This study focuses on English

article errors in students written descriptive text. The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive design. The data were analyzed based on Ellis' Error Analysis Procedure and normalization formula by Pica. The result of this study is: indefinite a/an-for-zero errors (90 errors), zero-for-indefinite a/an errors (27 errors) definite the-for-indefinite a/an substitution error (7 errors), definite the-for-zero substitution error (6 errors), zero-for-definite the substitution error (4 errors), and indefinite a/an-for-definite the substitution error (3 errors). It means that the dominant error was an indefinite a/an-for-zero errors.

The difference from this research can be seen that other researchers classify and describe the English article errors, and the English article errors contained in descriptive texts written by eight students and ten students. Meanwhile, the research that I used is the descriptive qualitative. In this study, the researcher only analyzes the article errors made by EFL students in writing report text. The researcher will identify source of errors based on interview of the students and uses related theory of Brown (2000); Interlingual Transfer and Intralingual Transfer. Subjects in this study are grade 9th student.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This research was designed as a qualitative descriptive study. Therefore, this study analyzed the types of articles errors in EFL students' writing. Gall et al. (2007) state that a descriptive research qualitative explains phenomena and their properties. This research focused more on what rather than what and why things happened. Therefore, giving tests and interviews were used in collecting data (p.129). Based on the explanation above, this study used descriptive qualitative. The data was collected from giving tests to find out what types of article errors that are made by EFL students in report text writing and interview to find why do the article errors occur.

3.2 Research Participant

Research Participant of this research was 17 students of ninth grade of X Junior High School in Jombang that tested. All of the students are given codes A-Q. After giving tests from the students, the researcher chose five students with using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was a sampling technique of data sources with specific considerations. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique was that not all samples have criteria that match the phenomena studied. Therefore, the researcher chose the Purposive Sampling technique that stipulates specific considerations or criteria that might be met by the samples used in this study. The criteria that used was the students' works that had many articles errors were analyzed and would to be interview.

18

Table 3. 1 Number of Errors

Code	Number of Errors
A	16
B	16
C	15
D	13
E	13
F	19
G	17
H	13
I	12
J	12
K	12
L	11
M	9
N	11
O	10
P	8
Q	6

From the table, it was gotten that the most five of the students that had many errors were student A, B, C, F, and G. But the student F and G were not avalaible to be interview because they were too shy and did not answer when I ask them. Consequently, I chose the 2 students that had errors close to them that were student D and E. Thus, the students' works that I analysed were from student A, B, C, D, and E.

3.3 Data and Source of Data

The data of this research was article errors and the student sentences that showed the reasons why the errors occur. In this

study, the researcher had conducted an analyse's the article errors of the report text writing. The source of the data has obtained from the students.

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument of this study used tests *(See appendix 1)* which to find out what the errors made by the students in writing report text and interview list *(See appendix 3)* to find out why the errors occur.

3.5 Data Collections

In this research, there were two types of data needed to answer the questions. To answer the first question, the researcher need the article's errors from students' works. so the researcher need to:

1. Arranging of tests on writing report text. The source of test was taken from Book " *Bahan Ajar Insentif Penunjang Siswa Kreatif : Bahasa Inggris Untuk IX SMP/MTs*" *(See appendix 1)*
2. Validating the test and discussed it with the expert. *(See appendix 7)*
3. Giving the tests to the students about writing report text.
4. Collecting the test result. *(See appendix 4)*

To answer the second question, the researcher needs to know about the causes of errors, the researcher need to:

1. Arranging of a interview list.
2. Validating the interview list and discuss it with the expert. *(See appendix 7)*
3. Interviewing the students based on interview list *(See appendix 3)*
4. Transcripting the interview

3.6 Data Analysis

Miles et al. (2018) states that *"Deciding on and generating the format displaying qualitative data in research is important*. There are two models of data displays, i.e: *"Matrices, with defined rows and columns 2. Networks: a series of nodes with links (lines and arrows) between them"* (p. 109). The researcher showed the data in matrices in point two and four.

1. Selecting the errors accoding to the types of articles based on observation list (*See appendix 2*).
2. Showing the data in the result of observation checklist. *(See appendix 5)*
3. Describing the errors based on types of articles.
4. Showing the data transcript of interview in the matrices *(See appendix 6)*
5. Describing the errors based on why the errors occur
6. Getting a general Conclusion