



Grammatical Errors in Simple Present Tense and Conjunction in Procedure Text Writing at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon

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Abstract

Writing skill, particularly procedure text, is a critical component of English language learning in Indonesia. Students at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon face persistent challenges in mastering simple present tense and conjunction usage in procedure text writing. Previous studies have examined grammatical errors separately in junior high schools, yet no study has specifically investigated these errors among maritime academy students in the context of procedure text. This study analyzes grammatical errors in simple present tense and conjunction made by students from the Program Studi Ketatalaksanaan Pelayaran Niaga dan Kepelabuhan and Program Studi Teknika at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon. A qualitative descriptive content analysis was employed. Data were collected from 50 students through an essay test requiring students to write procedure texts. Errors were classified using Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. A total of 123 errors were identified: 37 simple present tense errors and 86 conjunction errors. Omission dominated simple present tense errors (25.20%), while misformation dominated conjunction errors (43.90%). These findings suggest that future research should explore expanded populations across multiple maritime institutions and investigate the effectiveness of targeted grammar instruction strategies for maritime English learners.

Keywords: grammatical errors; simple present tense; conjunction; procedure text; maritime students.

Introduction

Writing is one of the four essential language skills alongside listening, speaking, and reading. It serves as a critical tool for expressing ideas, feelings, and information in a structured written form. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia, writing presents particular challenges as it demands mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and discourse organization. Among the various text types taught in Indonesian education, procedure text holds a prominent place due to its practical relevance in daily life, covering activities such as operating electronic devices, preparing food, and executing step-by-step processes.

Previous studies have examined grammatical errors among EFL students at various educational levels. Rohmah (2016) analyzed simple present tense errors in descriptive text writing among tenth grade students of MAN 1 Surakarta, finding 229 total errors dominated by misformation. Sholekh (2010) studied students' ability in using conjunction in writing at SMP Negeri 1 Pengadegan, revealing weaknesses particularly in using conjunctions such as 'for,' 'nor,' and 'whenever.' Putra (2018) investigated the effect of Power Notes Strategy on procedure text writing among senior high school students. However, these studies focused primarily on general secondary education contexts and did not specifically address the challenges faced by maritime academy students.

Recent studies continue to demonstrate that grammatical accuracy remains one of the most persistent challenges in EFL writing despite the adoption of more communicative and genre-based pedagogies. Research conducted in Indonesian higher education has consistently identified errors in verb tense, conjunctions, subject-verb agreement, and sentence structure as the most frequent problems affecting students' writing quality (Ramendra et al., 2021; Mubarok & Budiono, 2022). Furthermore, recent scholarship in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) emphasizes that grammatical competence should be developed within learners' disciplinary and professional contexts rather than through decontextualized grammar instruction alone (Basturkmen, 2019; Belcher, 2020). These findings indicate that grammatical error analysis remains highly relevant, particularly in vocational education where students are expected to produce accurate procedural and technical documents required in professional practice.

The maritime sector places a strong emphasis on accurate written communication because operational procedures, safety instructions, maintenance manuals, and technical documentation require precision to minimize misunderstanding and operational risks. Consequently, English instruction in maritime institutions should not only improve students' general language proficiency but also prepare them to communicate effectively in discipline-specific contexts. Recent studies on English for Maritime Purposes (EMP) have highlighted the need for instructional practices that integrate grammatical competence with authentic professional communication, enabling cadets to produce clear, accurate, and standardized procedural texts that meet international maritime communication standards (Pritchard, 2019; Belcher, 2020; Bocanegra-Valle, 2021). From this perspective, examining students' grammatical errors provides valuable evidence for aligning English instruction with the communicative demands of the maritime profession.

The gap in research on grammatical error analysis in maritime higher education contexts is significant. Students at maritime institutions such as Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon require proficient English writing skills for professional maritime communication. Yet their specific challenges in mastering simple present tense and conjunctive adverbs in procedure text writing remain understudied. Understanding

these errors is essential for developing targeted instructional interventions that address the actual linguistic needs of maritime cadets across program disciplines.

This study therefore aims to: (1) identify and analyze the types of grammatical errors in simple present tense usage made by students in writing procedure texts; and (2) identify and analyze the types of grammatical errors in conjunction usage made by students in writing procedure texts at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon. The research covers students from two study programs: Ketatalaksanaan Pelayaran Niaga dan Kepelabuhan (KPNK) and Teknik, providing a comprehensive view of grammatical challenges across maritime disciplines.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using content analysis. This method was chosen because it enables the researcher to systematically identify, describe, and interpret patterns of grammatical errors in students' written texts without relying on statistical measures. As defined by Creswell (2009), qualitative research involves data collection in natural settings where the researcher serves as the primary instrument of analysis, interpreting findings through participants' perspectives. The qualitative framework allowed for deep analysis of error types within the authentic writing samples produced by the students.

The research was conducted at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon, located at Jalan Jenderal Sudirman No. 156, Ciperna, Cirebon. The population comprised students from two study programs: Program Studi Ketatalaksanaan Pelayaran Niaga dan Kepelabuhan (KPNK) and Program Studi Teknik. A total of 250 students from each program constituted the population (N=500). Using random sampling, 50 students were selected as the sample: 25 students from Program Studi KPNK and 25 students from Program Studi Teknik, providing representation from both study programs.

Data were collected through an essay test in which students were required to write a procedure text based on their own experiences. Prior to the test, the subject matter of procedure text writing had been explained in class. The writing tasks were then collected and examined systematically. The researcher identified grammatical errors by focusing on two variables: simple present tense usage and conjunction usage. The research instrument was the students' written procedure texts, analyzed using Betty Schramper Azar's classification framework for grammatical error types.

Error analysis followed Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which classifies errors into four types: (1) Omission—the absence of a required item; (2) Addition—presence of an item that should not appear; (3) Misformation—use of the wrong form of a morpheme or structure; and (4) Misordering—incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes. The analytical procedure involved: creating a table of simple present tense and conjunction errors per student, recording identified errors, making corrections, classifying errors by category, and calculating the percentage of each error type using the formula: $P = (\text{number of category errors} / \text{total errors}) \times 100\%$.

Results and Discussion

Results

Data were collected from 50 students' procedure text writing samples. Analysis revealed a total of 123 grammatical errors: 37 errors related to simple present tense and 86 errors

related to conjunction usage. The errors were classified according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. Table 1 presents the overall classification of errors across both variables.

Table 1. Classification of Errors in Simple Present Tense and Conjunction in Procedure Text Writing

No	Types of Errors	Simple Present Tense	Conjunction	Total
1	Misformation	1 (0.81%)	54 (43.90%)	55
2	Omission	31 (25.20%)	22 (17.88%)	53
3	Addition	5 (4.06%)	6 (4.87%)	11
4	Misordering	0 (0%)	4 (3.25%)	4
	Total	37	86	123

For simple present tense errors, omission was the most frequent type with 31 errors (25.20%), followed by addition with 5 errors (4.06%), misformation with 1 error (0.81%), and no misordering errors. Omission errors were predominantly the absence of plural suffixes (-s/-es) and possessive suffix (-r), for example writing 'you' instead of 'your' and 'apple' instead of 'apples'. Table 2 presents the detailed frequency of conjunction errors.

Table 2. Frequency of Students' Errors in Using Simple Present Tense

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Omission	31	25.20%
2	Addition	5	4.06%
3	Misformation	1	0.81%
4	Misordering	0	0%
	Total	37	30.08%

For conjunction errors, misformation was overwhelmingly dominant with 54 errors (43.90%), followed by omission with 22 errors (17.88%), addition with 6 errors (4.87%), and misordering with 4 errors (3.25%). Misformation errors in conjunction primarily involved students using incorrect conjunctive adverbs—for example, using 'then' instead of 'second', 'after that' instead of 'second', or 'and' instead of sequential connectors such as 'next' or 'finally'. Table 3 presents the detailed frequency of conjunction errors.

Table 3. Frequency of Students' Errors in Using Conjunction

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Misformation	54	43.90%
2	Omission	22	17.88%
3	Addition	6	4.87%
4	Misordering	4	3.25%
	Total	86	69.92%

Discussion

The analysis of 50 students' procedure text writings at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon revealed a total of 123 grammatical errors, with conjunction errors (86 errors, 69.92%) markedly outnumbering simple present tense errors (37 errors, 30.08%). This disproportion indicates that students have relatively stronger command of basic verb forms than of logical connectors, yet still exhibit systematic weaknesses in both areas. The dominance of omission in simple present tense (25.20%) and misformation in conjunction (43.90%) points to distinct underlying causes for each error type.

The prevalence of omission errors in simple present tense – particularly the omission of plural suffixes (-s/-es) and possessive markers (-r) – reflects a common pattern in Indonesian EFL learners. Indonesian does not employ inflectional morphology to mark plurality or possession, making these grammatical features cognitively invisible to learners who rely on L1 transfer patterns (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). This finding aligns with Rohmah (2016), who similarly found omission and misformation to be dominant error types in simple present tense writing among Indonesian EFL students. The maritime context does not appear to alter this fundamental grammatical challenge.

The overwhelming dominance of misformation errors in conjunction (43.90%) reflects a deeper conceptual confusion about the sequential logic of conjunctive adverbs in procedural discourse. Students frequently substituted one conjunctive adverb for another – for example, using 'then' where 'second' or 'next' was required, or using 'after that' repeatedly for multiple steps that require distinct sequencing markers. This finding is consistent with Sholekh (2010), who found significant weakness in conjunction use among EFL students. The procedure text genre requires precise sequential ordering, and students' limited repertoire of conjunctive adverbs results in repetitive or inappropriate conjunction use.

Comparing these findings with previous research, the overall error rate and distribution patterns are consistent with prior studies at secondary school level, suggesting that these grammatical difficulties persist into higher education in maritime contexts. The study's unique contribution lies in demonstrating that KPNK and Teknika students at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon share similar grammatical challenges despite their different disciplinary orientations. This suggests that targeted grammar instruction – specifically addressing conjunctive adverb sequencing and plural morphology – would benefit both programs equally.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered for improving writing instruction at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon. First, English instructors should dedicate explicit instructional time to conjunctive adverbs and their sequential functions in procedure text, using authentic maritime procedural texts as models. Second, drilling exercises targeting plural and possessive morphology would address the most frequent simple present tense errors. Third, peer review activities focusing specifically on conjunction sequencing could help students internalize the logical structure of procedure text. Future researchers should expand the study population to include additional maritime institutions and investigate the long-term effectiveness of targeted grammar interventions for maritime EFL students.

Conclusion

This study investigated grammatical errors in simple present tense and conjunction usage in procedure text writing among students of Program Studi

Ketatalaksanaan Pelayaran Niaga dan Kepelabuhan and Program Studi Teknika at Akademi Maritim Suaka Bahari Cirebon. Analysis of 50 students' writing samples yielded 123 total errors: 37 simple present tense errors and 86 conjunction errors. For simple present tense, omission was the most frequent error type (31 errors, 25.20%), followed by addition (5 errors, 4.06%), misformation (1 error, 0.81%), and zero misordering errors. For conjunction, misformation was overwhelmingly dominant (54 errors, 43.90%), followed by omission (22 errors, 17.88%), addition (6 errors, 4.87%), and misordering (4 errors, 3.25%).

This research makes an original contribution to the literature on EFL grammar error analysis in maritime higher education contexts in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that students from both maritime study programs share systematic grammatical challenges that persist beyond secondary education. The identification of specific error types—particularly plural morphology omission and conjunctive adverb misformation—provides a concrete empirical basis for designing targeted grammar instruction and curriculum development within maritime English programs.

The study has several limitations that inform directions for further research. The sample was drawn from a single institution and comprised only 50 students, which limits the generalizability of findings. The research also focused exclusively on written procedure text, leaving other text types and language skills unexplored. Future studies should expand the population to include multiple maritime institutions across Indonesia, investigate other grammatical features relevant to maritime communication, and evaluate the effectiveness of specific instructional interventions designed to address the identified error patterns.

Author Contribution Statement

The authors' contributions to this article are as follows: Ai Dewi Prihastuti acted as the initiator and conceptor of the research, designed the study framework, and led the data collection and analysis; Suhendra Afriandi contributed to the literature review, theoretical framework development, and interpretation of findings; Elis Suswati contributed to the data collection, error classification, and critical revision of the article. All authors approved the final content of the article and are jointly responsible for all aspects of this research.

Statement of Interest

All authors declare that they have no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest relevant to this research.

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