

**ENGLISH MISSPELLING MADE BY THE SEVENTH  
GRADE STUDENTS OF MTs ULUMUL  
QUR'AN LANGSA**

**THESIS**

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## ABSTRACT

It is a common case that English has no close one-to-one correspondence between the letters and sounds. Some words have same letters, but those are pronounced differently. On the other hand, there are some English words which are similar in the way they are pronounced although they are represented in different letter sequences. Thus, getting perfect English spelling is not easy for some people. Because of the English inconsistency, some English words are commonly misspelled into other forms. This study is conducted to observe words misspelled by the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumum Qur'an. The research problems are: first, what kinds of misspelling made by the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumum Qur'an are, and second, why the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumum Qur'an misspell English words. Then, the objectives of this study are to find out the kinds of misspelling made by the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumum Qur'an and to explain why the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumum Qur'an misspell English words. The study applied qualitative approach which took the students' writing when they were doing test. It means that the study entered to the natural setting and the researcher did not do any experiments. In addition, this study used phonological perspective to describe and explain the kinds of misspelling happened. From the data presentation and discussion presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the kinds of misspelling made by the seventh grade students of Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Ulumul Qur'an are (1) misspelling of vowels; (2) misspelling of fricatives; (3) misspelling of consonant preceded by consonant; (4) misspelling of consonant doubling; (5) misspelling of digraph; (6) misspelling of silent letter; (7) misspelling of diphthong; (8) misspelling of glide; (9) misspelling of suffix and (10) misspelling of single consonant. Then, the researcher gives suggestion for the English instructor or people who concern with English to create method or way in mastering spelling. Specifically, for the teachers, they can use games, such as scrabble, puzzle, jumbled words and the others, whose purpose to increase the students' spelling skill.

**Key words: English Misspelling**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Background of the Study**

English is one of the languages with non-shallow orthography. It means that there is no close to one-to-one correspondence between the letters and sounds in the writing system. English, basically, has 26 letters in its orthography, but those letters are pronounced through many ways or more than 26 ways as the letters exist. In English, one letter may be represented in various sounds and one sound may come from different letter(s). For example, the words “go” and “do”. They have the same letter o, but people should pronounce it (the letter o) differently. The word “go” should be pronounced as /gəʊ/, while the word “do” is pronounced as /du:/. Other examples are the words “five” and “give”. Both have the same three letter sequences: “ive”, but those two words are pronounced in different ways; the word “five” will be pronounced as /faɪv/ and the word “give” will be pronounced as /gɪv/. Those examples describe that, in English, there are some words with the same letters, but those words are pronounced differently.

Thus, some English words are also represented in different letter sequences, but they are similar in the way of pronunciation, such as the words “then” and “gone” which result the same end sound n although the letter of the first word is “n” and the letter of the second word is “ne”. In addition, the words “knee” and “need” are different in their beginning letters, but they are

same in the pronunciation: the word “need” is pronounced as /ni:d/ and the word “knee” is pronounced as /ni:/. It means that the sound “n” comes from the letter “n” of the word “need” and from the letters “kn” of the word “knee”. That is why English is called as an inconsistency language and there is no close to one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds in English orthography.

Spelling, then becomes an important component of language. Although there is no direct and automatic connection, people’s spelling skill reflects their pronunciation accuracy, writing competence, reading skill and also capability of expressing idea into written form. Linda states that spelling is undeniably important. It can (though rarely do) make the difference between an intelligible and unintelligible message.<sup>1</sup>

Further evidence from Atkins and Tierney’s research shows that people’ ability in spelling is reflected in their reading skill. They found that person with reading difficulties have difficulty in recalling sequence of letters and numbers when they represented in an auditory-verbal format.<sup>2</sup> It means that reading difficulties relate to spelling difficulties, recalling sequences of letters and numbers.

However, the important reason for correct spelling is to have clear communication. When we write, we attempt to set out ideas accurately for

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<sup>1</sup> Bebout Linda, An Error Analysis of Misspelling Made by the Learners of English as a First and a Second Language, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/m10252m3455w1478>. (accessed on: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Atkins and Tierney. The Relationship between Memory Skill (Auditory and Visual) <http://www.fedvol.ie/research/default.asp?NCID=114&NID=456>. (accessed on: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012)

someone to read. Although the reader may detect the idea, he or she can be disconnected by misspelled words and the result is that the idea cannot be expressed perfectly and the reader may not catch the idea correctly. Smedley views that accurate spelling may be one manifestation of a general proficiency in language.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Waldhorn and Zeiger emphasized the importance of spelling by stating that weak spellers lose prestige socially and professionally. They may be intelligent and even educated, but their errors in spelling cause others (often erroneously) to consider them a trifle backward.<sup>4</sup>

But, actually, in producing language, some people cannot produce the language components correctly and perfectly including producing correct spelling. Some people may be able to spell words correctly, but others may face some difficulties in spelling.

English spelling, however, is not a simple case, because English has many words, which all cannot be guided by the English spelling rules. And, learning English, especially English as a foreign language, is not an easy task. Report of the OECD-CERI Learning Science and Brain Research project has revealed statistical data which point out that English children show the lowest percentage of correct word reading on a scale in comparison to other European countries, with only 30%— 40% correct words compared to German, Greek and Finnish, with close to 100%. That report indicates

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<sup>3</sup> Don Smedley, *Teaching the Basic Skills; Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar in Secondary English* (London: Methuen, 1983), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Waldhorn, and Arthur Zeiger, *English Made Simple* (New York : Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1981), 99.

implicitly that English with its inconsistency spelling system instead of having spelling rule are not easy to be learned.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas, when someone misspells certain words, he or she may not pronounce the word correctly in speaking and also may face difficulties in writing because of taking an inappropriate letters to form a word. It means that, he or she as stated above—will lack an important component and will reflect several skills and language competences, that is spelling.

Further, if people show words with their correct spelling, especially in written form, content of the message will be delivered completely correct by the readers. The readers do not need to make some possible meanings of written words. As Smedley illustrated: “It is true that, if I write ‘practice’ instead of ‘practise’, you may not even notice the error, let alone find your reading impeded.<sup>6</sup> And if I write ‘eny diparcher truen the kurekt werdz’, you make out my meaning easily enough, but very likely you had to pause and puzzle out my intention.”

The researcher, however, thinks that spelling research is not only an interesting case but also it is important to be discussed, because the research findings will be hoped useful to overcome the misspelling happened. Therefore, for people whose misspelling will have manifestation of a general proficiency in language spelling.

In this study, the researcher takes the seventh grade students as the subject t of the research. Specifically, the researcher focuses on the seventh

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/54/39/35562310.pdf>. (accessed on: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012)

<sup>6</sup> Smedley, *Teaching the Basic Skills; Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar in Secondary English*,7.

grade students of Mts.ulumul qur'an of east langsa because the researcher has found some misspelled words made by the students in her preliminary observation. The students have written those misspelled words when they had been writing task entitled Profession. The students apparently misspell common English words, such as *family* becomes **family**, *system* becomes **sistem**, *usually* becomes **usually**, *get up* becomes **get ap** and the others. Further, the researcher is challenged to investigate deeper the misspelled English words and to look for the causes of misspelling in order to be able to overcome and decrease the misspelling happened. Then, the students can have a good spelling.

Misspelling, basically, can be analyzed from some aspects and perspectives. It can be analyzed by morphological, phonological, psycholinguistic and discourse aspects and perspectives.

Some researchers have done the study of spelling or spelling error (misspelling) based on the various kinds of aspects or perspectives. They also have found various types and causes of misspelling in the research findings. Some of them are Alcock and Ngorosho. They have discussed about Learning to Spell a Regularly Spelled Language is Not a Trivial Task-Pattern of Errors in Kiswahili. They have researched spelling form phonological aspect. They have found some types of misspelling, such as misspelling of digraphs and also misspelling of letters.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Katherine J. Alcock, and Damaris Ngorosho, Learning to Spell a Regularly Language 2003.<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal>.(accessed on: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012)

The other researchers are Atkins and Tierney who studied about The Relationship between Memory Skill (Auditory and Visual) Reading and Spelling Ability for a Sample of Children with Specific Learning Disability. They emphasized of the study was on the psycholinguistic aspects. The researchers found that individuals with reading difficulties had difficulty in recalling sequence of letters and numbers when presented in an auditory-verbal format.<sup>8</sup>

Then, Bebout who studied about An Error Analysis of Misspelling Made by The Learners of English as a First and as Second Language. She mentioned that types of misspelling were misspelling of consonant doubling, misspelling of grapheme silence and misspelling of unstressed vowel. In addition, misspelling can be caused by speakers' or writers' native language, lacking of attention.<sup>9</sup>

In this study the researcher analyzes kinds of misspelled words by relating that analysis to phonological aspects and using speech perception theory to make deep explanation of the misspelling's causes.

## **B. Problems of the Study**

This study intends to answer the following questions.

1. What are kinds of misspelling made by the seventh grade students of Mts.

Ulumul qur'an langsa?

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<sup>8</sup> Atkins and Tierney. The Relationship between Memory Skill (Auditory and Visual) Reading and Spelling Ability.

<sup>9</sup> Bebout Linda, An Error Analysis of Misspelling Made by the Learners of English as a First and a Second Language, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/m10252m3455w1478>. (accessed on: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012)

2. Why do the seventh grade students of Mts.ulumul qur'an langsa misspell English words?

### **C. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems of the study mentioned above, this study has two objectives as follows.

1. To find out the kinds of misspelling made by the seventh grade students of Mts.ulumul qur'an langsa.
2. To explain why the seventh grade students of Mts.ulumul qur'an misspell English words.

### **D. Significance of the Study**

There are two kinds of significance of the study. They are theoretical and practical significances. In theoretical significance, the researcher hopes that this study will provide theoretical review on the study of the sound of language. To be specific, this study will give benefits for those who want to compare the misspelling happened to some people who have English as the first language and as foreign language.

Practically, this study is hoped to give valuable contribution to the English teachers and/or people who concern in English teaching-learning to understand what the misspelled words exist and why they happened. Then, the result can be used to be a starting point of treatment later and of renewing teaching strategies, especially in presenting English spelling material.



## **E. Scope of the Study**

In order that the research does not enter in broader area, this study is analyzed from phonological aspects because she analyzes the data in the form of letter(s) or syllable(s) and because the original words came from the listening action, in which the students wrote the words down after they were listening the teacher's speaking. Besides, the researcher also uses speech perception theory to give deep explanation about the misspelling's causes.

Meanwhile, the limitation of the study is because some learners or students sometimes cheated their words on the other students, in this case, the researcher was careful in collecting and analyzing the data. Besides, the research finding shows that this study cannot be used to build generalization because the teaching learning environment from one place to another will be different. It means that this research takes a small social context and donot bring to make generalization.

## **F. Terminology**

To avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding concerning with the study, the definition of the key terms is given as follows.

1. Misspelling refers to spelling a word incorrectly and distinguished from other error of writing, such as grammatical error, incorrect capitalization or misuse of punctuation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ghunter Kress, *Early Spelling: Betweenconvention And Creativity*, (London : Routledge, 2000), 1.

2. Seventh Grade Students are the same as the first level of junior high school.
3. Mts. Ulumul qur'an is one of the state junior high school in east langsa which is located in Jl.medan-b.aceh alue pinang langsa.
4. Speech Perception is process by which listeners assign or identify speech sound, and then the listeners can decide which words are represented in the signal<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Clark, *Psychology And Language:An Introduction To Psycholinguistics*, (USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanivich, Inc, 1977), 197.