

## An Error Analysis Of Using Conditional Sentences: A Case Study Of SMK Negeri 1 Aceh Barat Daya

Silfa Rahimi <sup>1\*</sup>, Nuzulul Isna <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> STKIP Muhammadiyah Aceh Barat Daya

---

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 14 August 2025

Revised 15 August 2025

Accepted 17 August 2025

---

#### Keywords:

Conditional Sentences,  
Errors, Analysis

---

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the types of errors and the most frequent errors made by students in using conditional sentences. This research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on error analysis. The subjects of the study are 32 students from SMK Negeri 1 Aceh Barat Daya. Data were collected using a test consisting of 20 questions. The analysis revealed that the highest number of errors occurred in Type 3 conditional sentences, with 72 instances (34%), followed by Type 1 with 61 errors (29%), Type 2 with 41 errors (20%), and Type 0 with 35 errors (17%). In terms of error categories, misordering was the most dominant, with 73 errors (35%), followed by misinformation with 53 errors (25%), omission with 51 errors (24%), and addition with 32 errors (15%). In conclusion, the findings indicate that Type 3 conditional sentences and misordering are the most significant challenges faced by students in mastering conditional sentence structures.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.*



---

### Corresponding Author:

Silfa Rahimi | STKIP Muhammadiyah Aceh Barat Daya

Email : silfarahimi@gmail.com

---

## 1. Introduction

Conditional sentences, also called “if sentences,” are important in English grammar (Chen, 2024). They help students discuss or write about things that could happen and what the result would be, for example, “If I studied harder, I would pass the test.” To speak English well, students need to understand how these sentences are built (Rasheed et al., 2024). But many students still make mistakes when using conditional sentences. This is because the grammar rules can be hard, their first language can affect their English, and sometimes, teaching methods are not clear. Because of these reasons, students often still use conditional sentences the wrong way (Nekoueizadeh & Bahrani, 2023).

In preliminary observation at SMK Negeri 1 Aceh Barat Daya, the researchers found that most students make significant errors when writing conditional sentences. They struggle to

identify the appropriate verb tense and structure required for different types of conditional sentences. These errors arise from a lack of familiarity with the functions and rules governing conditionals and limited exposure to contextual examples. Students often have difficulties distinguishing between real and hypothetical situations, which leads to confusion in their sentence construction. Another significant factor contributing to these errors is the students' tendency to rely on direct translation from their native language, which negatively affects the accuracy of their sentence formation. This issue is further compounded by insufficient practice in writing and speaking, making it difficult for students to internalize the correct structures (Rania et al., 2023).

Students often make errors in using conditional sentences due to their complex structure and verb tense usage. According to Yalmiadi and Telaumbanua (2024), students make errors with conditionals because they require an understanding of different time frames and hypothetical situations, which may not exist in their first language. Kustianah and Wibowo (2024) also highlighted that errors in conditional sentences often stem from intralingual factors, such as overgeneralizing grammar rules and confusion between real and unreal conditions. Additionally, Nadhifah Izdiyar et al. (2022) explain that students frequently rely on direct translation from their native language, leading to incorrect sentence formation. These challenges indicate the need for explicit instruction, practice, and exposure to correct conditional sentence patterns to help students develop accuracy in their usage.

Recent studies in error analysis have examined various aspects of language learning and grammatical structures. According to a study by Riani and Ismiyanti (2022), students encounter multiple challenges in accurately constructing conditional sentences. The most prevalent error is misformation, followed by omission, addition, and misordering errors. These mistakes primarily arise from difficulties in understanding verb forms and applying grammar rules correctly. Students frequently use incomplete knowledge and misinterpret crucial concepts, which leads to recurring errors. Because these issues stem from within the language system itself, they indicate that more concentrated grammar instruction and practice are necessary to enhance students' accuracy when using conditional sentences.

In addition, the study by Apridarmayana et al. (2021) showed that while most students perform satisfactorily in conditional sentences, errors still occur frequently. Misformation is the most common mistake, indicating that students struggle with verb forms and sentence structure. Many also face difficulties with addition, omission, and misordering errors. The main reasons for these mistakes are a lack of understanding of past tense usage and confusion in distinguishing between conditional sentence types. These findings highlight the need for clearer explanations and more targeted practice to help students improve their grammar skills.

Previous studies mainly focused on identifying errors in conditional sentences, including omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. However, this study offers a new perspective by analyzing these common errors and examining the structural language issues

within sentences. This research provides a deeper understanding of students' difficulties by reviewing the types of mistakes and the specific grammatical issues that cause them.

The research gap, a similar study has not been conducted at the school before. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in the comprehensive categorization of supposition sentence errors, which allows for a comparative analysis of different types. Unlike previous studies that have focused on general grammatical errors or one type of conditional sentence, this study provides a nuanced examination of the distribution of errors across all four types of conditional sentences. The research questions that drive this study will focus on:

- a. What is the frequency of errors made by students in using conditional sentences?
- b. What do students make the most dominant errors?

## 2. Research Methodology

Methods section should explain detail information about location, time, sample or population, research variables, research procedures, how the data to be collected and analysed. The number of methodology subsections can be adjusted. This study employs qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2021), qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. A population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which the researcher would like the results of the study to be generalizable (Mills, 2022). The population of this study is eighth-grade students at SMK Negeri 1 Blang Pidie, consisting of five classes. To ensure fairness and reduce bias, a random sampling technique was used. By this process, it is obtained students of class VIII.1, totaling 26 students. Data were collected through a written test instrument adapted from Riani and Ismiyanti (2020). The test consists of 20 multiple-choice questions specifically designed to assess students' understanding of all types of conditional sentences, including Type 0, Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3. Each question provides five answer options, one correct answer, and four incorrect answers representing common error types such as omission, addition, misordering, and misformation. This structure enables a detailed and systematic classification of students' errors for quantitative analysis. For details of test instrument are as follows:

Table 1. *Blueprint of Test Instrument*

| Conditional Type | Item Numbers | Grammar Focus                      |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Type 0           | 1–5          | General/Factual Conditionals       |
| Type 1           | 6–10         | Future Real Conditionals           |
| Type 2           | 11–15        | Unreal Present/Future Conditionals |
| Type 3           | 16–20        | Unreal Past Conditionals           |

*Adopted from Riani and Ismiyanti (2020)*

The quantitative data from the written tests was analysed using descriptive statistics to calculate the frequency and percentage of errors in different conditional types. This analysis

included categorising errors as omissions, additions, misformations and misorderings (Kustianahm & Wibowo, 2020). The formula used is:

$$P = \frac{\text{Number of each errors}}{\text{Total number of errors}} \times 100\%$$

### 3. Results and Discussion

Results and Discussions contain results obtained by the author during the research activities. The results of the research submitted in advance as whole which continues by doing the discussion. The discussions are presented systematically from general to the specific. The data can be presented with tables or figures. Results and discussions must also interconnect with theory that used. Avoid excessive use of citations and discussion of published literature.

#### Students' Errors in Using Conditional Sentences

The study presents the findings of students' errors in using conditional sentences, categorized into four different types: Type 0, Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3. These errors were identified through students' responses to a test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions designed to assess their understanding of each conditional type. The total number of errors found was 209. The details of errors as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Students' Errors in Using Conditional Sentences

| Type   | Number of Errors | Percentage of Errors |
|--------|------------------|----------------------|
| Type 0 | 35               | 17%                  |
| Type 1 | 61               | 29%                  |
| Type 2 | 41               | 20%                  |
| Type 3 | 72               | 34%                  |
|        | <b>209</b>       | <b>100%</b>          |

The data in Table 1 shows the distribution of students' errors in using conditional sentences, categorized by the four main types of conditionals. The highest number of errors occurred in Type 3 conditional sentences, with 72 errors or 34% of the total. This indicates that students had the most difficulty with Type 3, which typically involves past unreal conditions and requires the use of past perfect tense and modal perfect constructions (e.g., If I had studied, I would have passed). The complexity of verb forms in this type likely contributes to the high error rate.

The second highest number of errors occurred in Type 1 conditional sentences, with 61 errors, representing 29% of the total. These conditionals express real and possible situations in the future, and although less complex than Type 3, they still involve proper tense usage (present simple + will + base verb), which many students confuse. For example, "If she comes to the party, I will be happy." The student incorrectly used "will" in the if-clause ("If she will come..."), which is a common mistake. In Type 1 conditional, the correct structure is: If + present simple, will + base verb.

Type 2 conditionals accounted for 41 errors or 20%, showing moderate difficulty. These conditionals describe unreal or hypothetical situations in the present or future and require the use of past simple with “would” modals. Errors in this type may stem from the challenge of using past tense to describe unreal situations. For example, If she will study hard, she will pass the exam. The student incorrectly uses “will” in both clauses. In Type 1 conditionals, the if-clause should use the present simple, not “will.”

The lowest number of errors was found in Type 0 conditional sentences, with 35 errors or 17%. These sentences state general truths or scientific facts and use the simple present tense in both clauses, making them the most straightforward form of conditionals and thus easier for students to construct correctly. For example, if it will rain tomorrow, we will cancel the trip. The student incorrectly uses “will” in the if-clause. In Type 1 conditionals, the if-clause must use the present simple tense, not “will.”

### The most common errors in using conditional sentences

Based on the results of the test completed by students, it was found that they made various common errors in constructing conditional sentences. These errors reflect their difficulties in mastering the correct grammatical structure required for each type of conditional sentence. The errors identified include omission of essential sentence elements, addition of unnecessary words, incorrect word formation, and errors in word order. The following table summarizes the types and frequency of these errors as made by the students.

Table 3. The Most Dominants Errors in Using Conditional Sentences

| Type         | Number of Errors | Percentage of Errors |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Omission     | 51               | 24%                  |
| Addition     | 32               | 15%                  |
| Misformation | 53               | 25%                  |
| Misordering  | 73               | 35%                  |
|              | 209              | 100%                 |

Table 3 presents data on the most dominant types of errors students made when using conditional sentences. Out of a total of 209 errors, the most frequent error type is misordering, which accounts for 73 errors, or 35% of the total. The second most common error type is misformation, with 53 errors or 25%. Omission errors are also significant, with 51 occurrences, making up 24% of the total. Finally, addition errors are the least frequent, with 32 errors or 15%.

## 4. Discussion

### Students' Errors in Using Conditional Sentences

This study figured out that errors occurred across all types of conditional sentences. Among the 209 total errors identified in students' responses, Type 3 conditionals revealed the highest number, with 72 errors, accounting for 34% of all errors. This indicates that students have

significant difficulty in constructing or identifying the correct structure and meaning of Type 3 conditional sentences, which are used to talk about hypothetical situations in the past. This finding aligns with Kholilash's (2020) research, which showed that the complexity of past perfect forms and the conditional perfect in Type 3 conditionals affects students' confusion and high error rates. Additionally, a study by Kristina et al., (2020) confirmed that students frequently misform past unreal conditionals due to their syntactic and semantic demands. For instance, instead of writing the correct sentence "If she had studied harder, she would have passed the exam," many students wrote incorrect versions like "If she studied hard, she would passed the exam" or "If she had studied harder, she will pass the exam." These errors show a misunderstanding of the correct structure of Type 3 conditional sentences, which require past perfect in the "if" clause and would have + past participle in the main clause.

Type 1 conditionals also show a relatively high number of errors at 61, or 29% of the total. These sentences describe real and possible situations in the future, usually combining present simple in the "if" clause and "will + base verb" in the main clause. Although structurally simpler than Type 3, students still find it difficult and often confuse verb tenses and modal usage. According to research by Laksana (2019), students tend to overgeneralize grammatical rules and fail to distinguish between factual and predictive conditionals, resulting in errors in this type. For example, a common student error is: "If she will study hard, she will pass the exam," which incorrectly uses "will" in both clauses. The correct sentence should be: "If she studies hard, she will pass the exam."

Type 2 conditionals account for 20% of the total errors. These conditionals express hypothetical situations in the present or future using the past simple in the "if" clause and "would + base verb" in the result clause. The use of the past tense to refer to unreal situations remains a source of confusion. This result is supported by a study conducted by Sari et al., (2024), who noted that students often misinterpret Type 2 conditionals as referring to past events rather than present unreal situations, causing tense and modal mismatches in their usage.

Finally, Type 0 conditionals had the lowest number of errors, with 35 instances or 17% of the total. This type, which describes general truths and scientific facts using present simple in both clauses, seems more familiar and accessible to students. The relatively low error rate indicates that students are more comfortable with straightforward grammatical structures. Supporting this, Novarita (2019) found that learners typically perform better with factual conditional sentences because they are commonly used in everyday contexts and science-related materials.

### **The most dominant errors in using conditional sentences**

The most dominant error is misordering, which accounts for 35% of the total errors. This result indicated that many students were confused with placing the correct grammatical elements in their appropriate order, which can affect the clarity and accuracy of their sentences. For instance, a common misordering error observed was: "Would study she if

time had.” instead of the correct form, “If she had time, she would study.” Such errors indicate a lack of understanding of the fixed structure required in conditional sentence types, particularly Type 3. This finding is consistent with Wibowo (2020), who found that Indonesian students often misplace auxiliary verbs and subjects in complex sentence forms, especially in conditionals.

Following closely behind are misformation errors, comprising 25% of errors. These occur when students use incorrect word forms or verb tenses within the conditional structure. For example, some students wrote “If he eats too much, he will got sick,” rather than the correct “he will get sick.” This reflects confusion between base and past tense forms, or misuse of modals. According to Masrudin and Nasriandi (2022), misformation is a common issue among students due to the interference of their first language, which often has a different tense or verb formation system. The research emphasizes the importance of direct grammar instruction and pattern-based practice in helping students internalize the correct forms.

Omission with at 24% errors indicate that students often omit crucial grammatical components, such as auxiliary verbs or subjects. For instance, the sentence “If raining, we cancel the trip” omits the subject and auxiliary verb and should read “If it is raining, we will cancel the trip.” This type of error influenced by spoken or informal usage. As stated by Fauziyah (2022), students tend to leave out function words in writing, especially under test conditions, due to limited grammatical awareness and writing practice.

Lastly, addition is 15% of total errors, where students insert unnecessary elements that disrupt the grammatical structure. An example is: “If she will studies, she will pass.” The auxiliary “will” is wrongly used before the verb “studies,” which is incorrect for Type 1 conditionals. These errors occurred due to overgeneralization of English rules or from faulty learning strategies. The findings are supported by research from Fitria (2021), who observed that addition errors often arise when students try to apply previously learned structures to new contexts without fully understanding them.

## **5. Conclusion**

The study indicated that the most frequent type of error in using conditional sentences is found in Type 3, with 72 errors (34%), followed by Type 1 with 61 errors (29%), Type 2 with 41 errors (20%), and the least in Type 0 with 35 errors (17%). In terms of the most dominant error category, misordering ranks highest with 73 errors (35%), followed by misformation with 53 errors (25%), omission with 51 errors (24%), and the least common is addition with 32 errors (15%). In conclusion, this study finds that Type 3 conditional sentences and misordering errors are the most dominant challenges faced by students in using conditional sentences.

**References**

- Apridalrmayana, Nurbaida, N., & Harahap, I. S. (2021). An Analysis Of Students' Errors In Using Conditional Sentence At Eleventh Grades Students Of SMA Muhammadiyah 11 Padandsidimpuan In The 2020/2021 Academic Year. *Journal Pendidikan* 4(3).
- Chen, Y. (2024). An Investigation of the Acquisition of Conditional Sentences by Mandarin Speakers. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 618. <https://doi.org/10.32629/jher.v5i6.3402>
- Fitria, T. N. (2021). Grammarly as AI-powered English writing assistant: Students' alternative for writing English. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 5(1), 65-78.
- Kustianah, & Wibowo, A. (2024). An Analyzing on the Students Error in Using Conditional Sentence Kustianah. *INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 7(1).
- Kholilah, N. (2020). Students'errors In Using Conditional Sentences At Smk Farmasi Ikasari Pekanbaru (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau).
- Kristina, W., Rufinus, A., & Maiza, M. (2020). Error analysis of conditional sentences. *JOEEL: Journal of English Education and Literature*, 1(1), 35-42.
- Laksana, S. P. (2019). A Case Study of Students' Difficulties in Learning Conditional Sentence at the Eleventh Grade Students' of SMA N 4 Purworejo in the Academic Year of 2016/2017. *Scripta: English Department Journal*, 6(1)
- Masruddin, M., & Nasriandi, N. (2022). Lexical and Syntactical Errors Performed by Junior High School Student in Writing Descriptive Text. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1), 1094-1100
- Nadhifah Izdihar, F., Eka, R., Fakultas Bahasa, B., Asing, B., & Semarang, U. M. (2022). Error Analysis Pada Kemampuan Menulis Kalimat Conditional Sentences Siswa Kelas XII SMA N 9 Semarang ErrorAnalysis On Students'Ability In Writing Conditional Sentences In Grade XII of SMAN 9 Semarang. *Journal Language Teaching and Learning*, 4. <http://prosiding.unimus.ac.id>
- Nekoueizadeh, M., & Bahrani, T. (2023). The Effect of Conversational Shadowing on Teaching and Learning Conditional Sentences. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*, 4(1). [www.ijllalw.org](http://www.ijllalw.org)
- Novarita, N. (2019). An Analysis Study: Students' Error In Using Noun Clause. *Edukasi Lingua Sastra*, 17(2), 82-95
- Rania, A., Pasaribu, I., Riqqah, ), Wijaya, A., Yani, ), & Ag, L. S. (2023). Conditional Sentences. *Language Teaching and Learning*, 4.
- Rasheed, B., Zafar, M., & Shaheen, R. (2024). Measuring the Cognitive Learning of Graduate Students about Zero Conditional Sentences in English. *Language and Humanities Review*, 8.
- Riani, S., & Ismiyanti, Y. (2022.). An Analysis on Students' Errors in Using Conditional Sentences Type II on Third Grade of SMA N 8 Jambi. In *Journal Of English Language teaching* (Vol. 4, Issue 2).

- Sari, A. S., Lubis, Y., & Aulia, A. E. P. (2024). Students' Ability In Using Conditional Sentences At State Islamic Senior Highschool 2 Pekanbaru. *Quality: Journal Of Education, Arabic And Islamic Studies*, 2(1), 1-9.
- Wibowo, A. (2020). An Analyzing on the Students Error in Using Conditional Sentence. *INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 7(1), 43-50.
- Yalmiadi, & Telaumbanua, Y. (2024). Diagnosing the EFL Students' Sentence-Level Inaccuracies in the EFL Writing Classrooms. *Jurnal Ilmiah Langue and Parole*, 7(2). <http://e-journal.sastra-unes.com/index.php/JILP>