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AN ERROR ANALYSIS IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT USING SURFACE STRATEGY TAXONOMY

Abstract

Errors are made by the students in writing skill have been treated as the most serious error in English. Therefore, this research aimed to find errors in writing skill which is made by the students at the seventh grade in Junior High School 2 Terusan Nunyai. The errors were classified into surface strategy taxonomy which consisted of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The data were taken from descriptivetext which is made by 19 students. The writer used descriptive qualitative as the research design. The data were analyzed by identifying the students' errors, classifying the errors, and calculating the percentage of errors based on the total cumulative errors. The finding showed that the total of error items of students in English writing is 14 items. The highest errors were omission (57,14%), followed by addition (28,57%), misformation (14,29%), and misordering (0%).

Keywords

Descriptive Text, English Writing, Error Analysis, Surface Strategy Taxonomy

A. INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is one of the language skills in English. In Indonesia, it has been taught in junior high school and senior high school. For approximately 6 years of Indonesian children learn how to write correctly. But there are so many students who still cannot write correctly. Although, it already listed in Indonesia curriculum that English become one of the graduation requirements. There are many factors that cause it, such as lack of knowledge, exercises, vocabulary, and ignorance of grammar. Four of these factors can be addressed by the students in a way a lot of writing or practice and reading a book. In addition, teachers can also help the difficulties which is being faced by the students. There are many ways, one of them is teachers assess students' work. So that, teachers can know the ability of students and also the difficulties of students. Dulay et.al. (1982:138) said that "People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors". As the proverb word that discomfiture is a delayed victory. Therefore, error analysis is needed.

Bazerman and prior (2004:168) states that writing is a process of inscription, of inscribing text onto or into some medium. We usually think first of writing on paper, but in fact the media can be diverse. People also inscribe text on t-shirts, on electronic media, in stone, into tree trunks, on or in metal, in the dirt, and so on. Tools of inscription include pens, brushes, and pencils, computers and printing presses, lithographs and keyboards, knives and sticks. Randaccio (2013:58) defines that writing is the production of a text which shows creativity and individual expression. For the expressivists, who contend that writing is an individual act, it is the competent writer who establishes purpose, meaning and form; in so doing the writer 'creates the audience'.

Descriptive text is one of the genre in writing skill. Description text is the text which has purpose to describe a particular person, thing, or place. Descriptive text has structure as below (Sudarwati & Grace, 2007: 135-172):

a. Identification

Identification in this case is identifying the phenomenon to be described. For example, mention the name, occupation, profession, career, special participant, etc.

b. Description

Description in this generic structure is describing the phenomenon in parts, qualities, or/and characteristics of the subject being described. Example, mention the physical features, the way he/she dresses and his/her personality.

There are 5 the language features of description text:

- a. The use of adjectives and compound adjectives
- b. The use of linking verbs/relating verbs
- c. The use of attributive has and have
- d. The use of Simple Present Tense
- e. The use of degree of comparison

Error analysis is very important in learning process. Ellis (1997:20) considered that evaluating errors is essential if the error analysis is intended to identify the students' problems so that teachers can help solve them. Similarly, James (1998:1) extended the definition of error analysis to cover not only the process of finding the errors but also to

determine reviews their causes and consequences. Therefore, after doing error analysis, hopefully, the learning process will become more effective and efficient.

According to Richards et.al. (1996:127), error analysis has been conducted to identify strategies which students use in language learning, to track the causes of student's errors, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning or on how to prepare teaching materials. Corder (1981:14) defines that error analysis has to do with the investigation of the language of second language learners. Meanwhile, Brown (1980:166) states that the fact that students do make errors, and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of students' errors, called error analysis. Dulay (1982:146) classify the taxonomy into 4 kinds:

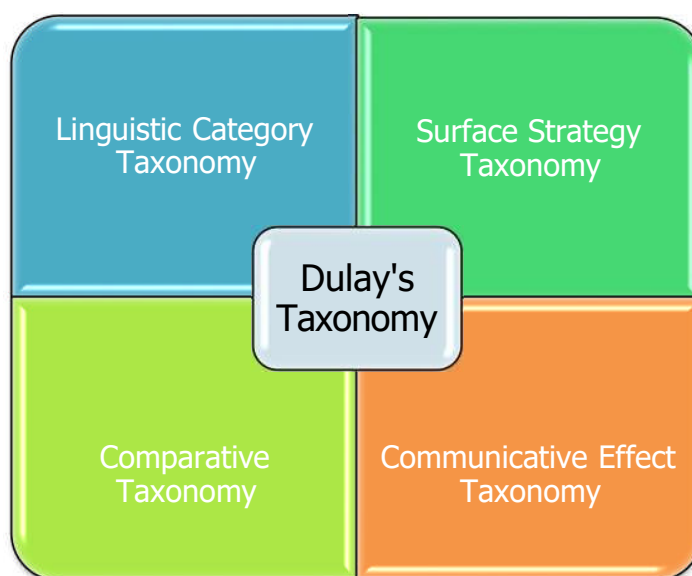


Figure 1: The Four Classification of Taxonomy

Linguistic Category Taxonomy

These linguistic category taxonomies classify errors according to either or both the language component or the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). Constituents include the elements that comprise each language component.

Surface Strategy Taxonomy

A surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures are altered: Learners may *omit* necessary items or *add* unnecessary ones; they may *misform* items or *misorder* them. Analyzing errors from a surface strategy taxonomy perspective holds much promise for researchers concerned with identifying cognitive processes that underlie the learner's reconstruction of the new language. There are 4 types of error in this taxonomy:



Figure 2: Types of Error in Surface Strategy Taxonomy

a. Omission

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance.

b. Addition

Addition errors are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance.

c. Misformation

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure.

d. Misordering

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

Comparative Taxonomy

The classification of errors in a comparative taxonomy is based on comparisons between the structure of L₂ errors and certain other types of constructions. These comparisons have yielded the two major error categories in this taxonomy: developmental errors and interlingual errors. Two other categories that have been used in comparative analysis taxonomies are derived from the first two: ambiguous errors, which are classifiable as either developmental or interlingual; and, of course, the grab bag category, Other, which are neither.

Communicative Effect Taxonomy

The communicative effect classification deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the listener or reader. It focuses on distinguishing between errors that seem

to cause miscommunication and those that don't. There are two types of error, that are global errors and local errors. According to Norrish (1983), "A global error is the typewhich affects the interpretation of the whole sentences and the local error merely a part of it, a clause or a phrase." The most systematic global errors include:

- a. Wrong order of major constituents
- b. Missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors
- c. Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules
- d. Regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions

These local errors include errors in noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of the quantifiers.

Based on the explanation above, the writer chose surface strategy taxonomy as the method to classify the learners' errors. As already explained above that students' errors will be classified into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the writer used descriptive qualitative method. It focused on analyzing the students' errors. The writer classified the students' errors using surface strategy taxonomy. The data in this research is gathered from the students at the seventh grade in Junior High School 2 Terusan Nunyai. This research analyzed the students' error in writing descriptive text. The samples of the research were all students in 1 class, but the writer divided into 6 groups. In this research, the instrument which was used in getting the data was students' writing. The writer asked the students to make a descriptive text about their favourite people, things, or places. The time to do it was 80 minutes. After the data were collected, the writer analyzed it based on surface strategy taxonomy which consisted of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. In this case, the writer analyzed the data step by step such as identifying the learners' errors by encircling the errors items, classifying the errors based on surface strategy taxonomy, and calculating the percentage of errors.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to identify, classify, calculate the percentage of errors which is done by the students using one of the taxonomy, namely surface strategy taxonomy to get data analysis. The instrument of this research is writing. The writing is in the form of descriptive text. The result of this research for teachers is to find out the difficulties of students. And, for the students is to help them in writing descriptive text. In analyzing the students' writing, the writer applied 3 steps:

1. Identifying the students' errors by encircling the errors items
To find the errors, the writer read the students' writing one by one. And then, the errors will be encircled to give know that the students do omission, addition, misformation, or misordering. After that, the writer give the correct answer.
2. Classifying the errors based on surface strategy taxonomy
After identifying the data, the writer classified the data based on surface strategy taxonomy. Then, the errors were inserted into a table to know the errors of each group.

3. Calculating the percentage of errors.

The last step is the writer calculated the percentage of errors. To get it, this formula was used. This formula is: Research Findings should be clear and concise. The results should summarize (scientific) findings rather than providing data in great detail. Please highlight differences between your results or findings and the previous publications by other researchers.

$$P : F/N \times 100\%$$

Figure 3: The Formula for Calculating the Percentage of Errors

Where:

P : The presentation of errors

F : The total number of errors

N : The total number of students' writing (Sudjiono, 2008:43)

Having checked the students' writing, it was found that the total number of errors made by them are 14 items.

Table 1: Classification of Students' Error

Errors' No	Types of Error					Total
	Groups	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	Percentage of Errors
<u>1</u>	1	2	0	0	0	14,29%
<u>2</u>	2	0	2	2	0	28,57%
<u>3</u>	3	3	1	0	0	28,57%
<u>4</u>	4	1	0	0	0	7,14%
<u>5</u>	5	1	1	0	0	14,29%
<u>6</u>	6	1	0	0	0	7,14%
Percentage of Errors		57,14%	28,57%	14,29%	0%	100%

Based on the data above, the writer found that the highest frequency of errors made by the students is omission (57,14%).

Omission Error

As the writer know that omission is the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. In this case, there are variety of omission made by the learners such as auxiliary verb (be), pronoun, noun pluralization, etc. The total number of errors made by the learners are 8 items (57,14%) of omission error. Some of the errors are illustrated as follows:

- a. *She beautiful and friendly.* It is incorrect because there is no auxiliary verb (be) for subject she. It should be *She is beautiful and friendly.*
- b. *It has long stoap and two pocket.* It is incorrect because the word *pocket* in the sentence need s/es to pluralize nouns. *Two* in this sentence is amount of the pocket. In English, if the amount of noun is more than one, it has to add s/es. In this case, the writer add s inthe word *pocket* because the last word in that word is *t*. So the correct sentence should be *It has long stoap and two pockets.*

Addition Error

As already explained above that addition is the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. There are 4 items (28,57%) of addition error. The errors which is made by the students are adding s/es on names of flower. In this case, the students made an error in a sentence *There are jasmines, orchids, sunflower, rose.* The correct one is *There are jasmine, orchid, sunflower, rose.* Because, the sentence only give know the names of flower. it does not need to add s/es. Another error is *This my favorite actress is Agnes.* In this sentence, the sentence should be *My favorite actress is Agnes.* Because, adding *this* in front of the sentence make the sentence become unwell-formed.

Misformation Error

The students commited many errors not only in omission and addition but also in misformation. In this case, the students made 2 items (14,29%) of misformation error. As we know, misformation is the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. For example, in a sentence *They are red, white, yellow.* It is incorrect because it should be *There are red, white, yellow.* Because, the students want to give know the names of color. But, they use wrong word as the subject of the sentence. They use pronoun *they* as the subject, but the meaning of the sentence will become different. *They* in the sentence tells the reader who they are. It means that the students failed to select and to use the right item appropriately.

Misordering Error

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. But, in this case, the students do not make an error in this type of error. So there is no error in this type.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the data above, the writer concluded that the total amount of errors made by the students are 14 items. The dominant errors are omission followed by addition, misformation, and misordering. The amount of omission errors are 8 items with the percentage are 57,14%. The amount of addition errors are 4 items with the percentage are 28,57%. The amount of misformation errors are 2 items with the percentage are 14,29%. Meanwhile, the amount of misordering errors is 0 item with the percentage is 0%.

Based on the finding above, the writer would like to give some suggestions to improve students' ability in writing skill. The first suggestion is in teaching English.

Teacher must teach in a way that is interesting in order to make the students interest in learning English. It means that teacher have to choose an appropriate method which will be used to teach the material in that day. Another suggestion is teacher have to give more exercises in making a text to the students in order to make them know how to make a good text correctly. And also, students have to learn more about grammar. Because, their grammar is so bad. The last suggestion is ask them to read dictionary a lot in order to see how to write the word correctly.

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