

AN ERROR ANALYSIS ON THE USE OF SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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Abstract

This research was conducted to (1) describe the types of errors made by the second health analysis students of SMK Semesta Bumiayu in the academic year 2015/2016 in writing descriptive text, and (2) describe the causes of the errors. The participants of this research were 22 students. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. To collect the data the writer used writing assignment. The collected data were identified, classified, and analyzed based on the types of error using Dulay's theory. The result of this research showed that based on the surface strategy taxonomy, the students tended to make errors in the form of omission (28 errors = 20%), in the form of misformation (23 errors = 21%), in the form of addition (5 error = 5%), and in the form of misordering (37 errors =34%) out of the total errors were 93 errors. The reasons why they made errors because of the students lacked English grammatical rules mastery

and different language rules between Indonesia and English language.

Keywords: error analysis, surface strategy taxonomy, interlingua error

A. Introduction

Writing is more than a medium of communication. It is a way of remember and a way of thinking well. As it is known, writing involves much work and practice. The writing process integrates visual, motorist, and conceptual abilities. In order to get a good construction and well arrangement in writing form, the students have to produce good and right sentences. Therefore, they should know a set of rules that must be followed which is said grammar.

Grammar is the major system in arrangement of word in a sentence. It tells us about forms and patterns in language. In addition, it also tells us how to put correctly a sentence up, such as on the use of word order, verb and noun systems, modifiers, phrases, and clauses in each sentence (Brown, 2000: 362). Particularly, writing without grammar would be confusing causing such problems, like grammatical error in writing. The problems above can be influenced by some factors. These coming from students' writing are: motivation, cognitive ability, intelegency quotion and talent. The other factor is external such as curriculum, approach, and method in learning process.

In fact, writing in English is not easy for some students. They may have difficulties when they use the language in writing. Because of these, there will be errors that can be found in their written

product. While actually, making errors, students will build their new knowledge to use the target language as Selinker (Mei Lin Ho, 2003: 1) states, making errors during learning the second language can be considered as a mean of building students' abilities because they can learn something from making errors.

Nevertheless, these errors will influence their communication. Therefore, it is important to analyze the errors because by learning the errors there are many advantages. According to Corder as cited by Richards (1986: 25), errors could be significant in three ways: they provided the teacher with information about how much the learner had learned, they provided the researcher with evidence of how language was learned, they served as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language.

According to the statement above, the writer would like to find out the types and the causes that influence errors in descriptive text writing. The writer chooses the students at the second health analyst class students of SMK Semesta Bumiayu as the subject of the research as they get a writing subject for the first time. There are many grammatical errors produced by the students in writing descriptive text.

B. Literature Review

This article discusses further about error analysis, the rules of simple present tense and descriptive text.

1. Definition of Error Analysis

According to Harmer (1991: 115), errors are part of the students' inter language, that is the

variety of the language which learners have stage of development and which is reformed to concern completely mastery. In addition, Corder (1982: 39) claims that making of errors is substantial in the teaching process itself. Errors are an indication that the learners are automatically exploring the new structure rather than just undergoing interference from the old habits.

Brown (2006: 220) states that error analysis is the study learner' errors that can be observed, analyzed, and classified to tell something that happen within the learners. According to Nunan in Rahmawati (2005: 31), error analysis is to identify the grammatical errors which they make. This analysis is completely selected for providing feedback of the students and organizing the errors. Practically, error analysis can be a very useful device of foreign language learning. Errors provide feedback, they tell the teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques. This analysis is completely selected for providing feedback of the students and organizing the errors. Practically, error analysis can be a very useful device of foreign language learning. Errors provide feedback, they tell the teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques.

Corder (1982: 45) defines error analysis has two functions are follows:

- a. The theoretical aspect is a part of investigating methodology in language learning process to find out the nature of psychological processes, we have to describe the learners' knowledge of the target language in particular moment in his learning career to relate this knowledge that

they has been obtaining to the teaching process.

- b. The practical aspect is for guiding the remedial action we should take to correct an inadequate setting for the learner or the teacher.

2. The Differences between Error and Mistake

When we talk about error, we may also think about mistake. Error and mistake are not the same. It is essential to make difference between error and mistake and most of people still misinterpret between the meanings of both.

According to Corder in Troike (2006: 49), errors are caused by learners that lack of second language knowledge while mistakes are caused by some kinds of failure processing for instance a lapse in memory, which they dismiss the analysis. In addition, error shows gaps in learners' knowledge, it happens since the learners do not know which correct is, while mistake shows infrequent gaps in accomplishments, it happens since the learners unable in precise circumstance to carry out what they know (Ellis, 1997: 17).

Hubbard (1983: 134) states that errors are caused by lack of knowledge about the target language or by incorrect hypothesis about it. While, mistakes are caused by temporary lapses of memory, confusion slips of the tongue and so on. Another way to differentiate between error and mistake is, if the learners can correct themselves, it is probably mistake, but if they cannot, it is an error. From the definition above, it can be said that error is something to do with unacceptable and inappropriate of grammar in the target language that has imprinted in learners' main. Thus, it cannot self-correct by them.

3. How to Analyze Errors

According to Ellis (1997: 15-19), there are four steps to analyze the learners' error in writing:

- a. Identifying the Errors
- b. Describing the Errors
- c. Explaining the Errors
- d. Evaluating the Errors

4. The Definition of Simple Present Tense

According to Azhar (1999: 18), simple present tense is helpful to know timeless tense for action, repeatedly or general true and action summarized in a single instant (with no reference to past or future). According to Azhar (1999: 18), simple present tense is helpful to know timeless tense for action, repeatedly or general true and action summarized in a single instant (with no reference to past or future).

5. The Rules of Simple Present Tense

According to Malik (2006: 4), the pattern of simple present tense is as follows:

- a. In positive sentences, the subject "*I/you/we/they*" + V-1 (without *s/es*) and *she/he/it* + (V-1 with *s/es*). Meanwhile, in the nominal form subject *I* + to be '*am*', *you/we/they* + to be '*are*', and *she/he/it* + to be '*is*'".
- b. In negative and interrogative sentences, the Auxiliary '*do*' for Subject (*I/you/we/they*) and '*does*' for subject (*he/she/it*).
- c. Spelling '*s*' added on the verb if followed by the subject *she/he/it* (the singular noun, profession, and third person).

- d. Spelling 'es' added on the verb that the last word is *-ss, -sh, ch, -x, -o*, if followed by subject *she/he/it* (the singular noun, profession, and third person).
- e. Spelling 'ies' is added on the word that has consonant followed by 'y' if followed by the subject *she/he/it* (the singular noun, profession, and third person).
- f. Spelling 'y' changed to be 'i'. But if denoted by vocal before 'y', then directly added by 's'.
- g. Verb 'have' in positive sentences, if followed by subject of sentence *she/he/it* the singular noun, profession, and third person) changed to be 'has'.

6. Descriptive Text

According to Cowan in Fahmi (2011: 15), descriptive presents the appearance of things that occupies the space, objects, people, and building. The aim of descriptive is to convey the readers what something looks like and attempts to paint a picture with words. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 208) define that there are three components in descriptive text as follows:

- a. Social function: to describe a particular person, place, or thing.
- b. Generic structures: Identification, which is to identify the phenomenon or occurrence to be described, and Description, which is to describe points, qualities, and characteristic.
- c. Significant lexico-grammatical features: focus in specific participant, use attributive and identifying process, use of epithets and classifiers in nominal group, use of simple present tense. The primary data was taken by questionnaire and interview and secondary

data was taken by documentation and the test result made

C. Method of Investigation

The writer used descriptive qualitative method. The population of this study was all of the tenth grade students at SMK Semesta Bumiayu and took 22 students of the tenth grade students of AK-2 (*Analisis Kesehatan*) class as the sample. The sampling technique used purposive sampling because of the consideration that the sample had a good motivation in learning English. Technique of data collection used documentation, interview, and questionnaire. In this study, the writer used three steps of analysing data: data reduction, data display and conclusion. The first step, writer used data reduction for some data collection from questionnaire, interview result and documentation. The second was classifying and making some short description the data into different kind of the data for data display, it focused on the information about kinds of those errors that categorized as omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering errors. The last was making conclusion of the dominant factor that caused the error on the use of simple present tense in writing descriptive text.

D. Discussion

There are 22 students' writings used as the data of this research. The writing is descriptive text in the form of paragraph with different topic and different length. Based on the errors the researcher has formed an error taxonomy for analysis including the following categories and sub-categories: Omission (Omission of Subject, Omission of to be in the present tense, Omission of -s/ -es in the verb

form), Addition (Addition of subject, Addition of to be in the simple present tense, Addition of preposition), Misformation of using verb past, misordering of word order.

1. Omission

As mentioned, omission is considered to be the absence of an item that should appear in a well-formed utterance. The following sentences are the examples that indicate this type of errors.

a. Omission of Subject

“Therefore, when buying this rabbit, I choose the white one” From this sentence, it shows that the student had committed the omission error since the student omitted the subject pronoun "I" before the verb. While actually, the sentence should be *“Therefore, when I buy this rabbit, I choose the white one”*.

b. Omission of to be in the present tense

“The fur very soft”. From this sentence, it can be seen that the student left out to be “is” that must be added before the word “the fur”, whereas it should be *“The fur is very soft.”* Therefore, the student had required the omission error.

c. Omission of -s/ -es in the verb form

“She often call her pet marry”. Dealing with this sentence, the student omitted -s/ -es in the verb, whereas it should be *“She often calls her pet marry.”* As a result, the student had committed the omission error.

d. Omission of -s/-es in the plural form

“I have two pet animal”. Regarding this sentence, the student omitted -s/-es in the plural form, whereas it should be *“I have two*

pets” In this case, the student had made the omission error.

2. Addition

As drawn earlier, addition is considered to be the presence of an item that should not appear in a well-formed utterance. Dealing with this type of errors, the writer provides the example of sentences which are called addition errors. They are:

a. Addition of subject

“Mother she now work in Singapura”.

This sentence shows the addition error since the student ded *“she”* whereas it should be *“mother works in Singapura”.*

b. Addition of to be in the simple present tense

“I am really loved food made by her”.

This sentence indicates addition error because the student added *“to be”* to the present simple sentence. The correct sentence should be *“I really love food that made by her”.*

c. Addition of preposition

“I am from in Bantarkawung”. This sentence indicates us the addition error. It is caused that the student added the prepositions *“in”*. It must be changed become *“I am from Bantarkawung”.*

3. Misformation

We should remember that misformation is considered to be the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. This error could affect the different interpretation and confusing meaning, like the sentences below that has been founded by the writer in her study. The sentences are as follows:

a. *I had a friend*

The sentence above contains misformation error. The student used an incorrect form because verb “*had*” that it is not used in simple present tense but in simple present perfect tense.

b. *She was very persistent*

Misformation is presented in the sentence above. This is evidenced in the use of “*was*” instead of “*is*”. Because “*is*” to be in the sentence as a simple present tense in nominal sentence. As a result, the student had committed the misformation error.

c. *He have short hair*

The sentence above contains misformation errors. The student failed to make the agreement between subject and verb. Instead of using “*has*” for third person singular subject, he/she used “*have*” and vice versa.

d. *I have always wanted to be able to speak in front of crowds*

Misformation is presented in the sentence above. This is evidenced in the use of “*have wanted*” instead of “*want*” that it is not relevant to the context because the context required verb “*want*” to be written in the present tense form. It is signed with the word “*usually*” that is time signal of present tense form.

4. Misordering

We should bear in mind that misordering is considered to be the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an

utterance. There are some students' sentences that are indicated as misordering error. Those include:

- a. *The floor of his clean and his room smell good*
From the above sentence, it can be known the student incorrectly ordered the words. The correct syntactical order is "*The floor is clean and smell good in his room*".
- b. *Mother she now work in Singapura*
Misordering is presented in the sentence above. This sentence has the wrong order of the pattern of simple present it should be "*mother works in Singapura*".
- c. *Me and her are friend close enough*
From the above sentence, it can be known the student incorrectly ordered the words. The correct syntactical order is "*I and she is friend closely enough*".

The result of the study mentioned above has collected some important information from the students' writings. The study shows errors that the students made in their writing descriptive text assignment. Also, the types of errors that occurred in this study belong to four types: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Additionally, it can be known the factors that influence the types of errors made by the students. According to the findings, it can be seen that there are most of the students as the subject of the study had made the four types of errors, with the total number of errors sentences is 93. This mark indicates that most of the students had made a lot of errors on the use of simple present tense in writing descriptive text. Meanwhile, 34% the misordering errors are most had been produced by the students.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to know that the students' reasons how they could commit the errors when they are writing descriptive text by using simple present tense are actually almost similar each other. For instance; some students admitted that they got difficulties in applying "to be" in the sentence. From those reasons, it can be concluded that the students do not fully understand on the use of simple present tense. Although they had been taught about it before, they were still confused which one to use when making a sentence such as verbal or nominal sentences. While actually, many errors in the students' writing descriptive text assignment were due to several factors. In fact, those are not only internal factor as well as the students' lack understanding of vocabularies but also external factor such as inappropriate grammar teaching method. However, the dominant factor is that the students lack understanding of vocabularies. It means that it becomes the factor which influences many students in committing the errors.

E. Conclusion

Based on the data described in the previous chapter, the writer could draw a conclusion concerning with the types of error on the use of simple present tense in writing descriptive text made by the tenth grade students of SMK Semesta Bumiayu in the academic year 2015/2016.

The result of the study shows that there are four types of error and the factor that influences the simple present tense error in writing descriptive text as follows:

1. Types of error on the use of simple present tense which are classified based on surfaced strategy taxonomy are as follow:
 - a. Omission Errors
 - 1) Omission of subject
 - 2) Omission of to be in the simple present tense
 - 3) Omission of –s/-es in the verb form
 - 4) Omission of prepositions
 - 5) Omission of –s/-es in the plural form
 - b. Addition Errors
 - 1) Addition of subject
 - 2) Addition of to be in the simple present tense
 - 3) Addition of preposition
 - c. Misformation Errors
 - d. Misordering Errors

According to the result of the analysis, the writer may conclude that 34% misordering becomes the highest errors that often made by the tenth grade students of SMK Semesta Bumiayu because they translate directly from Indonesian to English without using the rule of grammar.

2. The factors that influence errors on the use of simple present tense made by the tenth grade students in writing descriptive text are as follow:
 - a. Directly translation without considering the rule of grammar
 - b. The students lack understanding of English grammar especially in simple present tense
 - c. The student didn't have enough vocabularies
 - d. The students' opinion that grammar was difficult, so they were not interested in comprehending English grammar
 - e. The student lack understanding of English vocabulary.

- f. Inappropriate grammar teaching method made the students did not have motivation to know more about English
- g. The students' opinion that they were not interested in English
- h. The confusions between different use of similar forms or grammatical forms that do not have an equivalent in Indonesian language.

Acknowledgement

In this lovely opportunity, the writer would like to express her deepest gratitude and thanks to: Prof. Dr. Yahya A. Muhaimin as the rector of Peradaban university, the head of English Education Study Program, the team of journal publishing, and the writer's beloved second parents with her big family who always give sincere prayers for success in life. Finally, the writer thanks to all people who have given their support and affection in completing this article. The writer hopes this work can be valuable contribution to all readers especially those who are interested in teaching and learning English.

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