

Grammatical Error Analysis of the Eighth Grade Students in Writing Descriptive Text at SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 Academic Year

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Abstract

In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject and writing has an important role in it. This research was intended to know the percentage of each type of grammatical error of the eighth grade students in writing descriptive text at SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. The research respondents were chosen by using proportional random sampling. The research design used was descriptive research. The data of this research was taken from writing test, interview, and documentation. From the result, it was found that there were four types of grammatical error covering omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The percentage of each grammatical error was omission (57% or 234 items), addition (11% or 45 items), misformation (31% or 128 items) and misordering (1% or 5 items). This result showed that the highest percentage of grammatical error was omission and the lowest percentage was misordering.

Keywords: *Descriptive Text Writing, Grammatical Error, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, Error Analysis*

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject for Junior High School and Senior High School. One of the English language skills, writing plays an important role for the students in the process of learning a language. Axelrod and Chooper (2010:2) state that writing contributes to learning by helping the students remember what they are studying, by leading them to analyze and connect information and ideas from different sources, and by inspiring new insights and understanding. But there are a lot of students who make some errors dealing with English grammar in their writing, especially in descriptive text writing.

Errors are commonly made by the English learners because it is a part of learning a language. It happens because their mother tongue is different from the target language (English). Dulay et al (1982:138) say, "errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norms of mature language performance." Error is a part of language learning process and no one can learn language without making errors. Although they have tried so hard to keep themselves away from error, it always comes out in the process of learning.

In this research, error analysis is required to analyze the students' error. According to Brown (2000:218), the fact that learners make errors, and those errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system

operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learners' errors is called error analysis. Dulay et al (1982:138) state that error analysis stands for two major purposes. They are: (1) provides data from which interference about the nature of language learning process can be made, (2) indicates to teacher and curriculum developers, which part of the target language that the students have the most difficulty in producing correctly and which error types detract most from learners ability to communicate effectively.

Based on the preliminary study that was done on January 8th, 2014, it was found out that there were many grammatical errors produced by the students in their writing descriptive text. As the teacher said that the students faced difficulties in applying the formula of the tenses such as simple present tense and simple past tense. Those grammatical errors are classified based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al.

According to Dulay et al (1982:150), surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures are changed. Learners may omit necessary items or add unnecessary one, they may misform items or misorder them. In this research, there were four types of grammatical errors covering omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

In order to investigate the students' grammatical errors in writing, the writer was interested in conducting a research entitled "Grammatical Error Analysis of the

Eighth Grade Students in Writing Descriptive Text at SMPN 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 Academic Year.”

Research Method

The research design used was descriptive research. It was intended to analyse the grammatical errors made by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. McMillan (1992:144) states that a descriptive study simply describes a phenomenon.

SMP Negeri 1 Jember was purposively chosen as the research area after the researcher got the permission to conduct this research. The research population of this study was the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year. Arikunto (2002:112) states that if the number of the population is less than 100 people, it is better to take all the respondents. But, it is also stated that if the number of the population is more than 100 people, it is allowed to take 10%-15% or 20%-25% of the whole population as the respondents or samples of the research. Thus, the researcher used proportional random sampling to determine the research respondents. The steps to choose the respondents were as follows.

1. Determining the research population.
2. Choosing 10% of the students from each class by lottery. There were 36 students in each class, so 10% of each class was 4 students. Thus, there were 40 students as the respondents of the research.
3. Asking the permission to the teacher to administer the writing test to the chosen respondents of each class at the same time.

In this research there were two kinds of data: primary data and supporting data. The primary data was collected by using writing test, while the supporting data was collected by using interview and documentation. From the writing test, the researcher analyzed and classified the grammatical errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. The steps to analyze the data were taken from Ellis' theory (1997:15) as follows.

1. Identifying the grammatical errors made by all the students in their descriptive text writing test.
2. Classifying the errors into the categories of grammatical errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy, that is, omission, addition, misformation and misordering.
3. Explaining the errors that were classified into the four types of grammatical errors.
4. Evaluating the grammatical errors made by the eighth grade students.

The researcher used the formula from Ali (1993:186) to calculate the students' error. In this research, the researcher did not measure the students' writing ability.

Discussion

From the result of data analysis, it was found that the students made 412 grammatical errors which were classified into 234 errors of omission, 45 errors of addition, 128 errors of misformation, and 5 errors of misordering. The results on the analysis showed that the highest number of grammatical errors occurred in the descriptive text writing in the research was the omission errors having 57%. The other types were misformation (31%), addition (11%), misordering (1%).

Some of the omission errors in this research happened because the students omitted some necessary items in the sentence. Omission happened in some cases such as omission of article, omission of third person singular verb agreement, omission of pronouns, omission of plural inflection, omission of to be, omission of preposition, omission of possessive inflexion, and other omission. Some addition errors were found in the students' writing happened because the students added inappropriate or unnecessary items in their sentences. Those addition errors were divided into addition of article, addition of to be and simple addition. Misformation in this research happened because the students used the wrong form of the morpheme or structure, while misordering happened because the students placed a morpheme or a group of morpheme in the wrong place.

From all the discussion above, it can be stated that all of those errors made by the students happened because they were still in the process of learning a new language (English). The structure of their first language and a new language was totally different, so they usually faced difficulties in applying the rules of English structure. Dulay *et al.* (1982:97) say that where structure in the first language differed from those in the second language, errors that reflected the structure of the first language would be produced.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the data of analysis and discussion, it could be concluded as follows:

1. The types of grammatical errors made by the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year were omission (article, third person singular verb inflection, pronoun, plural inflection, to be, preposition, possessive inflexion, and other omission), addition (article, to be, and simple addition), misformation, and misordering.
2. The percentage of grammatical errors made by the eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Jember in the 2013/2014 academic year was omission (57% or 234 items), addition (11% or 45 items), misformation (31% or 128 items), and misordering (1% or items).

Based on the results above, the suggestions are given to the following people:

1. The English Teacher

By knowing the most grammatical errors made by the students at SMP Negeri 1 Jember, the teacher is suggested to give the students clear explanation about the use of article. Hopefully, the teacher will be able to minimize the students' errors especially omission dealing with article.

2. The Students

It is suggested that the students pay more attention on some grammatical rules such as a singular noun that should be added by an article because the students made many grammatical errors in omission of article. Thus, the students will be able to avoid the errors dealing with omission.

3. The Next researchers

Future researchers are suggested to conduct another research with different skill such as on speaking to know whether the students make the most errors on omission as happened in this present study.

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