Error Analysis of Students' Writing Composition at Vocational High School Context

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Abstrak

Menulis telah diajarkan dan dipelajari sebagai keterampilan penting bagi pelajar pemula hingga pelajar tingkat lanjut. Tentunya, menulis menjadi keterampilan yang sering dipelajari dan dipraktikkan, baik di sekolah maupun di universitas. Namun, meskipun sudah sering dipelajari dan dipraktikkan, kesalahan dalam menulis tidak dapat dihindari. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesalahan tata bahasa yang dilakukan oleh siswa sekolah menengah kejuruan dalam menulis teks naratif. Partisipan dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas sepuluh di sebuah sekolah menengah kejuruan di Surabaya. Penelitian ini dilakukan secara kualitatif. Para siswa diminta untuk menulis sebuah teks komposisi naratif, kemudian data diolah dengan mengidentifikasi dan mengkategorikan beberapa kesalahan yang ditemukan dalam komposisi tulisan siswa. Jenis-jenis kesalahan tersebut diklasifikasikan berdasarkan *surface structure taxonomy* (sistem klasifikasi berdasarkan perubahan struktur) (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa melakukan kesalahan dalam bentuk *misformation* (kesalahan formasi struktur grammatikal), *addition* (penambahan), dan *omission* (penghilangan). Kesalahan yang sering dilakukan oleh siswa adalah kesalahan dalam menggunakan *past tense*.
Kata kunci: tulisan komposisi, analisis kesalahan, sekolah menengah kejuruan

Abstract

Writing has been taught and learned as an essential skill for beginner learners to the advanced learner. Definitely, writing becomes regular lesson skill to practice, either in school or university. However, even it is learned and praciced often, making error is inevitable in writing. Thus, this study present study aims to analyze the grammatical errors made by vocational high school students in writing narrative text writing. The participants of this study were tenth grade students of a vocational high school in Surabaya. This research was conducted qualitatively. The researcher instructed students to write a narrative composition texts, then the data is processed by identifying and categorizing some errors that found in students' writing composition. The types of error are classified by surface structure taxonomy (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). The result of the study showed that the students made errors in misformation, addition, and omission. The frequent error made by the students is misformation in using past tense.
Keywords : writing composition, error analysis, vocational high school

INTRODUCTION

Bazerman (as cited in Hsiang, T., Graham and Yang 2020) stated that writing is pervasive in our social, educational, and occupational lives, in which it allows us to communicate, learn, persuade, record, chronicle, heal, reflect, and imagine. In our society, any kind of information is also delivered through written warning, announcement, and etc. Writing skill also dominates almost the whole aspects on our live include economy, politics, medical, and etc. Especially in education, writing becomes compulsory skill to learn and to teach.

Learning how to write can be a challenge for students. Moreover, for the EFL students, such as in Indonesia, they do not practice English in their daily lives. Previous studies about examining students' grammatical error shows complexity on subject-verb ageement, verb structure, preposition, and using an article. A study about writing error of pre-universty students by (Jasim Al-Shujairi & Tan, 2017) presented that students have problems with the usage of verb tenses, articles, and prepositions. In line with (Jasim Al-Shujairi & Tan, 2017), a study by (Pardosi, Veronika Br. Karo, Anggun S. Sijabat, Pasaribu, & Pasca Tarigan, 2019) found out that misformation in using past irregular verb is the highest error made by the students.

Those previous studies show that making error in writing is inevitable, such as in morphology/syntax (grammar). An error taxonomy of this linguistic category called as surface structure taxonomy classifies errors as misformation, addition, omission, and misordering, as follows :

- Misformation errors are characterized by the use of wrong form o the morpheme or structure (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). There are three types of misformation as regularization, archi-form, and alternating form.

- Addition error is described by the presence of items that should not appear in a well-formed expression. There are three type of this error, such as double marking, regularization, and simple addition, where each type has their own characteristic. Double marking is the failure to remove certain items that do not require in some linguistic construction, for example tense in English is only marked once. In a sentence where an auxiliary is required in addition to the main verb, the auxiliary not the main verb, takes the tense (Dulay et al., 1982). Meanwhile, error in regularization occurs when a marker added to an exceptional class of linguistic items, such as class of noun or class of verbs. For instance, the verb tell does not become telled, but becomes told, the noun shrimp does not become shrimps because this noun does not have plural form. However, simple addition does not have specific characteristics, only the use of unnecessary items in proper utterance that is not characterized as double marking or regularization.

- Errors in omission occurs when the writer omits that must emerge in proper utterance.

- Misordering errors are characterized by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes (Dulay et al., 1982).

According to (Dulay et al., 1982), the students could add unnecessary items or omit the ones that require in utterance, they also misorder well-formed utterance or misform some items in utterance. This error taxonomy shows that the surface elements of language are changed.

Most of the previous studies which examine and analyze errors in writing, include in Indonesia, involved junior high school, senior high school, and university students. Thus, this current study is conducted to analyze any errorrs in narrative writing composition that made by vocational high school students in Indonesia. This present study aims to answer this following question :

1. What type of errors are found in the students' narrative writing text?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted qualitatively to identify the categories of grammatical error in students' writing composition and designed as descriptive research. This study includes students in 10th grade of a vocational high school in Indonesia. They were asked to write a narrative text then submitting their assignment through Google Drive because the learning and teaching process was conducted in blended learning at that moment. Hence, the students and the teachers had limited opportunity to be presented in the classroom.

The data was obtained from five students' narrative writing compositions. Each text is labelled as text 1, text 2, text 3, text 4, and text 5. Error classification made by the students is classified by using surface structure taxonomy. Any errors that made by the students are described with some examples to give precise and tangible explanation. Thus, the result of this study may represent the students' writing error.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the errors analyzation of five students' writing composition, the most frequent error that made by the students is misformation in using past tense, in which it is found in almost all text of students' writing composition. This error happens when the students apply present form instead of using past tense in a sentence. For example, in the beginning paragraph in text 4, "In a small village, a girl *lives* with her mother." Whereas in this sentence the writer wrote infinitive form of the verb *live*, when it should be changed to *lived* to indicate past tense. Another example of misformation in using past tense is discovered in text 5, precisely in second paragraph. As written in this sentence, "Because she's diligent and kind, people around her love her." However, correct form of verb to complete this sentence should be written as *loved* to

specify that this sentence narrated past event. This finding is in line with (Jasim Al-Shujairi & Tan, 2017) who found out that errors in tenses as the most frequent error in students' paper, especially error in using irregular verbs.

Any other error such as misformation in preposition is noticed in students' writing composition. In text 2, the student wrote "She felt *sorry to* the snake." Whereas relevant preposition to complete the prepositional verb is *for*. A study by (Nurhamidah, 2021) also presents similar result, although reveals that misformation in preposition is the most error made by the students. In accordance with (Nurhamidah, 2021), a study by (Sabtan & Elsayed, 2019) who examined writing error made by university students also found that the students made grammatical error in preposition. Other error in misformation is found in text 5, where the student misformed to-infinitive structure. For example, "One of the bandits hit Dondong in the head which caused Maria's father *to lost* consciousnes." In which to-infinitive structure requires infinitive verb but in this sentence student wrote participal verb to form the sentence. Thereby, the previous sentence requires some changes, as written in this revised sentence, "One of the bandits hit Dondong in the head which caused Maria's father *to lose* consciousness." At which structure to – infinitive is in correct form.

In another study by (Pardosi et al., 2019) which examines junior high school students' writing error presents that misformation in using past tense is frequent error made by the students, then followed by error in addition. In this present study, error in addition is the least error made by the students then followed by omission. In text 2, error found is categorized as addition, especially double marking. In first paragraph, the researcher has noticed error in this sentence, "she *did not gave* enough food..." which the auxiliary verb *did* has taken past tense mark. Therefore, the main verb does not need to take the past tense mark and should be basic verb or infinitive. This sentence requires some correction, as it should be changed to "she *did not give* enough food..." at which the past verb is replaced to infinitive form. Another error in addition is also noticed in text 3. As written in this sentence "thousand of *seas worm* appeared to the surface." Where the student added inappropiate suffix -s in this compound noun. The word *sea* does not require any suffix because it modifies worms, to give clarity of specific worms that are mentioned in sentence. Thus, only the word *worm* would take the plural form. In the same sentence, the researcher also identifies misformation in using preposition. Occasionally, verb is combined with preposition and create a prepositional verb. In the same sentence, the student wrote "*appeared to* the surface", in which this preposition is not an

appropiate preposition to join with the verb, thud the correct form of this prepositional verb is appeared *on*. Indeed, this error is similir as error in another text that has been explained before. Identical error in addition is also revealed in text 5. The student added suffix *-es* into jewelry, as written in this sentence, "Their money and *jewelries* were also taken." In which the word *jewelry* does not need any suffix because it does not have plural form. In that case, the student could refer to pieces of jewelry to express various kinds of jewelry. Thus, the sentence should be changed to "Their money and *pieces of jewelry* were also taken." In which, the sentence is improved by adding the word *piece* to state that *jewelry* is uncountable.

In this research, error in omission is the least error made after addition. This type of error is found in text 1, on the first paragraph the student wrote "The neighbors amazed to see the harvest is unequaled." While in this sentence the student omitted a past plural to-be *was* before the word *amaze*. This sentence is expressed meaning that the harvest made the neighbors felt amazed beause they saw extreme amount of harvest. Another error in omission is also found in first paragraph of text, as written in this sentence "Every day *she puts make up* and wears her best clothes." Whereas, the students should add a preposition after the verb. Moreover, in this sentence is also categorized as misformation. Then, this sentence requires some corrections, as in this revised sentence, "Every day she *put make-up on* and *wore* her best clothes." In which all the verbs are in correct form and has been added an appropriate preposition.

Based on the error analysation above and some previous studies, although the participants are from different school, country, or different types of text, but the errors are relatively identical.

Conclusion

To conclude, the students have grammatical problem that leads them to cause error in writing. In this current study the error which made by the students are classified according to surface strategy taxonomy which divides errors into four types, consist of misformation, addition, omission, and misoredering. But in this study, there are three types that found in student's writing composition are identified, include misformation, addition, and omission. The most frequent error made by the students is misformation in using past tense. This error happens when the students applied present verb form instead of using past tense verb.

In this research, the students show their lack of grammatical knowledge. The source of error or lack of knowledge may be affected by some

factors. Further studies may examine these factors that inluence the students' knowledge and ability in grammar. In addition, further study may compare the error made by two different groups of students, thus this future study would give any insight and information about students' learning process. By knowing and understanding any error anlysis in students' writing would provide resource to improve learning and teaching in writing. Therefore, english teacher ought to serve innovative teaching method and sufficient resource to help the students to gain better understanding in English.

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