An Error Analysis of Descriptive Text Written by Junior High School Students in Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

The study deals with the error analysis in writing descriptive text for Junior High School students. The method of this research is descriptive quantitative. This research was carried out at SMP Islam Diponegoro, Surakarta. There are two techniques to collect the data, survey and test. The technique to analyze the data used in this research is error analysis. The steps of analyzing data started from collecting the data, identifying the error, describing the error, explaining the error, and drawing the conclusion.The result of this research are article errors were the highest number of linguistic errors with 49 errors or 45,37% and omission errors were the highest number of surface errors with 83 errors or 76,85%

Key Word: *error analysis, descriptive text, writing skill.*

Introduction

Mistakes and errors are unavoidable in the learning process of English as a foreign language for Indonesian learners. One thing that usually inhibits learners to learn a foreign language appropriately and effectively is the difference of the language system of the foreign language learned and their mother tongue. They usually borrow the patterns from their mother tongue or express the meaning using the vocabulary they have already known.

There are many rules in grammar that cannot be ignored,especially for the eight year students of junior high school. They are articles, parts of speech, sentence pattern, tense, etc. Although grammar does not belong to skill in English like reading, speaking, listening and writing, grammar supports those skills. There is no doubt that knowledge, implicit or explicit of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of language: you cannot word unless you know how should be put together. It is not true the language in speech does not concern to the grammatical rule, sometimes we did not seem to be aware that the neglect of grammatical caused miscommunication, in formal contexts or academic. In reading the student will understand the text and know the ideas of the writer's if they have the ability in grammar.

Through descriptive text, the writer would like to find out the students' learning problemsusing articles, auxiliary verbs, nouns, and prepositions and to know the students' achievement and difficulties in writing descriptive text. Callaghan (1988: 138) said that "a descriptive writing creates a clear and vivid impression of person, place, or thing."

Meanwhile, McCrimmon (1984: 163) states that Description is a strategy for presenting a verbal portrait of person, place or thing. So, descriptive text is a type of text that has purpose to describe person, place or thing clearly and specifically. Writing a descriptive text should be clear, vivid, and concrete. If a student has made a mistake in using article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition, it means that he/she is not competent yet in making his/her text. It makes the reader confused and difficult to understand what the writer means. In this research, descriptive text was only the media for students to make some sentences which use article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition.

According to Ellis (1996: 47), learners make error in both comprehension and

production. The example of a comprehension error is when learners do not understand the sentence they have made.However, comprehension errors have received scant attention, for, as Corder (in Ellis, 1996: 47) has point out,although we can test comprehension in general terms, 'it is very difficult to assign the cause of failures of comprehension to an inadequate knowledge of a particular syntactic feature of a misunderstood utterance'.

Dullay (1982: 138) defines errors as the flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that delicate from some selected norm of mature language performance. It means that there is something wrong in norms of language performance; make some errors is so unavoidable in learning process. Besides, making error is one part of learning and no one can learn without make some error.

Meanwhile, Brown (2000: 170) defines errors reflect the interlanguage competence of the learner as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker. Learner of language has different competences of level in learning English and automatically that has involved different cause of error.

It means that errors are very natural and unavoidable in learning process; maybe it is caused by the lack of knowledge about the target language and also reflects learners' interlanguage competence.

According to Corder in Ellis (1996: 48) there are five steps in error analysis: (a) Collection of a sample of learner language, (b) Identification of errors, (c) Description of errors, (d) Explanation of errors, and (e) Evaluation of errors. Meanwhile, Ellis (1997: 15) has three steps to do error analysis, they are: (a) Identifying Errors, (b) Describing Errors, and (c) Explaining Errors.

Based on the theories above, the writer divided the steps of error analysis into; collecting the data, identifying the error, describing the error, and explaining the error, and drawing the conclusion.

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen in Fauziati (2002: 82) said that errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. People cannot learn language without making errors. There are four descriptive taxonomies to analyze errors, namely linguistic category taxonomy, surface

strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy.

Brown (2000: 224) says that the cause of errors can be divided into 2 categories, namely: (a) Interlingualtransfer that is error influenced by the learner's mother tongueand (b) Intralingualtransfer that are cause of errors influenced by the complicated system of the target language itself.

Richards (1984: 174) says that the intralingualtransfer are divided into 4 terms, namely: (a) Over-generalization, (b) Ignorance of rule restriction, (c) Incomplete application of rules, and (d) False Concepts Hypothesized. In this research, the writer only analyze the intralingualtransfer because most of errors found made by the students were cause of errors resulting from complicated system of the target language itself.

According to Hyland (2004: 7), writing is seen as skill that is essentially learned, not taught, and teacher's role is non-directive, facilitating writing through on encouraging and cooperative environment with minimal interference. Another definition comes from Olshtain in Celce-Murcia (2001: 207) defines writing as an act of communication which takes place between the writer and the reader via the text in an interactive process.

From all of the explanation above, it can be concluded that writing is act of forming or combining letter from the spoken form into the written form in communication that essentially learned.

Through descriptive text, the writer would like to find out the students' learning problemsusing articles, auxiliary verbs, nouns, and prepositions and to know the students' achievement and difficulties in writing descriptive text.

Research Method

The method of this research is descriptive quantitative. This research was carried out at SMP Islam Diponegoro, Surakarta. It was conducted for a month on March 2012. The populations of this study were the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Islam Diponegoro in Academic Year of 2011/2012. The classes were used in this research were VIII A Putra which consisted of 15 students and VIII B Putri which consisted of ten students. There are several techniques to

collect the data, such as survey, and test. The technique to analyze the data used in this research is error analysis. The steps of analyzing data are started from collecting the data, identifying the error, describing the error, explaining the error, and drawing the conclusion.

Finding and Discussion

The result of the study showed that for the linguistic category, total errors of each kind of errors were 49 errors or 45,37% in article errors, 38 errors or 35,19% in Auxiliary verbs errors, 10 errors or 9,26% in noun errors, and 11 errors or 10,19% in preposition errors. For the four types of errors in linguistic category, article errors were the highest number of errors with 49 errors or 45,37%.On the other hand, for the surface strategy, total errors of each kind of errors were 83 errors or 76,85% in omission errors, 11 errors or 10,19% in addition errors, 14 errors or 12,96% in misformation errors, and 0 errors or 0% in misordering errors. For the four types of errors, omission errors were the highest number of errors with 83 errors or 76,85%.

The errors on linguistic category made by the students were classified like the following:

1. Article error

Some errors made by the students in the use of article are: (a) Deletion of article, (b) Wrong choice of articles, (c) Use of article for mass nouns, and (d) Redundant use of the article 'the'.The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) '...a computer, * studying table, and * book case' (text 1), (2) 'there is a eat table' (text 4), (3) 'there is **a** 2 windows' (text 22)

2. Auxiliary verbs Errors

Some errors made by the students in the use of auxiliary verbs are: (a) Learners omitted them in their constructions and came up with the following constructions and (b) Fail to understand the grammatical concord rule (plural noun should go with plural verb while singular noun should go with singular verb) in sentences they make. The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) my * bedroom big' (text 2), (2) 'There **is** a table and a chair next to the shelf' (text 7), (3) 'I **am** sleep with my sister' (text 24)

3. Noun Errors

Some errors made by the students in the use of noun are: (a) differ plural or singular noun and (b) Differ countable or uncountable noun.The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) 'in my bedroom are *two door*' (text 15), (2) 'I and my sister has *four pillow, two blanket*, and I have orange wall' (text 21)

4. Preposition Errors

Some errors made by the students in the use of preposition are: (a) Deletion of prepositions, (b) Wrong choice of prepositions, and (c) Redundant use of prepositions.The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) 'the color my bedroom is soft blue' (text 16), (2) 'in my bed I **to** sleep' (text 10)

The students' errors on surface strategy divided into four, they are:

a. Omission Errors

In omission errors, the student tent to omit an item in a well-formed sentence. The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) '...a computer, * studying table, and * book case' (text 1), (2) my bedroom * big' (text 2), (3) 'in my bedroom are two door*' (text 15), (4) 'the color * my bedroom is soft blue' (text 16)

b. Addition Errors

In addition errors, the student tent to add an item in a well-formed sentence. The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) 'there is **a** 2 windows' (text 22), (2) '**in** my room has one bed, two pillow, one air conditioner, one table, one television, one DVD player, one shelf, three lamp' (text 13), (3) 'I **am** sleep with my sister' (text 24)

c. Misformation Errors

In misformation errors, the student tent to use of the wrong form of the morphemes or structure in a well-formed sentence. The examples of this subtype of errors are presented below: (1) 'there is a eat table' (text 4), (2) There is a table and a chair next to the shelf' (text 7)

d. Misordering Errors

In misordering errors, the student tent to make incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. There is none of misordering errors made by the students in this study.

Table. 1: The Percentages of the Total Errors Linguistic Category

No.	Category	Error	Percentage
1.	Article	49	45,37%
2.	Auxiliary verbs	38	35,19%
3.	Noun	10	9,26%
4.	Preposition	11	10,19%
	Total	108	100%

Table. 2: The Percentages of the Total Errors Surface Strategy

No.	Category	Error	Percentage
1.	Omission	83	76,85%
2.	Addition	11	10,19%
3.	Misformation	14	12,96%
4.	Misordering	-	0%
	Total	108	100%

The cause of errors can be divided into 2 categories, they are:

1. Interlingualtransfer

Interlingual transfer those are error influenced by the learner's mother tongue. A different class of error is represented by sentences. In other word, when we compare the students work and we found that the text made by them was influenced by their mother tongue, it called interlingualtransfer. The error made by the students could be omitting *to be*/ auxiliary verb or translating word by word from L1 to L2.The sentences they had made were like the following: (a) 'My **color room** is pink' (text 6), (b) 'I am very comfortable in my room' (text 9), (c) 'my bedroom * big' (text 2)

2. Intralingualtransfer

According to Richard (1984: 174) there are four causes of errors in intralingualtransfer, the analysis was as follows:

a. Over-generalization

Over-generalization covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. They created of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures.The sentences they had made were like the following: (a) 'I **am** enjoy in my bedroom' (text 18), (b) 'My room is small, but they **are** has two bed' (text 21)

b. Ignorance of rule restriction

Ignorance of rule restriction is failure to observe the restriction of existing structures. That is the application of rules to context where they do not apply. The sentences they had made were like the following: (a) 'My bedroom **too** there was TV and my picture' (text 8), (b) 'because in my bedroom comfortable **condition**' (text 16)

c. Incomplete application of rules

Incomplete application of rules means errors are due to the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of rules required to produce acceptable utterances. The learners fail to produce a correct sentence according to the standards rules. The sentences they had made were like the following:(a) 'in my bedroom are *two door*' (text 15), (b) 'I and my sister has *four pillow, two blanket*, and I have orange wall' (text 21)

d. False Concepts Hypothesized

False concepts hypothesized means developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinction in the target language. In other word, false concepts hypothesized (i.e. the learner fails to comprehend fully) arise when the learner does not fully comprehend a distinction in the target language. The sentences they had made were like the following: (1) 'there is **a** 2 windows' (text 22), (b) '**In** my bedroom has a cupboard' (text 14)

The causes of errors occur when the students used wrong word in writing the text, the students' overgeneralization the rules they learnt before, the students did not understand what they had to do and it was worsen by the teacher sensitivity on the common errors made by the student.

Conclusion

For the linguistic category, total errors of each kind of errors were 49 errors or 45,37% in

article errors, 38 errors or 35,19% in Auxiliary verbs errors, 10 errors or 9,26% in noun errors, and 11 errors or 10,19% in preposition errors. For the four types of errors in linguistic category, article errors were the highest number of errors with 49 errors or 45,37%.

On the other hand, for the surface strategy, total errors of each kind of errors were 83 errors or 76,85% in omission errors, 11 errors or 10,19% in addition errors, 14 errors or 12,96% in misformation errors, and 0 errors or 0% in misordering errors. For the four types of errors, omission errors were the highest number of errors with 83 errors or 76,85%.

The causes of errors made by the students could be classified into two, namely; inter-lingualtransfer and intralingualtransfer. There are four causes of errors in intralingualtransfer, namely; errors caused by over-generalization, errors caused by ignorance of rule restriction, errors caused by incomplete application of rules, and errors caused by false concepts hypothesized. The causes of errors occur when the students used wrong word in writing the text, the students over-generalize the rules they learnt before, the students did not understand what they had to do and it was worsen by the teacher sensitivity on the common errors made by the student.

Based on the study, the students' ability in the use of *article, auxiliary verb, noun, and preposition* were poor. The errors in grammar, which are often made by the students, should be avoided or at least should be lessened. Prospective language teachers have to able to avoid and lessen the errors by inspecting or examining the details of them accurately and properly. In teaching and learning process, teachers should explain the materials to the students clearly and understandably. They must also be able to set an example in using the language they teach because they are the models for their students. Their sentences or speeches will influence the students in learning and using the language they learn.

There are some suggestions that can be made by the researcher in the end of this study:

It is expected that the teacher should know the problem in writing descriptive text on the eighth grade students specifically in using article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition. This study can help teachers, especially English teacher, to make some improvement and development in teaching English grammar, especially the use of article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition in writing descriptive text.

It is suggested that the students should practice more in using article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition more intensively not only in written form but also in daily communication. With this study can give them more information about the use of article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition by knowing their own errors. Therefore, the students can start from making simple sentences so that they can improve their proficiency in grammar.

It is suggested that another researcher should conduct researches in language study and to provide them with evidence how language is learnt in writing descriptive text on the eighth grade students specifically in using article, auxiliary verbs, noun and preposition.

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