

USING ERROR ANALYSIS IN TEACHING WRITING CLASS

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Abstrak. Membuat kesalahan adalah bagian dari proses belajar (Brown, 1980:164). Demikian juga dalam proses pemerolehan bahasa kedua, Jain (1969:189) mengatakan bahwa kesadaran adanya kesalahan pembelajar bahasa kedua adalah sangat penting untuk pemahaman proses pemerolehan bahasa kedua. Berkaitan dengan kesalahan dalam belajar bahasa, teori analisis kesalahan (*error analysis*) muncul. Analisis kesalahan digunakan untuk mengetahui proses pemerolehan dan penguasaan bahasa. Artikel ini membahas penggunaan analisis kesalahan dalam pengajaran ketrampilan bahasa khususnya menulis (*writing*). Materi mata kuliah ini berkaitan dengan pengembangan paragraf. Analisis kesalahan dalam pengajaran menulis meliputi grammar (tata bahasa) dan teori pengembangan paragraf. Penggunaan analisis kesalahan dalam pengajaran menulis ini sangat menguntungkan baik bagi mahasiswa maupun pengajar.

Kata kunci: error analysis, grammar, errors, mistakes, lapses

Introduction

In learning a foreign or second language, a learner and even native speakers cannot avoid making mistakes, even when learning English. Brown (1980:164) states that making mistakes is a part of the process in human learning, as seen in the following quotation.

Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes. Mistakes, misjudgment, miscalculations, and erroneous assumptions form an important aspect of learning virtually any skill or acquiring information (Brown, 1980:164).

The learners and teachers of language realize that errors in learning language always happen. This realization is very important to understand the process of the second language acquisition, as Jain says that "The realization that the second language learners' errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of the second language acquisition" (1969:189).

Relating to the errors in learning language, the theory of error analysis is promoted. Error analysis is used to know the process of language acquisition and language mastery. Error analysis can be applied in any skills of learning language.

This paper deals with the use of error analysis in teaching English skills, especially writing. It is teaching activity which the writer has done in teaching Writing in English Department, Faculty of Letters, UNTAG'45 Surabaya. In this paper, the discussion is divided into two parts, the discussion of error analysis in general, and the discussion of error analysis in teaching Writing.

Discussion

Error Analysis

Error analysis is used to analyze errors in using language made by the second language learners. The aim of this error analysis is to describe language items which are

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difficult to master and the causes of the errors. Brown divides errors into two kinds, that is, error and mistakes. An error is “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner”, while “a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly” (1980:165). Corder in Bell (1987:172) divides error or “fault” into three kinds: error (the grammatically incorrect form), mistake (the socially inappropriate form), and lapse (the slip of the tongue/pen), each of which is explained below.

Errors

An error is “a sure sign that the learner has not mastered the code of the target language” (Bell, 1987: 172). Relating to the source of the error, Bell (1987:172) says that if an error concerns with faulty knowledge of the grammar of the second language, the error is defined as something arising as a result of the second language learning and if it does not, the error must be found in the first language user of the language.

Mistake

In contrast to errors, mistakes can be made by both the first and the second language users of a language. Mistakes appear because of social gaffs of varying degrees of seriousness (Bell, 1987:172).

Lapses

This third kind is the lightest fault. Bell says that “since face-to-face communication is a real time activity, all speakers whether native or not make slips or lapses”, and that is why this fault can be ignored for practical purposes, unless they appear frequently, which makes the hearer disturbed by them (1987:172). According to Klassen, “an error is considered to be more serious” and she defines an error as “a form or structure that a native speaker deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use” (1991:10) Error analysis deals with the investigation of the language of second language learners (Corder, 1971:158). About error analysis, Brown states:

The fact that learners 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 learners’ errors, called error analysis” (1980 : 166).

The Use of Error Analysis in Teaching Writing Class

Writing is one of the subjects taught in English Department, Faculty, of Letters, Untag’45 Surabaya. This subject is given to the first-semester until the seventh semester students, each of which is respectively called Writing I to Writing V.

This paper is focused on dealing with Writing II concerning with making paragraph. To teach this subject, the lecturer gives material on elements of a paragraph and how to make good paragraphs, such as topic, topic sentence, supporting sentence, title, coherence, unity, etc. After discussing a certain material or topic and giving the examples, the students are asked to do exercises relating to the topic discussed. Most of the exercises are making paragraphs. They are done in the class and also at home. When

the students do it in class, they submit their works directly to the teacher after a given time limit. Their works are then analyzed directly by giving signs on their wrong parts without correcting them, and returned to them and each of them are asked to identify and rewrite their wrong sentences and sometimes their paragraph on the board. The other students are asked to correct the wrong parts written on the board. If the wrong parts have been corrected by the students, the teacher and students discuss them together. From this activity, the students will get much about writing good sentences and paragraphs and they learn more from the errors they have made.

Relating to the kinds of error discussed before, that is, mistake, lapses, and errors; in this paper, the terms used are error of competence (error) and error of performance (mistake). Lapses are not discussed here because they deal with speaking and this paper concerns with writing. However, to distinguish between error of competence and error of performance is not easy, for one error can be caused by both of them. Accordingly, to analyze the errors of the students' grammatical points, the words 'mostly' and 'mainly' are often used. Error analysis discussed in this paper deals with grammar and composition.

Grammar has an important role in writing. Without knowing grammar, learners cannot express their ideas well. Therefore, in teaching this subject, the lecturer cannot avoid talking about grammar. The discussion of grammar in writing is very useful to know the process of language acquisition and also to know their ability to express their idea through their sentences. Azar (1989) classifies grammatical errors into 12 kinds which are respectively discussed below. In each discussion, the illustrations are taken from the writing students' writing.

1 Singular and Plural Forms

English students often make errors relating to singular and plural forms. This error can be error of performance and error of competence. However, the first kind happens more frequently because the grammatical points are usually introduced at first stages of learning English. Therefore, most of learners have usually known this form. If they still have mistakes in using this, it is caused by their carelessness, or they forget it.

The error of competence may be also made by the learners especially the beginners. They have not mastered this grammatical point well. They do not really know that the plural form of English countable and regular nouns are added *-s* or *-es* if they are pluralized. While the uncountable nouns cannot be pluralized and irregular nouns change if they are in the plural form, like *child-children*, *mouse-mice*, *tooth-teeth*, etc. Both of the errors may be caused by the influence of the first language since in Indonesian there is no such kind of rule. If a noun is pluralized, it is written or spoken twice, like: *anak-anak*, *meja-meja*, etc. The errors found in the students' writing are listed below:

- 1) Many *student* have been prepared to have a test. (Many students have been prepared to have a test).
- 2) The *phenomena* is easily seen. (The phenomenon is easily seen / The phenomena are easily seen).
- 3) I have some *watchs*. (I have some watches).

2 Word Form

Word form in this case relates to inflectional derivation. The students tend to make errors of competence because the change of word form in English has no the same rules among the groups of word. In Indonesian, however, most of the words can be changed in the same way. For example :

Indonesian	: cantik (adjective) --- kecantikan (noun) Bijaksana (adj;) --- kebijaksanaan (noun)
English	: beautiful (adj;) --- beauty / beautician (noun) wise (adj;) --- wisdom (noun)

The examples of the students' errors can be seen below.

- 4) Mita is a very *arrogance* girl. (Mita is a very arrogant girl.)
- 5) Every person wants to *success*. (Every person wants to succeed / be successful.)
- 6) *Alive* in cities is sometimes harder than in villages. (Life in cities is sometimes harder than in villages)

3 Verb Tense

Tense is a grammatical point which causes many errors in learning English. This is due to the fact that Indonesian has no complicated tenses like in English. In English, there are 16 kinds of tense, each of which has different form and function. Because of the outstanding differences, the English learners often make errors in using tenses mainly because the influence of the first language. Accordingly, the students perform more error of competence than of performance. The examples:

- 7) The dean has given his speech an hour ago before the seminar has been began. (The dean gave his speech an hour ago before the seminar began. / The dean has given his speech before the seminar began)
- 8) While we are talking about the program, Amir's father listens to us. (While we are talking about the program, Amir's father is listening to us.)

4 Word Choice

Error concerning with word choice is caused mostly by error of competence because the ability to choose the words appropriately to express an idea is related to the amount of vocabulary the students master. For examples :

- 9) Mr. Hendra *accepted* a letter from Jakarta yesterday. (Mr. Hendra received a letter from Jakarta yesterday.)
- 10) Senior students must *come* the proposal seminar. (Senior students must attend the proposal seminar.)
- 11) Don't *speak* other people about my secret. (Don't tell other people about my secret.)

5 Adding a word / words

To correct error by adding a word / words means that the students miss a word / words. This error is mainly caused by error of competence. This deals with pattern and

the usage of words in sentences. To avoid this error, students should master English sentence pattern. For examples:

- 12) We need invite some lecturers to be the speakers in the seminar. (We need to invite some lecturers in the seminar)
- 13) The woman did not show me the way to the nearest bank, so I could not reach. (The woman did not show me the way to the nearest bank, so I could not reach it.)
- 14) Why she leaves him alone while he is in trouble? (Why does she leave him alone while he is in trouble?)

6 Omitting a word

This is the opposite of the kind of error above. This error happens because the students use a word which is not necessary. This error can be error of performance and error of competence. The examples:

- 15) No one is allowed to enter into his private room. (No one is allowed to enter his private room.)
- 16) That beautiful girl does not love with Agung even though he loves her badly. (That beautiful girl does not love Agung even though he loves her badly.)
- 17) That skinny old man is works hard every day. (That skinny old man works hard every day.)

7 Word Order

The errors relating to word order are mostly caused by interference of Indonesian, then most of them are errors of competence. There are some differences between Indonesian and English word order or sentence pattern. For examples :

- 18) I yesterday saw my old friend in the campus new. (I saw my old friend in the new campus yesterday./ Yesterday, I saw my old friend in the new campus.)
- 19) His wife once a week sends him a letter. (His wife sends him a letter once a week.)
- 20) Last night, Dina and her friends went to a cake shop and ice cream on Jalan Kertajaya. (Last night, Dina and her friends went to a cake and ice cream shop on Jalan Kertajaya.)

8 Incomplete Sentence

This error which is caused by incompetence is not only made by students in English, but also in Indonesian. The wrong sentences made usually lack of predicates. The examples:

- 20) The man wearing a blue shirt who becomes the moderator. (The man wearing a blue shirt becomes the moderator. / The man wearing a blue shirt and who becomes the moderator is going to study abroad.)
- 21) I have difficulties finishing my paper. Because I only have few references. (I have difficulties finishing my paper because I only have few references.)
- 22) Even though she has many activities in her faculty. She is able to manage his time to study hard. (Even though she has many activities in her faculty, she is able to manage his time to study hard.)

9 Spelling

Wrong spelling made by the students is mainly included in error of performance. This may be caused by carelessness, being in hurry, and so on. For examples:

- 23) Have you writen a letter for your father in Lamongan? (Have you written a letter for your father in Lamongan?)
- 24) This chapter is devided into three sub-chapters. (This chapter is divided into three sub-chapters.)
- 25) His opinion is not aproprate for the solution of the problem. (His opinion is not appropriate for the solution of the problem)

10 Punctuation

Most of the usage of punctuation in Indonesian and in English is the same. Therefore, the error in using punctuation is mostly error of performance. The errors are usually in the form of missing full stop at the end of a sentence, lack of a comma, not using a capital letter for the first letter or for proper nouns, etc. Though it seems little error, it frequently happens in students' writing. For examples:

- 26) When the competition began the stadium had been full of people. (When the competition began, the stadium had been full of people.)
- 27) All the students in my class went to borobudur last week. (All the students in my class went to Borobudur last week.)
- 28) My mother will buy some vegetables, that is, eggplants, beans, cabbage and carrots. (My mother will buy some vegetables, that is, eggplants, beans, cabbage, and carrots.)

11 Article

Errors of performance or mistakes have an important role in making this wrong usage of article appear. It is, however, also possible that this error is error of competence. In English, there are only three articles which are sometimes neglected by the students. For examples:

- 29) Rudy wants to become presenter. (Rudy wants to become a presenter.)
- 30) Most of people in villages work as farmers. (Most of the people in villages work as farmers.)
- 31) There is a authentic material which can be used as data. (There is an authentic material which can be used as data / the data)

12 Run-on-Sentence

When the students make complex sentences, they often make errors. They combine the sentences by using a comma only, so the relation between the two sentences is not so clear. This kind of error also often happens in Indonesian. That is why, when the students often make this kind of error in his first language/ Indonesian, they tend to repeat the same thing in learning English. For examples:

- 32) Miss Indah was writing in her room, her young brother was reading a novel. (Miss Indah was writing in her room and / while her young brother was reading a novel.)

- 33) Monetary crisis still happens in our country, our government has tried to overcome it. (Monetary crisis still happens in our country although our government has tried to overcome it.)
- 34) Mr. Ahmad's son is often absent, he likes playing games. (Mr. Ahmad's son is often absent. He likes playing games.)

In teaching Writing, the error analysis is not only focused on grammatical error, but also the composition as well. The routine activity done by the teacher to correct the students' compositions is correcting them at home. The other way is asking some students to write down their paragraphs on the board. Then together with all the students in the class, the teacher corrects the paragraphs. The other way is that the teacher copies some of the students' paragraphs as examples and give them to all students. Then the students are asked to analyze and correct them. After that, together with the students, the teacher discusses the wrong parts and reconstruct them.

The errors relating to composition include topic, title, main ideas, supporting sentences, unity, coherence, etc. In detail, the paragraphs are analyzed based on the relation among sentences: whether one sentence or the next one has a connection, whether the idea in one sentence supports the previous one, whether the main idea in the paragraph has already been focused, etc. After being analyzed based on the grammatical point and the theory of paragraphs, the students are asked to rewrite the paragraphs in order that they know the good ones.

Advantages of Error Analysis

The use of error analysis in Writing Class is very useful for the teacher, the students, and also the researcher. Those advantages are listed below.

For Teachers

- a. Teachers will know how far the students' ability in writing is, so teachers can reconstruct the teaching material.
- b. Teachers can remedy the teaching methods.
- c. By knowing errors made by students, teachers also get input relating to knowledge of language.

For Students

- a. By knowing the error of performance, students can avoid or decrease their carelessness.
- b. Relating to error of competence, students can improve their grammatical points which can support their English mastery.
- c. Students become skilled in using their power of reasoning.
- d. Students are helped to understand and to predict errors they make and try to analyze how the errors appear.

For Researchers

- Language researchers get new data about how English acquired and learned, as cited by Brown (1980:164) below.

Researchers and teachers of second languages soon came to realize that the mistakes a person made in this process of constructing a new system of language needed to be analyzed carefully, for they possibly held in them some of the keys to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition. Besides the advantages, there are some difficulties in using error analysis in teaching Writing Subject. The difficulty is that this activity needs a lot time and the teacher's energy. Therefore, the teacher should be able to manage the activity and the time, so the teaching material in one semester can be taught well. Working outside of the class must also be done by the teacher to correct, rewrite, and copy the students' writing to be discussed in the following meeting.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that using error analysis in teaching Writing Class is very advantageous. Based on the writer's experience in applying this activity, teaching Writing Class by using error analysis can reduce boredom. Moreover, there are many inputs relating to English grammatical points, expressing ideas in sentences and paragraphs, and learning English in general both for the teacher and the students. Even though this activity consumes a lot of time, this problem is not so significant that it can be handled so far. At the end, this paper is far from perfect; therefore, comments, suggestions, criticisms, objections will be well appreciated to make this paper better.

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