

ERRORS ANALYSIS IN SHORT BIOGRAPHY TEXT WRITTEN BY THE 11th GRADE STUDENTS OF A VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN SINGARAJA

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Abstract

This study was a descriptive qualitative study aimed at analysing types of error and sources of error in the short biography text writings in English language teaching (ELT) context. The subject of this study was 11th Grade of Accounting Department Students of a Vocational High School in Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016. The instruments in the study were researcher, tabulation table, and interview guide. The textual analysis design was used in this study to gather the data. The students' errors were analysed according to surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982). This study revealed that misformation was the most frequent errors occurred in the students' writings, followed by omission, addition, and misordering. Furthermore, the sources of error were identified according to four sources of error by Brown (2007). This study found that interlingual transfer was the main sources of students' errors, followed by context of learning, interlingual transfer, and communication strategy. Related to these findings, the present study suggested that teachers pay more serious attention to students' errors by comparing the students' first language system and the target language system in order to avoid errors.

Keywords: error analysis, short biography text, surface strategy taxonomy, sources of error

INTRODUCTION

The AEC has been applied since 1st January 2016 (Juwana, 2016). The AEC permits the people to visit and work in their countries each other. The AEC is not only open up the flow of goods or services, but also the labour market professionals (Hermino, 2016). It considers that challenges are conducted in ASEAN. A primary challenge is the use of English in various fields such as governmental, educational and business (Stroupe & Kimura, 2015). In Indonesia, English is learnt as a foreign language (Mardijono, 2003). According to Kemdikbud (2015), English is learnt as the compulsory subject in Junior High School, Senior High School, and Vocational High School.

Each of education level in Indonesia must use a curriculum as one of the most important guidelines. It is the part of the educational program (Rudy, 2015). One of curriculums in Indonesia is Curriculum 2013 or Kurikulum 2013 (K13) that aims to

prepare Indonesian in order to have ability to life as individuals and citizens, who have a belief, who are productive, creative, innovative, effective, as well as contributing to the society, nation, state, and world civilization.

Writing as productive skill seems to be the most complex and hardest language skill. According to Male (2005), writing is difficult to be mastered in second or foreign language. In addition, Foster (2001) asserts that the most difficult job is writing a good English. In writing, the students must be able to put their ideas into written forms and can use the target language elements, such as the use of grammar. The correct grammar is important to avoid misunderstandings (Subasini&Kokilavani, 2013).

The use of simple past tense seems to be the most difficult one for the students because it needs complicated considerations. According to Azar (2002), the simple past tense indicates an activity or situation began and ended at a particular time in the past. The simple past tense has its considerations to use the past forms of regular and irregular verbs. In these cases, the students in learning English as a foreign language often face problem in producing sentences in the form of past tense.

According to the preliminary observation, the students were less proficient in grammar. The students need more special attention from their teacher, such as giving feedback and correction to solve their errors. It is important because Curriculum 2013 in the Vocational High School indicates grammar as one of the evaluation criteria of the linguistic elements. Furthermore, grammar is very important to be mastered by accounting department students in order to have good English communication skills that can be used in the workplace. It is the basic requirement for the accounting professionals to prepare written materials such as reports, interpretations and footnotes for management review, perusal and decision (Siddiqui, 2014).

In sum, the researcher intended to conduct a study entitled “Error Analysis in Short Biography Text Written by the 11th Grade Students of a Vocational High School in Singaraja.” The study was conducted on the 11th Grade of Accounting Department Students of a Vocational High School in Singaraja in the academic year 2015/2016, because it was found that a lot of the students still committed grammatical errors in their writings, especially in the use of simple past tense. Then, the students’ writing in the form of short biography text was chosen to be analysed because the simple past tense is used in this kind of writing that becomes problems for the students. Furthermore, grammar becomes one of the evaluation criteria of the linguistic elements and it is needed in order to have good communication skills in the workplace. In addition, the result of this study is expected to enrich the teachers’ knowledge related to grammatical errors and the teachers can use the result of this study as a guideline to solve the common students’ errors.

METHOD

This study was a descriptive qualitative study. The qualitative research allows the researcher to make an interpretation of what the researcher sees, hears, and understands (Craswell, 2009). Meanwhile, textual analysis (TA) was used in this study to gather the data. It refers to a methodology which is used to gather data (McKee, 2003). In this case, the ex-post facto research design was applied. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007: 264) state that ex-post facto is “from what is done afterwards”. The textual analysis was used to report what happened in the texts. The general purpose of textual analysis is to find out something about how the texts are structured (Davis and McKay, 1998). This study was focused on analysing the types of error and the sources of error in

the students' short biography text writings that had been collected from XIB and XIC accounting department students of a vocational high school in Singaraja, in the academic year 2015/2016.

The three research instruments used in this research namely: researcher, tabulation table, and interview guide. Then, the procedure of the data collection was started from the objectives of the study, then the types and the sources of error in the students' writings were noted according to the types and sources of error.

According to Corder (1974), in Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005: 57), there are five steps in analysing students' errors, namely: collecting a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and error evaluation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There were four types of error found in the students' short biography writings. those are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Occurrence of Each Type of Error

No.	Types of error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Omission	152	36.78
2.	Addition	39	9.38
3.	Misformation	217	52.16
4.	Misordering	7	1.68
Total Occurrences:		415	100.00

In Table 1, it can be seen that the error of omission was committed 152 times or 36.63 % by the students. Then, the error of addition was committed 39 times or 9.40 % by the students. Moreover, the error of misformation was committed 217 times or 52.29 % by the students. In addition, the error of misordering was committed 7 times or 1.69 % by the students.

There were four sources of error revealed in the students' short biography writings. those are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Occurrence of Each Source of Error

No.	Sources of error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Interlingual Transfer	286	71.68
2.	Intralingual Transfer	33	8.27
3.	Context of Learning	59	14.79
4.	Communication Strategy	21	5.26
Total Occurrences:		399	100.00

In Table 2, it can be seen that the interlingual transfer was committed 286 times or 71.68%. Then, the intralingual transfer was committed 33 times or 8.27%. Moreover, the context of learning was committed 59 times or 14.79%. In addition, the communication strategy was committed 21 times or 5.26%.

The errors of omission were found in the students' writings. Those consisted of the omission of grammatical morphemes, such as copula "to be", suffix "s", suffix "ed", possessive ('s), preposition, definite article "the", and indefinite article "a/an". For examples:

(i) "*She also a leader of guerrilla forces during Aceh War.*" It shows that the students committed an error of omission. It can be seen that the copula of *to be* "was" was omitted by the students when it is supposed to be in between the subject "*She*" and the adverb "*also*" to make it in the correct form of simple past tense. Therefore, it is supposed to be "*She was also a leader of guerrilla forces during Aceh War.*" In addition, it was assumed that the error was caused by the interlingual transfer. It can be viewed from how the students produced the sentence. In the sentence (4.1), the students used the structure of their first language system "*Dia juga seorangpasukangerilyaselamaPerang Aceh.*" It can be seen that the students translated one word by one word of their first language production into the target language.

(ii) "*R.A. Kartini was born 21st April 1979*" It shows that the students committed an error of omission as well. It can be seen that the preposition "*on*" was omitted by the students when it is supposed to be in between the verb "*born*" and the date "*21st*". The correction of the sentence (4.5) is "*R.A. Kartini was born on 21st April 1979*" It was assumed that the students committed the error because of their communication strategy. The students produced the sentence according to his/her communication strategy.

Thus, this study found that the errors of omission were mostly caused by interlingual transfer or interference of the students' first language system. It is committed when the target language system has not been mastered by the students and the only previous linguistic system can give the interference to the target language (Brown, 2007). In addition, errors of omission were also caused by communication strategy. In these case, the students used their communication strategy to produce the sentences. It is relevant to Brown's theory of sources of error (2007), students obviously use production strategies in order to enhance getting their messages across. This strategy made the students committed errors in their writings. Cholipah (2014) also found interlingual transfer and communication strategy as the sources of error in her study.

Errors of addition were found in the students' writings. It occurs if the students present the items that should not be presented in the correct sentences (Dulay et al., 1982). In this study, it was found that the students just added a linguistic item to the correct sentence. For examples:

(i) "*Cut NyakDhien was become a leader of guerrilla forces during Aceh war.*" It shows that the students committed an error of addition. It can be seen that the verb "*become*" was added by the students. It is supposed to be "*Cut NyakDhien was a leader of guerrilla forces during Aceh war.*" The students committed the error because they wanted to use the verb "*become*," but he/she had an incorrect hypothesis and concept to the target language. In this case, the students tried to make the sentence in the form of past tense by adding the copula of the *to be* "was" before the verb "*become*" when it is supposed to use verb2 "*became*." It was assumed that the students committed the error because of intralingual transfer. It is the negative transfer within the target language itself (Brown, 2007).

(ii) "*She had a one son.*" It shows that the students committed an error of addition. It can be seen that the indefinite article "*a*" and the determiner "*one*" were used by the students. Both of the indefinite article "*a*" and the determiner "*one*" have

the similar indication to present a single noun. It is supposed to be “*She had a son*” or “*She had one son*”. The addition could be the result of the uncertainty of which word is appropriate to be used. Thus, it was assumed that the students committed the error because of the context of learning. The students just used the words according to their memorization. The students thought to use the article “*a*” for the single noun. However, the students also used the determiner “*one*” that made a redundant use of an indefinite article “*a*” before a determiner “*one*.”

This study found that the error of addition was mostly caused by intralingual transfer. It was the result of the students’ incorrect concept and hypothesis to the target language system either for the morphemes or structures. It is relevant to Brown’s theory of sources of error (2007), the intralingual transfer is the negative transfer within the target language. The students had their ways to produce the sentence without the interference of his/her first language. The students generalised the rules of the target language, but they did not use their first language system to make errors. It means that the students committed errors when he/she tried to develop their English proficiency. Cholipah (2014); Phuket and Othman (2015) also found the sources of error from intralingual transfer in their study. In addition, the error of addition was also caused by the context of learning. In this case, the students used the target language according to his memorization in their context of learning. It is relevant to the Brown’s theory of sources of error (2007), the students commit error because of the situation in the context of learning. The students make an incorrect hypothesis about the language (Bayinah, 2013).

Errors of misformation were found in the students’ short biography text writings. The error of *misformation* or *error selection* refers to errors that are characterised by the use of the incorrect forms of the morpheme or structure (Corder, 1981 & Dulay et al., 1982). According to the percentage, this type of error was the most frequently occurred. For examples:

(i) “*Cut NyakDien have many followers.*” It shows that students committed misformation of the verb “*have*” that should be in the form of past tense “*had*”. According to the context of the students’ writing, it was telling about a past event. Thus, it is supposed to be “*Cut NyakDien had many followers.*” In this case, the students did not choose the correct verb for their sentence that made them committed an error in the use of simple past tense. The students do not change the verb “*have*” into past form “*had*.” It was assumed that the error was caused by interlingual transfer. In this case, the students used the structure of their first language system, the verbs have no rules to change into past forms to tell a past event.

(ii) “*Her was graduated in 2014*” It can be seen that the possessive pronoun “*Her*” was used wrongly instead of the word “*She*” as the subject singular pronoun. In this case, the students did not have a comprehension in differentiating the morphemes “*Her*” and “*She*”. “*Her*” is a possessive pronoun while “*She*” is a singular pronoun that has its own rule as a subject. It was assumed that this error was caused by the students’ context of learning. The students just used the language according to his/her memorization. This situation led the students to commit errors.

This study found that error of misformation was mostly caused by interlingual transfer. The students used the target language with the interference of their first language system. In this case, they did not change the verbs into past forms to write a past event and they also used prepositions in English wrongly because they used prepositions as simple as Bahasa Indonesia that may use a preposition such as (*pada*) for

the day, month, and year. It is relevant to Brown's theory of sources of error (2007), the interlingual transfer is committed if the target language system has not been mastered by the students and the only previous linguistic system can give the interference to the target language. Then, the error of misformation was also caused by the context of learning. The students used the language according to his/her memorization in the context of learning. It is also relevant to Brown's theory of sources of error (2007). A similar study was also conducted by Cholipah (2014) who found interlingual transfer and context of learning as the sources of error in her study.

Error of misordering was the least type that occurred in the students' short biography text writings. This type of error occurred because the students display the correct elements. However, they did incorrect placements of morphemes or a group of morphemes in their utterances. Misordering refers to the errors that occur when the elements are presented correctly. However, the sequences are presented wrongly (Corder, 1981 & Dulay, et al., 1982). For examples:

(i) *"When he no had money."* It shows that the students committed an error of misordering. It can be seen from the word *"no."* It is supposed to be written in between the verb *"had"* and the noun *"money."* In other words, the students wrongly put the correct position of the morpheme *"no."* The correction of the sentence is supposed to be *"When he had no money."* It was assumed that the error occurred because of interlingual transfer. In this case, the students translated one word by one word of the students' first language.

(ii) *"Her was school at SMP Negeri 3 Singaraja."* An error of misordering can be seen from the possessive singular pronoun *"Her"* that was wrongly placed by the students. *"Her"* should be followed by the noun *"school."* Then, the copula *of to be "was"* should be in between of the noun *"school"* and the preposition *"at"*. Hence, it is supposed to be *"Her school was at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja."* It was assumed that the error was caused by communication strategy. The students used their own strategy to produce the sentence and they committed errors. In the sentence (4.18), it can be seen that the students misplaced the correct position of the words. Students obviously use production strategies in order to enhance getting their messages across (Brown, 2007).

This study found that error of misordering was caused by communication strategy. The students used their own strategy to produce the target language productions. It is relevant to Brown's theory of sources of error (2007), students obviously use production strategies in order to enhance getting their messages across. This strategy made the students committed errors in their writings. A study was conducted by Cholipah (2014) also found the sources of error that came from communication strategy in her study.

The findings of this study were slightly different from the study that was conducted by Saad and Sawalmeh (2014). They found that omission as the most frequently occurred in the role-play presentations. Meanwhile, this study found that misformation was the most frequently occurred in the students' short biography text writings. It was similar to the study that was conducted by Muhamed et al. (2013), who found that misformation as the most frequently occurred. Then, this study found that omission was the secondly type of the students' errors. Furthermore, addition and misordering were as the least types of the students' errors. It was similar to findings from Saad and Sawalmeh (2014) and Muhamed et al. (2013).

In addition, this study was also different from the study that was conducted by Cholipah, (2014) who found that communication strategy was the most source of error.

Meanwhile, this study found that interlingual transfer was the most sources of the students' errors. This was supported by Phuket and Othman (2015) who found the interlingual or native language interference was found to be the dominant source of error. The secondly source of the errors in the study that was conducted by Cholipah (2014) referred to interlingual transfer. Meanwhile, this study found that context of learning was the secondly source of the students' errors. Then, it was consistent with the study that was conducted by Cholipah (2014) who found the thirdly source of the students' errors was intralingual transfer. Equally, this study also found that intralingual transfer was the thirdly source of the students' errors. In addition, this study found that communication strategy was the least source of the error. Otherwise, it was different from the study that was conducted by Cholipah (2014) who found that context of learning was the least sources of the error.

evaluation of the students' error

Referred to the whole findings, this study found that misformation was the most common type of students' errors occurred in the students' writings. Most of the students used the incorrect forms of the morpheme and structure. It meant that the students committed the errors because they did not master the English grammar. In this case, the students must be given deep attention related to the grammatical aspects such as Subject-verb agreement, parts of speech: noun, pronouns, preposition, and verb forms.

Furthermore, this study found that the interlingual transfer became the most sources of the students' error. According to Brown (2007), the interlingual transfer is committed when the target language system has not been mastered by the students and the only previous linguistic system can give the interference to the target language. Related to the findings, it could be concluded that the students were difficult to master the target language because of the difference between the students' first language system and the target language system. In other words, the students mostly committed the errors because of the interference of their first language. It can be suggested that the teachers can teach the target language by comparing the students' first language system and the students' target language system. It is expected to make the students are able to differentiate the first language system and the target language system in order to avoid the students' errors.

In addition, from the four types of error found in the students' short biography text writings, this study revealed that the misformation error was the most type of the students' errors. While the interlingual transfer or the interference of the students' first language was the most source of the students' errors. However, the misformation was not only caused by the interlingual transfer or first language interference but also other sources of error, such as intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategy. Many errors do not have relation to the native languages (Dulay et al., 1982). The students committed the errors because of the difference between the students' first language system and the target language system. In this case, the first language, such as Bahasa Indonesia, verbs do not inflect either for tense or agreement, nouns do not inflect for plurality, and article rules in Bahasa Indonesia are too simple compared to those of English (Faisal, Mulya, & Syamsul, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The result of this study showed that the students committed some grammatical errors in their short biography text writings. This study found four different types of

error. Misformation was the most frequently occurred. Then, it was followed by omission, addition, and misordering.

Furthermore, the sources of the students' error were also identified in this study. The findings indicated that the most source of the students' error was interlingual transfer. Then, it was followed by context of learning, intralingual transfer, and communication strategy.

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