

Surface Strategy Taxonomy on the Efl Students' Paragraph Writing in Border Area

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to reveal students' error in writing paragraphs. The errors were limited to the surface strategy taxonomy. The study applied descriptive method. The 27 second semester students of English Department of Timor University were asked to write free types paragraphs within 30 minutes. The result of the study showed that based on the surface strategy taxonomy analysis, second semester students of English Department of Timor University produced errors in their writing. The most dominant error was found in the category of omission. The errors revealed the students' lack of understanding in English language grammatical rules. In line with the research result, the students are hoped to increase their knowledge of English language by not speaking their native language in the English class.

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1. Introduction

English is widely used in many fields and industries such as politics, science, arts, tourism, and economics (Al-Khasawneh, 2014). There are four main skills contained in languages such as reading, listening, writing and speaking. To successfully master English language, learners should be able posed those mentioned skills (Brown, 2000).

Writing as one of the language skills Bis defined as the act of forming symbols, letter or combination of letters, which relate to the sound when we speak, arranged according to certain conventions to form words and words arranged to form sentences (Byrne, 1997).

In writing skill, learners produce sentences in a particular order and connected together in specific ways (Al-Khasawneh, 2014). The facts show that learners encounter many difficulties when trying to produce sentences or to write English paragraphs. Therefore, written production is one of the most difficult tasks for many ESL/EFL learners (Harris and Cunningham in Al-Khasawneh, 2014). The importance of English writing is emerging dominant in both educational programs and in professional writing in non-English dominant countries (Leki in Ho & Duong, 2015).

Error analysis has become an interesting task for the teachers teaching writing as it helps them identify their own teaching methodologies and their students' ability in writing and to guide them in choosing the strategies and topics that best suit the students' capacity. Moreover, teachers find teaching writing really difficult as it requires a lot of effort and carefulness. Thus, patience is highly required from the teachers in order to improve students' ability to write.

Researchers and teachers of foreign language came to realize that the mistakes a learner made in the process of constructing a new system of language is needed to be analyzed carefully, for they possibly held in them some of the keys to the understanding of second language acquisition. It is not a new idea that errors should be treated as a developmental problem and that instructors should exercise patience in dealing with them (Robinson, 1998).

Based on the writer's experiences in teaching writing subject, the students get difficulties in writing, even in writing very simple sentences. They often commit errors when they are writing a paragraph. One of the basic reasons of this problem is insufficient knowledge of English itself. As the consequence, errors in writing become something that cannot be avoided. For instance, when students are asked to write their experience, they still used the infinitive form of verbs, for instance go instead of went, meet instead of met, etc. Almost the writings are linguistically errors even though we know that linguistics is a crucial matter for someone who is learning a language. For this sake, the writer reckons that it is important to conduct research on the students' error in writing as for Hammad (2012), understanding the learners' problems in writing skill is very important for a language teacher in order to improve the quality of second or foreign language writing. This research will be carried out under the title Surface Strategy Taxonomy on the EFL Students' Paragraph Writing in Border Area. this study was conducted in the Timor University, one of the public universities in NTT which is located in the border area of Indonesia and Timor Leste.

2. Methods

The present study is an error analysis study aims at investigating the types and frequency of writing errors committed by the second semester students of English Department of Timor University. The subject of this study were the second semester students of English department of Timor University which consisted of 27 students. These students were programming paragraph writing subject. All participants were asked to write free types paragraphs within 30 minutes. The descriptive method was employed in this study. The data were analyzed based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et all (1982). After classifying, the researcher then calculated the most frequent errors that were made by students. Finally, the researcher described, explained, interpreted, and then concluded the data.

3. Result and Discussion

The finding shows that the students produced errors in their writing. The errors and their percentage are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Percentage of students' error

No	Type of Error	Number of Error	Percentage of Error (%)
1	Omission	72	48.97
2	Addition	34	23.12
3	Misformation	23	15.64
4	Misordering	18	12.24
	Total	147	100

The data in the above table shows the classifications of students' errors in writing paragraph with their percentage. Based on the surface strategy taxonomy, it clearly seen that there are four types of error appeared in students writing such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Out of 147 number of errors, omission error gets the highest score i.e., 72 with the percentage 48.97%. This first rank is followed by addition error i.e., 34 with the percentage 23.12 %. Misformation takes the third place with the total error 23 and percentage 15.64 followed by 18 errors of misordering with the percentage 12.24 %.

Omission Error

Omission error deals with the deletion or absence of items that must appear in a well-formed utterance. In this research, omission is the most frequent error done by the students. From the findings, students produced many omission errors of grammatical morphemes such as to be, article, possessive indicator, plural form indicators, regular and irregular past tense, third person singular, preposition, demonstrative pronoun, conjunction and adjective noun phrase. The following sentences are examples of students' error of omission:

- a. Lidya study English in Timor University (S1)
In this sentence, the S1 omitted the -s in the verb study. In present tenses, every verb that preceded by third person singular subject should be added with -s. The right sentence should be Lidia studies English in Timor University.
- b. I very happy (S2)
To form noun sentence, one needs to add to be. In this sentence we can see that the S2 omitted to be before the adjective happy. The sentence must be I am very happy.
- c. On the way, we enjoy the nature (S6)
The regular past tense verb should be added with suffix -ed. The S6 was writing about his experience when he went to the beach and he omitted the suffix -ed in the word enjoy. The right sentence should be on the way we enjoyed the nature
- d. My best friend name is Ryan (S10)
In this sentence it is clearly seen that the S10 omitted the possessive indicator s. The sentence must be My best friend's name is Ryan

Addition error

Addition error is the opposite of omission. They are characterized by the addition of unnecessary item or the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. From the data, the students produced some types of addition error such as addition of articles, to be, suffix-ed, suffix-ing, and preposition. The following are some example of addition errors committed by the students in their writing:

- a. We are know each other very well (S11)
In this verbal sentence, the S11 makes an unnecessary addition of to be are. The right sentence must be We know each other very well.
- b. I went to Tanjung Bastian beach to celebrated my mother's birthday (S12)
The verb followed by to infinitive should be in base form even it is a past sentence. The right sentence must be I went to Tanjung Bastian to celebrate my mother's birthday.

- c. We gave our grandparents a food and a drinking (S15)
In this sentence, the S15 produce error of addition, i.e., the addition of article a and suffix -ing. The sentence must be We gave food and drink to our grandparents
- d. My grandparents lives in Alor (S19)
The addition of final -s in verb live makes the sentence wrong since the subject of the sentence is plural. There is no need for the students to add -s in the verb. The sentence should be My grandparents live in Alor

Misformation error

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong from the morpheme or structure. While in omission errors are the item is not supplied at all, in misformation errors the learner supplies something although it is incorrect. This type of error can cause the sentence become ungrammatical. The following are some examples of misformation in students writing:

- a. She hobby is singing (S22)
In this sentence, the S22 makes an overregulation of possessive pronoun. The right sentence must be Her hobby is singing
- b. Her has black hair (S27)
In this sentence, the student is alternating forms of subject pronoun. Instead of using possessive pronoun her, he should the subject pronoun she in his sentence. The right sentence must be She has black hair

Misordering error

Misordering error is a kind of error signed by a wrong placement of a morpheme or group morphemes in an utterance. This wrong placement brings error in the utterance. Some examples of misordering in the students writing are as follows:

- a. She has hair black and long (S16)
The order of this sentence is incorrect. The sentence must be She has black and long hair.
- b. Put the water hot into the cup (S20)
The same case with the previous sentence, the right form of this sentence should be Put the hot water into the cup

In line with the research finding, it is seen that the second semester students of English Department of Timor University committed errors in their writing. The result of this study shows that omission is the most frequent error found in the students' writing followed by addition, misformation, and misordering.

Based on the analysis of the interview, it is found that the errors happened because of the interference of the students' native language. Many students generated the system of English language with their native language, Indonesia language. The students used Indonesian system of language to construct English sentences in their paragraph writing. For example, the sentence produced by S20 "Put the water hot into the cup". If it is translated directly into Indonesian language, it becomes "Masukan air panas ke dalam cangkir". The students still use the Indonesian language system when producing English language.

Based on the observation, the researcher found another possibly caused of students' error in their writing is because they tend to speak Indonesian language in the English class. Moreover, some students speak their local language in the class. If

this habit is not eliminated, the students will always produce error in their writing and speaking.

4. Conclusion

ased on the result of the study, the writer concludes that second semester students of English department of Timor University commit errors in their writing. Kinds of errors encountered by the students are Omission (72) with the percentage 48.97%, Addition (34) with the percentage 23.12%, Misformation (23) with the percentage 15.64%, and misordering (18) with the percentage 12.24%. The most frequent errors encountered by the second semester students of English department of Timor University in their writing is omission.

In line with research finding and analysis, it is suggested that the students need to improve their writing skill. Moreover, students are hoped to not speak their native language in the English class as it becomes one of the factors causing error production. The teacher can see to what extent their students receive their explanation.

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