An Error Analysis on the Use of Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text
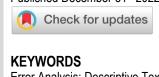
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ABSTRACT

The aims of this research include: (1) to identify the types of errors made by 12th grade of the students SMAN 13 Bone in their writing descriptive text, (2) to find out the dominant type of error, (3) to discover the source of error. This research used mix method. The instrument used in collecting the data was writing test. The test was given twice to the students. The population of this research was the 12th grade of the students SMAN 13 Bone. The sample was the 10% of the whole population which consisted of 42 students. In analyzing the data, the researcher found that the students made errors in using simple present tense in writing a descriptive text. The types of errors discovered, namely omission errors, addition errors, misformation errors, and misordering errors. The omission and misformation errors found to be the dominant errors in the students' writing descriptive text. The sources of errors include Inter-lingual and Intra-lingual transfer.

1. Introduction

Error analysis (EA) is a method used to analyze the speech or written performance of second / foreign language learners. Researchers approached Error Analysis (EA) from a various perspectives. Corder (1967) and Brown (2006) indicated that when students' make an error, it shows the students' ability. He considered the center of studying error analysis is not merely focused on the elimination of the errors itself, rather it is beyond that. In addition, he empathized on focusing in the students' errors as it is the display of the students' language features development.

Most EFL students deal with the difficulties in writing rather than speaking. In constructing a sentence, errors are still being encountered by the students whenever they try to write any texts (Ananda, Gani & Sahardin, 2014; Anggawirya et al., 2021). The perception of writing is very arduous which expects the students to have a comprehensive understanding, cognitive analysis, and linguistics synthesis to construct the language for them to have the ability to carry out the ideas, messages, and feelings to the listeners and/or readers by means of writing (Tan 2007). As a consequence, errors may occur in a various form of the language learners' writing, such as grammatical errors, cohesion errors, coherence errors, etc.

Present time, English is not widely used in the society in Indonesia, nor as an official communication media in neither the political matter and the educational system, but teaching English is more likely viewed as an important priority (Simatupang, 1999: 64). Thus, it inspired the researchers to look deeper into that matter which is error analysis, as they believe the unsatisfactory of EFL setting in Indonesia. Frankly, most of the grammatical errors are continuously detected in the students' writing. It could be the case that the use of simple present tense in the students' writing is more likely one of the grammatical error. The study was done by Siswoyo (2016) found 426 errors which were made by 57 students at English Department of Higher Education of Teacher Training and Education of Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Lampung. There were four types of errors occurred in the students' writing include 2.58% omission errors (the lack of a required item or morpheme in a well-formed utterance), 96.71% misformation errors (the wrong use of a morpheme or structure), 0.47% misordering errors (a morpheme or combination of morphemes being positioned incorrectly in a sentence), and 0.23% addition errors (the appearance of meaningless items or sentences that are frequently and poorly constructed). The number of errors in the previous study shows the lack of using simple present tense properly.

Therefore, it is a necessity to discover the students' errors in intending to avoid the future errors and to develop the students' writing ability. In accordance with the statement, the researchers are interested in carrying this research based on the research questions:

a. What are the types of errors in the students' writing descriptive text using simple present tense?
b. What are the dominants errors in using simple present tense of the students' writing in descriptive text?
c. What are the sources of errors in the students' writing descriptive text?

2. Literature Review

According to Corder (1973:257), the lack of competence as the language ability, has the possibility to be one of the reasons of the appearance of errors. They are usually uncorrectable because they are the result of a lack of skill. In addition, Brown (2006: 232) defines that errors are idiosyncratic in the inter-language of the learners' effectiveness which is a direct indication within a system. He further explains about an error which is a recognizable digression of adult grammar from a native speaker, delineating the inter-language aptitude of the learners. Hence, it is possible to conclude that errors are triggered by improper patterns of the targeted language's grammar that have been imprinted on students' minds. Thus, learners are unable to correct themselves because they are unenlightened of their inaccuracies.

The idea of error and mistake in the society is equivalent but that is invalid. In error analysis, it is a necessity to know the differences between error and mistake, technically those are two distinct concepts (Rahman, 2018). Both of error and mistake is aimed toward analyzing the learner language in a proper perspective. Brown (2006: 226) claims that a mistake refers to a performance defect, such as a guess made randomly or a slip caused by improper application of the system. In the situations where involving their native language and a second language, everyone makes mistake. Native speakers are typically able to identify and remedy such slip-ups or errors, which don't indicate a lack of proficiency but rather an intermittent breakdown or imperfection in the speech production process (Hasnia et al., 2022). The hesitations include slip-ups, pointless grammaticality, and other performance shortcomings in native speaker expression that also occur in discourse spoken in a second language. One can self-correct mistakes. In addition, Ellis (1997: 17) explains that Error indicates knowledge gaps in students because they are unsure of the correct answer, whereas mistake reveals rare gaps in results because the learners are unable to apply their information in a given situation (Rahman & Weda, 2019). Errors are rule based on regulation, systematic in nature, internally principled and free from capriciousness. It can be concluded, mistake resides on performance, on the other hand error resides on competence which is a consistent and systematic deviation and represents learners' ability at a particular phase.

Brown (1980:223-227) categorizes the sources of errors into four, including inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategy. Meanwhile, Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982: 150) classified the types of errors, namely descriptive taxonomies to analyze errors, namely linguistics category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy.

2. Method

This research used mixed methods because the researchers applied quantitative to answer the problem statement number 1 and 2, which aims to measure the students' errors in writing descriptive text, the researchers also applied qualitative to answer the problem statement number 3, which aims to analyze the sources of error made by the students. The data sources of this research are the descriptive text written by the 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone.

The procedures that the researchers took in collecting the data, including the writer decided to gather all the data via online, by asking permission to two different teachers to give the same assignment, in this case is to write a descriptive text. The students must collect their work before the deadline that was given by the teachers and the formats that the writer received were Microsoft word, Portable Document Format (PDF), and Joint Photographic Group (JPG).

The writer used a few approaches to analyze the data, including identifying errors, classifying errors, quantifying errors, identifying dominant errors, and characterizing error causes. The algorithm is used by the researchers to determine the percentage groups of students writing in the simple present tense in a descriptive paragraph:

$$X = \frac{\sum Er}{\sum W} \times 100\%$$

Which: X = the percentage of errors

Er = various of errors

W = words

Σ = the exact number

The writer grouped the students' mistakes into numerous categories. Error classification based on surface strategy taxonomy. Dulay et al. (1982: 150) classified errors into the following groups: (1) omission, (2) addition, (3) misformation, and (4) misordering are all examples of errors. The writer then calculated the percentage of each sort of inaccuracy. The writer used the 'Preselected Category Approach' advocated by Etherton (1977) and adapted by Norrish (1983) in this analysis, with the statistical computation based on Gulo's formula as follows:

$Pi = \frac{Fi}{n} \times 100\%$

Which: Pi = the percentage of mistakes that are made

Fi = percentage probability of a specific mistake type

n = total amount of errors discovered

After calculating the proportion, the writer estimated the average proportion of frequency of occurrence (Saleh, 2001). The writer utilized a simple statistical method in this investigation, namely the proportion as a whole (100%) split by the categories of errors seen. The outcome is known as the mean (PI). The third stage was to determine the degree of dominance of the specific fault. Any error whose (Pi P) is positive (+) is considered dominating. If, on the other hand, the result of (Pi P) is less than (), the error is regarded less dominating. The dominant errors are regarded as the responsibility of the students.

3. Result and Discussion

Error Analysis on the Use of Simple Present Tense in Descriptive Text

Here, the researchers provide data based on the theory used. In collecting the data the researchers used writing test. The test was given twice to the same sample within two weeks. The aim of the research to find out what are the types of errors, the dominant errors, and the sources of errors in writing descriptive text. The researchers discuss the result regarding to the research questions below:

3.1. The Types of Errors

Writing is one of the most crucial skills that students in senior high school must master. The purpose of writing is to deliver information in an accurate, effective, and suitable manner. Grammatically correct writing requires product. Furthermore, descriptive text is one of the styles of writing taught to students in SMAN 13 Bone. Unfortunately, the writer nevertheless noticed a number of inaccuracies. According to the prior explanation in the findings, the pupils' work contained all types of faults.

To examine errors, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982: 150) propose four descriptive taxonomies: linguistics category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparison taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. This study solely looks at the surface strategy taxonomy, which is divided into four sorts of errors: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Using the surface approach taxonomy, the researchers discovered the errors made by the 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone.

It is claimed that the SMAN 13 Bone 12th grade pupils are still struggling with employing the simple present in producing descriptive language. The researchers concluded that all of the students committed errors in utilizing simple present tense in the form of descriptive tense after examining the types of errors based on the surface approach taxonomy.

3.2. The Dominants Errors

After calculated the degree of dominants errors, the writer found that there are two dominants errors, namely omission and misformation errors. It shows that most of the 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone are still unable to use simple present tense in form of descriptive text. Specifically, in the form of omission is when the students tend to absent an important item in their sentence. Regularly, omission appears when the students did not add –s/es in their sentence (Liasari et al., 2011). The existence of omission is also because the students did not add the definite article in

a sentence (Norrish, 1983). It is supported by the result of the degree of dominance with 14 in the first test and 22.7 in the second test. Moreover, the other dominant error is misformation error. Misformation error is the incorrect use morpheme or structure because the misunderstanding of language in using some forms (Soetikno, 1996). It is proved by the result of calculation in degree of dominance with 13.53 in the first test and 9.23 in the second test. The writer then drew a conclusion that there are two dominants error made by the 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone, namely omission and misformation errors. The writer's statement is supported by the test which was given twice and after calculated the degree of dominance which the result is both positive.

3.3. The Sources of Errors in Students' Writing Descriptive Text

Inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, learning environment, and communication techniques are the four categories used to classify the sources of errors (Brown, 1980:223-227). The researchers observed two sources of errors in employing simple present tense in descriptive prose generated by SMAN 13 Bone students: inter-lingual transfer and intra-lingual transfer. Inter-lingual transfer, often known as a negative transfer, is the primary cause of error. It refers to mistakes that result from the intervention of the learner's mother tongue. According to the data, most students translate their statements without thinking if they are grammatically correct in their target language. The second form of inaccuracy is intra-lingual transfer, which is the reflection of the learners' skill at a specific level. The researchers discovered three sources of errors in intra-lingual transfer: overgeneralization (the appearance of errors when students apply a structure that they have already experienced in a new situation), ignorance of rule restrictions (the appearance of errors when students avoid the proper use of the rules in a certain structure), and incomplete application of rules (the appearance of errors when students avoid fully developing a str The researchers identified the sources of errors by examining the students' writing, as evidenced by the findings.

4. Conclusion

Regarding to the research findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researchers concluded that:

a. The 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone made errors in using simple present tense in writing a descriptive text. The number of errors discovered in the first test is 218 errors and in the second test is 260 errors made by the students. The researchers found that there are four types of errors appeared in the students' writing descriptive text, namely omission errors, addition errors, misformation errors, and misordering errors from both given tests.

b. From the two tests that were given to the students, the researchers drew a conclusion that omission and misformation errors are the dominant errors of the students' writing descriptive text. Both results from the first and second tests of omission and misformation errors are plus. For omission error, it is 14 and 22.7 and misformation error is 13.53 and 9.23.

c. In analyzing the errors made by the 12th grade students of SMAN 13 Bone, the researchers were able to find some sources of error, namely inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer. The researchers also discovered three sources of errors in intra-lingual transfer, namely overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restrictions, and incomplete application of rules.

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