Errors in English Descriptive Text Produced by High School Students in Manado

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ABSTRACT

Studying errors in English as a foreign language is crucial for both teachers and learners. This study aims to identify and analyze the types of errors in writing descriptive texts produced by students at SMA N 8 Manado, with a focus on determining the most prevalent types. This qualitative study employs the classification error theory based on Dulay et al. (1982), namely, the surface strategy taxonomy, omission, misordering, addition, and misformation. The students in SMA N 8 Manado, as the sample of this study, were asked to write a paragraph about their goals. The results of this study showed the percentage of errors made by students in writing descriptive text, which are, omission error (25,23%), error of misordering (7,47%), error of addition (10,28%), and error of misformation (57,94). This study also found other errors that are produced by some students that are not included in the classification of errors by Dulay et al (1982), they are errors in punctuation and capitalization.

1. Introduction

Error analysis is an essential aspect of evaluating written text in English. Soe (2021, p. 113) stated that analyzing errors in writing is an important thing to do in academic writing for second language and foreign language learners. Error analysis can be considered as one way to improve writing skills. By identifying students' points of failure or making error analysis, those who are involved in language teaching can focus to help the students to solve their difficulties in writing (Gaddafi, 2022; Ramadhani, 2020). Error analysis also can enhance students' language proficiency. Al-Khresheh (2013) claims about error analysis that deals with how people acquire and use a language. Accordingly, when students' writing errors are known by the teacher, the students' language and writing skills will be improved. EFL students tend to produce error(s) in their writing (Rahman et al., 2019; Prihandoko et al., 2021). Pancawati and Dwiastuti (2021) pointed out that errors in writing are a natural process of learning. It is also unavoidable and a necessary part during the learning process, even native speakers still produce lots of errors (Farisatma et al., 2017; Hasnia et al., 2022).

Descriptive text is one of the several texts which must be mastered by students in writing skills. Based on the Merriam-Webster dictionary, descriptive is about presenting observations from the characteristics of someone or something. Descriptive text is a text that contains a description of something, situation, or writing about person appearances. Thus, descriptive text plays an important purpose in writing to explain about something or someone. Ayu (2016) pointed out that readers can imagine the object in more detail through descriptive text writing. Hence descriptive text has a point of view to make students understand the whole material of text. So, students use a lot of descriptive text such as to describe someone or something in a way that can be understood by others.

Previous studies on error analysis, conducted across various populations, places, and time, have yielded different findings. For example, first, Dinamika and Hanafiah (2019) investigated and classify the syntactical error made by students of FIB-USU English Department in report text obtained the most predominant syntactical errors which comprises of 125 errors (50, 2 %) caused by intra-language error. Second, different research regarding error analysis using narrative text by Pardosi et al (2019) found out that theerror of misformation is the most frequent error in the ninth Grade of SMP Swasta Talitakum Medan with 150 errors. Third, Fitria (2020) conducted a study about error analysis at STIE AAS Surakarta on their writing composition of recount text and found that the most dominant error found in grammar is 53,37 % based on the frequency of each aspect of error. Additionally, Sari et al., (2021) also did an error analysis of students' recount text translation using surface strategy taxonomy in SMAN 1 Pringsewu, and it shows the most common error was misformation with the mother-tongue interference problem.

The existing studies have inspired the current research, which aims to analyze students' errors in descriptive text writing at SMA N 8 Manado. Notably, there is limited research on error analysis conducted in North Sulawesi. Moreover, based on the researcher's observation, and from the English teachers' suggestion, the students in SMA N 8 Manado produce some errors in writing and the teachers wanted to know the types of errors they dominantly produce. Thus, it is important to conduct an error analysis in this place.

2. Methodology

The research method of this study is qualitative. Creswell (2012) pointed out that qualitative research means for exploring and understanding the meaning individual or groups ascribe to a social human problem. Furthermore, to support findings, the researchers also used quantitative data to see the percentage of the most dominant error produced by students.

This study used purposive sampling method. In conducting a purposive sampling, the researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

The instrument of this study was a descriptive text writing test and human instrument to analyze the data. The students were asked to write a paragraph about their goals in approximately 100-150 words.

The data analysis has been through several steps. First, the researcher read the students' descriptive text writing carefully. Second, the researcher identifies the errors produced by students. Third, the researcher put them into categories based on Dulay et al's surface strategy taxonomy, namely, omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. After that, the researcher asked an expert to re-read and validate the findings to get a better interpretation. Finally, to get the result of the most dominant errors produced by students, the data will be calculated using percentage using the following formula:

$P = (f/n) \times 100\%$

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of error occurred

N = Number of cases (total frequent/total individual)

After doing the data analysis, the researchers made an interpretation based on the results of calculated data. The type of error that has the highest percentage was interpreted as the most dominant error produced by students in SMA N 8 Manado.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

There are two research questions in this study, first, is to find out the type of the errors produced by students, and the second, is to find out the most dominant error produced by the students.

To answer those questions, the researchers identified the students' error and counted the number of each error, then the total of error has been converted into percentages. The table below is the recapitulation of the students' descriptive text writing errors.

Table 1. The Classification of Errors

No	Surface Strategy Taxonomy	Total of Error	Percentage (%)
1	Omission	34	30,9%
2	Addition	33	30%
3	Misordering	7	6,3%
4	Misformation	36	32,72%
Total		110	100%

Based on the table above it can be clearly seen that there are four types of error produced by students, which are:

a. Misformation

Based on the data research it was found out that the highest percentage of error is misformation. It was found out that there are 36 errors in misformation or 32,72% of the whole errors. The researcher found out that most of the students could not distinguish the location of the article "an/a" in the sentences or the use of plural and singular. As the example:

Student's writing	Correction
I want to become **an** CEO	I want to become **a** CEO
My goals for the next five years (1) is to become a useful person and…	My goals for the next five years are to become a useful person and…

b. Omission

The researcher found 34 errors or 30,9% of omission error in the students' writing. Omission errors characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in the sentence. There were errors about pronouns, letter in a word, and article. For example instead of writing 'mentally' a student wrote 'metally' which can cause ambiguity.

Student's writing	Correction
" so they can do normal activities"	"so they can do **their** normal activities"
"to help others by listening to the complains of people who are not **metally** good"	"To help others by listening to the complains of people who are not **mentally** good"

c. Addition

Addition is a type of error which is characterized by the presence of word that is not needed in a sentence. The students wrote the word that didn't need in the sentence, based on the data in the type of addition error there are 33 error and can be percentage to 30% from 30 students who did writing test.

Student's writing	Correction
When I'm old **age** I can sit with my friends	When I'm old I can sit with my friends
I want to be an successful **and successful** person	I want to be a successful person

d. Misordering

The lowest percentage is misordering which is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme in a sentence. There were 7 errors or 6,36% of the whole texts written by students. The researcher found there were incorrect placement of words.

Student's writing	Correction
And also **I want later in the future** to have a small harmonious	And also, **later in the future I want** to have a small harmonious
But I'm still confused **what about I will chose**	But I'm still confused **about what will I choose**.

3.2. Discussion

The result shows that there are 110 total of errors that found in students writing test which the classification based on surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al (1982) there are misformation, omission, addition, and misordering. In addition, the researcher also found out other errors that some students produce in their descriptive text writing that are not included in the error classification of Dulay et al (1982). They are error in punctuation and in capitalization. Cholipah (2014) stated that punctuation can help a reader to follow the separations between sentences like period (.) and the comma (,). Error in punctuation produced by students, for example "After graduating from high school i want to study to be a nurse" must be add (,) between "school" and "I". Another finding is capitalization error. Students also produce error

in capitalization, for example "I" in, "After graduating from high school i want to study to be a nurse" in this sentence the letter 'i' is supposed to be capitalized.

The dominant type of error that most of students made in descriptive text writing is misformation which has 36 total errors or 32,72% error. The most common error was in the use of the plural words. In students' writing, they wrote some goals or wishes that they want to achieve in the future, and they often wrote the word "goal or wish" in their writing without using the end "-s or –es" to show plural form. Furthermore, in using "to be" in a sentence r paragraph that is plural form has to use "are", but students often make errors in this case by using to be "is" instead of "are". Moreover, students' misformation error in writing also located in how the student wrote some words as the example "merry" which supposed to be "marry". However, it is also found out that there are some students that did not produce any error in their descriptive text writing.

Based on the results above, there are two previous studies that have similar findings to this research. First, a study by Pancawati and Dwiastuty (2021) about error analysis of using simple present tense on students' descriptive text writing using surface strategy taxonomy find out the dominant error was misformation which is 49, 35% errors. The study of Ernawati et al., (2019) also find out the dominant type of error was misformation which is 41,1% of errors student made.

Otherwise, there were some related studies that have different results. For example, first, research by Nadya and Muthalib (2021) found out that the most type of error was omission error which is 38%. Second, error analysis in discussion text written by Kharmila and Narius (2019) find out 50, 77% omission errors. Third, a study of error analysis written by Suhono (2018) find out the highest error was omission error 48, 9%. So, there are the differences and similarities in the results of this study with previous studies.

4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation in the previous chapter, this research was carried out to analyze and classify the type of students' error in descriptive text writing. The collected error was classified based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay (1982). The researcher would like to present conclusion of several points that are related to the statement of research question. First, the types of errors in writing descriptive text made by students in Grade XI A SMAN 8 Manado can be divided into errors of omission (30,9%), error of misordering (6, 36%), error of addition (30%) and error of misformation (32, 72%). Besides, there are also another type of errors found in this research, which are error in capitalization and punctuation. The second question is the dominant type of error made by student in X A SMA N 8 Manado was error of misformation which there are 36 times or 32, 72%.

Here are some recommendations that hopefully can be applied in teaching and learning activities. First, for the English teachers, after being informed about the type of errors and most dominant errors students produced in writing descriptive text, teachers can prepare teaching material to help students to improve their writing. For the students, it is recommended to learn from the errors they produced and to see the reconstructed sentences in the appendix, so they can see the type of errors they usually produce and try to improve their writing. For other researcher, it is recommended to use the findings as the reference to conduct another study to improve students' English writing.

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