A Study of Error Analysis in Aceh

Rezki Nuarta*1,2, Usman Kasim1, Yuliana Natsir1

1University of Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh
2GTI English Banda Aceh

*Corresponding author: rezkinuarta@yahoo.com

Abstract

The goal of this study is intended to figure out what errors of surface strategy made by the students of SMP Negeri 4 Banda Aceh in writing are. The subject of this study was the eighth grade students. Qualitative study was used as a method to obtain the data. To collect the data, the students’ writings were taken from the teachers in the form of journal text. The technique used in analyzing the data was the technique suggested by Corder (1974) which involves choosing the language corpus, identifying errors in the corpus, classifying errors, explaining errors and evaluating errors. However, to classify the errors, the writer used surface strategy taxonomy suggested by Dulay et al. (1982). It shows that all of the students produced the errors in surface strategy including omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The most dominant error was omission and it was followed by misformation, addition and misordering. The students also made non surface strategy errors including past tense, spelling, identifying the noun, creating ideas, and capitalization.

Keywords: Error analysis, surface strategy, writing

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of language skills that must be learned at junior high school. When junior high school students learn English, they should be able to write well. As stated in 2013 curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2014) that students are expected to be able to write a simple essay accurately regards to linguistic aspects which is acceptable in the context of everyday life.

The problem found when the writer conducted an Internship Program (PPL) at SMP Negeri 4 Banda Aceh and became a temporary teacher in 2014. When the writer taught writing to the students at this school, it was found that many students could not write a simple essay. They produced so many errors and some students could not order the words into correct sentence.

In this case, the writer intends to investigate the errors that produced by the students of SMP Negeri 4 Banda Aceh. This way is known as ‘Error Analysis’. Errors analysis is the process of analyzing error in learning language. As Gass and Selinker (2008) state that error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the
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Conducting error analysis may help the teacher to understand what the main issues of students’ errors are. According to Ferris (2011), comprehensive error analysis by the teacher could be an invaluable tool not only for the instructor but also for students, giving them a clear-cut numerical sense of what their major issues are. Dulay et al. (1982) mentioned that errors have four taxonomies including linguistics category, surface strategy, comparative analysis and communicative effect. In this case, the writer chose the surface strategy. Since the error analysis in surface strategy that suggested by Dulay et al. (ibid) at the level of junior high school in Aceh is still rare, this study should fill the gap of the research questions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a complex process and activities to arrange and produce written form in which the writer uses certain convention of variables of linguistic aspects (word spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, etc.) in order to express idea, thought, opinion, and feeling so that people, as readers, can understand (Dyan, 2010). It could be said that in order to create a well form of writing, it requires a good language competency.

Writing in English as a foreign context should be different from writing in general. According to Barkaoui (2007), learning and teaching writing in a second language are very challenging tasks, not least because of the myriad of affective, linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors. It is supported by Nagari (2011) who stated that writing in a second or foreign language seems to be the most difficult language skill for language learners to acquire in academic contexts. It could be seen that studying writing in English as a foreign context should be more difficult and challenging than writing for natives (Furtina et al. 2016).

3. METHODS

In this study, the writer analyzed the students’ errors on writing by using the method known as Error Analysis. Error Analysis is one of the methods on the Second Language Acquisition focusing on Errors (Zawahreh, 2012). To display the data, qualitative study was used in term of analysis and collecting the data. A qualitative study is the method which provide on interpretation with a complete view and depth understanding (Tewksbury, 2009).

All of the students at eighth grade at SMP Negeri 4 became the subject in this study. The subject of this research was taken by using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sample chosen by the writer based on his/her judgment. The methodology of the study chosen by selecting unit such as individual, group of individual or institution is the technique of purposive sampling which primarily used in qualitative (Teddlie, 2009). The instrument in this study was a document analysis. In this study of error analysis, the technique used in analyzing the data was suggested by Corder (1974). According to Corder (ibid), error analysis involves choosing the language corpus, identifying errors in the corpus, classifying errors, explaining errors and evaluating errors.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

To know the findings of this study, the writer displayed the findings by describing the data in the qualitative way. This finding is based on the journal texts produced by the respondents. The writer got the journal texts from the teacher. To get the valid
data of errors, the students' writings which were not following the instruction of the test would be discarded. The first findings would be the example of errors on surface strategy.

After conducting the error analysis on the journal texts produced by the respondents, all the type of errors in surface strategy had been found. In this chapter, the writer just provides 2 examples for each error. These are the examples of errors that the students made.

In omission error, some students mostly omitted the 'be verb'. We know that without the 'be verb', it might be difficult to identify the meaning of the sentence whether the sentence was taken time in the past (was/were) or present (am/is/are). Even though in some cases it is possible to identify the time by the context of the text, the missing of be verb is still considered as fatal errors in writing.

E1. For me during course of english _ very pleasant
E2. My teacher miss Kurniawati _ very good

E1 and E2 are the examples of be verb omission. The students omitted 'was' when they were describing the adjective of very pleasant and very good. In addition error, some students tended to add 'be verb' for the simple verb instead of in adjective or in the passive sentence.

E3. ME feel be afraid
E4. I am enjoyed collecting information

E3 shows that students put “be” after verb feel. In the formal English “feel” is a linking verb. Linking verb must follow adjective directly. E4 displays how the students wrote sentence by adding “be” after verb “enjoyed”.

Misformation is known as the wrong form of morpheme or structure. In these results, it could be seen that many students tended to create the misformation error in regularization of reflexive pronoun.

E5. I enjoyed the most were do on interview with your friend
E6. Me feel be afraid

E5 shows the students misformed the pronoun of “your”. In the context of his journal, student 1 did interview with his own friend in the class. However he wrote “your friend” instead of “my friend”. E6 shows the students did not know the subject pronoun and object pronoun. He wrote “Me” as the object pronoun.

In misordering error, some students tended to arrange the sentence in Indonesian way. This disarrangement could confuse the reader.

E7. Because not much yet know
E8. Magazine or newspapers bout things or activity that can you do

E7 shows that how the students translated in Indonesian way “tidak banyak tau” “not much yet know”. Actually the correct arrangement is “did not know much” . E8 shows the students did not know how to arrange the sentence correctly because he put can preceding the subject you.

From the findings above, it could be seen that all of the errors based on surface strategy have been made by the respondents. The students succeeding on the writing without errors were very rare. Based on the finding, none of students wrote perfectly. Each student always made errors. It proves that the errors are inevitable for the students.

When finding the errors in surface strategy, the writer also found other errors. These errors were also crucial in writing. These errors are past tense, capitalization,
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idea redundancy and noun. Since the writer believes that these errors influenced the success of writing, the researcher made this type of errors as a research question. In answering the next research question about other errors in students’ writings, the researcher also found that there were non-surface strategy errors made by the students.

Some of the students did not know how to use past tense correctly. Sometimes the students used simple present on the past situation and vice versa. *(note: these students wrote his/her journal in the context of past).*

E9. I was too nervous because I do not really like the teacher
E10. I’m happy with study English

E9 shows that the student did not change the word “do” to the past form “did” then for the E10, the students put “am” instead of “was”. The next type of error was on the spelling. Many missing letters were produced by the students in a word.

E11. I have to do better attitude, better polite
E12. I have to study English

E11 shows the students the wrong spelling of p-e-l-i-t-e. In the correct form, p-e-l-i-t-e should be p-o-l-i-t-e. E12 shows the misspelling of the word English. The student forgot the word “h”.

When the question asked the students to answer in the form of noun, some of them made a sentence/phrase instead of a noun.

E13. In this chapter I learnt about will do
E14. The difficulties that I had were I am difficulties at the association

The word “will do” in E13 is not a noun. “Will do” should change to the “future tense”. When the students wrote “In this chapter I learnt about will do”, it could confuse the reader. E14 shows the student wrote the sentence “I am difficulties at the association” to explain his difficulties. It also indicates a redundancy. In this situation the best answer should be in the form of noun “association” The difficulties that I had were association.

Lack of idea may create a redundancy. In the journal texts, many redundancies had been found.

E15. To state and ask if one can do something. To state and ask if one will do something
E16. I have to active again study. I have to active again English

From the data, it could be seen that when the students could not write anymore or when they could not find any other idea, most of them tended to rewrite the same sentence. However, the variety of sentence is an important role in writing. Some students produced so many errors in capitalization. However, capitalization considered as a fatal error in writing.

E17. More over miss Kurnia is so patient
E18. Mrs Kurnia Success Continue

Some students made an error in capitalization even for the name of teacher. In E17, ‘kurnia’ should be ‘Kurnia’ because it was the teacher’s name. E18 shows that the student wrote the sentence by using capitalization for each word: Mrs Kurnia, Success Continue. It stated that the student did not follow the rule of capitalization. In another word, the student in E2 did not consider capitalization as an important role in writing.
4.2 Discussion

The finding of surface strategy showed that the most dominant error was omission. Meanwhile, it was followed by misformation, addition and misordering. In another word, it could be said that in this study omission is a usual error, misformation is a frequent error, omission is an occasional error and misordering is a rare error.

In omission, majority of students omitted ‘be verb’. There are two possible cause of ‘be verb’ omission. First, the students probably did not know what the function of be verb is. Second, the students know the function of ‘be verb’ which is mostly to describe the adjective, but the students probably had difficulties to identify the word either it is a verb or adjective.

In misformation some students tended to create the sentence error in pronoun. This error could probably happen because in Indonesian there are no such English pronouns. For example ‘ Hp punya dia’ when this words change to English it could be ‘his phone’ or ‘her phone’. When the learners try to translate those word, the misformation errors could happen for example ‘ he phone’, ‘phone he’, ‘him phone’ ‘she phone’ and other possible errors.

These misformation errors probably are caused by L1 interference. As Dulay et al. (1982) defined, interference as the automatic transfer due to habit of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. So, it could probably happen to the students using Indonesian. It also could be said as a negative transfers since negative transfer happens when the learners have a good understanding in native language which impact to the target language.

However, even though these errors were not dominant, in addition, some students tended to add ‘be verb’ for the simple verb instead of adjective or participle. It is probably because many of them did not understand when the sentence should use ‘be verb’. The writer was not sure the result of addition happens due to L1 interference but it could be said that the knowledge of L1 may still influence the target language especially in addition of ‘be verb’.

Lastly, in misordering, some students tended to arrange the sentence in Indonesian way. As we know that to transfer English to Indonesian or Indonesian to English, some sentences should be reversed. Still, the writer believed that this was also due to language interference. In other types of errors including past tense, ideas, spelling, and capitalization, these errors might happen because the students were not accustomed to write a text in English. The writer believes that when the students get used to write in English, these errors could be reduced. It could be said that, these types of errors are very common in writing and these errors are not only experienced by the students at this school but for majority of English learners. Even for the higher level students such as undergraduate students in English department, still learn how to be better in handling these obstacles.

Apart from the research findings, the writer would also like to discuss the shortcoming on this study. When collecting the data, everything was not always work as planned. Many unexpected things happened. The first problem came from the ability of the students. Based on the data, there were many respondents could not write well. Some of them could not even produce a sentence. To collect the data, the writer should sort the students’ writing because many data were not eligible to be analyzed. More than half of the students’ writings had been removed in this study. There were approximately 110 writings had been taken, but only 20 writings were eligible to be analyzed. Thus, this was unpredictable finding.
The next problem, some students were found cheating during writing. There were many students’ writings looked similar. It made some of the data inadequate to be analyzed. Additionally, the teachers also became a major issue in collecting the data. Since there were two teachers who taught in the eighth grade, the writer had difficulties to standardize the students’ writing. It was because the teachers probably used different method in teaching writing. In other words, even though the materials in teaching English were the same, the method and the ability of the teachers to teach the students might influence the students’ writing. Despite of the difficulty, the teachers were very cooperative and had contributed a lot in collecting the data needed for this study. On the surface taxonomy errors, the findings revealed that the students also created errors in the component of writing including past tense, spelling, identifying the noun, creating ideas, and capitalization. It indicated that, most of the respondents were not able to write well in English. Therefore, the writer suggested that the schedule in studying writing should be added. However, if it is not possible due to curriculum target, the school could make an extracurricular of English, especially about writing.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Firstly, the findings showed that all of the students produced the errors in surface strategy including omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The most dominant error was omission and it was followed by misformation, addition and misordering.

Secondly, the writing ability of the respondents was still under expectation of curriculum 2013. It was proved by the findings of this study which stated that Most of the students still did not know well about grammar for example how to use ‘be verb’, how to write in past and how to formulate sentence in present. Some of them were also lack in the vocabularies and ideas of writing as a result their writings had so many repetition words and sentences. The students also did not pay attention in capitalization. Next, the writer found that many students wrote the wrong words due to misspelling. Some of them even could not spell the common words correctly. Then, there were so many students’ writings could not be analyzed because the writings were bad and unreadable. However, based on the findings, the writer also concluded that most of the cause of errors produced by the respondents due to L1 interference. Students tended to write English in Indonesian way, whether in grammar form, sentence order, ideas of writing etc.

After this study has been done, the writer made some suggestions based on the findings of this study. First, the teacher should teach the students more about the important rules how to make a correct sentence. Therefore, omission and addition on the sentence could be reduced. Second, the studying of pronoun and reflexive pronoun were the main solution for misformation because many misformation errors happened due to lack of knowledge in pronoun. The last for misordering errors, the writer believed that, it could be fixed automatically when the students get used to write in English. In this case, the teachers’ assignment was how to make the students get used to it. For instance, the teacher could ask the students to write the journal text or diary in English for each meeting.

Based on the shortcoming that writer faced, the writer would make some suggestions about the study of error analysis. When conducting this research, the writer had difficulties in analyzing the data. It was probably because the writer took the students’ writing in the junior high school level. In this case, the writer suggested
that the next researcher should take on the different level. The reason was simple that in analyzing the writing especially in error analysis, it was better to have at least an intermediate level of writing. In junior high school level, the writer found many students’ writings were not eligible to be analyzed. It was because most of them could not write accordingly as a result they did cheating. In another word, their writings were on the very basic level and the originality of them considered as poor level. So, for the further research, the object of the study could be probably taken on a higher level and the result would probably be better.

Cheating also became a main issue on this study. Some students did cheating while the teacher asked them to write. It made some of the students’ writings considered as inadequate to be analyzed. To deal with this situation the writer suggested that the further researcher should involve in the process of students’ writing. Even though the writer intended to collect the data by using documents from the teacher, the writer must get involved personally.

Furthermore, the writer also had some suggestions for English teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Banda Aceh. Firstly, the teacher should pay more attention when giving the assignment in order to avoid cheating among the students. For the students who cheat should get punishment. This punishment was important to deal with cheating since the data showed that some of students created many similar sentences with their friends.

Secondly, the writer’s suggestion was about teacher’s correction on students’ writing. It had been found that the English teachers at SMP Negeri 4 Banda Aceh tended to appreciate the students’ writing with the perfect score even there are many mistakes. For this problem, the writer suggested that teacher should give a real correction for the students’ works. Therefore, they know about their errors and avoid the same errors for their next writings. The writer believes that correction from the teacher is very important in dealing with the errors in writing.

REFERENCES
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