AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN WRITING OF RECOUNT

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengetahui kesalahan siswa dalam menulis teks recount dan menentukan tipe kesalahan berdasarkan taksonomi kategori linguistik, taksonomi siasat permukaan, dan taksonomi efek komunikatif dan (2) menginvestigasi alasan siswa membuat kesalahan. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah 31 siswa kelas X4 SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah tahun ajaran 2013/2014. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Instrument dari penelitian ini adalah tugas menulis dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berdasarkan taksonomi kategori linguistik, kebanyakan siswa membuat kesalahan siktaksis. Berdasarkan taksonomi siasat permukaan, kesalahan terbanyak yaitu pada kesalahan penghilangan. Berdasarkan taksonomi efek komunikatif, siswa banyak membuat kesalahan lokal. Kesalahan yang dibuat siswa terjadi karena kurangnya pengetahuan siswa terhadap tata bahasa Inggris dan pengaruh dari bahasa pertama mereka.

Kata kunci: kesalahan siswa, menulis, teks recount

Abstract: This research was intended to (1) find out the student's errors in writing recount text and determining the types of error based on linguistics category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy and (2) investigate the students' reason for making the errors. The subjects of this research were 31 students of class X4 at SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah of 2013/2014 academic year. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative. The instruments of this research were a writing task and interview. The result showed that based on linguistics category taxonomy, mostly students made syntactic errors. Based on surface strategy taxonomy, mostly students made omission error. Based on communicative effect taxonomy, mostly students made local errors. The errors made by the students happened because of the students' lack of knowledge of English grammar and also the influence of their first language.

Keywords: recount text, students' error, writing

INTRODUCTION

English comprises of four skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing by which a person is able to communicate in various context. Writing is one of productive skills that must be learned by the students, they must apply the five general components of the writing process, and they are content, form, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Mary and Water (1995:90) as cited in Setiawan (2009) state that writing is complex process since it is made of a large number of skills, not only one element that is used but also all of language elements need to be considered such as: spelling, grammar, diction, punctuation, etc.

Most of students in the first grade of SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah have difficulties to write. They cannot write well so that they did not pass the standard score of the school (KKM). According to KTSP curriculum, the students at the first grade of senior high school have to master writing skill. The students are expected to be able to write recount text. Recount text is one of the text genres that the students learn. This text is written with the purpose to inform the readers or people about something that happens in the past. It can be experiences and events. In fact, many students find difficulty in writing. They are confused to use the correct grammar. They tend to ignore the grammatical rules in writing. According to Batston (1994) grammar is a structure and regularity that lies in a language. This implies that each language has a certain rule to form a sentence. In addition, Hornby (1995:517) states that grammar is rules in a language for changing the form of words and combining them into sentences. In this study, grammar means the rules in a language for changing the form of words and combining them into sentences in English. Therefore if a person wants to master English, he/she must learn the

grammar and how to use it properly. All language learners tend to make errors when they learn a language. Language learning and language error cannot be separated each other. Language errors frequently happen in the language learning process. Foster (2005:87) states that an error is an individual language user's deviations from standard language norms in grammar, syntax, pronunciation, and punctuation. Moreover, Dulay, et.al, (1982:5) states error is something incorrectly done through ignorance or carelessness. Errors occur in every situation such as the grammatical errors. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. Considering that there are many errors that students made, it is important for the teacher to analyze the students' errors in students' writing. Error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpret or describe the errors made by a person in speaking or in writing and it is carried out to obtain information on common difficulties faced by him/her in speaking or in writing English sentences. Meanwhile, McKeating (1981:212-213) states that error analysis involves collecting errors, studying them, classifying them in various ways and suggesting possible causes. Error are studied in order to find out something about the learning process and about the strategies employed by human beings learning another language.

Brown (1980:66) states that the fact that learners do make error can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of system operating within the learner, led to surge of study of learner's error, called "error analysis". Dulay (1982:146) mentions that there are four most useful and commonly used bases for the descriptive classification of error. Those are: 1) linguistic category which classifies errors according to either or both the language component or the

particular linguistic constituent the error affects. 2) Surface strategy taxonomy which emphasizes on the surfaces structure such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. 3) Comparative analysis which is based on comparison between the structure of the second language error and certain other type's construction. 4) Communicative effect which deals with error from perspective of their effect on the listener and reader. It focuses on distinguishing errors that seem to cause miscommunication and those that do not. In this research, the researcher analyzed the errors based on linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. The data collected were analyzed to determine the type of errors and classify using linguistic category taxonomy following Politzer and Romirez's classification as a guideline. Then, the researcher described the errors by following surface strategy taxonomy because surface strategy taxonomy holds much promise for researcher to deal with identifying cognitive processes that underlie the students' reconstruction of the new language. The last, the researcher used communicative effect taxonomy for analyze the errors because communicative effect taxonomy deals with how far students' errors in using grammar affect the communication on the reader and listener. As it is stated by Dulay et.al, (1982: 189), "Errors that affect overall sentence organization usually hinder communication significantly, while errors that affect a single element of the sentence usually do not hinder communication".

Based on the explanation stated above, the researcher wanted to know the students' errors in writing of recount text and the reasons why they made errors. The researcher conducted this research at the first grade of SMAN 1 Pesisir

Tengah. This research focuses on students' grammatical errors in writing of recount text.

METHODS

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative design. Leedy (1974) states that a descriptive method simply looks with intense accuracy at the phenomenon of the moment and then describes precisely what the researcher has seen. In this research, the researcher tries to find the phenomena which occur in writing recount texts. This design was intended to describe phenomena or problems in learning English. The researcher used one class as the subject at the first grade of SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah the 2013/2014 academic year. Techniques used in this research were a writing task and interview. The researcher asked the students to make three paragraph of recount text based on the topics given. Then, after giving writing task to the students, the researcher interviewed the students. After collecting data, the researcher analyzed the data by using four steps 1) collecting the data from the students' work 2) identifying students' errors 3) classifying errors 4) calculating the percentage of students' errors with this formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Errors}}{\text{Total Words}} \times 100\% = ...\%$$

(Nation, 1981:58)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As previously stated, this study is intended to find out the students' errors in their recount writings at the first grade of SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah in academic year 2013/2014. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher found that there were 298 errors of 5404 total words or 5.51% based on Linguistic Category Taxonomy. They made 282 of syntactic errors or 94.63% and 16 errors or 5.36% of morphological errors. Then, based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy, there were 73 errors of 5404 total words or 1.60%. The highest frequency of errors was omission 38 errors or 43.67%. The second place that was misformation 35 or 40.22%. Then, after misformation there was misordering on the third place, 8 errors or 9.19%. The last, addition consists of 6 errors or 6.89%. Meanwhile, Communicative Effect Taxonomy there was 223 errors of 5404 total words or 4.12%. They made 16 errors of Global Errors or 7.17% and 207 errors of Local Errors or 92.82%.

Discussions

After collecting the data from the students' writing task, the errors were identified and classified based on Linguistic Category Taxonomy (syntax and morphology), Surface Strategy Taxonomy (omission, addition, misformation, misordering), and Communicative Effect Taxonomy (global error and local error). After classifying the types of error, the frequency was determined.

Based on the result of the research, it was found out that there were many occurrences of syntactic errors compared to morphological ones, morphological

errors comprising 5.36%, whereas syntactic ones 94.63%. The predominant morphological errors were only in possessive case. Syntactically, the most predominant type is verb category. Whereas simple past tense formation constitutes the most predominant type of errors. This case was caused by insufficient students' knowledge about tenses. The students' knowledge extremely influences the students' ability in making sentences. The insufficient knowledge on it made the students unable to decide the correct tenses they should use.

Meanwhile, based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the researcher found that the highest frequency of errors made by the students was omission with 43.67%. Omission is at the highest level compared to the other types. This case might be affected by the lack of the students' knowledge about English. This is supported by the result of interview in this research. About 61.29% of students answered that they have difficulty in arranging sentences to be grammatically correct. Most of students omitted some grammatical items, such as to be (was/were) function as copula in the sentences. Some of students used wrong preposition in their writings. Some of students were also confused to use morpheme-s to indicate plural or singular and to place articles a, an, and the. The errors occurred because the students did not know which word should be arranged to construct sentence. They were still confused in arranging sentences which have different tenses in separate times. In line with Dulay, et.al, (1982:5) errors occur in every situation such as the grammatical errors.

Then, misformation has the second level; the total of misformation was 40.22%. Based on the result of interview, their errors were affected by their first language,

Bahasa Indonesia, and also their errors were affected by the different rules between English and Bahasa Indonesia. In line with Ellis's statement (2002:223-236) which states that the second language learners may be confused to recognize the use the second language because of their first language's influences. In addition, Setiadi (2006) says that language learners whose mother tongue has no tenses tend to have more difficulty in learning a target language which has tenses. As the result, some of students got difficulties to change the verb because in Bahasa Indonesia there is no verb changing in constructing sentences. It can be seen from their writing tasks that they made, the students still used the verb *go* instead of *went*.

The third percentage of error based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy is misordering, that is 9.19%. The lowest number is addition 6.89%. Based on the result of interview, that case was caused by their lack of knowledge of English. As it is stated by Brown (2000:76) error is a result from lack of knowledge of the rules of the language. In this research, the students' insufficient knowledge on tenses distracts most frequently on the students' production of errors in transforming the sentences, because students' knowledge extremely influences the students' ability in making sentences. The insufficient knowledge on it made students unable to decide the correct tenses they should use.

In the other case of Communicative Effect Taxonomy, there were 92.82% local errors and 7.17% global errors. Most students made local errors, but those errors were still understandable because this type of errors does not hinder communication. Besides, global errors are the errors that affect overall sentence

organization that significantly hinder communication. In this research, there were only 7.17% of students made global errors.

The errors which students made in this research are frequently caused by the lack of knowledge of English and also the first language's influences that influence their ability in writing. However, that condition is still understandable because it serves beneficial improvement for teachers and for the students, as it is supported by Dulay, et.al, (1982:138) that errors are the flawed side of learner's speech or writing. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. Moreover, Hornby (1987) states that errors are considered as something natural and play an important part in learning process. It can be concluded that the students make errors as the process of learning. From the errors student can learn then make some improvements in learning process and the teacher should facilitate them in improving English mastery, so that the target of language learning can be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

After conducting the research, doing the analysis, and presenting the result, the conclusion and suggestion of this study is also presented. 1) Most students committed all error types of linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. Based on linguistics category taxonomy, the highest frequency of error was syntactic errors (94.63%). Based on surface strategy taxonomy, the highest frequency of error was omission error

(43.67%). Based on communicative effect taxonomy, the highest frequency of error was local errors (92.82%). 2) Those errors happened because the students had difficulty in arranging sentences into grammatical correct form, the influences of their first language, Bahasa Indonesia, and their lack of knowledge of English grammar.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the writer would like to offer some suggestions to be considered in teaching to improve the students writing ability. 1) In order to minimize the students' errors in writing, the teacher should teach how to construct English sentences appropriately to improve the students' knowledge of English grammar. In addition, the teacher has to set the first priority to the errors that mostly occurred (syntax, misformation, and local error). 2) When the teacher teaches grammar, the teacher should consider the different rules that English and Bahasa Indonesia have. Since based on the result of interview, most of students said that the rules of Bahasa Indonesia often influenced them in making sentences in English.

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