STUDENTS' ERRORS IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT AT SMP NEGERI 3 SIDIKALANG

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study to determine the types of errors found in the narrative text written by students of SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang. Errors are analyzed to find the dominant type., and the reason they made the mistake This study used descriptive qualitative method. The object of this research is the 8th grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Sidikkalang. From the findings in the field, the writer finds that there are types of errors that come from the grammatical aspect. namely: sentence patterns, word order,concord, tenses. then the researcher studied and concluded. that the highest error is in the writing error of tenses. with a yield of 68.13%.   and the lowest in the sentence pattern as much as 1%. And the reasons students make error because they do not understand the structure of English writing and some students think that writing in English is the same as writing in Indonesian. Errors are like Overgeneralization: Ignorance of rule restrictions Incomplete application of rules Incorrect concept Hypothesized

Key Words: *Error Analysis,grammatical error', Narrative Text.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the skills that students must learn in mastering English. Writing is a mental process that requires students to know the nature of language in order to convey certain messages to readers in their writing. In other words, stories can be visualized in the form of physical actions.

In writing a narrative text, students must know the mechanism such as how it is arranged. For example, there must be an introduction to open the text. Then the content of the text usually contains the problems faced by the character. This is to avoid boredom from the readers so that they can get the moral lessons from the text.

According to Hubbard (1988:45), writing is indeed a complex skill because students who are going to write stories must have certain ideas to develop them to be interesting and meaningful. To do this, students must build large vocabularies that allow them to express many things in the story. This means that they also have to learn a lot about the world which is called general knowledge. In addition, students must master grammar which includes parts of speech, tenses, sentence structure and even word pronunciation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Errors

Errors are unavoidable in the process of mastering English. In each of the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing there can be errors made by the students because of lack of knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and discourse. A teacher should be aware of this situation so that she can later improve her teaching based on the understanding of how and why errors occur.

Zhang (2011:11) says that errors can be seen clearly in the students' performance both in oral (speaking) and written work (writing). Errors are the results of productive skills. The students are bound to encounter problems which lead to errors because of the weak vocabulary, inappropriate use of grammar in sentence, composition mechanisms and so on.

It is logically accepted that errors are caused by factors that are beyond the awareness of the students. In other words, students make errors without knowing that they have made the errors. Thus, this term should be distinguished from a mistake which is an unsystematic error in which a student can correct it by herself after finding out the mistake. An error, on the other hand, occurs as the student produces the target language through the speaking or writing process. She produces errors as the result of misunderstanding the target language or ignoring the grammatical rules.

1.1 Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors refer to errors that are based on the violation of English grammatical rules which are rigidly applied to writing. For instance, the sentence like *I am study English* shows an error in which the student misunderstands the aspect of tenses. The correct one should be *I am studying English* which is based on the use of Present Continuous Tense.

Verbs in English must be related to the time and tense. An error like this can be corrected by teaching the students the aspect of tenses in English.

As there is a difference between the grammar of Indonesian as the mother tongue of the students and English as the target language, there can be errors in the mastery of both grammars. Thus, grammatical errors may come from the following aspects.

Sentence Patterns

A sentence pattern refers to how a sentence is constructed based on the definition of sentence. For example, the sentence *I English study* is an error because it does not follow the pattern of *subject x verb x object.* In the above example, the violation of the correct grammar is seen from the pattern *subject x object x verb* which is not acceptable.

The basic definition of a sentence is that it consists of a *subject* (nouns or pronouns), and a *predicate* (verbs). This can be extended by adding *complement.* This concept is very important for the construction of sentences.

The sentence patterns are basically related to verb patterns (Hornby, 1996) such as:

1. Subject x Verb (Predicate) x Object.
2. Subject x Verb x Complement (Adverb or Adjective)
3. Subject x Verb x Object x Adverb.

In each pattern above, there is a *subject* which takes the form of a noun or a pronoun in terms of the parts of speech in English. It may look simple but in reality each component has details of grammar. For example, *Gerund* can be regarded as a subject in the form of verbal noun (noun taken from a verb). Thus, the sentence *Smoking is dangerous* (pattern: *subject x verb x complement)* can be accepted as correct.

Word Order

Word order refers to how words are arranged according to the grammatical function. The sentence like *I and John are students* (which should be *John and I are students)* belongs to the error of *word order* because of the wrong position of the words *I* and *John.* In English, the word *I* is always placed after the other subject pronouns. This error can be the result of the translation from Indonesian into English in which the subject *I* is considered the most important person. This is obviously an error which comes from the different concept of culture in English.

Concord

Concord refers to how a subject agrees with a predicate.

For example, the sentence *He have much money* (which should be *He has much money*) is considered an error due to the concord or subject x verb agreement. The subject *He* takes a singular form and so the verb *have* should be changed into *has.* The sentence like *One of the students speak English* (which should be *One of the students speaks English*) is an error due to the misuse of the singular or plural form of a subject. It is known in English that a subject in the form of noun or pronoun must be related to the verb. The singular subject takes the singular verb as the predicate. The sentence like *The students study English seriously* shows that the verb *study* is used in relation to the plural form of the subject *the students* or *they.* Thus, concord is often the common source of errors in

writing. The question is whether the students realize this fact when they write their stories or narrative texts.

Tenses

Tenses refers to how a verb is used in relation to the concept of time and action. The sentence *I saw the film* (Simple Past Tense) contains the concept of action which was done in the past. The time of the event is the focus here. The sentence *I have seen the film* (Present Perfect Tense), on the other hand, focuses on the results of the action. In other words, the action happened in the past but there is an implication that the person who saw the film now understands it or remembers the story in the film. There is often confusion in choosing the Simple Past or the Present Perfect Tenses in writing.

In general, the tenses are divided into three aspects of time namely *past, present* and *future.* In its application, however, there are detailed features of each time component. Tenses can be frustrating for students who study English as a foreign language. They should be given sufficient explanation so that they can avoid making errors in the writing. The following explanation can be used a framework of reference in the discussion of errors in tenses.

Students may think that *tense* is the same as *time*. In fact, tense and time are different. Hornby (1975: 78) gives a detailed explanation. The word "time' stands for a concept with which all mankind is familiar, divided into past, present and future. It is something independent of language. The word "tense' stands for a verb form or series of verb forms used to express a time relation. Tenses vary in different languages. Tenses may indicate whether an action, activity, or state is past, present, or future. Tenses may also indicate whether an action, activity, or state is, was, or will be complete, or whether it is, was, or will be in progress over a period of time.

It is clear now that tense in English is determined by the verb form. The meaning can cover both tense and time. The sentence *He teaches English* basically contains the verb " teaches" as Simple Present Tense. This means that he does the activity of teaching every day. But the meaning of the verb " teaches" also included the past time. The teacher in this example taught, is teaching and

will be teaching in the future.   This notion of tense is mentioned in the definition in Webster's New World College Dictionary (1995:1379) as " *the characteristic of the verbs that indicates the time of the action or state of being that the verb expresses; or any form of the verb takes to indicate* this characteristic; or a set of such forms for a given time reference"

1.2 Causes of Errors

Errors have been extensively studied by linguists, teachers and researchers. The existence of errors in students' writing prove that they are worthy of discussion. When the causes of errors can be explained in details, the teachers of English can tell more about the difficulties of learning a foreign language like English.

Errors have received so much attention that Corder (in Richard and Sampson's 1974:174) mentioned four types and at the same time causes of errors as the learner begins to build up his proficiency. They are:

1) *Overgeneralization* : the student creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language (e.g *he can sings*, *we are hope, it is occurs, he come from*). Overgeneralization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. It may be the result of the student reducing his linguistic burden.

2) *Ignorance of rule restriction*; failure to observe the restriction of existing structures, that is, the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply (e.g *the man who I saw him* violates the limitation on subjects in structures with *who, I made him to do it* ignores restrictions on the distribution of *make.* Some rule restriction errors may be accounted for in terms of analogy; other instances may result from the rote learning of rules.

3) *Incomplete application of rules*: the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances. For example, across background languages, systematic difficulty in the use of questions can be observed. (Teacher: *Ask her how long it takes*. Student: *How long it takes* ?

4) *False concepts hypothesized*: faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language (e.g *one day it was happened* ; misunderstanding of the function of *was* as a marker of past tense).

2. Narrative Texts

Narrative writing iS concerned with the writing of a personal experience. The experience is easy to describe because it contains fresh information in the mind of the student. The contextual clues appear to provide more information as the materials for the writing. The result of the writing is called the narration.

The elements or aspects of the narration are: characters, plot, setting, conflict, resolution and theme. Characters are people in a narrative. The student may choose a character that resembles himself. This aspect of the story is very important. Without characters the narrative loses its meaning.

Plot is another aspect of a narrative. It is concerned with how the story is developed in a sequence of action, and time. Scott (1980: 223) explains that a plot is a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. The sentence *"The king died and then the queen died"*, for instance, is a story because there is a time sequence, while the sentence " The *king died, and the queen died of grief"* contains the plot as there is the causality. The question why the queen died suggests the causality.

Setting refers to a place, or a situation where an action is performed by a character. When a character does something, there should be a setting. For example, the student himself may describe his trip to a tourism object. His destination is Lake Toba. There he looks at the beautiful lake. The lake and its surroundings are the setting in the narrative.

A conflict in a narrative makes the story very interesting. The readers want to know how it is resolved. It is not easy to describe a conflict. A clever student can use lengthy vocabulary to show the intrigue between characters.

Every problem must have a solution. This is a natural philosophy. Likewise, a narrative that presents a conflict (a problem) usually offers a resolution (the final solution). When a character who loves a woman is rejected in his marriage

proposal, the man can take many possible actions. He can simply forget the woman, hurt himself, feel frustrated, experience a trauma, or look for another woman. The student has many choices as the solution to the problem.

Resolution can be based on reality or the author's perception. The story can lead to any of the two types of resolution. What is important is that readers may feel satisfied when the resolution is presented. Again the resolution can be described with simple words such as the ending of a story *"then the couple lived happily ever after"*.

The most valuable element of a narrative is the theme or coda, that is, the moral lesson from a story. It may be hidden in the story. The readers are expected to learn something from the event or conflict. The end of the story provides the clue to the theme.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

A. Research Design

This research applies descriptive qualitative method.

B. The Sources of Data

The data of this study were taken from the composition of students SMP Negeri 3 Sidikkalang in narrative texts which were collected after they finished writing stories at home. they are given enough time to complete the work so that they can express their ideas well, students use dictionaries and cell phones just in case they want to find the words for the appropriate expression.

C. The Techniques of Collecting Data

researchers make a group and put some students into groups, and made a meeting zoom, then the researcher explained to the students about what needs to be written for narrative texts such as generics, the students of SMP Negeri 3 Sidikkalang were asked to write narrative texts on a paper,
They chose experience no matter what they are about to portray, the work is an individual attempt to tell the story. ,Furthermore, the researcher collected the results by taking it to the students' homespiece of

D. The Techniques of Analyzing Data

The collected narrative texts were read by the researcher to find out the existence of these aspects of the narrative text. The explanation is analyzed by following the steps (Shridar in Fauziati) (2009: 136):

1. Identification of Errors

In this step, the researcher studied the data obtained and found the existing errors by underlining the errors made based on the given error concept.

2. Classification of Errors

After the errors were identified, the researcher classified them into types based on grammatical accuracy such as 1) sentence patterns, 2) word order, 3) suitability and 4) word form.

3. Calculation of Errors

In this step, the researcher counted the errors and found out how often the errors occurred in each of the four types of grammatical errors in writing narrative texts that had been made by the students of SMP Negeri 3 Sidikalang.

Causes of errors such as 1) over-generalization, 2) ignorance of rule restrictions, 3) incomplete application of the rules and 4) incorrectly hypothesized concepts as stated in the theoretical framework. Analyzed by asking students the reasons why students can make this mistake

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some students of SMP Negeri 3 Sidikaang were asked to write narrative texts about their personal experieences. The data were then analyzed and the results showed that the grammatical errors ocurred in the four areas of grammar with the folowing percentage:

1) Sentence Pattern : 1 error (1.09% of the error population).
2) Word Order: 4 errors (4.39 % of the error population)
3) Concord ; 24 errors (26.37 % of the error population).
4) Tenses: 62 errors (68.13 % of the error population)

From the percentage of the errors, it can be concluded that the dominant error was taken by the tenses (68.13%). The least error was taken by sentence pattern (1.09%).

The causes of errors were discovered by using the concept of Corder (1974) with the following examples found in the data

Causes of Erors	Sample of Examples
Overgeneralization	I *am started* following online school,
Ignorance of rule restriction	We *several times* stay in school, As well as *me* who registered online, when the church *was finished*, many praised me, my *experience when* leaving to Balige with my family one day,
Incomplete application of rules	As we arrived there, I *walk* down to the beach, I saw some seagulls *flew* around hunting for fish, we had no enough sunlight,
False concepts hypothesized	One day, my father and I wanted to *back* hometown, After *being repaired and able to walk*, my father thanked the kind man, my parents *separated when a child*, two weeks ago *I and my family* were in my grandpa's hometown, I chose to order *one glass avocado*, we *soaked* in the pool while relaxing, it's *not better if I try*, *don't forget* we also stop at the restaurant, we *vacation* on the lake.

From the given examples of the errors, it can be inferred that the causes of errors can be identified . The four causes of the errors as stated all exist in the students' narrative texts. Certainly, there are more examples found in the cause of false concepts hypothesized. In other words, the dominant cause of error is in the false concepts hypothesized (faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language). This means that the students still applied the translation approach to produce their sentences.

SUGGESTIONS

Errors can be used as an instrument to evaluate the level of mastery of the students who learn English. They provide the teachers with some information about the students' knowledge of the grammar which leads to a higher

comprehension of the language. Asking the students to write any text can help the teachers pinpoint their problems in learning the language. Therefore, teachers should take the chance to teach the language by explaining the types and causes of errors that the students have made in their composition.

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