AN ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN ERROR AMONG EFL STUDENTS OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study aims at providing a comprehensive account of analyzing error in second language learners. For this purpose, an empirical study was conducted, using Indonesian students learning English as the research subject, especially among students of international program of Muhammadiyah University Surakarta. The researcher explored the type of errors made by students at different proficiency levels: high, medium, and low level. This study uses error analysis as methodological framework. More specifically, this study was an attempt to describe the type of grammatical error which frequently exist in written production, to describe frequency grammatical error among proficiency levels, and to describe the students' understanding of errors. Students' writings were analyzed for errors based on surface strategy taxonomy. The results of this research revealed that 846 sentences indicated errors. Types of omission error was the highest one 322 (37.9%) sentences. Afterward, grammatical error in low proficiency level was the highest one 322 (37.9%) sentences. The second was high proficiency level 276 (32.6%) sentences. The third was medium proficiency level 248 (29.3%) sentences. Most of the students didn't understand about grammatical errors, because through students' interview only 7 students were able to change grammatical error to be good sentences.

Key words: Error Analysis, International Program, and English Proficiency Level of International Program

A. Introduction

Research on second language acquisition has evidenced revolutionary advancements since the publication of Fries' book *Teaching and Learning English as Foreign Language* in 1974. Since then, various studies have been conducted to account for the process of L2 acquisition in many languages around the world, for instance analyzing error. Within the field of second language research, a large number of studies have focused on error analysis (EA). Error analysis is the first approach to the study of SLA which includes an internal focus on learners' creative ability to construct language, (Troike, 2006: 38). It is very essential for the English teacher to discuss error analysis to emphasize the relevance of such analysis for teaching English as a foreign language. Moreover, it is important to accomplish that errors made by the learners need to be analyzed correctly in order to be able to arrange learning strategy effectively. As Corder, (1981: 35), says EA is one of a methodology of the psycholinguistic investigation which has goal to get

information about the pschololinguistic process and cognitive process in language production of second language learning. So far, error analysis have been studied as second foreign language which involve the second language learners on the different background of country, instance, English foreign language learner in Philippines (Lasaten), Malaysia (Rafik-Galea and Muftah,),Thailand (Watchara punya wong and Usaha), Jordan (Khotaba), Saudi Arabia (Al-Mohanna), India (Benzigar), English foreign language learner in Saudi (Alhysony), Turkey (Abushihab), and Iran (Khojasteh and Kafipour).

In the scope of error analysis, especially the researchers in Indonesia, studying error analysis in international program are rarely done by the researchers. Hence, the aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive account of analyzing error in second language learners of international program at different proficiency levels at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. It can provide evidence for the system of language which a learner is using at particular points in the course of L2 development in his discovery of language.

In learning foreign language, language learners begin learning a language from their mother tongue. The learners may encounter mistake or error much of the time. The difficulties of ongoing process in acquiring learning cause second language learners make errors. Thus, the phenomenon of error has been giving more attention for researchers in second language acquisition. Actually, Error analysis had a long history as far as second language learning is involved. The idea of the error as an effective to be avoided has been especially supported by behaviorism, being considered an

obstacle to language learning, (Lopez, 1999: 169). Nevertheless, error that was not described in this way was trivialized. From the 1940s until 1960s contrastive analysis were established to investigate learner errors in the field of second language acquisition. Contrastive analysis lay in behaviorist account of language learning, regarded language learning as a mechanical process of habit formation, (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 23). In addition contrastive analysis of the 1940s to 1960s was not sufficient for the study of second language acquisition caused by learning theory of behaviorist to which it is fastened cannot describe the logical problem of second language learning process that was addressed, (Troike, 37). The other problem of contrastive analysis was not always legalized by evidence from real learner errors. Finally, in the 1970's error analysis became recognized and gets more considerable attention of applied linguistic. It means that it attempt to validate the prediction of contrastive analysis by systematically gathering and analyzing the language learner production.

Brown (2007: 166), defines error analysis is the study of learner's errors in target language which can be observed, analyzed and classified to unfold of the system operating language within the learners. It direct manifestation of a system within which a learner is operating. In order to analyze in learners' errors in an appropriate perspective, it is very essential to make a systematic distinction between errors and mistakes. Erdogan (2005: 263) in Ellis suggests that about the error; if he or she always uses of the sentences incorrectly, it indicates of error. The second is to ask learner to try to correct his own odd utterance. Where is unable to correct, it indicates error. It means that if the learner is unable or unwilling to

make the correction form, we assume that the form the learner used is the one intended, it is called error too. Errors arise due to the imperfect competence in the target language. It is typically created by learners who do not yet fully command several institutionalized language system. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance, the utterances which are resulted from the failure to utilize a known system correctly (Ellis, 1997: 17). These mistakes seem to increase in frequency under condition of stress, indecision, and fatigue. It can be concluded that mistake is a performance of error that is the slips of the tongue; it is not the result of the lack of competence.

Error can be classified into four types: omission, addition, misformation and misording. When a learner is leaving off necessary items that must emerge in a well-performed utterance, that learner is doing omission error, (Dulay, 1982: 154). It is leaving out an item that is required for an utterance to be considered grammatical. Addition errors, which are the contrary of omission, are characterized by the presence of items that should otherwise not appear in a well-performed utterance, (1982: 156). Generally, it occurs in second language acquisition of the leaner Regularizations, double markings, and simple addition are kind of addition error. Mis formation, are the error that characterized by the use if the wrong from of a structure or morpheme, (1982: 156). There are three type of mis formation namely, regularization error (neglecting exception and dissemination rules to domain where the learner don't use the rules transformation of verb and countable or uncountable noun, for instance: *falled, runned, womans, phenomenons, critorions,etc*) archi-form (selection of one member of a class of form to represent other on the class, for

example, out of the set this/that/these/those the learner might use only one that) and alternating form (the use of archi-form often five way to apparently fairly free alternation of various members of a class with each other. Misording errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme in an utterance. Then, James (1998: 111). asserts blend error is sometimes called the contamination or cross-association or hybridization error. It is also called as combining or mixing (a substance) with another so that the component parts undistinguishable from one to the other. The characteristic of blending is when two alternative grammatical forms combine each other to produce ungrammatical blend.

Brown (2007: 263-266) classifies sources of error into four categories, first, Inter lingual transfer which is the negative influence or interference of the mother tongue of learner, second, intra lingual transfer which is the negative transfer or items within the target language, the third is context of learning, which overlaps both types of transfer. Fourth, communication strategies, it is evident that communicative strategy is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating. Likewise, Richard (1970: 6-11) classifies causes error into four types, they are overgeneralization, Incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized and ignorance of rule restriction.

B. Research Method

This is a study descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of the research are EFL students of international program at different proficiency level that consist of high, medium and low level. The researcher takes 20 EFL students in each proficiency level. Total numbers of this

research are 60 students of International program of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

The object of this research is sentence containing error taken from students' composition (written production) in EFL students of International Program of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

During the process of creating the research, the first the researcher may collect document from the result of written test made by EFL students of International program that consist of two proficiency levels; high and low level. The second is interview. Interview can be done in several ways, for instance open-ended, close-ended, focused or structured. In open ended interview, the researcher asks for the participants to get the information's opinion on event of fact.

In technique of analyzing data, the researcher effort to find and to arrange the data systematically and accurately through the procedure that have been suggested by Brown (1980), namely: error identification, error classification, and error explanation.

C. Finding and Discussion

This section will present four point of analyzing error among proficiency level of International Program, the first describes the types of errors in written production, the second describes the types of errors which are frequently exist in written production, the third describes the most error among proficiency and the fourth describes the students' understanding about grammatical errors.

1. Types of Error Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

After analyzing all data, the researcher found 322 omission errors. Omission of "-s/es" Noun inflection in plural form:

a) You should focus on some *aspect*
You should focus on some aspects.
b) When we look for some *job* in here,
When we look for some jobs in here,

In sentences above, the student don't comprehend the function of "-s/es" as the plural form, because they omitted "-s/-es" ending of the word as plural form.

Omission of Auxiliary:
a) This program is too bad and Ø not have advantages for children development

This program is too bad and does not have advantages for children development.

In the sentences above, grammatical function *does* auxiliary is added to the predicate to create negative statement or question form. Unfortunately, the students neglect *does* in negative form. They don't add *does* in negative form.

In addition, the researcher found 114 errors, for instance: Addition "–s/-es" noun inflection:
a) Every *individuals* should know what he need for the next future. Every individual should know what he need for the next future.
b) Every *individuals* includes children, teens, boys and girls. Every individual includes children, teens, boys and girls.

In this case, the students are not suitable with the sense of singular subject of the sentence. Because when the word "every" put in the sentence, noun should be singular form. So that, the word: "individuals" should be changed "individual".

Then, a total of 216 errors were identified in Misformation errors, for instance: Misformation of verb infinitive instead of Verb-2:

a) Three days ago, I *hear* one of program on channel radio. Three

days ago, I heard one of program on channel radio.

b) Two or three days ago, I *hear* the opening of a program. Two or three days ago, I heard the opening of a program.

From the sentences above, the student put wrong verb between verb-1 and verb-2. The student use the word "hear" instead of "heard" for the past event, because there is time marker: "ago" to indicate past event. So the word "hear" should be "heard".

Then, A total of 33 errors were identified in Misordering errors:

a) Malaysia creates *animation good.* Malaysia creates a good animation

b) That program can cause *degradation moral* to children.

c) That program can cause moral degradation to children.

The examples of sentence pattern of above, the learner put incorrect adjective and noun. When we want to describe a noun, we should put on the position of adjective before noun. In English grammar it call adjective phrase which has function to modify noun. So the sentences above should be *"a good animation"* and *"moral degradation"*.

Afterward, a total of 161 errors were identified in blend errors, for instance, wrong spelling of words:

a) Individual will see and *mett* the new problem. Individual will see and meet the new problem.

b) The problem of the sentence above, the learner writes wrong spelling word English. The learner write "mett" for the word "meet", the learner's errors are caused by the limitation of students' vocabulary in English.

2. The Types of Grammatical Errors Which Frequently Exist in Written Production

After analyzing all data the data the researcher found the types and frequent of errors. Total of errors 846 were identified in all proficiency levels. Type of omission is the highest error. *It is one* of the types of error which frequently exist in written production, because the highest percentage of omission errors is 322 (38.1%) sentences. These omissions errors can be classified into 16 types of errors:

No	Type Error	Level H, M, L	Percentage
1	Omission of "-s/es" noun inflection	71	22.0
2	Omission of to be	54	16.8
3	Omission of "-s/es" verb inflection	49	15.2
4	Omission of Preposition	27	8.4
5	Omission of Auxiliary	27	8.4
6	Omission of Adverb	23	7.1
7	Omission of Personal Pronoun	11	3.4
8	Omission of Conjunction	14	4.3
9	Omission of Verb	15	4.7
10	Omission of Article	11	3.4
11	Omission of "-ing" verb inflection	6	1.9
12	Omission of Noun	5	1.6
13	Omission of Relative Pronoun	2	0.6
14	Omission of Modal	3	0.9
15	Omission of Adjective	3	0.9
16	Omission of "ed" verb inflection	1	0.3
	Total Error	322	

The second primary error is misformation error. The researcher found 216 (25.5%) sentences containing errors. These misoformation errors can be classified into 25 types of errors as follow:

No	Type Error	Total H, M, L	%
1	Misformation of Verb inflection	67	31.0
2	Misformation of Noun instead of verb	19	8.8
3	Misformation of Preposition	16	7.4
4	Misformation of using Determiner (Quantifier)	14	6.5
5	Misformation of verb instead of noun	9	4.2
6	Misformation of Adjective instead of Verb	1	0.5
7	Misformation of to be	14	6.5
8	Misformation of Noun	13	6.0
9	Misformation of modal	7	3.2
10	Misformation of Adjective instead of Noun	14	6.5
11	Misformation of noun instead of adjective	8	3.7
12	Misformation of Pronoun	11	5.1
13	Misformation of sentence pairs	4	1.9
14	Misformation of adverb for adjective in Parallel Structure	1	0.5
15	Misformation of demonstrative adjective	**1**	0.5
16	Misformation of relative pronoun	5	2.3
17	Misformation of adverb instead of noun	1	0.5
18	Misformation of adverb instead of adjective	1	0.5
19	Misformation of article	4	1.9
20	Misformation of Irregular Comparative in Degree Comparison	1	0.5
21	Misformation of Verb-ing instead of adjective	1	0.5
22	Misformation of verb-1 instead of adjective	1	0.5
23	Misformation of "to infinitive" instead of modal	1	0.5
24	Misformation of noun instead of verb 1	1	0.5
25	Misofrmation of "-ing" verb form infinitive verb	1	0.5
	Total Error	216	100.0

The third major error is blend errors. The researcher found 161 (19.0%) sentences indicating errors.

These misformation errors can be classified into 6 types of errors. Misspelling of word is in the highest rank, 63 sentences.

No	Type Error	Level H, M, L	Percentage
1	Wordy Construction	26	16.1
2	Misspelling	63	39.1
3	Wrong choice of verb	38	23.6
4	Word choice of adjective	5	3.1
5	Wrong choice of noun	17	10.6
6	Wrong choice of adverb	12	7.5
	Total Error	161	

Addition is in the fourth rank of error. The total number of addition error in all proficiency levels are 114 (13.5%) sentences. These addition errors can be classified into 14 types of errors.

| No	Type Error	Level H, M, L	Percentage
1	Preposition	6	5.3
2	Determiner of Quantifier	4	3.5
3	Conjunction	1	0.9
4	Addition of "-s/" noun inflection	25	21.9
5	Addition of "–s/es" verb inflection	7	6.1
6	Addition of Verb (double verb)	15	13.2
7	Additoin of "-ing" regular verb inflection	7	6.1
8	Addition of to be	24	21.1
9	Addition of article	9	7.9
10	Addition of modal	5	4.4
11	Addition of adjective	2	1.8
12	Addition of possessive adjective	3	2.6
13	Addition of object of verb	2	1.8
14	Adverb	4	3.5
	Total Error	114	

The last is misordering error. The total number of misordering error in all proficiency levels are 33 (3.9%)

sentences. These misordering errors can be classified into 7 types of errors. Misordering of sentence pattern is the highest one, 22 sentences.

No	Type Error	Level H, M, L	Percentage
1	Misordering of noun	1	3.0
2	Misordering of Adjective Phrase	4	12.1
3	Misordering of conjunction	1	3.0
4	Misordering of sentence pattern	22	66.7
5	Misordering of adverb	2	6.1
6	Misordering of adverb time	2	6.1
7	Misordering of date	1	3.0
	Total Error	33	

Describing the Grammatical Error Mostly Occur among Proficiency Levels of International Program of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

Table 1
Grammatical Error among Proficiency Levels
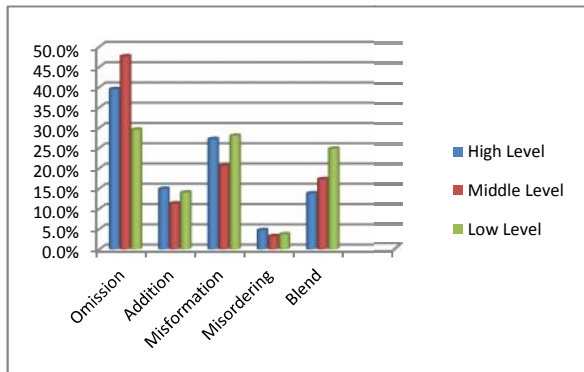
The Table shows that how the percentage of type errors in all proficiency levels is very different. In omission of error, the total of students' omission error in high level is 109 (39.5%)sentences, nonetheless omission error in medium level is higher 118 (47.6%) sentences than high level, and

low level is the lowest one 95 (29.5%)sentences.

Misformation error is in the second rank in all type of errors that is 216 (25.5%) sentences. Nevertheless these errors are very different in each proficiency level. In misformation error, the total number of students' misformation errors in high level is 75 (27.2%) sentences, however misformation in low level is the highest one 90 (28.0%), and medium level is the lowest one 51 (20.6%).

The third rank is blend error. The researcher found 161 (19.0%) sentences indicating errors, nonetheless these errors are quite different in each proficiency level. The total number of students' blend errors in high proficiency level is 38 (13.8%) sentences, it is lower than blend errors in medium proficiency level 43 (17.3%) sentences, meanwhile low proficiency level is the highest one 80 (24.8%) sentences.

Addition errors are in the fourth rank in all types of errors: 114 (13.5%) sentences, nevertheless these errors are quite different in each proficiency level. In addition error, the total number of students' addition errors in high proficiency level is 41 (14.9%) sentences. It is higher than blend errors in medium proficiency level 28 (11.3%) sentences, conversely low proficiency level is the highest one 45 (14.0%) sentences.

Misordering error is in the last rank in all type of errors that is 33 (3.9%) sentences, nonetheless these errors are quite different in each proficiency level. The total number of misordering errors in medium proficiency level is 8 (3.2%) sentences. It is lower than misordering error in low level 12 (3.7%), conversely high proficiency level is the highest one 13 (4.7%) sentences.

3. The Students' Understanding on Their Errors

In this part, the researcher interviewed 30 students in different proficiency levels and each proficiency level consists of 10 students. The researcher asked for the students to get the information's opinion on event of fact about their understanding of grammatical use. The researcher conducted interview for students to assure that they really understand or not in using grammatical rules. So, through this interview, error and mistake can be distinguished.

Based on the result interview, 8 students are able to find grammatical error, but unable to change it, clearly it indicates error. These consist of 4 students from high proficiency level, 2 students from medium level and 2 students from low level. Moreover, 15 students are unable to identify grammatical error and to change to be a good sentence, obviously it indicate error too. These consist of 4 students from high proficiency level, 4 students from medium level and 7 students form low level. Finally, only 7 students are able to identify grammatical error and able to correct it, it indicates mistake.. These consist of 2 students from high level, 4 students from medium level, and 1 student from low level. As a result, the students from low level are the most dominant in conducting error, because just two 1 student who are able to identify grammatical error and correct it, while 9 students didn't able to correct it. Students' high level is in the second rank, because just 2 students are able to identify grammatical error and correct it, otherwise 8 students didn't able to correct it, it means that it is indicating error. Students' medium level is in the third rank, because 3 students are able to identify grammatical error and correct it,

notwithstanding 7 students didn't able to correct it.

D. Conclusion

Viewed from the perspective of surface strategy taxonomy, the errors were categorized into 5 groups, omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and blend. The highest percentage of occurrence was error in omission 322 (38.1%) sentences. The second major error was misformation errors, 216 (25.5%) sentences. Blend error was the third rank, 161 (19.0%) sentences. The fourth major error was addition, 114 (13.5%) sentences. The fifth major error was misordering, 33 (3.9%) sentences. Afterward, the researcher found 276 (32.6%) sentences error in high proficiency level, 248 (29.3%) sentences error in medium level, and 322 (38.1%) sentences error in low proficiency level.

The researcher also conducted interview for students to assure that they really understand or not in using grammatical rules. So, through this interview, error and mistake can be distinguished. The researcher interviewed 30 students in different proficiency levels. There were 8 students who able to identify grammatical error, but unable to change it, clearly it indicated error. Afterward, 15 students were unable to identify grammatical error and to change to be a good sentence, obviously it indicated error too. Then, only 7 students were able to identify grammatical error and able to correct it. Through the students' interview, the researcher concluded that most of the students didn't really understand about grammatical error, because they were unable to change grammatical error to be good sentences.

E. Suggestion

After conducting this research, the researcher would like to recommend for the lecturers, the students and other future researchers.

1. To The Lecturer

Lecturers are the model and guide of their students to get successful in English skills. The lectures or teachers should respect the students' error and give guidance to the students in teaching and learning process. They should discuss to their students how to identify and correct their error in English written text. Furthermore they need more technique in teaching writing to give exercises or practices in the classroom or outside from the classroom.

2. To The Students

The students should more focus and practice in learning English, especially in writing. They should have more pay attention and great winning in learning English process.

3. To The Next Researchers

Grammatical errors that happened to the students are sources for the teachers and students to be overcame. Hence the other researchers should find out the other solution of the problem in grammatical errors that happened to students.

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