

Error Analysis in Academic Writing: A Case of EFL Students in North Central Timor

Febronia Lasi
(febry1202@gmail.com)

University of Timor

The proposed study intended to investigate the different types of errors in academic writing performed by 20 English Foreign Language (EFL) Learners undertaking English for Academic Writing at English study program (ESP) University of Timor Indonesia. The learners were required to write a one page term paper assignment on a topic related to their hometown. The descriptive qualitative method was employed to examine and analyse the students' term papers and interview. The analysis document became the primary source supported by the interview sections as references for the secondary sources. The errors in the term papers were identified and classified accordingly. The whole primary data were classified based on the types of errors, and they were explained. The result of the present study revealed that the errors majority carried out by the EFL learners due to the grammatical errors or sentences structure. Then, it followed by determiners, using capital letters, articles, and punctuation as the minor errors. The findings of this research were expected to provide the EFL learners positive input in learning English as a foreign language specifically in academic writing.

Keywords: *academic writing, error analysis, descriptive qualitative*

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki berbagai jenis kesalahan dalam penulisan akademik yang melibatkan 20 mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris sebagai Pemelajar Bahasa Asing (EFL) tentang Penulisan Akademik pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (ESP) - Universitas Timor Indonesia. Subyek penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester lima yang terdiri dari 20 mahasiswa yang dipilih secara random dari lima kelas tersebut. Partisipan ini diberikan tugas untuk menuliskan sebuah topik tentang 'Kampung Halaman' mereka masing-masing. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif yang diaplikasikan untuk memeriksa dan menganalisis makalah dan wawancara siswa. Dokumen analisis menjadi sumber utama yang didukung oleh wawancara sebagai referensi pada sumber sekunder. Kesalahan dalam makalah penelitian diidentifikasi dan diklasifikasikan berdasarkan data yang diperoleh. Seluruh data primer diklasifikasikan berdasarkan jenis kesalahannya, dan dijelaskan. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa sebagian besar kesalahan yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (EFL) disebabkan oleh kesalahan tata bahasa atau struktur kalimat. Kemudian diikuti dengan determinator, menggunakan huruf kapital, artikel, dan tanda baca sebagai kesalahan kecil. Temuan penelitian ini

diharapkan dapat memberikan masukan positif kepada peserta didik EFL dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing khususnya dalam penulisan akademik.

INTRODUCTION

Meyers (2005) states that writing is a way to produce language you do naturally when you speak. Writing is speaking to other on paper – or on a computer screen. Writing is also an action – a process of discovering and organizing your ideas, putting them on a paper and reshaping and revising them. This research conducted on the error analysis of English academic writing of the fifth semester students at English study program. This area holds significant importance to English language teachers for providing students learning feedback along with the learning complexities that manifest the developmental process of foreign language. Therefore, the study examines the common errors that students commit in their English writing. Writing is a highly complex task and writing in foreign language makes the task further complicated as it requires sufficient command over the foreign language to fulfil all the formalities; composing, developing logical ideas, which are essential for a written text to be comprehensible. While writing, a writer engages into the cognitive process of formulating ideas into target language.

In spite of the fact that, for most students, writing is probably considered the most difficult among four skills, up to now English teaching and learning model practiced in the classroom has not given significant proportion to writing yet. Most of the teachers have not given a lot of opportunities to the students to practice and develop writing skill and have not given correct treatment to the students' writing problem. The teachers also have not found yet appropriate method and technique to teach writing effectively. Despite the fact that, for most students, writing may be considered the most difficult of the four skills, to date there are still many students who lack writing, such as grammar or structure, this is the basis why researchers want to discuss or analyze the mistakes made Students in writing, if writing is still a weakness of them, then this is very impact on them, such as writing in their thesis or scientific papers.

The aim of this study is to explore the competence level of fifth year students of the University of Timor English Study program after they have gone through the Academic and Communicative Skills programme for four semesters. That is, the paper seeks to analyse whether the students were able to apply the knowledge they gain in the Academic and Communicative Skills classes by writing error-free texts or whether they still face challenges in avoiding errors in their essays and if so, to identify the type of errors that typify their writing. To a very large extent, the study seeks to extend the scope of existing literature by doing an error analysis of fifth year students in order to find out the type of errors that they commit in their essays. Based on the background of study above, so the identification of study in this research is the students still lack in English writing. This research is limited or focused on academic writing a descriptive text, descriptive text is a simple text, from where the writer can see the fundamental mistakes made by students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing

According to Taylor (2009) writing is not merely a skill we employ to record our knowledge, but the very moment at which we confront what learning and understanding are all about. So, it means that, while the reader will surely find plenty of guidance on the practical issues that arise in writing an essay. Because that, writing is very important for added our knowledge and also enrich our

vocabulary with the write.

Coffin, (2003 :10) says that student writing is always embedded within relationships around teaching and learning and these relationships influence, not least, the extent to which students come to write successfully in higher education. From definition coffin, as students must be able to writing through relationships around because that writing much unlimited. The important, in our heart awareness for writing every day with what we see around us.

The purposes of writing is the students to be ability for critical thinking, understanding and memory something issues of problems, to extend students' learning beyond lectures and other formal meetings, to improve students' communications skills and also train students as future professionals in particular disciplines. This range of reasons for writing may not be so apparent to students, who may see writing as mainly an assessment hurdle and can find out an activity to help students explore these issues.

Taylor (1989) stated that for starting the writing something must be know are: a. Interpreting assignment topics b. Drawing on your own experience and background c. Developing your argument through introductions, middles and conclusions, d. Understanding the conventions of academic culture e. Honing your ideas into clear, vigorous English.

Based on the above writing guide is very important for student's and also given instructions very easy for understand by the students'. Before, you write something the first you doing is read instructions writing guide.

According to Brown (2001: 343-346) there are at least five types of classroom writing performance. The first is imitative or writing down. At the beginning level of learning to write students will simply write down English letters, words, and possibly sentences in order to learn the conventions of orthographic code. The second is intensive or controlled. A common form of controlled writing is to present a paragraph to students in which they have to alter a given structure throughout. For example, the students may be asked to change all present tense verbs to past tense; in such a case, students may need to alter other time references in the paragraph.

Heaton (1975: 136). The minimum criteria for the intermediate level are: accurate grammar, vocabulary and spelling, though possibly with some mistakes which do not destroy communication, handwriting generally legible, and expression clear and appropriate, using a fair range of language, able to link themes and points coherently.

Academic Writing

In most forms of academic writing a detached and objective approach is required. An academic argument appeals to logic and provides evidence in support of an intellectual position. According to Bowker (2007:3), "Academic writing is a special genre of writing that prescribes its own set of rules and practices". Academic writing focused the written product with in deep investigation over the resource to provide relevant product. Academic writing is one of the cornerstones of university study. In all disciplines, students (and their teachers) need writing to express their ideas clearly.

However, academic writing can come in many forms and you may be asked to write an essay, a report or even a reflective journal article. These different types of academic writing adhere to specific styles but all of them have similarities. Furthermore, this study will focus in writing thesis as one kinds of academic writing. There are some typical features in academic writing, such as: - Complexity - Formality - Precision - Objectivity - Explicitness - Accuracy - Hedge – Responsibility.

Error Analysis

Error Analysis Vahdatinejad (2008:15) maintains that error analysis can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. It provides the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence. He also makes distinction between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). Mistakes are a sure sign that learners are learning language, especially L2. This statement suggest learners know a point or have used many times correctly but somehow slip has occurred. Errors, On the other hand, occur because learners do not probably know a particular point of target language. Hence error correction has a role to play in language learning. The explained above means that the students still always learning about their errors for whatever their lack. And the teachers should also help students to find the weakness of the students and give their treatments through explanation or information.

Corder (1967:167) state: “A learners errors are significant in that they provide to the writer evidenced of how language is learned or acquired what strategies or procedures the learners is employing in the discovery of the language.

Cause of Errors

The cause of error can be divided into three categories namely Brown (2002:224): a. Interlingual Interference Interlingual Interference is a cause of errors where the learners transfer their native language system into the target language system. Interlingual interference is called as interlingual, which is defined by Smith (1994:7) as the systematic linguistic behavior of the learners of second or other language. b. Intralingual Interferences Intralingual is a cause of error from the target language itself due it is complicated system Brown (2002:224). In this case, the learners have been saved from the interferences of their mother tongue but as they learn the target language. They find it more complicated and the result learning, the learner seem to make generalization of the target system on the basis of the data to which they are exposed. c. Carelessness The error of carelessness is caused of the less knowledge of the students and the students who are purposely done the mistake. It can be shown when the students use double preposition or may be phoneme omitted or mistyping.

METHOD

This research was conducted at the fifth semester students of English studyprogram in the academic year 2018/2019. The population of this research was in which consisted of five classes which consisted of around 100 students, and the sample of research was 20 students. The sample was taken 1/5 from the total of population randomly. This research was based on the descriptive quantitative method which aims to gather the data in order to know the students’ error in writing descriptive text. The writer collected the data by giving written test about their “Home Town”. The instrument of this research is to write descriptive text. It is used to find out what error that made by students.

To collect the data of this research, the researcher use some steps, namely; the students were asked to write descriptive text, the researcher collected the students’ writing and analyzed the students’ writing about descriptive text. The data analyses were an important part in conducted a research. In analyzing the data, descriptive quantitative technique was applied. In administering the test, the writer first, identifying the students’ writing, classifying the errors, as such: addition, omission, misordering, misformation and finding out the dominant types of errors that made by students to obtain the percentage of the data. Then the following formula suggested by Sudjono (2004:43) was employed to know analyze the data: $X = F/N \times 100$.

FINDINGS

After analyzing the data, it was found that:

1. The occurrence of omission error was 60, the occurrence of addition error was 40, the occurrence of misformation error was 35 and the occurrences of misordering error was 2. 2. Occurrences total was 157. The most dominant error made by students in writing descriptive text was 60 occurrences or about 35 % in omission. 3. Most often errors occurred was error of omission about 60 occurrences. This types of error was usually caused by carelessness. Carelessness occurred when the students are not deliberate to do some mistakes, but the result showed that it was the mistake. The mistake came from wrong written a phoneme omitted or mistyping.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the students' error in writing descriptive text, it was found that the four types of error found in this research, they were omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The most dominant error made by students in writing descriptive text was 86 occurrences or about 35% in omission. Most often errors occurred was error of omission about 86 occurrences. This types of error was usually caused by carelessness. Carelessness occurred when the students are not deliberate to do some mistakes, but the result showed that it was the mistake. The mistake came out from wrong written a phoneme omitted or mistyping.

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