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ERRORS ON EFL STUDENTS' PARAGRAPH WRITINGS

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Abstract
It is common for EFL students to commit grammatical errors in the early stage of learning writing, especially in paragraph writing. Therefore, this research aimed to identify the types of errors and the most dominant ones committed in descriptive paragraph writing exercises. A qualitative research design was applied to this study. Writing exercises were used as research instruments to collect the data. Twenty-six students of the English Study Program were used as participants in this study. Error Analysis Method (EAM) based on Surface Structure Taxonomy and percentage error analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings showed that there were four types of errors committed referring to misformation with a frequency of error was 47 (0,14 %), omission with a frequency of error 81 (0,24%), misordering with a frequency of error 153 (0,47%), and addition with the frequency of error was 45 (0,13%). In this case, a misordering mistake was the dominant one, and an addition error was the least dominant one committed by the students. In conclusion, the researchers assume that some factors affect students' mistakes, such as lack of knowledge and competence in English grammar. The error analysis method was a very suitable way to identify types of errors using simple present tense in descriptive paragraph writing.

Keywords— Errors, EFL Students, Paragraph Writing

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language means learning both language aspects (i.e. grammar, vocabulary) and language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, writing). As an essential language skill, writing needs to be mastered. (Khairunnisa, Ibrahim, & Othman, 2021) State that writing skill is crucial for students to provide knowledge of the text, and it makes them able to express their opinions by producing written essays when responding to tasks given as an evaluation. According to (Alsher, 2021), writing is a problem for some students in creating engaging, obvious, short, and effective written work. Furthermore, (Srinivas, 2019) states that writing is regarded as the most challenging of the four language skills, which needs more practising time and makes students unable to distinguish its forms and get the main idea stated. Since writing is considered a challenging skill, it is not easy to learn and master it. It is complex and defying, particularly for EFL students. In the process of teaching and learning activities in paragraph writing, The role of an English teacher is such an essential factor needed to improve students' writing skills. In this case, the teacher needs to give learning feedback to assist them in enhancing their paragraph writing skills. It is in line with (Sari & Wahyuni, 2018), who claim that teachers need to have enough time to provide high-quality feedback and those students need enough time to process and apply feedback. In brief, good feedback is required by students to make their writing skills much better.

Additionally, there is also another factor that impacts students' writing skills in terms of grammar use. When students master or get accustomed to grammar, it helps them write more correctly than those who do not. According to (ALkhresheh & Orak, 2021, grammar is conventionally defined as the words used to create sentences. It helps someone comprehend how words are formed in a complex way. It has something to do with two primary components, grammar rules and how they are studied and

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practised in terms of language framework. Naturally, students need to master both vocabulary and grammar. (Melati, 2020) also states that it is common for EFL students to make mistakes in writing, especially in their early stage of learning paragraph writing. In other words, if students do not master such a language aspect, grammar, their writing constructions are not good. They usually encounter problems or difficulties and even commit grammatical errors when writing. Chen (2002) (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021) mentioned nine types of writing problems students encounter: word choice, tenses, word usage, definite articles, relative clauses, redundancy, spelling and punctuations, and sentence level.

As one of the writing problems, tenses must be learned by heart. Tenses are a grammatical category related to the time of the situation and indicated by the form of the verbs. (Kumayas, 2021). It is also delineated (Napitupulu, 2021) that tenses are the changes of verb forms based on the time at an event in an English sentence. Under the preliminary activities on the descriptive paragraph writing course that the researchers carried out with all the English Study Program first-semester students. The researchers found that many students made mistakes in using the present tense and did it repeatedly, which is regarded as a grammatical error. In other words, they have insufficient knowledge of the grammatical rules and only sometimes use English as the target language. Their daily activities enabled them to find out that English descriptive paragraph writing is more complex than L1 writing, making them commit errors in writing exercises. Based on the facts and explanation stated, the researchers needed to conduct research in line with error analysis on students' descriptive paragraph writing. In this case, the researchers wanted to determine what types of errors were committed by students in descriptive paragraph writing.

Literature Review

Errors

Errors are unavoidable, constitute, or deviation that occurred for some reasons or others, and non-native speakers of English are firmly bound to the aspects of social and cultural existence, and the dominant problem that caused errors in writing was tensed. (Li, 2021). It is in line with the ideas of (Yahya, Ishak, Zainal, Faghat, & Yahaya, 2012), who define errors as unavoidable interference of L1 of non-native English speakers in language learning, especially in writing. According to (Hussain, Hanif, Asif, & Rehman, 2013), errors are caused by memory lapses of the students in terms of tiredness and strong emotions. Moreover, Richards (1971) in (Koki, 2022) classified error into two types. The interference of the native language elements, either in spoken or written performances of the target language, causes interlingual errors. Intralingual errors are caused by ineffective learning traits related to rule application and the unawareness of rule restrictions.

Additionally, there were three levels of errors, such as grammatical error, which is related to features of grammar that are not used correctly. According to standard usage, a lexical error is connected with vocabulary in terms of a subset of words in a language used in a particular context or to a specific person. A mechanical error has something to do with the rules of written language, such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling. (James,1998; Nordquist, 2019) in (Koki, 2022). In brief, errors are usually made by EFL students who need to gain language proficiency. Consequently, they are more likely to make errors which need correction. (Brown, 2007; Corder 1967) in (Rana, Al Owaidh, & Al Harbi, 2019). In this research, errors are grammatical learning problems faced by students whose first language is not English in writing activities. They can be barriers for students to master English writing skills.

Paragraph Writing

Wali and Madani, (2020), in (Maulida, Rahman, Handrianto, & Rasool, 2022) define paragraph writing as the first way or step to master writing skills. It is an essential skill in writing before any writing skills, for it allows readers to grasp the quality of the writing. Furthermore, (Yamin, 2019) points out that coherence addresses one central and crucial concept in each paragraph. It also notes that the continuity of paragraph writing makes the flow of one sentence to another in a section smooth.

Other experts (Maharani, 2017) mentioned three components to a successful paragraph (i.e.

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topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences). These three elements make the section complete and make it easier for the reader to understand the paragraph. In addition, Wali and Madani, (2020), in (Maulida, Rahman, Handrianto, & Rasool, 2022) illustrate three genres of paragraph writing: narrative, descriptive and expository. Moreover, (Sari & Wahyuni, 2018) define paragraph writing as a paragraph used to elaborate specific person, item, place, or object. It also explains how this paragraph has generic structures; identification, definition, and conclusion. It means that paragraph writing is such a basic writing which students should master since it contributes to good quality of other writing skills. In this research, the researchers used descriptive paragraph writing to be analyzed.

Research Method

Research Design

A qualitative research design was used for this study. Syahri, Sulaiman & Susanti, (2017) in (Sulaiman & Syahri, 2022) state that qualitative research is research which is in line with reducing, classifying, verifying, presenting, and drawing conclusions. Tavakoli, (2012) in (Sulaiman, 2020) adds that qualitative research design deals with the existing phenomenon or facts without manipulating the data. In brief, this research is categorized as qualitative research for it has nothing to do with numerical data of inferential statistics obtained from giving a pretest, treatment and posttest.

Participants

Twenty-six participants of Muhammadiyah University Palembang from the first semester in the English department voluntarily took part in this research. The participants were taken and selected through a purposive sampling technique. The participating students were available when this research was carried out and was suitable for the study's criteria, like being English department students and having experience in writing activities.

Instrument and Technique of Data Collection and Analysis

To have the data collected, the researchers asked the students to do or write a descriptive paragraph writing about their lovely mother, which consisted of 400 words. In this writing exercise, the use of the present tense was emphasized. They were given one and a half hours to complete the task. The researchers gave detailed instructions through the Zoom platform and afterwards let them send their writing exercises through e-mails.

After the data were obtained, the researchers analyzed them using the error analysis method (EAM) to collect samples of the learner's language, identify the errors, describe the errors, explain them, and evaluate/correct them. (Dirgeyasa, 2016). The data analysis from EAM was categorized based on surface structure taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. In addition to analyzing the errors through the error analysis method (EAM) based on surface structure taxonomy, the data were counted or calculated through the percentage of errors analysis, and the formula was stated.

$$P = \frac{Frequency\ of\ each\ kind\ of\ error}{total\ frequency\ of\ four\ types\ of\ error} 100\%$$

Note: P = Percentage

Results and Discussion

This research was by error analysis findings conducted by giving descriptive paragraph writing exercises in terms of four kinds of errors (i.e. omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). In this case, the researchers asked students to write a descriptive paragraph about "My Lovely Mother" and gave them one and half hours to complete it, then asked them to submit it through e-mails. It was proved that all students made grammatical errors using present tense in descriptive paragraph writing. To get detailed results of the mistakes committed during the writing activity, Table 1 describes the recapitulation of students' errors based on surface structure taxonomy.

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Table 1. The Recapitulation of Students' Errors based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

Subjects	Kinds of Errors				Errors Total
	Omission	Misformation	Addition	Misordering	
1	2	1	2	11	15
2	4	3	2	10	19
3	3	1	0	9	13
4	3	2	0	9	14
5	5	0	2	7	14
6	2	0	1	6	9
7	4	0	4	13	21
8	3	1	3	10	17
9	6	1	3	9	19
10	2	1	4	8	15
11	1	1	0	2	4
12	1	10	2	2	15
13	3	2	1	9	15
14	2	3	3	5	13
15	1	1	1	4	7
16	0	0	2	4	6
17	4	3	1	0	8
18	1	1	0	1	3
19	5	0	2	3	10
20	2	10	0	8	20
21	1	1	1	4	7
22	7	2	2	2	13
23	5	0	3	0	8
24	1	2	1	1	5
25	8	0	3	7	18
26	5	1	2	9	17
Frequency Total	81	47	45	153	325

Table 1 describes the errors made by the first semester students of English Department in descriptive paragraph writing exercises based on surface structure taxonomy. In this research, the researchers found out that 1st student got 15 total errors in terms of 2 omissions, 1 misformation, 2 addition, and 11 misordering. The 2nd student got 19 total errors in terms of 4 omissions, 3 misformation, 2 addition, and 10 misordering. The 3rd student got 13 total errors in terms of 3 omissions, 1 misformation, 0 addition, and 9 misordering. The 4th student got 14 total errors in terms of 3 omissions, 2 misformation, 0 addition, and 9 misordering. The 5th student got 14 total errors in terms of 5 omissions, 0 misformation, 2 addition, and 7 misordering. The 6th student got 9 total errors in terms of 2 omission, 0 misformation, 1 addition, and 6 misordering. The 7th student got 21 total errors in terms of 4 omissions, 0 misformation, 4 addition, and 13 misordering.

In addition, the 8th student got 17 total errors in terms of 3 omissions, 1 misformation, 3 addition, and 10 misordering. The 9th student got 19 total errors in terms of 6 omissions, 1 misformation, 3 addition, and 9 misordering. The 10th student got 15 total errors in terms of 2 omissions, 1 misformation, 4 addition, and 8 misordering. The 11th student got 4 total errors in terms of 1 omissions, 1 misformation, 0 addition, and 2 misordering. The 12th student got 15 total errors in

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terms of 1 omissions, 10 misformation, 2 addition, and 2 misordering. The 13th student got 15 total errors in terms of 3 omissions, 2 misformation, 1 addition, and 9 misordering. The 14th student got 13 total errors in terms of 2 omission, 3 misformation, 3 addition, and 5 misordering. The 15th student got 7 total errors in terms of 1 omissions, 1 misformation, 1 addition, and 4 misordering. The 16th student got 6 total errors in terms of 0 omissions, 0 misformation, 2 addition, and 4 misordering.

Additionally, the 17th student got 8 total errors in terms of 4 omissions, 3 misformation, 1 addition, and 0 misordering. The 18th student got 3 total errors in terms of 1 omission, 1 misformation, 0 addition, and 1 misordering. The 19th student got 10 total errors in terms of 5 omissions, 0 misformation, 2 addition, and 3 misordering. The 20th student got 20 total errors in terms of 2 omission, 10 misformation, 0 addition, and 8 misordering. The 21st student got 7 total errors in terms of 1 omissions, 1 misformation, 1 addition, and 4 misordering. The 22nd student got 13 total errors in terms of 7 omissions, 2 misformation, 2 addition, and 2 misordering. The 23rd student got 8 total errors in terms of 5 omissions, 0 misformation, 3 addition, and 0 misordering. The 24th student got 5 total errors in terms of 1 omissions, 2 misformation, 1 addition, and 1 misordering. The 25th student got 18 total errors in terms of 8 omissions, 0 misformation, 3 addition, and 7 misordering, and the 26th student got 17 total errors in terms of 5 omissions, 1 misformation, 2 addition, and 9 misordering. In conclusions, most of the students made errors in misordering (153), omission (81), misformation (47). and addition (45). In addition, the outlines or summary instances of students' errors in descriptive paragraph writing occcured such the following sentences, as follows:

1. Omission

a) I have_ beautiful mother. (students 1, 15)**.** It should be: *I have a beautiful mother*

b) She usually wear a veil. (student 17, 26). It should be: *She usually wears a veil.*

2. Misformation

a) *She had a pointed nose*. (students 1, 22) It should be: *She has a pointed nose.*

b) She liked bringing her new satchel. (student 18, 20) It should be: *She likes bringing her new satchel.*

3. Addition

a) I thinks that she loves me alot. (students 7, 25) It should be: *I think that she loves me alot.*

b) She is likes making a cake. (students 12, 17) It should be: *She likes making a cake.*

4. Misordering

a) *She everyday puts on her long dress.* (students 3, 8) It should be: *Everyday, she puts on her long dress.*

b) *She has a smile nice*. (students 13, 19) It should be: *She has a nice smile*.

In addition, the researchers then calculated or counted the errors through the percentage analysis formula. To be clear, Table 2 illustrates the results of the frequency and percentage of errors.

Table 2. The Frequency and the Percentage of Errors

No	Kinds of Errors	Frequency of Each Kind of Error	Total Frequency of four Kinds of Errors	Percentage(%)
1	Omission	81	325	0,24
2	Misformation	47	325	0,14
3	Addition	45	325	0, 13
4	Minsordering	153	325	0,47

Table 2 shows the results of the

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frequency and percentage of errors calculation through the percentage analysis formula. In this context, the highest percentage of error was misordering (0,47%) and the lowest one was addition (0,13%), while misformation was 0,14% and omission was 0,24%. In conclusion, most of the students made an error in misordering since they tended tobe perplexed by the use and function of the simple present tense in doing descriptive paragraph writing. Furthermore, the researchers assume that omission errors were made by the first semester students of the English Department because they left out an item that required an utterance to be considered grammatically. While misformation errors were made by them because they used the wrong forms of structure.

On the other side, they made such an addition error because they wrote or put down an item that must not exist in a well-formed utterance, and they made a misordering error because they did not understand the use and function of simple present tense. They wrote or put down the words or morphemes incorrect order in their writing.

In this research, the researchers decided to select the first semester students of English Study Program because they have paragraph writing course. It was done to know their basic writing skills and grammar mastery. This research has examined errors in students' writing exercises, coded based on surface structure taxonomy and percentage error analysis. This research findings have relationships with the study of (Perlin, Sartika, & Nery, 2020) in term of the calculation of error using percentage error analysis which showed that there were four types of errors found, such as misformation with the frequency of error was 33 (56,89 %), omission and misordering with frequency of error was 8 (13,79%), and addition with the frequency of error was 9 (15,51%). Yet, the researchers' study showed that there were four types of errors like misformation with the frequency of error was 47 (0,14 %), omission with the frequency of error was 81 (0,24%), misordering with frequency of error was 153 (0,47%), and addition with the frequency of error was 45 (0,13%). Instead of having the relationship with the study of (Perlin, Sartika, & Nery, 2020), this research also has the difference on calculation types of errors. In this context, (Perlin, Sartika, & Nery, 2020) only used percentage error analysis in analyzing the errors but this research used two kinds of techniques for analyzing the errors related to percentage error analysis and surface structure taxonomy recapitulation which showed that the most dominant error was misordering and the least one was addition. These errors indicated that students have grammatical problems in using present tense in descriptive paragraph writing.

Conclusion

The error analysis method is an appropriate way to identify students' errors in writing, especially in descriptive paragraph writing using the present tense. This is arranged systematically, which enables the researchers to get a conclusion based on primary writing exercises given to the students. Additionally, surface structure taxonomy is good means of describing and classifying errors in terms of omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. Moreover, the findings of this research showed that misordering mistakes are most frequently made or committed by students. In addition, lack of knowledge and competence in English grammar become influential factors that commit students' errors in paragraph writing.

In conclusion, the results of this research can give a contribution or recommendation to teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) about grammatical errors in using present tense in writing. In other words, once English teachers teach writing, as soon as they teach grammar, they identify the types of mistakes that the students make and correct them. The results of this research can help English teachers design teaching materials for teaching writing skills. Besides, the researchers also suggest that students must practice writing more to improve their writing skills. Hopefully, this research can guide the following researchers to conduct profound research in line with error analysis on descriptive paragraph writing.

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