

## **A CASE STUDY OF GRAMMATICAL ERROR ANALYSIS OF CREATIVE WRITING**

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### **Abstracts**

We realize the difficulty of acquiring skill in second language writing. Many aspects in writing should be concerned, include model texts, grammar, spell-check, punctuation and prepositions. Learners have to study how to convey their understanding of grammatical rules. In this research, researchers conducted analysis in grammatical error based on surface strategy taxonomy. Surface strategy taxonomy highlights the way surface structures are altered. It includes omission, addition, misformation, and misordering errors. There are 125 grammatical errors found in 12 creative writings which include 37 errors in omission, 10 errors in addition, 13 errors in misinformation, 1 errors in misordering, and 64 errors in others category. Researchers mostly found errors in use of tenses and punctuation as other error category. The participant did not make any improvement in his creative writings from March 2013 up to January 2014 because he repeated make same grammatical errors in each article.

**Keywords:** grammatical analysis, grammar error, creative writing

### **Introduction**

One of productive skills in learning a language is writing. We realize the difficulty of acquiring skill in writing especially in second language. A half century ago, many experts stated that writing was essentially a way for recording speech and for strengthen grammatical and lexical features of language (Brown, 2004). Not many students learn to utter their thoughts and ideas in a logic way, well-developed organizations that fulfill an intentional purpose even though students in developed countries learn the basics of writing skill in their native language.

Writing is an activity which takes much time and concentration, also is less impromptu but more permanent activity. There are some aspects in writing, includes model texts, grammar, spell-check, punctuation and prepositions. According to Harmer (2002), "Writing has a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from differences in grammar and vocabulary, there are issues of letter, word, and text formation, manifested by handwriting, spelling, and layout and punctuation." (p.255). It implies that

writing creates opportunities to enhance students' vocabulary and grammar rules, also expresses their ideas into written form.

Grammar is an essential element in writing skill. Chomsky (1960 in Richards, 1987) states that "the knowledge of grammar underlying our ability to produce and understand sentences in a language. We call upon grammatical competence to express meanings in ways that are native-like in the target language" (p. 144) Students should have ability to comprehend and produce the sentences with a well-constructed grammar to show their proficiency level. In addition, Harmer (2002) states that "if grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer, although creating a "good" grammar rules is extremely difficult" (p.12). Learners who ignore grammatical rule will be incorrect communicators.

Learners have to study how to convey their understanding of grammatical rules of target language from spoken to written language. Still, they experience some difficulties in implementing the language rules in writing and make errors. Dulay (1982 in Brown 1994) argues that "an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker" (p. 25). It implies that learners make errors because they do not know the appropriate and correct rules of the target language. They also can repeat in making error at other times. Actually, people can learn by making errors first. Learners make errors take part in understanding the process of learning foreign language.

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 146-150), writing errors can be categorized into four categories, includes linguistic category 10 taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect. In this research, researchers conducted analysis in grammatical error based on surface strategy taxonomy. Surface strategy taxonomy highlights the way surface structures are altered. It includes omission, addition, misformation, and misordering errors. Based on the background, there are two research question in this paper:

1. What kind of errors type of surface structure taxonomy found in learner's creative writings?
2. Is there any learner's improvement of grammatical errors in creative writings?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Creative writing in second language***

Learning a language takes up all four skills of language which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Creative writing is recognized to be a part of the program study in higher education, especially in English departments. They have a poet, fiction writer, script writer, screenplays, and creative non-fiction on their agendas. Creative writing is considered as practices in college or university, and many researchers also agreed to apply it in classroom practices. It can be concluded that creative writing is an imaginative and expressive idea to express meaning by imagery, narrative, and drama. There are three elements on creative writing:

1. Voice

Special way and method of an author to convey things. Learners should identify an author's written voice just like try to identify a person's spoken voice. A target in creative writing is to improve learners' written voice. Their voice should be expressed as natural, obvious, constant, and unique.

2. Characters

Characters are the people or actors, such as animals, inanimate objects, nature; who are exposed in the story. Learners should develop the character by visualizing and describing in specific and real to the author and the audience.

3. Point-of-view

Most of the fiction is written in an eyewitness person (first person), or a narrator who tells things that happened to others (third person). In this element, point-of-view is about the narrator's standpoint on the characters and events in writing.

***Error analysis in writing***

Within producing discourse in utilizing language, an individual, especially those who have a different first language will have to give out effort in getting the message through to the person or people reading or listening to them. In making second language utterance or writing as a product of language, a learner will always go through a process of receiving and producing knowledge. Therefore, errors in learning second language will always occur as new knowledge take time to fossilize and to be processed by the brain. This can also be affected by the repetition of practice that the learner does in their time. A definition of error in language learning by Dulay et al (1982) is that errors in language are those language uttered but without the realization of the speaker or writer that they are not according to the rules of the language and that this is not avoidable in the process of learning. The study of error analysis is to investigate the errors being made to notify researcher in the nature that learners learn another language also to infer the target language that teachers and curriculum researchers need to improve on in building a rubric for future learners in accordance to avoid further errors that are recurring. So far, the study of error analysis has helped the making of language learning curriculum for all stages of second language learners (Dulay et al, 1982).

As mentioned by Dulay et al (1982), there are various common occurring errors in producing second language which includes:

1. Omitting grammatical morphemes which means that the speaker fails to produce a word that does not affect the meaning of what they are trying to say. For example; They see bird whereas the correct sentence should be They see a bird, therefore omitting the word "a".
2. Double marking a feature of semantics although the requirement is only one. For example, double marking a past tense, The dog didn't ate the food as an example.

3. Regularizing rules, for example mans for men.
4. Using archiforms which mixes up the use of him and he, or she and her; She boyfriend went with him.
5. Using two or more forms in random alternation
6. Misordering which words are incorrectly placed within utterance or written language.

Furthermore, Chomsky (1965) has pointed out that there are two factors that may cause the failure of constructing and producing grammatically correct output, which the first is factors of physique including fatigue and inattention which Chomsky refers as “performance” and secondly factors of not knowing the grammatical rules of the language itself which Chomsky refers as “competence”. In addition, there are categories described by Corder (1967) in which second language identify as discourse error as errors and mistakes. Errors are caused by learner’s learning process in second language acquisition whereas mistakes are caused by learner’s performance in discourse, although they have learnt the language function. Thus, investigating the difference between the two is a challenge as it is a covert source of data in which deeper research is needed to figure out the identification of each error traits are of second language learners in particular (Dulay et al, 1982).

Errors being produced by language learners also vary having three different categories, including;

1. Developmental errors

Described by Dulay et al (1982), developmental errors are alike to the errors that are produced by children during the process of learning a target language, including first language.

2. Interlingual errors

Errors included as interlingual errors are those formed by the similar build of grammar from an individual’s mother tongue, therefore a mix up between the speaker’s native language and the target language (Dulay et al, 1982).

3. Ambiguous errors

These errors portray the structure of their native language as well as the language that is produced by children’s utterance when they are first learning (Dulay et al, 1982).

4. Other errors

Other errors mentioned by Dulay et al (1982) are also possible where these errors are not able to be put into the categories of error from the above as they are not alike with the errors children make while learning their first language and these can be classified as unique and creative constructions of language.

Errors are classified differently and categorized in accordance to identify the solution in minimizing them for second or foreign language learners especially in the language of English in this research. Although this may be so, a complex procedure happens during second language learning such as external and internal factors, according to the learner’s environment and the processing of information included. However, this research limits the

factors as merely the description of the errors of the writing production of the research participant. zAll in all, the research will be based on these theories by Dulay et al (1982) to categorize the types of errors done by the research participant and will be elaborated within chapter three in this study.

### ***Case Study***

A case study according to Thomas (2011) is the analysis of things which include persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or systems. Also, according to Yin (2014), a case study has the function take part in giving knowledge on human knowledge about individuals, groups, organizational, social, and political and the phenomenas that are related. Schramm (1971) as well has mentioned that the core of a case study and almost all case studies is that it attempts to draw decisions or a set of these decisions. These decisions are the reasoning behind what goes on including the reason the studies were taken, how are they implemented and thus resulting in the result of research.

As a result, case study is a unique study which involves a specific subject as the focus, then to find out the reasons why the event could happen.

### **Method**

#### ***Research Method***

Researchers conducted document analysis as the methodology. According to Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh (2002), in document as named as content analysis, written or visual items detailed are identified. There are some objectives of document analysis, include: to determine tendency, partiality, or prejudice in written forms; to identify types of errors and difficulty in students' writing; to explain current practices; and to find out the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics. This paper also is a case study since it focuses on a single unit, such as one individual. A case study's goal is to arrive at a detailed description and understanding of the case.

#### ***Research Setting***

The research was conducted in English Education Master Program of Sanata Dharma University. Researchers collected and analyzed the documents of a former student in English Literature Gajah Mada University. The participant was chosen as purposive sampling by determining characteristics which suitable with research's objective. There are 12 creative writings which were composed in March 2013 up to January 2014, listed below.

No	Date Created	Title
1	March 2013	Merapi Eruption
2	March 2013	Response Letter
3	April 2013	Food Review
4	May 2013	Curator
5	May 2013	Bag It Review

6	June 2013	Edit (Make It Simpler)
7	June 2013	Final Creative Writing
8	November 2013	Assignment 1
9	December 2013	Paper Metope
10	December 2013	The Warden
11	January 2014	The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
12	January 2014	A Wizard of Earthsea

### ***Data Analysis Technique***

By analyzing the student's creative writing produced by a former student of English Literature Gajah Mada University, the researcher found the data results and findings. Researchers used Dulay, Burt, & Krashen's surface structure taxonomy of errors type. It purposed to show the tendencies the second language learners that might omit, add, misform, or misorder items in their sentence. Indeed, there are four types of errors in surface strategy taxonomy.

Omission is the first type of error when an absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Content morphemes carry the bulk of the referential meaning of a sentence: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs. The second type is addition. Addition is the kind of error when a presence of an item appears in a well-formed sentence. This type is divided into three points, they are: doublemarking, regularization, and simple addition. The third type is misinformation which is the kind of error when the morpheme or structure is incorrectly used. This type is similar to the addition type since there are three parts included in this type, they are: regularization, archi-forms, and alternating forms. The last type is misordering. Misordering is the kind of error when there occurs incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

The results and findings showed the student's errors in his writing. Researchers checked and analyzed students' writing products by highlighting errors he made. Then, researchers made a list of errors. After that, researchers would categorize the data based on the type of the errors. Researchers counted the errors from students' writing. After that, researchers discussed the results by describing the data, writing development, and the error analysis results in the form of descriptive data.

### **Finding and Discussion**

From the data analysis, the researchers have identified the errors from the collection of creative writing done by the research participant during the eleven-month span. These errors have been identified and categorized into 4 variety according to Dulay et al (1982) as;

#### ***Omission***

#### ***Addition***

1. Double-marking
2. Regularization
3. Simple addition

**Misinformation**

1. Regularization
2. Archiforms
3. Alternating forms

**Misordering**

These categories are then given codes according to the table 1 below;

Category	Sub-category	Code
OMISSION		E1
ADDITION	Double-marking	E2-a
	Regularization	E2-b
	Simple addition	E2-c
MISINFORMATION	Regularization	E3-a
	Archiforms	E3-b
	Alternating forms	E3-c
MISORDERING		E4
OTHERS	Verbs of tense	E5-a
	Punctuation	E5-b
	Preposition	E5-c
	Spelling	E5-d
	Capitalization	E5-e

Table 2 shows amount of errors in each article and are itemized to type of error listed below.

No	Title	E1			E2			E3			E4		E5		
		a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	a	b	c	d	e
1	Merapi Eruption	4	1	1			1			17				2	4
2	Response Letter		1				1			1	1				
3	Food Review			1			2	2	1	10					
4	Curator	2								2			1		
5	Bag It Review	5		1							1				
6	Edit (Make It Simpler)	1		1											
7	Final Creative Writing	4		1		1					1				
8	Assignment 1						1								
9	Paper Metope	6					3								
10	The Warden	1								1				2	
11	The Legend of Sleepy Hollow	6					1			1	3			1	
12	A Wizard of Earthsea	8	1	3	1					12			4		

Total: 125	37	1	2	7	1	4	8	1	44	6	5	5	4
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There are total 125 grammatical errors found in 12 creative writings which listed above. Most of errors are not in errors type of surface structure taxonomy, but in use of tenses. There are 44 errors in use of tenses, which participant should use of present tense instead of past tense (in reverse), present continuous instead of present tense, along with others. Participant did not keep consistency in tenses from sentence to sentence in some articles. Other errors such as punctuation, preposition, spelling, and capitalization also found. Participant might not concern about details like punctuation, preposition, etc. not because he did not know, but since he did not check again what he had been written.

There are 37 errors found in omission such as omission “s/es”, or “to be”. Those little words involve in small role in indicating the meaning of a sentence. According to Dulay et al (1982), omission errors are found in large amount and greater sorts of morphemes during the early stages of second language acquisition. From table 1, it can be seen that participant made errors in omission is much the same in each article.

In addition and misinformation type of errors, there is similar amount of errors found, about 10-13 errors. The specific errors are much found in simple addition and alternating forms. Addition errors usually result from the all-too-faithful use of second language in the later stage. In misinformation errors, the participant process something although it is incorrect, for example he used ‘eated’ instead of ‘ate’.

The participant wrote the 12 creative writings from March 2013 up to January 2014. As seen in table of errors (table 1), the participant repeated in making errors from article 1 up to article 12, especially in omission type of errors and use of tenses. The participant did not check previous writing he wrote so that the he could not know what errors he could put right. Researchers argue that the lecturers may not ask student to recheck his writing before assignment submission and give any feedback so learner could improve his writing.

## Conclusion

Based on the research question, there are 125 grammatical errors found in 12 creative writings which include 37 errors in omission, 10 errors in addition, 13 errors in misinformation, 1 errors in misordering, and 64 errors in others category. Researchers mostly found errors in use of tenses and punctuation as other error category. As the second research question is stated, researchers state that the learner as the participant did not make any improvement in his creative writings from March 2013 up to January 2014. There are some possible causes of errors in learner’s creative writing such as basic grammar understanding of the learner, learner’s carelessness, and insufficient implementation of rules.

There are some suggestions which are relevant to this research include the lecturers need to encourage learners to be motivated in learning, especially in writing. Effective writing will give much benefit for future professional work that requires written communication. It also can be concluded that how we write tells others about our skill and intelligence. In order to manage learners’ carelessness, lecturers can implement peer



assessment of their writing. Therefore, the learners are supposed to be able to realize what their errors are and improve their writing better. Lecturers also could intensify exposure to English texts and grammar to get over insufficient implementation of rules.

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