

# ERROR ANALYSIS IN WRITING AN ENGLISH NARRATIVE COMPOSITION

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the research is to know the errors which have been made by the learners in their English narrative composition and it is also to know why they made the errors, to identify the errors made by the learners, to correct the errors which have been made, to improve the teaching quality which is appropriate with the curriculum and the syllabus and to get the data and the explanation about the difficulties in studying English especially in writing the English narrative composition. Writing is chosen because writing is the most difficult part in learning English as what it said is different with what it is written. The method used in this research is descriptive method. Descriptive method means the method which tries to give the data and the explanation about the recent symptoms. The data was taken from 20 students and it was taken by asking the learners to make the English narrative composition, classifying then analyzing the errors found in their composition. The errors that have been found in the compositions are 30 items or 15% for errors of selection, 25 items or 12,5% for errors of ordering, 115 items or 57,5% for errors of omission and 30 items or 15% for errors of addition. Some identifying, classifying, analyzing and correcting the errors have been done to correct the errors that have been found. It was done in order to minimize and avoid the same errors happen again in the learners' English narrative composition.*

**Keywords:** errors analysis, writing, English narrative composition

## ABSTRAK

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu untuk mengetahui kesiapan yang dibuat oleh pembelajar dalam karangan narasi bahasa Inggris mereka, kenapa mereka membuat kesiapan, mengidentifikasi kesiapan-kesiapan yang dibuat oleh pembelajar, mengoreksi kesiapan-kesiapan tersebut, meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan kurikulum dan silabus dan untuk mendapatkan data dan uraian tentang kesulitan-kesulitan dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris khususnya dalam menulis karangan narasi bahasa Inggris. Menulis adalah bagian tersulit dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris karena apa yang diucapkan tidak sama dengan apa yang ditulis. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu metode deskriptif. Metode deskriptif yaitu metode yang memberikan data dan uraian tentang gejala-gejala yang terjadi saat ini. Data diambil dari 20 pembelajar dan dengan cara meminta pembelajar untuk membuat karangan narasi bahasa Inggris, mengklasifikasi kesalahan lalu menganalisa kesalahan-kesalahan yang ditemukan. Kesalahan-kesalahan yang ditemukan yaitu pemakaian kata yang tidak seharusnya (errors of selection) sebanyak 30 atau 15%, pemakaian elemen kata yang salah (errors of ordering) sebanyak 25 atau 12,5%, penghilangan elemen kata yang seharusnya ada (errors of omission) sebanyak 115 atau 57,5% dan penambahan elemen kata yang seharusnya tidak ada (errors of addition) sebanyak 30 atau 15%. Kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut dianalisa dengan tujuan untuk meminimalisir dan menghindari kesalahan yang sama dalam karangan narasi bahasa Inggris para pembelajar.*

**Kata kunci:** analisa kesiapan, menulis, karangan narasi bahasa inggris

## INTRODUCTION

There are some kinds in learning English such as; listening, speaking, writing and reading. Writing is the most difficult part in learning English as what we say is different with writing. Heaton (1988) stated, "The writing skills are complex and certainly difficult to teach, requiring not only grammatical and theoretical devices but also conceptual and judgmental elements".

Most learners are still confused when they are about to write as writing is the most difficult part in learning English. This can be happened because the learners are still lack of knowledge about writing. They often directly write what in their mind is. Mother tongue is still influenced when they are writing. Based on the problems, the research was conducted to solve them. Knowledge related to writing was given to the learners in order to enrich their knowledge about writing. Hope that after giving some knowledge about writing, the learners can write well, not only writing about English narrative composition but also writing for other aspects, such as report, writing assignment, etc.

Some factors made writing in English looks difficult, such as spelling, vocabulary and grammar. There are many aspects in grammar that should be mastered by the learners which can make some errors in learning English.

Writing is also concerned about the linguistics because "Linguistics is the scientific study of language" according to Todd (1987). In linguistics there are branches of the linguistics which one of them has the specific purpose that also help the learners in learning writing. "With writing, on the other hand, language competence involves the association of a meaning with a sign, a visual symbol".

Errors found in the learner's English narrative composition would also be discussed in this paper. Sometimes learner makes errors in composition such as; error of omission (*penghilangan kata*), error of selection (*pemakaian kata yang tidak seharusnya*), error of addition (*penambahan kata*) and error of ordering (*elemen yang sudah benar tetapi urutannya salah*).

### The Nature of Errors

Everyone who studies English has exactly made some errors, especially the learners in Junior High School (SMP) or in Senior High School (SMA). It becomes common because English is not a mother tongue so the learners seldom use it in daily conversation. The government in curriculum 1994 for English subject stated,

*"Pada akhir sekolah menengah umum siswa memiliki keterampilan membaca, menyimak, berbicara dan menulis dalam bahasa Inggris melalui tema yang dipilih berdasarkan tingkat perkembangan dan minat mereka, tingkat penguasaan kosakata (lebih kurang 2500 kosakata untuk program IPA dan IPS dan lebih kurang 3000 kosakata untuk program bahasa) dan tata bahasa yang sesuai."* (Kurikulum Depdikbud SMU, 1994)

### Kinds of Errors

Based on the errors which happened commonly, Richards (1974) explained that the errors are: (1) Interlingua Errors. Interlingua errors are the errors happen in the learners' grammar which reflects the learners' mother tongue. These errors occur because there is interference from the learners' mother tongue, e.g.: It is a book green, not what you, what number? (2) Intralingua

Errors. Intralingua errors is the errors happen in the learners' mother tongue but they don't reflect the learners' mother tongue, but it looks like a language which is made by the learners studying the target language as their mother tongue or looks like the errors in the target language occur because the grammar, itself, effects one another in the target language, e.g.: She can dances. I opening my book.

Based on Dulay (1982), he divided the errors into four types. First, *Linguistic Category Taxonomy* is an error based on the language components or the linguistic main elements which affect the errors. The language components consist of phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantic and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary) and discourse (style). The linguistic main elements consist of the elements which compare each language component. Second, Surface Strategy Taxonomy is explained about the way to change the strategy taxonomy which occurs. Third, Comparative Taxonomy is based on the comparative between the structures of the errors in the second language with the certain another type construction. Comparative taxonomy consists of: (1) Developmental Errors (Intralingua Errors). This error happened because the learners' study the target language as their first language, ex.: Brother drink milk. Mother eat apple. (2) Interlingua Errors. This error happened commonly in the structure of the language becoming the semantic which is same as phrase or in the learners' native language, ex.: The woman beautiful. The sky cloudy.

Fourth, Communicative Effect Taxonomy. Surface Strategy Taxonomy and Comparative Taxonomy only focus on the errors happened in both of those taxonomies. Communicative taxonomy influences the classification with the errors from the listeners' or the readers' view.

Based on Hendrickson (1980), he grouped the errors into two types, they are: (1) Global Errors. Global error is same as communicative errors. Global errors are the errors happened in the structure language which cause the learners misinterpret the oral or written message or consider that the message couldn't be understood in the whole contexts it. (2) Local Error. Local error is also called as linguistics error. Local error is the error happened in the structure language which seems strange or weird, but it didn't make the learners felt difficult in understanding the meaning of the sentences.

Based on the theories, the linguistics experts classified the errors into four types, they are: (1) Social Error. The social errors, the errors commonly occurred in the structure element. The errors could be happened because of the failure in application the English patterns which was based on the language which referred to the social context. (2) Register Error. This error happened because the language used didn't suitable for a certain occasion. Register error has a strong relationship in the usage of a language based on the situation. Usually the learners did the error because they haven't mastered if one language doesn't suitable to use in a certain situation. This happened because there is only limited material which discusses about the appropriateness in using a language for a certain occasion but this still considers as the learning process for the learners. (3) Referential Error. This error happened between the linguistics form with the objects or the situations happening outside the class. This error also happened because the learners haven't known what they thought and felt exactly. (4) Textual Error. This error happened related with the learners' knowledge based on the target language patterns.

Corder (1971) explained, "The learner's errors are classified as a textual error when he does not select the structurally correct form in his sentence of intended relation between two sentences". Textual errors are: (1) Errors of Omission. Error of omission is the missing of some elements which should exist. e.g.: Woman is very beautiful. (It should be: The woman is very beautiful). She eat apple. (It should be: She eats an apple). (2) Errors of Addition. Error of addition is the adding of some elements which shouldn't exist. e.g.: I ate with bread and egg this morning. (It should be I ate bread and egg this morning). It is a meat. (It should be It is meat). (3) Errors of Selection. Error of selection is the use of words which shouldn't be used. e.g.: Do he go to school? (It should be Does he go to school?). She is thinking about you. (It should be She is thinking of you). (4) Errors of Ordering. Error of ordering is the elements which are not put in the proper place. e.g.: She doesn't know what is my name. (It should be She doesn't know what my name is). They know where do I live. (It should be They know where I live).

### The Causes of Errors

The errors can be happened because of some factors, based on Norrish (1983), there are some factors that can cause the errors, and they are: (1) The carelessness from the foreign learners. (2) The interferences from the learners' mother tongue which was believed as one of the aspects that caused the errors. (3) The translation from their mother tongue to another language so it caused the difficulty where there aren't any synonyms between those two languages. (4) The learners couldn't translate the materials which were given to them based on what was expected by the native speaker. (5) The mistake analogy which was might be made to ignore the exact patterns. (6) The language couldn't be predicted and the learners might be made the errors using the language that they have studied but they haven't heard the certain words.

Corder (1971) divided the learners' errors caused into: First, Transfer: Every learner has her/his own mother tongue and before they get used to use their mother tongue as their daily conversation. Corder (1971) also explained, "The main cause why the learner made errors is called transfer. Transfer shows that the learner of second language the habit of his mother tongue". So based on Corder, the learners tried to apply in the foreign language that they have learned, in other words, the learners used the mother tongue system into English as their target language.

Second, Analogical or Overgeneralization: Analogical errors are the characteristics from each foreign learner. The analogical errors are commonly caused by the difference between the structure system from the mother tongue and the target language, the application of similarity of 'tenses' in English, the similarity in plural forms which don't exist in the learners' mother tongue.

Another cause is the learning process hasn't finished so they applied their ability based on their experience or based on another structure language from the target language as Corder (1975) said, "analogical errors occur when the learner has discovered a correct rule, he may still continue to make errors because he has not yet discovered the precise of categories to which the rule applies".

Third, Teaching-Induced: As we know, all of the lesson in English must consist of selection, repetition, graduation and presentation. In teaching English as a foreign language, the teacher should be careful in making the lesson plan because if the program doesn't suitable with the selection, repetition, graduation and presentation

so the material itself can make the learners make the errors.

Fourth, The Purpose of the Error Analysis: By analyzing the errors, the English teachers will know the errors causes which have been made by the learners when they are doing an English narrative composition and by knowing the errors causes, it hopes that the learners will not make any same errors. S.K. Sharma (1981) stated, "An error analysis is a process based on analysis of learner's error". So, by analyzing the errors, the English teachers can figure out various errors which have been made by the learners so the English teacher can teach appropriately.

Dulay (1982), the errors analysis have two purposes, they are: (1) It provides data from which difference about nature of the language learning process can be made; (2) It indicates to teacher and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types distract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively.

Fifth, The Nature of Narrative Composition: Writing is the most difficult part in English subject as what it is said to be different from what it is written. White and Arndt (1991) stated that, "Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols; it is a thinking process in its right." so, before the learners start to write an English composition, they should master the English pattern correctly.

Dougal (1988) said, "A composition is a group of closely related paragraph that develop a single idea." Crystal (1991) also said, "Writing a composition with vocabulary and structure which the student has either learnt to use orally or written exercises for each lesson. These exercises may be of various types. The range from filling blanks to the composition and may be modification, sentences composition and paragraph writing."

So the theory of the composition based on Mc. Dougal is the activity of writing which is started by mastering words and the grammar itself. There are 4 kinds of compositions; they are argumentation, description, exposition and narration. Wishon and Burks (1980) stated:

"Argumentation is used in persuading and convincing; it is closely related to exposition and is often found combined with it. Description is used to create a visual image of people, places and even of units of time-days, time of day or seasons, exposition is used in giving information, making explanation, and interpreting meanings and narration is the form of writing used to relate the story of acts or events."

Based on Hornby (1974), "Narration is telling of a story", meanwhile based on John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily (1986), "Narration adalah (1) Penceritaan, pengisahan; (2) Cerita, kisah".

Narratives are stories. Narratives are plots. They are essays that tell a story, hopefully in an interesting way, that also convey themes. Often, if you are asked to write a narrative essay, you will not be asked to research a theory or topic. Rather, you will be asked to use your imagination instead of a bibliography. You may need to research for this narrative essay; nonetheless, the writing may come more easily to you for you do not need to quote specific words from primary sources.

### The Nature of Writing

Good writing provides information or messages clearly and creates effective verbal dialogue to readers. It aims to give point of view of the ideas in text where it organizes in different way of writing such as narration, description, exposition, and argumentation. When students

write a paragraph, they try to explore what they are thinking in mind, and they also concern with the language, meaning, and the structural of context related to English language acquisition as a second or foreign language. As Gould, Diyanni, and Smith state that “Writing is an effort to create a dialogue with readers, and it involves exploring our relationships to our readers in much the same way that exploring our relationships to people we talk to.”

Thus, writing must be related to the content, the language and grammatical rules. In order to avoid misunderstood, the students have to use correct sentences by creating a well written text and giving attention to the arrangement of words into their composition to express their idea and to give the value of the writing to readers.

Developing writing is related to the writer’s knowledge of language and writing exposure. Writing process is the way the writers give their ideas and messages to readers in the form of text. The writers present their ideas in various ways of writing such as narration, description, classification, comparison and contrast, argumentation and etc. First narration is a basic writing strategy for presenting past event or activities. It can be used for a variety of purposes such as to illustrate and support ideas with anecdotes, to entertain readers with revealing stories, to analyze causes and possible effects with scenarios, and to explain procedures with process narrative. Second, description is a strategy used to create a dominant impression. For example, students describe a place in order to set a scene and make readers aware of its atmosphere and to describe people to show a kind of person’s performance. Third, classification is aimed to classify number of items or ideas into a small number of classes. In a classification of paragraph, it is important to set up adequate categories and define what goes into categories. Fourth, comparison and contrast are to compare similar aspects or to contrast different aspects of two subjects, people or things. At last, argumentation is to argue ideas or opinion by giving some argues to proof the concept or research. A good paragraph must give

readers complete information and unified by a controlling idea. It is organized form and can be understood what the paragraph is going to be about. As Boardman states: “A paragraph is a group of sentences that works together to develop a main idea. Paragraphs are organized differently depending on their purposes. There are three main types of paragraphs in English: narrative, descriptive, and expository.”

## METHOD

Descriptive method is used to do the research. There are 3 types of descriptive method, they are observational method, case study method and survey method. Observational method, as a part of descriptive method, was used to take the data. The learners’ English narrative compositions were used as the research instrument.

The data were taken from 20 learners and it was taken by asking the learners to make English narrative composition. After that, identifying, classifying, analyzing and correcting were done in order to minimize and avoid the same errors if they are asked to make another English narrative composition.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Table 1 Kind of Errors

No.	Sentence	Correction	Level
1.	Finally, there was a battle <u>among</u> Tunggul Ametung and Prince Sanjaya.	Finally, there was a battle <u>between</u> Tunggul Ametung and Prince Sanjaya.	Errors of selection
2.	After getting the fish he would bring to his mother or selling the caught fish <u>in</u> town.	After getting the fish he would bring to his mother or selling the caught fish <u>to</u> the town.	Errors of selection
3.	<u>He and Rio’s mother</u> just cried and prayed to God.	<u>Rio’s mother and he</u> just cried and prayed to God.	Errors of ordering
4.	Finally, I had the <u>support of my parents</u> .	Finally, I had my <u>parents’ support</u> .	Errors of ordering
5.	The <u>child youngest</u> was very kind to the rabbit.	The <u>youngest child</u> was very kind to the rabbit.	Errors of ordering
6.	They started to walk across the street and their dog behind them.	They started to walk across the street and their dog <u>walked</u> behind them.	Errors of omission
7.	One by one they grew up, married and moved away from their parents.	One by one they grew up, <u>got</u> married and moved away from their parents.	Errors of omission
8.	Prof. Moriarty wanted to steal the diamond and wanted to kill someone.	Prof. Moriarty wanted to steal the diamond and <u>to kill</u> someone.	Errors of addition
9.	Once upon a time, there was lived a little girl named snow White.	Once Upon a time, there <u>lived</u> a little girl named Snow White.	Errors of addition
10.	Her parents <u>were</u> had died.	Her parents <u>had died</u> .	Errors of addition

Based on the above descriptions, there are some several types of errors. First, error sentences in error of selection. Error of selection is about the use of words which shouldn't be used. One example can be seen from this following sentence: *finally, there was a battle among Tunggul Ametung and Prince Sanjaya*. The sentence is wrong because "among" is used to explain about nouns in more than 2 things meanwhile in the sentence there are only two nouns, "Tunggul Ametung" and "Prince Sanjaya". "between" is more appropriate to use in the sentence than "among". The correct sentence is *Finally, there was a battle between Tunggul Ametung and Prince Sanjaya*. Another example can be seen from: *after getting the fish he would bring to his mother or selling the caught fish in town*. The sentence is wrong because "the meaning" of the sentence will be illogical if "in" is used in the sentence. "to" is more appropriate to use in the sentence so the correct sentence is *After getting the fish he would bring to his mother or selling the caught fish to the town*. The second type of error is error sentences in error of ordering. Error of ordering is about the elements which are not put in the proper place.

*This type of error can be seen from this following sentence: he and Rio's mother just cried and prayed to God*. The sentence is wrong because of the arrangement of the sentence. The arrangement of the sentence should be *Rio's mother and he just cried and prayed to God*. Another example: *finally, I had the support of my parents*. The sentence is wrong and the explanation is the same with the first, second and the third sentence. The sentence should be *Finally, I had my parents' support. The child youngest was very kind to the rabbit*. The sentence is wrong and the explanation is the same as the first, second, third and the fourth sentence. The sentence should be *the youngest child was very kind to the rabbit*.

The third type of errors is error sentences in error of omission. Error of omission is about the missing elements which should exist. Some examples of this error can be seen through this following sentences. *They started to walk across the street and their dog behind them*. The sentence is wrong because *the sentence is ambiguous* so the word "walked" is added to the sentence. The correct sentence is *they started to walk across the street and their dog walked behind them*. Another example, *one by one they grew up, married and moved away from their parents*. The sentence is wrong and the explanation is the same as the previous sentences above. The sentence should be *one by one they grew up, got married and moved away from their parents*.

The fourth type of error is error sentences in error of addition. Error of addition is the adding some elements which shouldn't exist. Example: It is a meat. The article "a" shouldn't be used before "meat" as "meat" is uncountable and article is used to show the amount of the things. Except, there are additional word to show the exact amount of "meat", example: There are two pieces of meat. (1) Prof. Moriarty wanted to steal the diamond and wanted to kill someone. The sentence is wrong because "wanted" is used two times in the sentence so it is called redundancy. The sentence should be Prof. Moriarty wanted to steal the diamond and to kill someone. (2) Once upon a time, there was lived a little girl named snow White. The sentence is wrong because "the meaning" of the sentence will be in passive sentence. The sentence should be Once Upon a time, there lived a little girl named Snow White. (3) Her parents were had died. The sentence is wrong and the explanation is the same as the first sentence above, the

sentence should be her parents had died.

## CONCLUSION

Some analyses about the errors made by the learners are concluded by the writer, they are: (1) recognizing the characteristics of the learners' errors. Most of them haven't mastered the target language well so they tend to make mistakes in their mother tongue; (2) Most of the learners' errors happened in the textual errors; (3) Most of them were influenced by their mother tongue, in other hand; they transferred directly to their mother tongue even with grammatical wrong; (4) The errors done by the learners perhaps happened because of the teacher's style in teaching; and (5) The learners weren't used to write or make an English narrative composition by the English teachers so they got some difficulties when they were asked to make an English narrative composition.

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