



## Error Analysis In Writing Descriptive Text In The First Semester Of Social Science Students Of STKIP Al Maksum

Yusrah<sup>1)\*</sup>, Syafii<sup>2)</sup>

STKIP Al Maksum Langkat, Indonesia

\*Email : [yusrah@stkipalmaksum.ac.id](mailto:yusrah@stkipalmaksum.ac.id)

### Abstract

Writing as a productive skill is important for students to express their ideas. However, students conducted errors in the productive skills. Therefore, this study is intended to find out types of errors made by students in written English. This study employed the qualitative method where the Error Analysis was implemented. The subject of this study is students in first First Semester of Social Science Students of Al Maksum and the object of this study were the errors found in written English. The population of this research was all of students in first semester which consists of 90 students from all study programs where 25 % of the populations were taken as the sample. To collect the data, written tests were conducted. The written test shows the percentage of writing errors, including omission errors, which is 58.38%, misformation errors with a total of 16.48%, misordering error 13.89%, and addition of 11.26%. The errors were found when students omitted 'to be' as main verb. Second, students tend to add 'to' after modal auxiliaries such as 'can' or 'will'. Third, misformation errors happened when students could not form the verb correctly. Last, the misordering errors were produced when students put words randomly. Consequently, it was discovered that the errors made by students were impacted by their native language, and this is the interlanguage

**Keywords:** error analysis, Surface Structure Taxonomy, writing.

### I. Introduction

Language learning involves committing errors. Errors seem to be a natural process of learning. In the past, language teachers considered errors committed by their students as something undesirable which they diligently sought to prevent from occurring. However, it is believed that writing is very difficult, and thus the learners need to have a comprehensive understanding, cognitive analysis, and linguistics synthesis to pattern the language to be able to convey ideas, messages, and feeling to the listeners or readers through writings (Tan, 2007).

In addition, another study by Aziz, Fitriani and Amalina (2021), which investigated the types of linguistic errors produced by students by adopting the notions of Error Analysis (EA) and the Surface Strategy Taxonomy as the theoretical framework shows that Overall, 122 (63%) cases out of 195 cases were categorized under the omission type of errors. The number marker, verb-tense, article, preposition, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun were the category of frequent errors made by students respectively. These were followed by addition (18%), misformation (15%), and misordering (5%). Significance to the source of

errors, intralingual transfer turned out to be the main reason that triggers the error in the students' writings.

Therefore, this study was intended to investigate students' errors on the genre of descriptive text which is used the Surface Strategy Taxonomy as the suitable theory to be the fundamental of this research. The previous researches show one skill in each study of error analysis. This study was carried out to analyze students' writing skills and especially writing errors made by students. It is important for the researcher to analyze their errors and diagnose the difficulties they experience in the classroom so that it can be an input for teachers to improve their students' writing quality. Error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and interpret or describe the errors made by a person in writing and is carried out to obtain information on common difficulties faced by students in writing English sentences (Choironi, Sukirlan, & Suparman, 2017). Current traditional method of teaching is teacher centered learning where the lecturers use visual (Hassan, 2020).

aids in the form of presentation slides, whiteboard and visualizer.

Then, the important issue in this research is the analysis of error writing skills. It is very important to know the extent of student achievement in learning writing skills. In addition, the Surface Strategy Taxonomy (SST) is rarely used by previous researchers, such as the existing Surface Strategy Taxonomy (SST) does not look in detail at the sections of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. In addition, the writer wants to deepen the existing research by analyzing in more detail the mistakes made by students in writing skills. The criteria of a good human being and a good citizen for society and nation are certain social values that are much influenced by the culture of the people and the nation (Keguruan et al., 2022)

## **II. Literature Review**

Writing in first language is a complex process, and of course, it may be more complicated to write in a foreign language. Many researchers have tried to identify the common errors made by students in writing in second language. A better understanding of errors and sources of errors can help teachers identify students' difficulties in learning that language.

Ramli, Suhartono and Novita (2013) noted that writing is a way to express feelings, ideas, arguments, willingness, and thoughts in the form of words in sentences. It means that students should be able to express their ideas in written form as a result of their understanding of the text they read. For that reason, writing is an important skill to be taught to students. Even though writing is stated important as explained above, it is still a matter in the process of learning a foreign language.

In this study, the researcher analyzed the students' errors in writing a descriptive text. Writing is a formal skill and error analysis is also a formal process to revise and improve writing skills. Through error analysis both teachers and students are able to find errors due to their mother tongue's interferences in the context of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexical, and culture. In addition, Sirait (2012) believes that by noticing the writing errors done by the students, the teachers can take them as advantages for the students themselves, such as: (a) a device which the learner uses in order to learn, (b) to fully grasp and understand the nature of errors, and (c) instead of just being able to recognize errors, the learners are now able to explain the rules and correct the errors.

The Surface Strategy Taxonomy (SST) is a descriptive taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). According to Dulay et al. (1982, as cited in Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2012), the taxonomy highlights the ways the surface structures are altered by learners who may omit necessary items or add unnecessary one; they may misformatted items or misorder them (Dulay et al., 1982, p. 150). Surface strategy taxonomy discusses the analysis of errors based on the comparison between the altered structures of the target language utterances

produced by an L2 learner and other types of language constructions (Kafipour & Khojasteh, 2012). For example, the errors made by the native English children who are in the process of acquiring the language are used as comparative data to those of the Italian EFL learner defiant productions in order to classify the errors (Aziz et al., 2021)..

### **III. Research Method**

The research method of this study is qualitative in nature. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) explain that qualitative study finds out a phenomenon, a process, or a particular point of view from the perspective of those involved. In brief, the purpose of this study is to find out the students' errors produced in their speaking and writing. Specifically, in this current study, the researcher uses Error Analysis (EA). In conducting this research, the data was taken from the transcripts of senior high school students class 1 (grade X) which were recorded directly on 16-23 October 2021. Research Participants

The subjects of this study were the students in first grade of SMA N 1 Stabat and the object of this study was the errors found in spoken and written English. The population of this research was all students in first grade which consists of 208 students from all study programs. The sample was the students in first grade chosen randomly in which there were no criteria in selecting the participant. Tests were used to collect the data. The form of the tests was speaking and writing test. In this study, the researcher selected the samples by doing the lottery method. Since the lottery method is quite burdensome if it is performed by hand, the lottery method is calculated by using Microsoft Excel in order to save time, which is more effective and efficient. Because individuals who make up the subset of the larger group are chosen at simple random, each individual in the large population set has the same probability of being selected. This creates, in most cases, a balanced subset that carries the greatest potential for representing the larger group as a whole, free from any bias (Hayes, 2021).

#### **Research Instrument**

The research instruments in this study were oral and written tests. Oral tests were carried out through short conversations recorded with a tape recorder. While the written test was conducted through writing some sentences and/or expressions and/or statements and/or short paragraphs.

#### **Technique of Data Collection**

The test employed in this study included writing tests. Arikunto (2002, p. 150) says that a test can be described as a series of questions or other instruments which are used to measure the intervals of group's skill, knowledge, intelligence, capability, or talent. Here, the researcher used tests as the research instrument. The tests were given to find out and to identify the errors made by students in writing.

The writing test was conducted three days right after the 3 classes end around 19 to 23 October 2021. The writer took the data in three different classes to direct the students to take the writing test. The students were asked to compose a paragraph describing themselves and their family in descriptive genre. The time duration given to the students is about 45 minutes per student in each class and a minimum of 150 words is required. So there were 7.800 words collected from 150 words multiply 52 students.

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

The analysis of the written data uses the identification of errors as proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). However, to make it more detailed, the researcher analyzed the causes of errors based on the two basic rules or criteria; language transfer and context of learning (Aziz et al., 2021). In calculating the number of errors and the frequency of errors, Walizer and Wiener's (1990) statistical calculation was employed to display the error percentage:  $P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$

where P is the percentage of error. F is the frequency of error. N is the total number of samples.

#### IV. Discussion

This section is intended to answer the research question which is “what types of errors do students likely make in the written test.?” In this type of test, the students were asked to compose a short text that described themselves. The variables include their origins, hobbies, families, best friends, and parents’ jobs. The overall data can be seen in Figure 1 below.

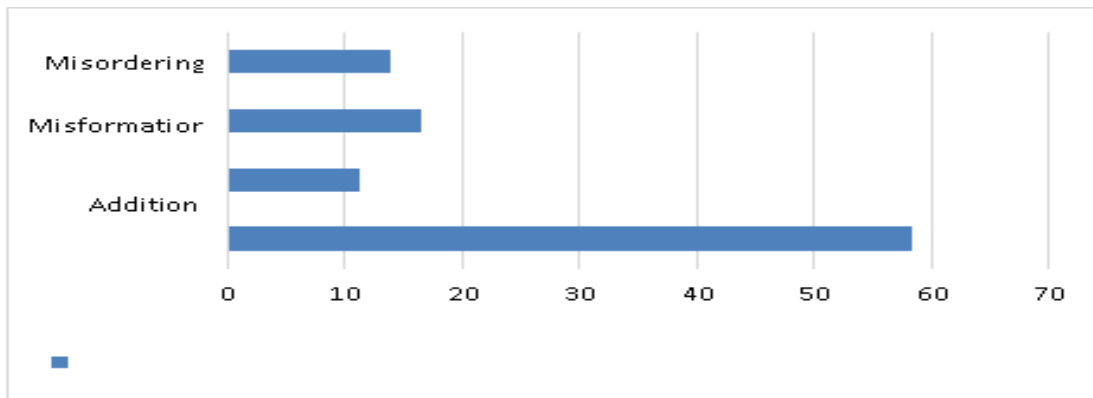


Figure 1. Percentage of errors in written test.

The results found that the highest percentage of errors in the written test is omission errors, which is 58.38%. This value is considered very dominant compared to other variables which only reach less than the range of 20%. Misformation error came in second with a total of 16.48%, followed by misordering error of 13.89% and addition of 11.26%. To be able to understand each item from Figure 1, the writer explains it through several sub-chapters below.

##### Omissions found in students’ written test

The results of the written test show that grade X students tend to make omission errors in sentences they write. Based on Figure 2 below, it is clear that only two students did not make omission errors in writing descriptive paragraphs while 50 other students did. Six students did it three times, six students did it twice, while the other students showed this error 4-8 times. In the event, there was one student who did it 10 times.

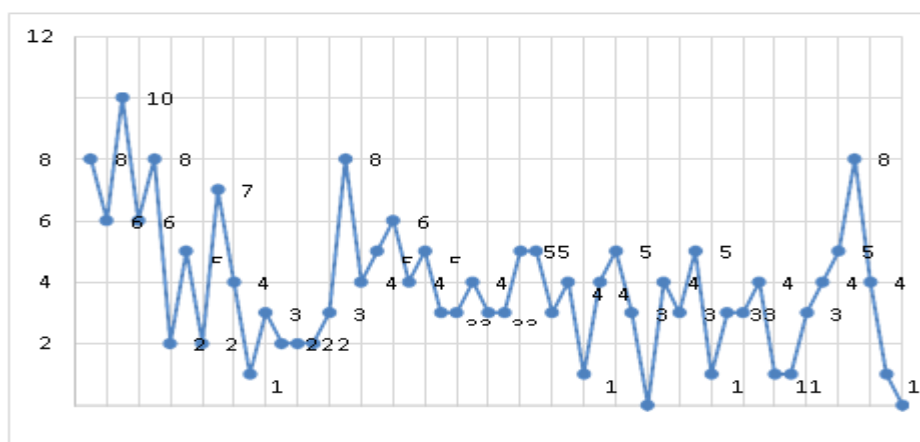


Figure 2. Omission found in written test.

As previously explained, omission errors tend to be repeated by students. In order to obtain a more detailed picture, Table 1 and several subsections below are provided to represent the errors made by students in the written test. Table 1 below shows the tendency of student omission. The sample is tabulated based on the results of the student's written test with code 49. There are 12 sentences produced from her short paragraph. The data shows that the student omitted many aspects including 'to be' as the main verb or as the auxiliary verb, determiner, and disagreement on subject-verb. The first example is sentence number 3, "I from Kampung Rawa." The sentence shows that the student omitted to be 'am' to agree with the subject 'I'. The sentence should be "I am from Kampung Rawa." The next error is shown in sentence number 4, "My age 16" which should be "My age is 16" or "I am 16 years old".

#### **Addition found in students' written test**

The total percentage of addition errors made by students in writing tests is 11.26%. This shows that even though the test is carried out in writing, the accuracy, ability, and understanding of students towards the descriptive text is still in doubt.

### **V. Conclusions**

This study has described the errors made by students in writing. The result in the written test shows that the rank of percentage of errors in the written test is the same as the oral test, including omission errors, 58.38%, misformation error with a total of 16.48%, misordering error 13.89%, and addition of 11.26%. To explain the causes of errors, the writer begins with the omission which it was found that the student omitted 'to be' as the main verb or as the auxiliary verb, determiner, and disagreement on subject-verb. Second, students tend to add 'to' after the modal auxiliaries such as 'can' or 'will'. Third, misformation errors happened when students could not form the verb correctly. Last, the misordering errors were produced when the students put words randomly. Some students translated the Indonesian language into English.

### **References**

- Afifuddin. (2016). An analysis of students' errors in writing descriptive texts. *English Education Journal*, 7(1), 130-139
- Alahmadi, N. S. (2014). Errors Analysis: A case study of Saudi learner's English grammatical speaking errors. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(4), 84-98
- Altunkaya, F. (1999). *A brief study on Error Analysis* (2nd ed.). Ankara: Ideal.
- Arikunto, S. (2002). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktek* [Research procedure: A practical approach]. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2006). *Introduction to research in education*. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Aziz, Z. A., Fitriani, S. S., & Amalina, Z. (2021). Linguistic errors made by Islamic university EFL students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(3), 733-745. doi: 10.17509/ ijal.v9i3.23224
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Principles of language*

*learning and teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.

- Chelli, S. (2014). Interlingual and intralingual errors in the use of preposition and articles: The case of first-year students of English at Biskra University. Paper presented at International colloquium 'Coherence Configurationnelle des Sujets de Memoires et deTheses: Positions Estimologique et Preoccupations Methodologiques, M'sila, Algeria. Retrieved from <http://archives.univ-biskra.dz/bitstream/123456789/3571/1/Interlingual%20or%20Intralingal%20Errors%20in%20the%20Use%20of%20Preposition.pdf>
- Choironi, N., Sukirlan, M., & Suparman, U. (2017). An analysis of students' grammatical error in writing of descriptive text based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy at second grade of SMAN 1 Pesisir Tengah Krui. *U-JET: Unila Journal of English Teaching*, 6(3), 1-8.
- Danurwindo, F. (2014). *Grammatical error analysis in speaking of the second semester English students of IAIN Tulungagung academic year 2013-2014* (Unpublished undergraduate dissertation). Institut Agama Islam Negeri Tulungagung, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Language two*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be?. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10(3), 161-184. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(01)00039-X
- Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2001). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Hassan, M. (2020). the Influence of Using Mind Mapping Technique on the Students in Writing Recount Text At Smp. 04, 65–70.
- Hayes, A. (2021). Simple Random Sample. Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/simple-random-sample.asp>
- Hojati, A. (2013). An investigation of errors in the oral performance of advanced-level Iranian EFL students. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4), 177-79
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring Error Analysis*. London: Longman.
- Kafipour, R., & Khojasteh, L. (2012). A comparative taxonomy of errors made by Iranian undergraduate learners of English. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(1), 18-24
- Keguruan, T., Al, P., & Utara, S. (2022). Developing An Electronic Module Based on Local Wisdom in Dokan Village to Optimize the Character Education. 5(September), 3838–3843.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Long, M. H. (2014). *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. New York: Routledge.
- Linh, V. T. N. (2013). *Grammatical errors made by English major students at Haiphong*

- Private University when speaking English and the solutions* (Unpublished undergraduate dissertation). Haiphong Private University, Haiphong, Vietnam.
- Ma'mun, N. (2016). The grammatical errors on the paragraph writings. *Vision: Journal for Language and Foreign Language Learning*, 5(1), 95-131. doi:10.21580/vjv5i1862
- Mustafa, F., Kirana, M., & Bahri Ys, S. (2016). Errors in EFL writing by junior high students in Indonesia. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 5(5), 37-50
- Ramli, D., Suhartono, L., & Novita, D. (2013). An analysis on the students' errors in writing recount text. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa*, 2(2), 1-11.
- Richards, J. C. (1974). *Error analysis: Perspectives on second language acquisition*. London: Longman.
- Ruminar, H. (2018). Grammatical errors in ESP students' presentation across proficiency levels. *EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka): Culture, Language, and Teaching of English*, 3(1), 15-22
- Saad, M. A. H., & Sawalmeh, M. H. M. (2014). Error analysis in role- play presentations among less proficient L2 Malaysian learners. *International Journal of English Education*, 3(3), 170-181
- Safrida, H. G., & Kasim, U. (2016). Grammatical errors: An analysis in speaking produced by EFL undergraduate students. *Research in English and Education Journal*, 1(1), 71-80
- Şanal, F. (2007). *A learner corpus based study on second language lexicology of Turkish students of English* (Doctoral dissertation, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey). Retrieved from <http://libratez.cu.edu.tr/tezler/6384.pdf>
- . P. (2016). Interlingual errors and intralingual errors found in narrative text written by EFL students in Lampung. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, 17(2), 87-95
- Simbolon, M. (2015). An analysis of grammatical errors on Speaking Activities. *Journal on English as A Foreign Language*, 5(2), 71- 86
- Sirait, F. (2012). An analysis on grammatical errors in communication made by the employees at Golden Virgo Hotel Batam. In N.Purwati et al. (Eds.), *Research in English and applied linguistics (REAL) vol 2: Beautiful world is seen from the eyes of linguist* (pp. 102-126). Jakarta: Halaman Moeka.
- Tan, H. M. (2007). A study of EFL learners' writing errors and instructional strategies. *Journal of Kun Shan University*, 4, 113- 122.
- Ting, S. H., Mahadhir, M., & Chang, S. L. (2010). Grammatical errors in spoken English of university students in oral communication course. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 10(1), 53-70. Walizer, M. H., & Wiener, P. C. (1990). *Research method and analysis: Searching for relationship*. New York: Harper and Row.