

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN  
PARAGRAPH WRITING BASED ON SURFACE STRATEGY  
TAXONOMY AT THE SECOND YEAR OF SMA NASIONAL  
MAKASSAR**

**Puspitasari<sup>1</sup>, Nunung Anugrawati<sup>2</sup>, Wildhan Burhanuddin<sup>3</sup>**

**<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia  
puspitasa.ps@gmail.com**

**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study was to identify the types of errors in sentence structure in paragraphs based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy made by the Second Year Student of senior High School. The researcher used descriptive quantitative method. The sample of this study was 30 students in one class who were selected as the subjects by using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher used writing test as the instrument of this study. The researcher found 52 errors made by the students at the second year of Senior High School Nasional Makassar. Those errors can be classified as follow: 21.16% errors in omission, 21.16% errors in addition, 28.84% errors in misformation, 28.84% errors in misordering. It indicates that the students still have problem in constructing well-formed sentence in writing. Omission error can be divided into five parts namely: Article, noun, to be as auxiliaries, preposition, s/es as plural marker. Addition error can be divided into three parts namely: double marking, regularization and simple addition. Misformation can be divided three parts namely: regularization, archi-form and alternating form. The last is mis-ordering of errors.*

**Keywords:** *Sentence Structure, Descriptive Text, and Taxonomy*

**ABSTRAK**

*Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis kesalahan struktur kalimat dalam paragraf berdasarkan Taksonomi Strategi Permukaan yang dibuat oleh Siswa Kelas II SMA. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 30 siswa dalam satu kelas yang dipilih sebagai subjek dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Peneliti menggunakan tes menulis sebagai instrumen penelitian ini. Peneliti menemukan 52 kesalahan yang dilakukan siswa kelas 2 SMA Nasional Makassar. Kesalahan dapat diklasifikasikan sebagai berikut: 21,16% kesalahan dalam penghilangan, 21,16% kesalahan penambahan, 28,84% kesalahan dalam salah formasi, 28,84% kesalahan dalam kompilasi. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menyusun kalimat yang baik secara tertulis. Kesalahan penghilangan dapat dibagi menjadi lima bagian, yaitu: Article, noun, to be as auxiliaries, preposition, s/es as plural marker. Kesalahan penambahan dapat dibagi menjadi tiga bagian, yaitu: penandaan ganda, regularisasi dan penambahan sederhana. Misformation dapat dibagi menjadi tiga bagian: regularization, archi-form dan alternating form. Yang terakhir adalah kesalahan pengurutan kesalahan.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Struktur Kalimat, Teks Deskriptif, dan Taksonomi*

## **Introduction**

In this global era, one of the international languages used until now is English. English is used as a means of communication all over the world. It is generally known that English comprises of four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing by which a person is able to communicate in various context.

Writing is a process, it must be learnt by stage, from a simple to a complex, from a sentence to a composition. Basic of writing ability is making a sentence, because a sentence is a smallest unit to express idea, opinion, and feeling. For many students writing is very difficult especially in arranging the words into good sentences because they usually translate from Indonesia into English, it have been that English grammar is different from Indonesian grammar. According to Swan (2005), grammar is the rules that show how words are combined, arranged or changed to show certain kinds of meaning. The differences make it difficult for the students to develop their skill in writing because Indonesian grammar influence in arranging the sentence in English.

Many students get difficult in constructing correct sentences. However, the structural differences between Indonesia and English cause the students get difficulties in constructing sentence. As a result, they will make sentence error. Sentence errors make writing difficult to understand by reader and even the intended meaning of the text gets lost.

Error taxonomies are part of the error analysis. According to Dulay et al (1982), the most commonly used taxonomies are based on (1) linguistic category, (2) surface strategy taxonomy, (3) comparative taxonomy, and (4) communicative effect taxonomy. However, in this case there only discuss about one category of error analysis in which Surface strategy taxonomy because this step that the researcher used in analysis data.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interest in analyzing the error paragraph writing focus on descriptive paragraph, this tittle is An error analysis of students' sentence structure in paragraph writing based on surface strategy taxonomy at the second year of senior high school.

## **Materials and Method**

The current study addresses issue:

The objective of the research is to identify the kinds of error on sentence structure in paragraph based on surface strategy taxonomy made by the Second Year Students of Senior High School?.

### **Definition of Error**

Brown (2000), states that there are two main sources of errors, namely, interlingual errors and intralingual errors. He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language (AbiSamra 2003). According to Kavaliauskiene (2009) transfer of errors may occur because the learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine.

### **Concept of Writing**

#### Definition of Writing

Writing is one of productive skills that must be learned by the students, they must apply the five general components of the writing process, and they are content, form, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanic. Setiawan (2009) state that writing is complex process since it is made of a large number of skills, not only one element that is used but also all of language elements need to be considered such as: spelling, grammar, diction, punctuation, etc.

There are many ideas dealing with the writing process. According to Clouse (2005) there are four steps in the writing process. They are as follows:

#### 1) Prewriting

The procedures for coming up with ideas in the absence of inspiration. If the writers sit around waiting for inspiration, the writers may never get anything written; inspiration does not occur often enough for writers to depend on it.

#### 2) Drafting

Once writers generate enough ideas during prewriting to serve as the adeparture point, they make their first attempt at getting those ideas own.

#### 3) Revising

During revising, writers rework the raw material of the draft to get it in shape.

#### 4) Editing

Because experienced readers expect the writer's writing to be free of errors, the writers must edit to find and eliminate mistakes so they don't distract or annoy the writer's reader.

### **Micro and Macro Skill of Writing**

Brown (2003) explains that micro-skills are to imitative and intensive types of writing task whereas macro-skills are related to responsive and extensive writing.

a) The descriptions of micro-skills are as follows:

- 1) Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English;
- 2) Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose;
- 3) Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns;
- 4) Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g.: tense, agreement, plural, patterns, and rules);
- 5) Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms;
- 6) Use cohesive devices in written discourse;

b) The descriptions of macro-skills are as follows:

- 1) Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse;
- 2) Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to formant purpose;
- 3) Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relation as main idea, supporting idea, new information, generalization, and exemplification;
- 4) Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing;
- 5) Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text;
- 6) Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately, assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting device,

writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrase and synonyms, and using feedback for revising and editing.

### **Paragraph**

A paragraph is compiled sentences that deal with one subject and it presents a discussable main idea. Furthermore, Oshima and Hogue (1999) states that a paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentence develops one main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. However, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly. A paragraph may stand by itself.

According to Mc Crimmon (1998), there are four requirements of a good paragraph as the following:

- 1) Unity The paragraph should be related to a single controlling idea (often expressed in the topic sentence of the paragraph).
- 2) Complements A paragraph is complete when it does all it is intended to do, where the brief paragraph poses a question and provides an answer.
- 3) Coherence The sentence should be arranged in a logical manner and should follow a definite plan for development.
- 4) Well developed Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea. Oshima and Hogue (1999) say that a paragraph has three major structural parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentence, and a concluding sentence.

### **Sentences Structure**

Writing is the act of composing text (Linse, 2005). In composing text, of course, the researcher requires to demonstrate the control of a number of writing aspects, it could be, for example the control of content, format, sentences structure, vocabulary, punctuation spelling and so forth. As one of component in writing, sentence structure is the order and arrangement of the words in a sentence. It direct the students to make sense of words which is a group of words is not merely as the ordering words; moreover it will make a group of word more meaningful that express a complete thought. As the result, the reader can obtain the information or message which is convey by the researcher.

## **Descriptive text**

Descriptive writing is the clear description of people, places, things, or events using appropriate details. Details use is usually sensory and select to describe what the writer sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes. It is related to Oshima and Hogue (2007) that descriptive writing appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes and sounds.

## **Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

Surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen in (1982) is a taxonomy developed in analyzing error made by the learners which consist of several alternatives for error classification as a result of comparative categorization and communicative effect taxonomy. By classifying errors using the surface strategy taxonomy is very practical since it can physically highlight the cognitive process underlying learners reconstruction of the mother tongue and target language. In, addition, this taxonomy also emphasizing that errors are inevitable since the learner are actively progressing towards producing the target language while utilizing their temporary principle in the former language. This taxonomy divides learner errors into four categories which are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

## **Method**

This researcher used Descriptive Quantitative Method.

## **Data Analysis**

In this research, the data collected need to analyze in order to be more meaningful. In this research, the term of analyzing data known as data analysis. In analyzing data, error analysis used by the researcher as the method.

## **Findings**

After the errors have been identified, the researcher classified the errors based on their types. In this research, the errors made by the students in writing descriptive text were classified based on surface strategy taxonomy. The errors were classified into your types; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

### **The Kinds of Error in Paragraph Writing Performed by the Students**

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	11	21.16%
Addition	11	21.16%
Mis-formation	15	28.84%
Mis-ordering	15	28.84%

Frequency and percentage type of error using Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the researcher found 52 errors in the descriptive test made by the Second Year Students of Senior High School. The researcher found 11 errors of Omission type, 11 errors of Addition type, 15 errors of Misformation type, 15 error of Misordering type. Thus, there were 52 errors in total. The following analysis concerns about omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

### 1. Omission

The researcher found 11 errors in terms of omission type. The researcher found 5 kinds of omission namely; article, preposition, to be as auxiliaries, s/es as plural marker and noun. The first the error occur in missing part of article. The second, the errors were in missing part of to be as auxiliaries. The third, the errors were in missing part of s/es as plural marker. The fourth, the errors were in missing part of preposition. And the last, the errors were in missing part of noun.

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Omission		
a. Article	2	18.18%
b. Noun	1	9.09%
c. To be as auxiliaries	5	45.46%
d. Preposition	1	9.09%
e. s/es as plural marker	2	18.18%
Total	11	100%

Each of them is discussed as follow:

#### 1) Omission on Article

The users omitted an article (the/a/an) that should appear in the sentence. The error happened because the student was still confused in using “a” for general, “the” for specific noun and adjective. A/an can be used for general statements or “the” to specific noun that have not been previously mentioned or have been mentioned for the first time. For example “Indonesia has different ethnic, national and religious” the correct sentence should be “Indonesia has **a** different ethnic, national and religious”

#### 2) Omission on noun

The researcher found 1 error in omission of noun. For example “The equator and **is** on the main land of Asian” the correct sentence should be “The equator and **it is** on the main land of Asian”

#### 3) Omission on to be as auxiliaries

The users omitted to be (is/am/are) that should appear in the sentence. The error happened because the student tried to apply English rules in the wrong construction or they did not master English grammatical structure. For example “In the Mall there **were** many stand” the correct sentence should be “In the Mall there **are** many stand”

#### 4) Omission on preposition

A preposition is usually used before a noun or pronoun to show places, position or times. For Example “Joko widodo was born on **june** 21 1961 in Surakarta” the correct sentence should be “Joko widodo was born on **21 june** 1961 in Surakarta”

#### 5) Omission on s/es as plural marker

In regular pattern, word or form which express more than one should be marked by s/es i the end of the word. For example “There were many **stand** or event **store** that sale many good things” the correct sentence should be “There were many **stands** or event **stores** that sale many good things”

## 2. Addition



The research found 11 errors of addition type. Those errors can be divided into 3 types of errors; addition on regularization, simple addition and double marking.

Type of Error Addition	Frequency	Percentage
a. Double Marking	1	9.09%
b. Simple Addition	9	81.81%
c. Regularization	1	9.09%
Total	11	100%

Each of them is discussed as follow:

#### 1) Double marking

An error in which a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once. For example “I **likes** mall” the correct sentence should be “I **like** mall”

#### 2) Simple addition

It is an addition error that consists of double marking or regularization. No particular features characterize all addition errors, which are the use of an item should not appear in a well formed utterance. For example “Indonesia **have** a lot of flora” the correct sentence should be “Indonesia **has** a lot of flora”

#### 3) Regularization

Regularization which requires special rules, is indicated by the application of regular rule or an error. For example “I sad and **boring** I’m going to the Mall” the correct sentence should be “I sad and **bored** I’m going to the Mall”

### 3. Mis-formation

The researcher found some errors. Those errors can be divided into 3 types of errors; mis-formation on regularization, archi form and alternating form.

Table 1. Type of Error Mis-formation

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Mis-formation		
a. Regularization	9	52.95%
b. Alternating Form	5	29.41%
c. Archi Form	3	17.64%
Total	17	100%

Each of them is discussed as follow:

1) Regularization

Regularization is an item in which a regular marker is used in an irregular marker one. For example, “Mall **have** three floors” the correct sentence should be “Mall **has** three floors”

2) Alternating Form

The alternating form which normally occur as a result of the use of archi form that often give way to the free alternation of various members of a class with each other. For example, “Disappointed the people **woh** support him” the correct sentence should be “Disappointed the people **who** support him”

3) Archi From

The archi form error are those that result from selecting wrong class of forms to represent others in the class. For example, “Patient in carrying out **their** obligations” the correct sentence should be “Patient in carrying out **his** obligations”

4. Mis-ordering

Table 2.Type of Error Mis-Ordering

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Mis-ordering	15	100%

Mis-ordering is the kind of error is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme in a sentence. For example “Indonesia is rich **countries**” the correct sentence should be “Indonesia is a rich **country**”

### Discussion

In conducting this research, the writer followed the steps to analyze the errors proposed by Dulay *et.al* (1982:150), there are four categories to classify errors. They are linguistic category, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative taxonomy. That is why, the researcher used surface strategy taxonomy to classify errors. There are four types of error in surface strategy taxonomy, those are omission, addition, mis-formation, and mis-ordering.

Omission error is the characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in well-formed utterances. In this case the student still face problem article, noun, to be as auxiliaries, preposition, s/es as plural marker. For example “And **is** on the main land of Asia and Australia” the correct sentence should be “And **it is** on the main land of Asia and Australia”. The errors made by the students in writing showed that students’ knowledge of the grammar aspect was low.

The students omitted many errors not only in omission error but also addition errors. Addition errors are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well formed utterance. There are three kinds of addition include: double marking, regularization and simple addition. For example “Mall usually **have** competitions” the correct sentence should be “Mall usually **has** competitions”.

The students committed error in another type of error, misformation error. Misformation error is characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme of the structure. The students made errors in three kinds of misformation error include: regularization, archi-form and alternating form. For example “Mall usually **has** competitions” the correct sentence should be “Have rules that must be **obey**”.

The students made a lot of errors because they did not understand how to use tenses correctly.

The last is misordering error. Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. For example “Mall is **big a** building” the correct sentence should be “Mall is **a big** building”.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher found 52 errors made by the students at the second year of senior high school. Those errors can be classified as follow: 21.16% errors in omission, 21.16% errors in addition, 28.84% errors in misformation, 28.84% errors in misordering. It indicates that the students still have problem in constructing well-formed sentence in writing. Omission error can be divided into five parts namely: Article, noun, to be as auxiliaries, preposition, s/es as plural marker. Addition error can be divided into three parts namely: double marking, regularization and simple addition. Misformation can be divided three parts namely: regularization, archi-form and alternating form. The last is mis-ordering of errors.

### **References**

- Abisamra, N. (2003). *An Analysis of Errors in Arabic Speakers' English Writing*. In Mourtaga, K.
- Boardman, A.C (2002). *Writing To Communicate Second Edition*. San Fransisco: University of California Extension
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2000. *Principle of Language Learning and Teaching Fourth Edition*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.t5
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2003. *Language Assesment Principles and Classroom Practice*. California: Longman.
- Brown, H. Douglas (2007). *Principles Of Language Learning And Teaching*. Fifth Edition. New York: Pearson Education, In
- Bungin. (2005). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*. Prenada Media Group. Jakarta.
- Clouse, Barbara Fine. 2005. *265 Troubleshooting Strategies for Writers*. USA: MC Graw-Hill Companies.
- Dulay, H., Burt, Marina, Krashen, Stephen. (1982). *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, Rod. 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fauziati Endang. 2002. *Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press.
- Frank, Marcella. 1972. *Modern English Grammar: A Practical Reference Guide*. Englewood Cliffs N.J: Prentice Hall
- Heaton. J.B. 1988. *Writing English Language Tests*. England: Longman Pub Group

- Hidayah, Ahmad Taufik. 2013. *Error analysis of the use of the simple tense and the simple past tense in writing essays among TESL Collage students.*
- Hongue, Ann. 2008. *First Step In academic Writing. Second Edition. USA: Pearson Education Longman.*
- Irwansyah. 2012. *Error Analysis On Students' Writing Based On Surface Strategy Taxonomy.*
- Kavaliauskiene, G. (2009). *Role of the Mother Tongue in Learning English for Specific Purposes.* ESP World, Issue 1(22), Vol.8. [Online] Available: <http://www.esp-world.info/Articles>.
- Keshavarz, M. D. (2003). *Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis. Error Analysis in Translation and Learner Translation Corpora.* In Mitchell, R. and Myles, M. (2004). *Second language learning theories.* New York: Hodder Arnold.
- Larson, Mildred L. 1984. *Meaning-Based Translation: A guide to cross-Language. First Edition.* New York: University Press of America
- Linse, Caroline T. 2005. *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners First Edition.* New York: University Press of America
- Maniam, Mahendran & Rajagopal, Punethawathi. 2015. *Simple past tense based on surface structure taxonomy in Esl Malaysian undergraduates writing.* University of Education Sultan Idris, Malaysia
- Mc Crimmon, J. (1998). *Writing with a Purpose.* Boston: Bedford
- Oshima, Alice and Hogue, Ann. 1998. *Writing Academic English, Third Edition.* New York: Addison Wesley Longman
- Oshima, Alice and Hogue, Ann. 2007. *Introduction to Academic Writing. Thrid edition.* USA: Longman, Pearson Education Inc
- Richards, Jack. 1973. *Error Analysis Perspective on Second Language Acquisition.* Longman.
- Rini, Ayu. (2008). *Mahir Menulis Paragraf Bahasa Inggris; Cara Jitu Meningkatkan Kemampuan Menulis dalam Bahasa Inggris.* Jakarta: Pustaka Mina.
- Ristiyani, T. (2011). *A Grammatical Error Analysis of The Students Writing of Reporting A School of The Eleventh Year Students of SMA Negeri 1 Semin In 2011.* Unpublished Script. Universitas Widya Dharma Klaten.
- Sattayatham, A. and Pongrat R. ( 2008). *Analysis of Errors in Paragraph Writing in English by First Year Medical Students from the Four Medical Schools at Mahidol University.* Silpakorn University International Journal Vol.8 : 17-38.
- Setiawan, Habi. 2009. *An Analysis of Students' Sub-ordinate Conjunction Errors in Written Data at The Second Grade of SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung.* Unpublished Script. Universitas Lampung
- Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosuder Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik,* (Yogyakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2002), p.127
- Swan, M. (2005) *Practical English Usage Third Edition.* New York: Oxford University Press
- Vahdatinejad, S. (2008). *Students' Error Analysis and Attitude towards Teacher Feedback Using a Selected Software: a case study.* Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi.