

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Writing is important for a literate society. Writing can be an act of discovery, of communication, of joy. It connects us to work, to culture, to society, to existing knowledge, and to the meanings of our lives. Written language provides the means to convey and evaluate “their own and others”, writing also can use these skills to “read like writers” (Farman and Dahl 2003).

Writing is the learned process of shaping experiences into text, allowing the writer to discover, develop, clarify, and communicate thoughts and feelings. Writing requires and supports the development of thinking skills. Learning to write brings the learner into the literate community as an active participant in the conversation. Writing is our media for expressing our ideas or thoughts.

Nowadays many school offers program which enable students to be competent in the four languages skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Recent studies by Alwasilah (2001:15-26 cited in Gunawan, 2002) show that those schools have succeeded in producing students who are good at speaking, reading, and listening, but unfortunately they have failed to produce students who have good proficiency in writing.

Dealing with students’ lack of writing skill, Alwasilah (1998 cited in Gunawan, 2002) points out those students graduate do not know how to

write because their school teachers fail to provide them with adequate writing skill.

Sometimes people who consider writing difficult are simply because of their personality (Rivers and Temperly, 1978 cited in Devianty, 2003). Furthermore they said that some people can express themselves on the paper easily, and some find it easier to use other channel such as speaking to communicate their ideas.

According to Cimcoz (1991:1), another reason why writing is so difficult for ESL learners is “they (the students) don’t know how to write, feel stupid when they can’t find the right words, fear criticism, and want to avoid the emotional turmoil experienced when faced a topic and a blank paper.”

Furthermore, there are other reasons why ESL difficult for learners. Limited knowledge of the second language may block students to write. For instance, a learner who has little knowledge of grammar and owns limited vocabulary and other important elements of the English will find writing in the second language more difficult than writing in his native language.

The second language learning process is frequently characterized by ‘systematic’ errors, i.e. aberrations or deviations, which can be described either interns of native-language interference or in terms of specific psychological learning strategies. The former is known as *interlinguistic* errors and the latter as *intralinguistic*. The applied linguistic technique which purposes to describe and classify interlinguistic errors is known as Contrastive Analysis (CA); the description and classification of

intralinguistic errors is commonly called Error Analysis (EA) (Titone, 1985:93-94).

Writing narrative text is one kind of writing product that often given to the students in Junior High School as assignment. The purpose of narrative writing, according to ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand (first published 1998) is

“The basic purpose of narrative is to entertain, to gain, and hold a readers’ interest. However narratives can also be written to teach or in form, to change attitudes/social opinions eg soap operas and television dramas that are used to raise topical issues. Narrative sequence people/characters in time and place but differ from recounts in that through the sequencing, the stories set up one or more problems, which must eventually find a way to be resolved.”

Referring to those descriptions, this study purposes to observe error analysis in students’ writing by describing and classifying their errors in writing narrative text. This study is very important because writing is supposed as the most difficult subject in teaching-learning process and still many students are sure make errors in the process of writing.

1.2 Research Questions (The Problem)

This research seeks answers to the following questions:

- 1) What aspects of writing errors are made by students in writing narrative text?
- 2) What aspects of errors are the most frequently found in students narrative text?

1.3 Procedures of Solving the Problem

The procedure used in this investigation is document analysis in which the students narrative texts are closely analyzed. The students were asked to write narrative writing on specific theme in one hour. The theme given is “Daily Activities”. It is based on the curriculum. Further, students’ writing was analyzed by seeking out the errors they made in English narrative writing.

Meanwhile, the respondents engaged in this study were the first grade students of state Junior High School Lembang (SLTPN 3 Lembang). The first grade students were chosen because they have learnt how to write narrative text using simple present tense.

This study employs purposive sampling. According to Arikunto (1997), purposive sampling is conducted by taking subject which is usually on certain purpose. This technique is usually because of some consideration: limitation of time, energy, and fund. There are ten students who are purposively chosen to be the respondents of this research.

This study used qualitative method in analyzing the data. In addition, Frankel and Walten, in Muyani (2005), states that “analyzing the data in a qualitative was basically involves synthesizing the information obtained from various sources into a coherent description of what the writer has observed or discovered”. Moreover, there are three stages which are taken in conducting data analysis. First, the data collected was analyzed based on indicators of common writing error, known aspects of errors, as presented by <http://www.researchhaven.com/CommonError.htm> and King

and Stanley (1989). Second, the findings were presented in tables to categorize the findings. The tables include: the errors category of each respondents, the errors percentage of each aspects. These data become the source of analysis. Lastly, from this analysis, the conclusion of the research of the students' errors based on the data is drawn.

The indicators of common writing error, known as aspects of errors, as presented by <http://www.researchhaven.com/CommonError.htm> and King and Stanley (1989) are as follow:

a. Sentence Fragments

Make sure each word group have punctuated as sentence contains a grammatically complete and independent thought that can stand alone as an acceptable sentence. For instance:

Incorrect:

Scientists report no human deaths due to excessive caffeine consumption. Although caffeine does cause convulsions and death in certain animals.

Revised:

Scientists report no human deaths due to excessive caffeine consumption, although caffeine does cause convulsions and death in certain animals.

b. Sentence Sprawl

Too many equally weighted phrases and clauses produce tiresome sentences.

Incorrect:

The hearing was planned for Monday, December 2, but not all of the witnesses could be available, so it was rescheduled for the following, Friday, and then all the witnesses could attend. [There are no grammatical errors here, but the sprawling sentence does not communicate clearly and concisely].

Revised:

The hearing, which had been planned for Monday, December 2, was rescheduled for the following Friday so that all witnesses would be able to attend.

c. Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Place modifiers near the words they describe; be sure the modified words actually appear in the sentence.

Incorrect:

When writing a proposal, an original task is set for research.

Revised:

When writing a proposal, a scholar sets an original task for research.

d. Faulty Parallelism

Be sure use grammatically equal sentence elements to express two or more matching ideas or items in a series.

Incorrect:

The candidate's goals include winning the election, a national health program, and the education system.

Revised:

The candidate's goals include winning the election, a national health program, and improving the educational system

e. Unclear Pronoun Reference

All pronouns must clearly refer to definite referents [nouns].

Use "it", "they", "this", "that", "these", "those", and "which" carefully to prevent confusion.

Incorrect:

Einstein was a brilliant mathematician. This is how he was able to explain the universe.

Revised:

Einstein was a brilliant mathematician. Used his ability with numbers to explain the universe.

f. Incorrect Pronoun Case

Determine whether the pronoun is being used as a subject, or an object, or a possessive in the sentence, and select the pronoun from to match.

Incorrect:

Castor's communist principles inevitably led to an ideological conflict between he and president Kennedy

Revised:

Castor's communist principles inevitably led to an ideological conflict between him and president Kennedy

g. Omitted Commas

Use commas to signal nonrestrictive or nonessential material, to prevent confusion, and to indicate relationships among ideas and sentence parts.

Incorrect:

When it comes to eating people differ in their tastes.

Revised:

When it comes to eating, people differ in their tastes.

h. Superfluous Commas

Unnecessary commas make sentences difficult to read.

Incorrect:

Field trips are required, in several courses, such as, botany and geology.

Revised:

Field trips are required in several courses such as botany and geology.

i. Comma Splices

Do not link two independent clauses with a comma (unless you also use a coordinating conjunction: “and”, “or”, “but”, “for”, “nor”, “so”, “yet”). Instead use a period or semicolon, or rewrite the sentence.

Incorrect:

In 1952 Japan’s gross national product was one third that of France, by the late 1970s it was larger than the GNPs of France and Britain combined.

Revised:

In 1952 Japan's gross national product was one third that of France. By the late 1970s it was larger than the GNPs of France and Britain combined.

j. Apostrophe Errors

Apostrophes indicate possession for nouns ("Jim's hat," "Several years' work) but not for personal pronouns ("its", "your", "their", and "whose"). Apostrophes also indicate omissions in contractions ("it's" = "it is"). In general they are not used to indicate plurals.

k. Words Easily Confused

"Effect" is most often a noun (the effect), and "affect" is almost always a verb. Other pairs commonly confused: "lead"/"led" and "accept"/"except". Check a glossary of usage to find the right choice.

l. Misspellings

Spelling errors are usually perceived as a reflection of the writer's careless attitude toward the whole project.

m. Subject and Verb

This category includes kinds of subjects, verbs and their usage (King and Stanley, 1989).

Incorrect:

This data is needed for analyzing my research.

Revised:

This data are needed for analyzing my research.

n. Verb Agreement, Tense and Form

This point suggests the rules of subject-verb agreement (include foreign English words) and their agreement of the tenses and forms.

Incorrect:

He person drive a metromini everyday.

Revised:

He drives metromini everyday.

o. Incorrect Usage

This aspect rules the usage of words in correct applications. This includes conjunction, form, prepositions, and articles.

Incorrect:

Between the teachers, students, and administrators, there is a sharp disagreement.

Revised:

Among the teachers, students, and administrators, there is a sharp disagreement.

The above description can be summarized into the following table.

Table 3.1

Common Writing Error (Aspects of Errors)

Measured Aspects	Indicators
1. Sentence Fragments	Sentence does not contain a grammatically complete and independent thought.
2. Sentence Sprawl	Too many equally weighted phrases and clauses.
3. Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers	Modifiers should be placed near the words they describe: the modified words actually appear in the sentence.
4. Faulty Parallelism	Grammatically equal sentence elements to express two or more matching ideas or items in series.
5. Unclear Pronoun Reference	Pronouns must clearly refer to definite referents [noun]
6. Incorrect Pronoun Case	Determine whether the pronoun is being used as a subject, or an object, or a possessive in the sentence, and select the pronoun form to match
7. Omitted Commas	Use commas to signal nonrestrictive or nonessential material, to prevent confusion, and to indicate relationships among ideas and sentence parts
8. Superfluous Commas	Unnecessary comas make sentence difficult to read.
9. Comma Splices	Do not link two independent clauses with a comma.
10. Apostrophe Errors	Apostrophes indicate possession for nouns but not for personal pronouns. Apostrophes also indicate omissions in contractions.
11. Words Easily Confused	“Effect” is most often a noun (the effect) and “affect” is almost always a verb. Other pairs commonly confused” “lead”/”led” and “accept”/”except.”
12. Spelling Errors	Spelling errors are usually perceived as a reflection of the writer’s careless attitude toward the whole project.
13. Subject and Verb	This category includes kinds of subjects, verbs and their usage (King and Stanley)
14. Verb Agreement, Tense and Form	This point suggest the rules of subject verb agreement (include foreign English words) and their agreement of the tense and forms
15. Incorrect Usage	This aspect rules the usage of words in correct applications. This includes conjunctions, forms, prepositions, and articles

[<http://www.researchhaven.com/CommonError.htm>. and King and Stanley (1989)]

1.4 Organization of Content

The content will be presented in to two subs chapter. First sub-chapter will elaborate the theoretical framework of the theory of errors analysis. Second sub-chapter will discuss research findings and discussions.

