

MORPHOLOGICAL AND SYNTACTICAL ERRORS IN STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

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Abstract: This research aims to: 1) show types of morphological errors in descriptive writing, 2) to show types of syntactic errors in descriptive writing, 3) to show types of errors, in terms of morphology or syntact in descriptive writing. It uses qualitative method (case study). It was conducted in SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang Kota, Riau. It has started in September to completion. The 62 sample were gained through random sampling. The error classification sheets, which are derived from 62 students' writing from SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang, are used for the research instrument. The results of this research are: 1) there are some morphological errors in students' descriptive writing, such as inflection, derivation, noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, article, copula (be), auxiliary, conjunction, and pronouns. The errors mostly occur in auxiliary with a percentage of 14.67%. 2) there are some syntactical errors in students' descriptive writing, such as passive voice, tense, noun phrase, prepositional phrase, subject/predicate, subject-verb agreement, demonstrative determiner, and paired adjective. The errors highly occur in Subject-verb agreement with a percentage of 23.04%. 3) The morphological and syntactical errors occur in the omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

Key Words: Morphological Errors; Syntactical Errors; Descriptive Writing.

Introduction

English is a universal language since it is spoken and understood more widely than other languages. It can be at least found almost everywhere, such as in the language of cinema, television, music, among educated people, etc. In today's global world, the usage of English is also very important, particularly it may play a major role in many sectors for global competitiveness in education, medicine, business, or engineering. As a result, many people like learning English as a foreign language or using it as their second language.

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. Alwasilah (2011, as cited in Musthafa, B & Hamied, FA 2014, p. 4) said: "While the status of English as a Foreign Language was declared early (in 1955) and accorded the status of a compulsory subject to be taught in Junior Secondary Schools approximately in the same year, the policy to introduce the English language as an optional school subject to elementary school pupils was not made until the 1990's." It means that English more likely is taught by the teachers as a foreign language starting from early school. Today, they also teach the English language in university as an additional subject. Although the students have learned English since primary school, many students still have difficulty expressing or writing good English. To help the student to improve their English language skills, it is important to recognize some language errors that are commonly made by them.

Writing is one of the hardest skills in English language skills. Many students still cannot write good English even though they may have some knowledge about writing. To write good English, students must



know and consider several aspects of the English language, such as morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Morphology deals with the word structure of components of grammar, while syntax deals with the structure of the language. Semantics deals with meaning at the levels of words, phrases, or sentences. Whereas pragmatics deals with the appropriate context of the language.

Observation has been made at the SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang and it reveals that some students are still difficult to master English writing skills. Many students still make errors in the correct usage of English grammar or structure, such as using the superlative form (it is the oldest mosque) of words and using the noun phrases (we can see the fountain colorful). The first error is a morphological error. The student omits the use of morpheme of the word superlative. The inflection suffix-s is required to form a superlative adjective. The second error is considered as a syntactical error. The student puts the modifier colorful after the head of the noun. It is the incorrect position, so it is called a misordering error of a noun phrase.

Based on the observations, the researcher wants to conduct an analysis of the different types of errors that commonly appear in the students' writing. The researcher considers choosing a descriptive text because it is one of the writing texts that exist in the syllabus of SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang. Moreover, the students have been familiar with this text because they have learned this text since elementary school or junior high school. Therefore, the following are the formulation of this research:

1. What types of morphological errors are committed by the students in their compositions?
2. What types of syntactic errors are committed by the students in their compositions?
3. What type of errors, in terms of morphology and syntactic that are committed most frequently in their compositions?

Based on the formulation of this research, the objectives of the research are:

1. To find out types of morphological errors in students' writing.
2. To find out types of syntactic errors in students' writing.
3. To find out types errors., in terms of of morphological and syntactic in students' writing.

Method

This research uses qualitative research and the method used in this research is descriptive research. According to Bieber and Lavey (2011:4), qualitative research is research presented in general words and texts. Meanwhile, descriptive research is a method that represents a state or phenomenon as it is (Sudaryono, 2017: 82). Therefore the results of this research will be mostly in form of descriptions and sentences.

According to Alvi (2016: 10) population is the comprehensive group of an element, such as individual, institution, object, etc, which depends on the nature of the investigation. In this research, the population was the first-year students of SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang. The total number of the population is 369 students who are divided into 11 classes.

Alvi (2016: 11) states that the sample is the smaller number of population. It means that a sample is a representative group of elements that are selected from the population. Gay (2012: 143) mentioned that a single participant or with as many as 60 or 70 participants could be a sample size in qualitative research. He also mentioned that more participant (in qualitative research) does not necessarily mean the research or its result will be more reliable or useful, so qualitative researcher should take fewer samples. The sample of this research was selected by using simple random sampling as mentioned by Gay (2012: 143) that simple random sampling is the technique to determine a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of selection for the sample. The randomness of this technique is that depends on the process of selecting a sample from the population. The method that the researcher used for simple random sampling was the lottery method. Therefore, the sample of this research is 62 students from 369 students.

To collect the data, the researcher uses the type of data collected from documents. These documents belong to students' descriptive writing. According to Paltridge and Phakiti (2010: 99-100): *There are varied type of data collected in qualitative research, such types description of behavior (what people are seen or heard doing or saying), description of the event (a piece of behavior, defined either by the people in the setting or by the researcher), description of institution (the way the setting operates in term of regulations, tacit, rules, rituals), description of appearance (what the setting or people in it look it), description of*

research event (what people say or do in the interview, focus group), personal narrative (reconstruction of experience that aids understanding), account (what people say or write to the researcher-actual words), talk (what people are heard saying), visual record (what is actually seen), and document (a piece of writing belonging or pertaining to the setting). In collecting the data, the researcher has done several steps. These steps are as follows:

1. The researcher joined the online classroom and gave an explanation to students about the descriptive text and how to make or write descriptive text;
2. The researcher gave a topic about the descriptive text;
3. The researcher asked the students to write descriptive writing about historical places or the famous place that exist in their town (It is based on the syllabus). The researcher asked them to write a maximum of 150 words and write it on a paper. It is online learning, so the students must take a picture of their paper then send it through the WhatsApp group.

After the result of students' writing are collected, the researcher analyzed the errors made by the students. The research uses the error classification sheets as the instrument, which are derived from 62 students' writing from SMA Negeri 1 Bangkinang.

In this research, the researcher applies qualitative data analysis based on Flick (2014). According to Flick (2014: 4-5): "Qualitative data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making (subjective or social meaning) in material and what is represented in it. It also combines approaches of rough analysis of a detailed analysis (elaboration, condensation, summaries) with approaches of a detailed analysis (elaboration of categories, hermeneutic interpretations, or identified structure)." Then the researcher did some procedure of analysis, as follows:

- a. Organizing the data, after collecting the data the researcher checked the data and choose some sentences that have errors. Then, put them on the table.
- b. Sorting or Categorizing the data, the researcher classified or seperated the data according to the Linguistics Category and Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982, cited in Kharmila and Narius, 2019, p. 328).

Afterwards, the data will be categorized into the morphological and syntactical errors.

Results and Discussion

Results

Based on the analysis of students' descriptive writing, the researcher found that many errors occur at both the morphological and syntactical levels.

Table 1.

Linguistic Level	Kinds of Error	Research Findings				Total	Percentage
		Omiss	Add	Misform	Misorder		
Morpheme	Inflection	5	12			17	8.90%
	Derivation	1	4			5	2.61%
	Noun	3			1	4	2.09%
	Adjective				2	2	1.05%
	Verb	1	1		2	4	2.09%
	Adverb		1			1	0.52%
	Preposition	7	4			11	5.76%
	Article	7	1			8	4.19%
	Copula (be)	21	2	2		23	12.05%
	Auxiliary	20		8		28	14.67%
	Conjunction	2			1	3	1.57%
Syntax	Pronouns	13		1		14	7.33%
	Passive Voice			6	2	8	4.19%
	Tense			4		4	2.09%
	Noun Phrase				5	5	2.62%

Prepositional Phrase			2	2	1.05%
Subject/Predicate	6			6	3.14%
Subject-Verb Agreement		44		44	23.04%
Demonstrative Determiner	1			1	0.52%
Paired Adjective			1	1	0.52%
Total	87	25	65	16	191
Percentage					100%

Table 2 shows that many errors occur at both morphological and syntactical levels. At the morphological level, the errors include inflection, derivation, noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, article, copula (be), auxiliary, conjunction, and pronouns. The highest number of morphological errors occur in the use of *auxiliary* with a percentage of 14.67% whereas the lowest number of morphological errors occur in the use of *adverb* with a percentage of 0.52%. In the syntactical level, the errors include passive voice, tense, noun phrase, prepositional phrase, subject/predicate, subject-verb agreement, demonstrative determiner, and paired adjective. The highest number of syntactical errors is *Subject-verb agreement* with a percentage of 23.04%. Meanwhile, the lowest number of syntactical errors is a *demonstrative determiner* and *paired adjective* with a percentage of 0.52%.

Discussion

Omission

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an element that must appear in a sentence. In the following table, the data about omission errors, that are obtained from students' descriptive text, are presented:

Table 2.
Omission at Morphological and Syntactical Levels

Level of Linguistic	Kind of Error	Errors
Morpheme	Inflection	28.5. It is the old ∅ mosque in Pekanbaru.
	Derivation	41.13. It is about IDR 15.000, include ∅ parking area.
	Verb	41.7. They ∅ different size and shape, but they ∅ made of stones and bricks.
	Noun	33.6. The main ∅ is a large and it has stupa on the top.
	Preposition	8.2. It is the only historical heritage site in the form of a temple ∅ Riau.
	Article	21.5. ∅ wall has each meaningful carving.
	Copula (be)	5.5. It ∅ approximately 135 km from Pekanbaru city.
	Auxiliary	6.6. The materials of the temple ∅ made of bricks and stones.
	Conjunction	31.1. The temple is made of bricks ∅ stones.
	Syntax	Personal Pronouns
Subject/Predicate		36.7. The water boom is a little bit small, but ∅ clean. 40.15. We can use them but ∅ not free.
Demonstrative Determiner		1.6. Then, ∅ a river nearby.

Table 2 shows that some errors in students' descriptive writing occur at the morphological and syntactical levels. The morphological errors include Inflection; (1) omission of inflection –*est*, (2) derivation; omission of inflection – *ing*, (41.7.) verb: omission of the present verb *have*, (3) noun; omission of noun *building*, (4) preposition: the omission of the preposition *in*, (5) article: omission of article *the*, (6) copula (be): omission of to be *is*, (7) auxiliary; omission of auxiliary be *are*, (8) conjunction; omission of coordinating conjunction *and*, (9) personal pronouns; omission of pronouns *it*. Whereas, the syntactical errors include (1) subject/predicate; the omission of the subject and predicate *it* and *is*, and (2) demonstrative determiner; the omission of demonstrative determiner *there is*.

Addition

Addition errors are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed or incorrect location. In the following table, the data about addition errors, that are obtained from students' descriptive text, are presented:

Table 3.
Addition at Morphological Levels

Level of Linguistic	Kind of Error	Errors
Morpheme	Inflection	24.14. Each person must pays IDR 5.000. 37.8. This boat can still fits up to 15 people.
	Derivation	43.11.However, we must climb the top carefully, especially on raining days, because the road does not have a layer of asphalt.
	Verb	22.8. It is only take an hour from Pekanbaru.
	Adverb	32.12.However, we only cannot see inside the house.
	Preposition	34.2. It is a symbol of . 34.4. It has been opened since in 1975.
	Article	25.3. They even the slaughter 10 buffaloes.
	Copula be	22.12.Therefore, the number of visitors highly increase is on the day before Ramadhan.

Table 3 shows that some errors in students' descriptive writing only occur at the morphological. The morphological errors include (1) inflection; addition of inflection –*s*, (2) derivation; addition of derivation –*ing*, (3) verb; addition of verb *take*, (4) adverb; addition of adverb *only*, (5) preposition; addition of preposition *of*, (6) article; addition of definite article *the*, and (7) copula be; addition of to be *is*.

Misformation

Misformation Errors are the use of an inappropriate or wrong form of morpheme or structure in written form. In the following table, the data about misformation errors, that are obtained from students' descriptive text, are presented:

Table 4.
Misformation at Morphological and Syntactical Levels

Level of Linguistic	Kind of Error	Errors
Morpheme	Personal Pronoun	8.12.You can visit it easily because the four temples are in the same area.

	Copula (be)	38.14. The food and drinks is affordable, so we don't need to worry about that.
	Auxiliary	32.11. There is no entrance fee, so we does not need to pay. 45.12. Each person have to pay 5000 rupiahs.
Syntax	Passive Voice	2.6. It is built on 5000 square meter site with European home style. 59.14. It is call s <i>Meriam Puntung</i> .
	Tense	28.3. It shows that Siak Sri Indrapura Kingdom has ever reigns Pekanbaru
	Subject-Verb Agreement	3.9. Many visitors comes especially on holiday. 4.10. They refers to rivers.

Table 4 shows that some errors in students' describing writing occur at the morphological and syntactical levels. The morphological errors include (1) personal pronoun; incorrect pronoun *it*, (2) copula (be); misformation of *is*, (3) auxiliary; misformation of *does* and *have*. Whereas, the syntactical errors include (1) passive voice; misformation of the main verb *built*, (2) tense; misformation of the main verb *reigns*, and (3) Subject-verb agreement; misformation of the concord between subject and verb *many visitors* and *comes*; *they* and *refers*.

Misordering

Misordering Errors could be seen when two elements exchange in the incorrect position. In the following table, the data about misordering errors, that are obtained from students' descriptive text, are presented:

Table 5.
Misordering at Morphological and Syntactical Levels

Level of Linguistic	Kind of Error	Errors
Morpheme	Verb	24.12. There is a large parking area, so park the bus can here as well.
	Noun	30.3. This museum name has unique.
	Adjective	3.10. They are mostly people local here.
	Conjunction	31.7. This temple ∅ not as big as Borobudur temple, although it has a large area.
Syntax		1.10. This temple also has a parking area large .
	Noun Phrase	22.11. In Kampar, Balimau Kasai is a tradition traditional to welcome Ramadhan month.
	Prepositional Phrase	3.8. There are no fishes the water inside .
	Paired Adjective	35.2. It is usually used for traditional events Malay .
	Passive Voice	26.13. Swimming allow is there, but everybody knows that the water is not good.

Table 5 shows that some errors in students' describing writing occur at the morphological and syntactical levels. The morphological errors include (1) verb; misordering of verb *park*, (2) noun; misordering of noun *name*, (3) adjective; misordering of adjective *local*, and (4) conjunction; misordering of conjunction *although*. Whereas, the syntactical errors include (1) noun phrase; misordering of word order, (2) prepositional phrase; misordering of preposition *inside*, (3) paired adjective; misordering of adjective *Malay*, and (4) passive voice; misordering helping verb *is*.

Conclusions

Based on the result and discussion, the errors that are found in the students' descriptive writing mostly occur at both the morphological and syntactical levels. The morphological errors include inflection, derivation, noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, article, copula (be), auxiliary, conjunction, and pronouns, while the syntactical errors include passive voice, tense, noun phrase, prepositional phrase, subject/predicate, subject-verb agreement, demonstrative determiner, and paired adjective. The morphological and syntactical errors occur in the omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. At the morphological level, the errors mostly occur in auxiliary. The students often omit and misform the auxiliary verb, such as be (in the passive voice) and has (in present perfect tense). Meanwhile, at the syntactical level, the errors highly occur in Subject-Verb agreement. The students often write the wrong verb, so the subject and the verb do not match.

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