

## **An Error Analysis of Descriptive Writing Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy Made by the Eight Grade Students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the Academic Year of 2019 / 2020**

**Hastri Firharmawan <sup>a</sup>, Ida Komariyah <sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> English Education Department, University of Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen

<sup>b</sup> Student of English Education Department, University of Ma'arif Nahdlatul Ulama Kebumen

Email: hfirharmawan@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

To support success in the future, the mastery of writing is significant for school students. However, acquiring this ability may take time because students have to learn to minimize errors. This research aims to describe the students' errors in their writing of descriptive texts and finding out the degree of the errors made by the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019 / 2020. The writer used descriptive qualitative method in conducting the study. The research involved 32 students of grade VIII in the academic year of 2019 / 2020 at SMP N 6 Kebumen as participants that were selected by purpose. Data in this research were in the forms of words and sentences showing the students' writing ability of descriptive texts taken from the worksheet documents done by the students. The writer analysed the documents by using the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et.all. (1982:152). Data validity was gained by using investigator triangulation. It is how examination of the credibility of the data is done by making use of other observers for checking the degree of trust of the data. The results of the research showed that there had been found 123 items of errors in the descriptive writings made by the students of grade VIII at SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020. These errors consisted of four types. They covered errors of omission, errors of misformation, errors of addition, and errors of misordering. The sequence of the errors from the most dominant type to the least one was errors of misformation (61%), errors of omission (20%), errors of addition (15%), and errors of misordering (4%). This research was described the students' errors in writing descriptive texts. Accordingly, this possibly helps students correct their errors to produce better writing later.

Keywords: Error analysis, descriptive writing, surface strategy taxonomy

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. Background**

English is spoken in all over the world as a means of communication. Because of this, it is taught in many countries. However, the position of the language in each country can be various, ranging from mother tongue or first language, second language, or foreign language. This has a connection with contexts in the country where English is used.

In Indonesia, English is not a new thing. The language has been taught at Indonesian schools since long ago. It is used as the first foreign language to support the development of knowledge and technology (Sepyand M, 2017:206). Although the position of English in Indonesia is as the first foreign language, for junior high school students it is important to learn. The mastery of the language do not only help them upgrade any information or current knowledge and technology faster, but also more easily. In supporting this, there are four language skills to master. They are writing, listening, speaking, and reading skills.

Writing as one of the student's productive skills which possibly produces various texts to share any information readable to everyone is a significant skill to master. However, it seems to be one of the most difficult subjects at school (Richard and Renandya, 2002:303). It is mainly addressed for those who learn English as a foreign language or second language. The difficulty in writing is due to, not only does it require students translating their ideas into a readable text, but also generating and organizing ideas of the mind. The students have to produce words, sentences, paragraphs, and extended compositions in the same time.

In addition to Richard and Renandya, Gaith (2002:1) also explains that writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore ideas and thoughts and make them visible and concrete. It means that when writing, students have to consider many things to build a good writing result. As a consequence, some students who learn English may produce many errors in their writing. This is because of the difference between the learners' native language rules and that of the learners' language being learned. In short, the ability to write is difficult; and, to gain this competence students needs further learning.

Similarly, in the case of writing descriptive texts which becomes part of English lesson materials at Indonesian junior high schools, there is great possibility of errors made by the students regardless of the teachers' guidance in the practice. As the preliminary interview to the English teacher that the researcher did at the research site, the teacher said that most students on grade eight of SMP N 6 Kebumen have a lot of problems to write a descriptive text. There have been identified abundant of erros. These errors might be caused by the students' having limited chance to explore their ideas in English writing. Usually the paragraph idea is still ambiguous because the students write more than one main ideas in one paragraph. Another, the idea is less interesting eventhough it is about the students' own life. In addition, they also have difficulty in applying suitable grammar rules and constructing the text. In the same time, they are also in a lack of vocabulary.

Copy with such problems found on the eight graders of SMP N 6 Kebumen and agreeing with what Myles (2002:1) commented that the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments, the writer tried to conducted a research dealing with students' descriptive writing. The title is "An Error Analysis of Descriptive Writing Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy Made by the Eight Grade Students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the Academic Year of 2019 / 2020". This study is expected to be able to disclose the type of errors in writing, especially in a descriptive text which was made by the eight grade students of SMPN 6 Kebumen.

## 2. The Research Focus

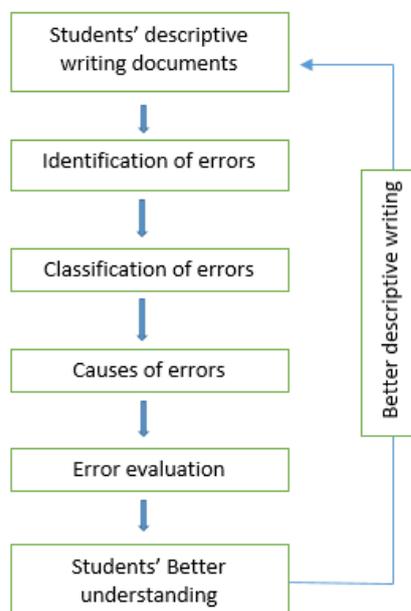
Based on the preliminary interview with the English teacher at the school, in general most students on grade VIII had problems with descriptive text writing. Focus of this study is to analyse the descriptive texts produced by students on grade VIII at SMP N 6 Kebumen, especially discussing writing errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy. Surface strategy taxonomy which includes omission, addition, misformation, and misordering seen through the learners' descriptive writing worksheets.

## 3. Objectives of the Research

Based on the problem formulations, this research has two objectives to achieve. Those objectives are:

1. To describe the types of errors in descriptive writing made by the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019 / 2020.
2. To find out the degree of the errors in the descriptive writing made by the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019 / 2020

This research analysed errors elicited through the students' worksheet documents of descriptive text. The results helped students understand better on how write descriptive texts. The framework of thinking in this research is illustrated in schema as follow:



Picture 2.1: The framework of thinking flowchart

This research was started by collecting the students' writing documents assumed to have a lot of errors. The writer identified the errors which were then to be classified based on the surface strategy taxonomy. And then, the writer also tried to analyze the causes of the errors before finally doing error evaluation. Completing the evaluation, the writer shared the evaluation results in order to help students had better understanding which later help them create better descriptive writings.

## **METHOD**

### **1. Research Design and Strategies**

This was a qualitative research. Ritchie (2003:2) explains that qualitative research is naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meaning which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc) within their social world. In this research, the writer found out and described the types of errors in students' writing of descriptive texts and made analysis of their causes based on the surface strategy taxonomy as proposed by Dulay and Brown.

By using purposive sampling, participants in this research were the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen. The research involved (how many numbers) students from class VIII A. Purposive sampling is a type of non probability sampling method which targets a particular group of people by Patton (1990:169).

### **2. Data and Data Sources**

According to Lofland in Moleong (2013:157), the main source of data in a qualitative research is the words and actions, the test is additional data such as documents. Data in this research were in the forms of words, sentences, and paragraphs that students made. The writer collected the data from the students' worksheet documents. Document is the previous event note in the form of writing, pictures or other monumental works from certain people. The documents in this research were in types of the learners' worksheets in writing descriptive texts. These were gained from the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen, class VIII A, in the academic year of 2019/2020.

### **3. Technique of Data Collecting**

Cresswell (2014:239), states that data collection steps involve: 1) Setting of the boundaries for the study; 2) Collecting information through observations, interviews, documents, and visual materials; and, 3) Establishing the protocol for recording information. In the data collecting, the writer came to the research site after she got permitted and collected the data from the texts which were written by students of grade VIII, especially VIII A in SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020. The test were descriptions about places, things, animals and people.

### **4. Technique of Data Analysis**

According to Moleong (2013:280) data analysis is the process of organizing and sorting the data into patterns, categories, and basic description unit so that it can be found and formulated into the working hypothesis as suggested by data. The technique of data analysis used in this study is error analysis. The writer analysed the documents gained from the research site based on the surface strategy taxonomy.

### **5. Validity of Data**

To guarantee data trustworthiness in a research, Yvonna and Denzini (2012:269) explain that a writer might use one of the following triangulation kinds, namely: source triangulation, technique triangulation, time triangulation, investigator triangulation, or theory triangulation. In this research, the writer applied the investigator triangulation. It

is how examination of the credibility of the data is done by making use of other observers for checking the degree of trust of data. It is done by comparing the results of the work of an analysis with other analysis. Therefore, in this research, the writer analysed the errors through the students' worksheets. After that, she checked the validity of the data by consulting to the experts. The experts were the English teachers in SMP N 6 Kebumen. They were Titi Saraswati S.pd and Sejati S.Pd.

## 6. Research of Procedures

In this research, the writer followed some stages which showed the procedures for error analysis as defined by Ellis (1985:296). Those stages are as follow:

### a. Collecting the samples of language learners

The first stage in error analysis is deciding what samples of language students to use in the analysis and how to collect these samples. In this stage, the writer used the results of the students' work. The data were descriptive texts written by the eight grade students of SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020.

### b. Identification of errors

After the data collected, the errors that were found in the data had to be identified to find errors that had been made by students. The writer identified the types of errors by underlining the errors made by the students

### c. Classification of errors

Once the errors identified, there were some types of errors and causes that had been made by students. To facilitate the analysis, the writer used the surface strategy taxonomy and classified errors based on their class or category.

### d. Explanation of errors

The next stage was finding out the frequency of errors in every error category. The calculation was conducted in every sentence. The writer analysed the causes of errors in the sentences.

### e. Evaluation of errors

The writer formulated the percentage of errors as follow:

$$E = P/I \times 100\%$$

Note E : Error Percentage

P : The Number of Error Category

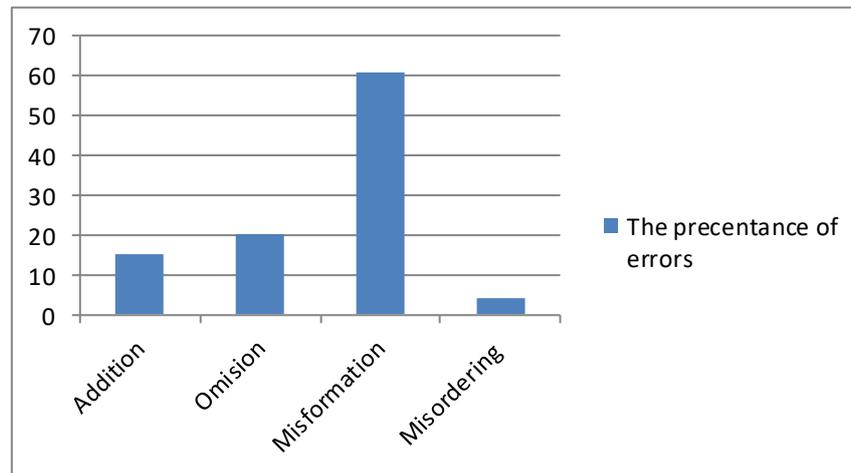
I : The Total Number of Possible Error

This stage, the types and causes of errors were showed on a table that allowed the writer to draw the conclusion.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982:152) surface strategy taxonomy is the way surface structure is altered. Learners of English language may omit necessary items or add unnecessary ones. Besides, they may also misform items and disorder them. The surface strategy taxonomy includes errors of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

Data in this study proves the four error types that the students of grade viii at SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020 made on descriptive writing. It is like what Dulay et.all (1982:152), explained in the surface strategy taxonomy. The students made errors on their writing which covered errors of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The distribution of the errors made by the students can be described in error distribution chart as seen in picture 4.1



Based on picture 4.1 showing the error distributions made by the students, it is observable that the most general errors to the least ones follow the following pattern, namely: misformation, the most general errors (61%), omission (20%), addition (15%), and misordering (4%). The dominant errors for misformation is understandable since there are a lot of of subskills (8) within this. This, of course requires students to work harder as writing is an active, productive, and creative force in language. Like what Alwasilah (1994: 78), argued that writing is a psycholinguistic process, starting from the formulation of ideas through semantic rules, then arranged with syntactic rules, and presented in the writing system order. The arrangement is based on the harmony of the meaning of words and sentence structure. This must be a complex process for the students. In addition, O 'Shea (2000: 6), also stated that good writing is careful in the use of words, free from ambiguous words, expressing objective ideas, economical in expressing ideas and paying attention to the readers.

After making analysis of the documents from the students' worksheets on descriptive writing, the researcher made classification of the errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et.all (1982:152). This covers errors of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The table 4.5 shows distributions of errors made by students on the four error types.

Table 4.5 Distribution of types of errors based surface strategy taxonomy

	Types of Errors	The number of errors	The percentage
1	Addition	18	15
2	Ommision	24	20
3	Misformation	75	61
4	Misordering	6	4
	Total	123	100

Based on table 4.5, it is seen that there are 123 errors made by the students of grade VIII at SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020 on descriptive writing. These errors are distributed in four error types (addition, ommision, misformation, and misordering) with misformation having the highest frequency (75 errors) or 61% and with misordering having the lowest frequency (6 errors) or 4% of the total errors made. At the same time, ommision comes second with 24 errors or 20% and addition comes the third with 18 errors or 15% of the total errors that the students made.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the analysis, and discussion in chapter IV, this research can be concluded as follow:

1. There are four types of errors on the descriptive writings made by the students of grade viii at SMP N 6 Kebumen in the academic year of 2019/2020;
2. Those errors covers ommision, misformation, addition, and misordering;
3. The sequence of the errors from the most dominant type to the lowest one is misformation (61%), omission (20%), addition (15%), and misordering (4%).

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