

## USING ERROR ANALYSIS IN TEACHING WRITING CLASS

### IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WIDYA DARMA

Oleh:

**AMIATUN NURYANA**

IKIP Widya Darma

**Abstrak:** In learning foreign or the second language, in this case English, we and even native speakers cannot avoid making mistake. The learners and teachers of language realize that errors in learning language always happen. This realization is very important to understand the process of the second language acquisition. This paper deals with the use of error analysis in teaching English skills, especially writing. Error analysis is used to analyze errors in using language made by the second language learners. The aim of this error analysis is to describe language items which are difficult to master and the causes of the errors.

In this paper, the discussion is divided into two parts, the discussion of error analysis in general, and the discussion of error analysis in teaching WritingsClass. The data is derived from the teaching activity which the writer has done in Writing Class in English Department, WidyaDarmaSurabaya. First, the teacher gives material relating to the theory of making good paragraphs. Then, the students are asked to make paragraphs. Their works are analyzed directly by giving signs on them and the students are asked to rewrite their wrong sentences and sometimes their paragraph on the board. The other students are asked to correct by the students, the teacher and students discuss them together. From this activity, the students will get much understanding about writing good sentences and paragraphs and they learn more from the errors they have made.

It can be concluded that using error analysis in teaching Writing Class is Very advantageous. Based on the writer's experience in applying this activity, teaching Writing Class by using error analysis can reduce boredom. Moreover, there are many inputs relating to English grammatical points, expressing ideas in sentences and paragraphs, and learning English in General both for the teacher and the students.

**Kata Kunci:** Error Analysis, Teaching, Writing class

## INTRODUCTION

In learning foreign or the second language, in this case English, we and even native speakers cannot avoid making mistake. Brown (1980 : 164) states that making mistakes is a part of the process in human learning, as seen in the following quotation.

Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes. Mistakes, Misjudgments, miscalculations, and erroneous assumptions form an important aspect of learning virtually any skill or acquiring information (Brown, 1980 : 164).

The learners and teachers of language realize that errors in learning language always happen. This realization is very important to understand the process of the second language acquisition, as Jain says that “The realization that the second language learners’ errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of the second language acquisition” (1989 : 189).

Relating to the errors in learning language, the theory of error analysis appears. Error analysis is used to know the process of language acquisition and also used to know the process of language mastery. Error analysis can be applied in any skills of learning language.

This paper deals with the use of error analysis in teaching English skills, especially writing. It is teaching activity which the writer has done in Teaching Writing Class in English Department, WidyaDarma Surabaya. In this paper, the discussion is divided into two parts, the discussion of error analysis in general, and the discussion of error analysis in teaching Writing Class.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Error analysis***

Error analysis is used to analyze errors in using language made by the second language learners. The aim of this error analysis is to describe language items which are difficult to master and the causes of the errors.

Brown divides errors into two kinds, that is, error and mistake. An error is “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner”, while “a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly” (1980 : 165).

Corder in Bell (1987 : 172) divides error or ‘fault’ into three kinds “ error (the grammatically incorrect form), mistake (the socially inappropriate form), and lapse (the slip of the tongue/pen), each of which is explained below.

### **a. Errors**

An error is “a sure sign that the learner has not mastered the code of the target language” (Bell, 1987 : 172). Relating to the source of the error, Bell (1987 : 172) says that if an error concerns with faulty knowledge of the grammar of the second language, the error is defined and if it does not, the error must be found in the first language user of the language.

### **b. Mistake**

Different from the first kind, mistakes can be made by both the first and the second language users of a language. Mistakes appear because of social gaffs of varying degrees of seriousness (Bell, 1987 : 172).

### **c. Lapses**

This third kind is the lightest fault. Bell says that “since face-to-face communication is a real time activity, all speakers whether native or not make slips or lapses”, and that is why this fault can be ignored for practical purposes, unless they appear frequently, which makes the hearer disturbed by them. (1987 : 172).

According to Klassen, “an error is considered to be more serious” and she defines an error as “a form or structure that a native speaker deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use” (1991 : 10).

Error analysis deals with the investigation of the language of second language learners (Corder, 1971 : 158). About error analysis, Brown states :

The fact that learners do make errors and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learners’ errors, called error analysis” 1980 : 166).

## **The Use of Error Analysis in Teaching Writing Class**

Writing is one of the subjects taught in English Department, Faculty, WidyaDarmaSurabaya. This subject is given to the first-semester until the seventh semester students, each of which is called Writing I until VII.

This paper is focused on dealing with Writing II Concerning with making paragraph. To teach this subject, the teacher gives material relating to the theory of making good paragraphs, such as topic, topic sentence, supporting sentences, title, coherence, unity, etc. After discussing a certain material or topic and giving the examples, the students are asked

to do exercises relating to the topic discussed. Most of the exercises are making paragraphs. They are done in the class and also at home. When the students do it in the class, they give their works directly to the teacher after finishing making them. Their works are analyzed directly by giving signs on them are asked to rewrite their wrong sentences and sometimes their paragraph on the board. The other students are asked to corrected by the students, the teacher and students discuss them together. From this activity, the students will get much about writing good sentences and paragraphs and they learn more from the error they made.

Relating to the kinds of error discussed before, that is, mistake, lapses, and errors; in this paper, the terms used are error of competence (error) and error of performance (mistake). Lapses are not discussed here because they deal with speaking and this paper concerns with writing. However, to differentiate between error of competence and error of performance is not easy for one error can be caused by both of them. Accordingly, to analyze the errors of the students' grammatical points, the words 'mostly' and 'mainly' are often used. Error analysis that is done for this subject deals with grammar and composition.

Grammar has an important role in writing. Without knowing grammar, learners cannot express their ideas well. Therefore, in teaching this subject, the teacher cannot avoid talking about grammar. The discussion of grammar in writing is very useful to know the process of language acquisition and also to know the their ability to express their ide through their sentences. Azan classifies grammatical errors into 12 kinds which are respectively discussed below.

#### **a. *Singular and Plural Forms***

English students often make errors relating to singular and plural forms. This error can be error of performance and error of competence. However, the firs kinds happen more frequently because the grammatical points are usually introduced at firs stages of learning English. Therefore, most of learners have usually known this form. If they still have mistakes in using this, it is caused by their carelessness, or they forget it.

The error of competence may be also made by the learners especially the beginners. They have not mastered this grammatical point well. They do not realy know that the plural form of English countable and regular nouns are added s or es if they are pluralized. While the uncountable nouns cannot be pluralized and irregular nouns change if they are in

the plural form, like child-children, mouse-mice, tooth-teeth, etc. Both of the errors may be caused by the influence of the first language since in Indonesia there is no such kind of rule. If a noun is pluralized, it is written or spoken twice, like: anak-anak, meja – meja, etc.

The errors found in the students' writing are listed below.

- Many *student* have been prepared to have a test. (Many students have been prepared to have a test).
- The *phenomena* is easily seen. (The phenomenon is easily seen / The phenomena are easily seen).
- I Have some *watchs*. (I have some watches).

### b. *Word Form*

Word form in this case related to inflectional derivation. The students tend to make errors of competence because the change of word. In Indonesia, however, most of the words can be changed in the same way. For example:

Indonesia : Cantik (adjective) ----- Kecantikan (noun)

Bijaksana (adj.)----kebijaksanaan (noun)

English : Beautiful (adj.) ---- beauty / beautician (noun)

Wise (adj.) ----- wisdom (noun)

The examples of the students' errors can be seen below.

- Mita is a very *arrogance* girl. (Mita is a very arrogant (girl)).
- Every person wants to *success*. (Every person wants to succeed/be successful)
- *Alive* in cities is sometimes harder than in villages. (Life in cities is sometimes harder than in villages.)

### c. *Verb Tense*

Tense is a grammatical point which causes many errors in learning English. This is due to the fact that Indonesia has no complicated tenses like in English. In English, there are 16 kinds of tense, each of which has different form and function. Because of the outstanding differences, the English learners often make errors in using tenses mainly because the influence of the first language. Accordingly, the students perform more error of competence than of performance. The examples:

- The dean has given his speech an hour ago before the seminar has been began. (The dean gave his speech an hour ago before the seminar began. / The dean has given his speech before the seminar began.)
- While we are talking about the program, Amir's father listens to us. (While we are talking about the program, Amir's father is listening to us.)

#### **d. Word Choice**

Error concerning with word choice is caused mostly by error of competence because the ability to choose the words appropriately to express an idea is related to the number of vocabulary the students master.

For examples :

- Mr. Hendra *accepted* a letter from Jakarta yesterday. (Mr. Hendra received a letter from Jakarta yesterday.)
- Senior students must *comethe* the proposal seminar. (Senior students must attend the proposal seminar.)
- Don't *speak* to other people about my secret. (Don't tell other people about my secret.)

#### **e. Adding a word/words**

To correct error by adding a word/words means that the students miss a word/words. This error is mainly caused by error of competence.

This deals with pattern and the usage of words in sentences. To avoid this error, students should master English sentence patterns. For Examples:

- We need invite some lecturers to be the speakers in the seminar. (We need to invite some lecturer in the seminar.)
- The woman did not show me the way to the nearest bank, so I could not reach. (The woman did not show me the way to the nearest bank, so I could not reach it.)
- Why she leaves him alone while he is in trouble? (Why does she leave him alone while he is in trouble?)

#### **f. Omitting a word**

This is the opposite of the kinds of error above. This error happens because the students use a word which is not necessary. This error can be error of performance and error of competence. The examples :

- No one is allowed to enter into his private room. (Non one is allowed to enter into his private room.)
- That beautiful girl does not love *with* Agung even though he loves her badly. (That beautiful girl does not love Agung even though he loves her badly.)
- That skinny old man *is works* hard every day. (that skinny old man works hard every day.)

#### **g. Word Order**

The errors relating to word order are mostly caused by interference of Indonesia, then most of them are errors of competence. There are some differences between Indonesia and English word order or sentence patterns. For examples:

- I yesterday saw my old friend in the campus new. (I saw my old friend in the new campus. / Yesterday, I saw my old friend in the new campus.)
- His wife once a week sends him a letter. (His wife sends him a letter once a week.)
- Last night, Dina and her friends went to a cake shop and ice cream on JalanKertajaya. (Last night, Dina and her friends went to a cake and ice cream shop on JalanKertajaya).

#### **h. Incomplete Sentence**

This error which is caused by incompetence is not only made by students in English, but also in Indonesia. The wrong sentences made usually lack of predicates. The examples :

- The man wearing a blue shirt who becomes the moderator. (The man wearing a blue shirt becomes the moderator. / The man wearing a blue shirt and who becomes the moderator is going to study abroad.)
- I have difficulties finishing my paper because I only have few references. (I have difficulties finishing my paper because I only have few reference.)
- Even though she has many activities in her faculty. She is able to manage his time to study hard. (Even though she has many activities in her faculty, she is able to manage his time to study hard)

#### **i. Spelling**

Wrong spelling made by the students is mainly included in error of performance. This may be caused by carelessness, being in hurry, and so on, For examples:

- Have you *written* a letter for your father in Lamongan? (Have you written a letter for your father in Lamongan?)
- This chapter is *devided* into three sub-chapters. (This chapter is divided into three sub-chapters.)
- His opinion is not *appropriate* for the solution of the problem. (His opinion is not appropriate for the solution of the problem.)

#### **j. Punctuation**

Most of the usage of punctuation in Indonesia and in English is the same. Therefore, the error in using punctuation is mostly error of performance. The errors are usually in the form of missing full stop at the end of a sentence, lack of a comma, not using a capital letter for the first letter or for proper nouns, etc. Though it seems little error, it frequently happens in students' writing. For examples:

- When the competition began the stadium had been full of people. (When the competition began, the stadium had been full of people.)
- All the students in my class went to borobudur last week. (All the students in my class went to Borobudur last Week.)
- My mother will buy some vegetables, that is, eggplants, beans, cabbage, and carrots.)

#### **k. Article**

Errors of performance or mistakes have an important role in making this wrong usage of article appear. It is, however, also possible that this error is error of competence. In English, there are only three articles which are sometimes neglected by the students. For examples:

- Rudy wants to become presenter. (Rudy wants to become a presenter.)
- Most of people in villages work as farmers. (Most of the people in villages work as farmers.)
- There is a authentic material which can be used as a data. \*There is an authentic material which can be used as data/the data.)

#### **l. Run – On – Sentence**

When the students make complex sentences, they often make errors. They combine the sentences by using a comma only, so the relation between the two sentences is not so



clear. This kind of error also often happens in Indonesian. That is why, when the students often make this kind of error in his first language / Indonesian, they tend to repeat the same thing I learning English. For examples :

- Miss Indah was writing in her room, her young brother was reading a novel. (Miss Indah was writing in her room and / while her young brother was reading a novel.)
- Monetary crisis still happens in our country, our government has tried to overcome it. (Mono tary crisis still happens in our contry although our government has tried to overcome it.)
- Mr. Ahmad's son is often absent, he likes playing games. Mr. Ahmad's son is often absent. He Likes Playing Games.)

In teaching Writing, the error analysis is not only focused on grammatical error, but also the composition as well. The way to correct the students' composition is by asking the students one by one to write down his or her paragraph on the board. The teacher rewrites some of the students' paragraphs as examples and copy them to be given back to all students. Then the students are asked to analyze and correct. Them. After that, together with the students, the teacher discusses the wrong parts and reconstruct them.

The errors relating to composition include topic, title, main ideas, supporting sentences, unity, coherence, etc. in detail, the paragraphs are analyzed based on the relation among sentences : whether one sentence and the next one has a connection, whether the idea in one sentence supports the previous one, whether the main idea in the paragraph has already been focused, etc. After being analyzed based on the grammatical point and the theory or paragraphs, the students are asked to rewrite the paragraphs in order that they know the good ones.

The use of error analysis in teaching Writing Class is very useful for The Teacher, The Students, and Also the researcher. Those advantages are listed below.

#### **a. For Teachers**

- Teachers will know how far the students' ability in writing is, so teachers can reconstruct or replan the teaching material.
- Teachers can remedy the teaching methods.
- By knowing errors made by students, teachers also get input relating to knowledge of language.

### **b. For students**

- By Knowing the error of performance, students can avoid or decrease their carelessness.
- Relating to error of competence, students can improve their grammatical points which can support their English Mastery.
- Students become skilled in Using their power of reasoning.
- Students are helped to understand and to predict errors they make and try to analyze how the errors appear.

### **c. For Researchers**

- Language researchers get new data about how English acquired and learned, as cited by Brown (1980 : 164) below.

Researchers and teachers of second languages soon came to realize that the mistake a person made in this process of constructing a new system of language needed to be analyzed carefully, for they possibly held in them some of the keys to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition.

Besides the advantages, there are some difficulties in using error Analysis in teaching Writing Subject. The Difficulty is that this activity needs a lot time and the teacher's energy. Therefore, the teacher should be able to manage the activity and the time, so the teaching, material in one semester can be taught well. Working outside of the class must also be done by the teacher to correct, rewrite, and copy the students' writing to be discussed the following meeting.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that using error analysis in teaching Writing Class is Very advantageous. Based on the writer's experience in applying this activity, teaching Writing Class by using error analysis can reduce boredom, Moreover, there are many inputs relating to English grammatical points, expressing ideas in sentences and paragraphs, and learning English in General both for the teacher and the students. Even though this activity consumes a lot of time, this problem is not so significant that it can be handled so far. At the end, this paper is far from perfect; therefore, comments, suggestions, criticisms, objections will be well appreciated to make this paper better.

## REFERENCES

- Bell, Roger T. 1981. *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London : B.T. Ltd. Batsford Ltd.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 1980. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice – Hall Inc.
- Corder, S P. *Idiosyncratic Dialects and Error Analysis*. In Richard, Jack C. Editor. *Error Analysis, Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London : Longman.
- Jain, M P. *Error Analysis: Source, Cause, and Significance*. in Richards, Jack C. Editor. *Error Analysis, Perspective on Second Language Acquisition*. London : Longman.
- Klassen, Johanna. *Using Student Errors for Teaching*. in English Teaching Forum. January 1991.