



MORPHOLOGICAL ERRORS IN NARRATIVE WRITING OF ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT MADRASAH ALIYAHNEGERI 2 PALEMBANG

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Abstract

The objectives of the study are 1) to find out the types of morphological errors in students of MAN 2 Palembang in writing narrative composition, 2) to find out the most frequent type of morphological errors made by eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang in their narrative compositions. Thirty nine students of the eleventh grade students at MAN 2 Palembang were assigned to write narrative text in English based on the topic provided by the researcher. They were asked to write text in 60 minutes. The frequencies of errors were calculated as percentage. In this thesis, the researcher used morphological errors taxonomy based on James to identify the English composition of eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang. This study revealed: 1) The participants contributed noun morphology errors, verb morphology errors, and adjective morphology errors. 2) The most frequent type of morphological errors contributed by participants were 'misselection'. The identified sources of errors were mainly from first language (L1) transfer rather than second language (L2) intrinsic difficulty. From this study, the writer believe that students' L1 interferes their L2 in their second language learning.

Key words: Morphological errors, narrative composition

Introduction

People use language to communicate one other. Meyer (2009, p. 1) says that language is one of many different systems of communication, a system that is unique to human beings and different from, for instance, the systems of communication that animals employ. It can also be used to express the ideas, opinions, thought and feeling either written or oral. Therefore, language is very useful for people.

In learning English, there are four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From those skills, writing is the most difficult skill among them. As stated by Choudhury(2013, p. 27), the four core language skills are listening, speaking, reading



and writing where writing is obviously the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners to master. He asserts that main reason for this difficulty is the fact that writing is a very complex process which involves both creating and organizing ideas and translating them into cohesive texts which are readable.

However, writing should be learnt by everyone. So, it is possible that everyone can master writing skill. As Hamza(2009, p. 3) states writing is a trade in which every educated man, woman, and child should be skillful and any one can master it if he goes about it in the right way. Therefore, writing is important skill that needs to be mastered.

There are many types of text writing. They are descriptive, narrative, expository, and so on. From those texts, narrative is easier to be analyzed. According to Norrish in Hendriwanto and Sugeng (2013, p.61), narrative text is easy to investigate grammatical errors. Therefore, narrative is chosen as the instrument to investigate the errors, especially for EFL students.

In Indonesia, which English is considered as a foreign language, it is not easy to master writing skill because the students sometimes make errors because of their weaknesses in writing. According to Sarfaz (2011, p.30), the students being weak in English, especially in their writing skills, commit multiple errors as they have been inadequately exposed to learning of L2. She also asserts that committing errors is a reflection of a cognitive activity of a learner and tells us a great deal about the internalize process of language production.

Errors in writing come from misunderstanding in constructing the component of language. James (1998, p. 142) asserts, text errors arise from ignorance and misapplication of the 'lexico-grammatical' rules of the language. He also says that it would be appropriately to be content to account for lexical and grammatical (sub) system separately.

Grammar exists in every language including English. According to Subasini and Kokilavani, (2013, p.56), all languages have grammar, and each language has its



own grammar but grammar of English is more complex and difficult to be taught. According to Shiu (2011, p.2), English grammar is complex, regardless of how “complexity” is defined, it stands to reason that the more complex a grammar structure is, the more difficult it would be for L2 learners to learn. Therefore, learning English grammar is commonly not easy and need long process.

Most research analysis in writing revealed that most students contribute errors in grammatical aspects in writing than other aspect, such as lexical or discourse. According to Ning, (2012, p.7), in making text errors, there are more grammatical error that is found in students’ composition than other errors, such as lexical error. Therefore, grammar error in writing process needs more attention and awareness.

Grammar is divided in two aspects called morphology and syntax. As stated by James (1998, p. 154), grammar has traditionally been discussed in terms of morphology and syntax, the former handling word structure, the latter handling structures ‘larger’ than the word. So, these two aspects have different function and need different comprehension.

From those aspects of grammatical errors (morphology and syntax), morphological errors are the most frequent category that occur in students’ writing. Kovac in his journal reports (2011, p. 25), from the total number of 3518 errors recorded, morphological errors were the most frequent ones, followed by syntactic and lexical errors which occurred in approximately equal proportion and phonological errors constituted in the error corpus.

Based on researcher’s preliminary visit, when he did an informal interview to the teacher of English and the students of MAN 2 Palembang, the teacher said that the students had some difficulties to write paragraphs, especially the paragraphs that describe past event, because of the alteration of verb/auxiliary verb from present to past tense. Furthermore, the students said it was hard to choose the types of verb when making paragraphs in past event, such as narrative text. Therefore, it can be

concluded that morphological errors become a serious problem in learning writing especially for the foreign language learners such as MAN 2 Palembang students.

Concept of Morphological Errors

Morphological error is a part of grammatical errors. It is a failure to follow the norm or rules of word classes. According to James (1998, p.154), Morphology error is one which involves a failure to comply with the norm in supplying any part of any instance of these word classes; *six book**, *aboli*shment* ($\sqrt{-tion}$) are noun morphology errors; **bringed*, *was drink*en* ($\sqrt{-ing}$) are verb morphology errors; *visit me soon*ly* is an adverb morphology error; and *a colourfull*er scene*, an adjective morphology error. Prepositions happen to have no morphology.”

This research framework for morphological error classification is mainly drawn from James’s (1998) morphological error taxonomy. The classifications are drawn as bellow:

Table.1
Classification of Morphological Errors Based on James (1998) Taxonomy

Noun Morphology Errors	Verb Morphology Errors	Adverb Morphology Errors	Adjective Morphology Errors
1. Plural –s a. Omission b. Redundant (Numerals / Quantifier) c. Overinclusion (addition) 2. Misselection	1. Third Person singular –s (suffix –s) a. Omission b. Misplacement 2. Past Tense –ed a. Omission b. Overused (addition) 3. Progressive –ing c. Omission d. Overused (addition) 4. Misselection	1. Omission 2. Addition 3. Misselection	1. Past Tense –ed a. Omission b. Addition 2. Progressive –ing c. Omission d. Addition 3. Misselection



Noun Morphology Errors

1. Plural –s

It is one of the morphology errors. it appears (1) Redundancy when preceded by numerals and other quantifiers. e.g; **six book*, **several tree*, (2) overinclusion e.g; **every teachers*, (3) Omission, e.g; **one of my friend*∅*

2. Misselection

It is a use of the wrong form of a structure of morpheme. it could be caused by the difficulties of specific characteristic of the English words which were significantly different with the first language of the agents. E.g; *he didn't know his real *dessent* (*dessent* should be *descent*)

Verb morphology Errors

1. Third person singular –s (suffix –s)

It is a facet of concord and is suffixed to lexical verb (*drinks*) and to auxiliaries (*has, is, does*). This applies (1) Omission, e.g; *They do what √pleases them which *make life great*, and (2) Misplacement e.g; *He*s open the hot water, He*s get up and open it.*

2. Past tense –ed

Past tense –ed is both omitted and overused. It is multifunctional. E.g; *yesterday, he accept* ∅ the Nobel* (omission), *He *can walked* (false analogy/overused)

3. Progressive –ing

It contains omission (*she was *do homework*), and overused/addition (*he didn't giving the answer*), and also Misselection

Adverb Morphology Errors

1. Addition e.g; *visit me soon*ly*

2. Misselection e.g; he takes the stick **direkly*



Adjective Morphology Errors

- a. Past tense –ede.g; *a *cook dinner* (it should be *a cooked dinner*)
- b. Progressive –inge.g; *a *bored time* (it should be *a boring time*)

Definition of Writing

Writing is an activity which has close relation with spoken language. According to Brown (2001, p. 335), writing is the representation of spoken language, written language is almost same with spoken language, the difference is the performance of written language is conveyed in graphical. Besides Brown also mentioned that written products are the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures, specialized skills is required in written language, and that not every speaker develops naturally.

The conclusion based on statements above that writing is a process of expressing the idea into a written form, and it needs specialized skills that not every students can develop it naturally, it needs the teacher who is able to motivate and encourage the students to develop their writing skills, and they are expected to be able to develop their writing skills and make a good composition.

Concept of Narrative

Narrative text is texts that contains past event and it is used to entertain the reader. According to Rebecca (2003, p.5), a narrative text is a text which relates a series of logically, and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by factors. It is a kind of text to amuse, entertain, and to deal the readers with actual or vicarious experience in different ways.

The generic structure of narrative text: Anderson, M. & Anderson, K. (2003, p.6) explained 3 (three) steps in constructing a narrative text. They are orientation, complication, and resolution.



1. Orientation, the writer tells the audience who is in the story, when it is happening, where it is happening, and what is happening.
2. Complication, the writer tells about something that will begin a chain of events.
3. Resolution is the ending of the story, it shows how the characters deal with the problem.

Concept of Narrative Writing

Narrative writing is an activity of the writers to tell the story (fiction/non-fiction) or experience to express their feelings. According to Gaetz and Phadke (2011, p.1), narrative writing tells a story in which the writers talk about their feelings, thoughts, or actions. In narrative writing, the writer creates a story that will not only entertain the readers, but will have a concluding point or message. Because narrative writing are the telling of personal stories, the writer is able to be more creative with the structure and organization.

Method of the Research

This study was drawn in descriptive method. This method was used to describe the collected data. According to Knufer and McLellan (n.d. p. 1196), descriptive research refers to the types of research question, design, and data analysis that will be applied to a given topic and tells what is, while inferential statistics try to determine cause and effect.

Descriptive research method is related to qualitative research. According to Lambert (2012, p. 255), there are a number of researchers who believe and support the fact that 'qualitative descriptive' is a viable and acceptable label for a qualitative research design. While phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography also are descriptive qualitative approaches, by nature, they are not exclusively in the descriptive domain because they also tend to explain phenomena.

Whereas, in analyzing the data, this study employed inferential statistics; this is a kind of quantitative data analysis which one of the purposes was to find out the data's frequencies (Cohen et all, 2007, p. 503).

Population and Sample

According to Creswell (2012, p.142) population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic. In addition, Watt and Van den Berg (2002, p.62) define a population is the full set of all the possible units of analysis, and the population is also sometimes called the universe of observations.

The population of this study are the eleventh grade students of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Palembang, in academic year of 2015/2016. There are 7 classes of the eleventh year of the students, they are XI IPA AKS, XI MIA 1, XI MIA 2, XI MIA 3, XI MIA 4, XI IIS 1, and XI IIS 2.

According to Creswell (2012, p.142), sample is a subgroup of a target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. In this study, convenience sampling is used. This sampling is appropriate for this research since the population is large but only one class is available by the teacher. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 98), A convenience sample is a group of individuals who (conveniently) are available for study. Thus, a researcher might decide to study classes at a nearby school because the principal or the teacher asks for help in evaluating students' ability.

The sample of this study is class XI. MIA 1 in academic year of 2015/2016 of MAN 2 Palembang. The total numbers of the students are 44.

Findings and Discussion

In order to get the data, the test was used as a technique to collect the data in this research. Corder (1981, p.209) states a test is a method of measuring a person ability or knowledge in a given area. In addition, Riduan (2009, p.30) states the test is



a series of questions or exercises that are used to measure the skills of knowledge, intelligence, ability or aptitude of the individual or group.

In this research, before doing the test, the researcher gave a short explanation just to remain the students about narrative text that they had studied and to make sure that if the students contributed errors not mistakes. Then, the students were asked to write a narrative composition about 120 - 150 words within sixty minutes. four topics are provided; 1). Roro Jonggrang 2). The Legend of Malin Kundang 3). The legend of Toba Lake 4).Sangkuriang. The participants are suggested to choose one of the provided. In addition, the researcher allowed students to open their dictionary to make sure that they wrote each word correctly. But, the researcher did not allow students to open google translate.

In doing this assignment, the students did not need specific preparation. The students completed the writing work under their present condition at the time when the researcher came to the class to give the assignment. This spontaneous production was expected to produce authentic data.

After collecting the data from the students, writer analyzed, underlined, and identified student's sentences that contained morphological errors. The classification and identified sentences of morphological errors were figured out in the table below:

Table 2

Identifications and Classifications of Morphological Errors

Type of Errors	Identified Sentences
A. Noun Morphology Errors	
1. Plural –s	1. After some <i>*year</i> , Malin <i>*sucses</i>
a. Omission	
b. Redundancy	1. They had two <i>*daughter</i>
c. Overinclusion (addition)	1. They asked <i>*peoples</i> to join
2. Misselection	1. The fish begged <i>*his</i> to set it free 2. <i>*his</i> <i>*wont</i> to go to ocean 3. He <i>*live</i> with <i>*she</i>



	<p>4. *Their Malin kundang and his mother 5. Malin kundang agree with it and left *he mother 6. With *angry, her mother Sangkuriang head hit hard 7. His *named is Toba</p>
<p>B. Verb Morphology Errors 1. Third person singular –s (suffix –s) a. Omission</p>	
<p>b. Misplacement</p>	
<p>2. Past Tense –ed a. Omission</p>	<p>1. Then, he *receive fish at lake 2. His father *promis not to say 3. This daughter *help to bring 4. They found their mother and *talk about it 5. The fish *change to girl 6. He *was *wait a few time 7. They *live in old house 8. His mother *feel not *admitted and *curse Malin Kundang 9. He *like to help his mother 10. She *agree about anything 11. Malin finally *travel to country side 12. Malin also *mary the beautiful girl 13. Malin and his wife *travel to his village 14. His mother also *hear about the happy news 15. His mother *recognize him and then hugged and *kiss him 16. God *answer her prayer 17. The Malin’s body *turn into big stone 18. The process *continue to the upper of his body 19. He *live with *she 20. His mother *follow Malin 21. Main kundang *pity his mother 22. His mother *curse Malin 23. Malin kundang *agree with it</p>



	<p>24. Dayang sumbi *regret after hitting Sangkuriang</p> <p>25. Sangkuriang *want to hunt and *ask Dayang Sumbi</p> <p>26. Many ladies *are mandate</p> <p>27. Sangkuriang *answer</p>
b. Overused (addition)	<p>1. He *was cut the fish</p> <p>2. He *was lifed alone</p> <p>3. He was *was feeled hungry</p> <p>4. He *was thinked to catch fish</p> <p>5. He *was *wait a few time</p> <p>6. Please don't *killed me</p> <p>7. The beautiful girl *was prepared a dinner</p> <p>8. A farmer *was feeled happy</p> <p>9. They *were *fallin love</p> <p>10. His mother *is cried</p> <p>11. His mother *cryed to *listened it</p> <p>12. He *was went for *nomade</p> <p>13. Where do you *lived Malin?</p>
3. Progressive -ing a. Omission b. Overused (addition)	
4. Misselection	<p>1. The fish *say</p> <p>2. They *have a children</p> <p>3. Bataraguru *feel in love</p> <p>4. He *can't control his mad</p> <p>5. He *go to *searced a fish</p> <p>6. Her husband had *broke his promise</p> <p>7. Bang toba *direkly *take the stick</p> <p>8. You Ø not *said to the child</p> <p>9. They *were *fall in love</p> <p>10. His son found his mother and *tell about it</p> <p>11. His mother *go to beach</p> <p>12. Malin Kundang *speak to his mother</p> <p>13. *his *wont to go to ocean</p> <p>14. Malin and his mother *meet old grand mother</p> <p>15. Malin *speak, "No, this grandmother *don't my mother"</p>



	<p>16. Malin *leaved his mother 17. She *life with a son 18. He *to help his mother 19. Malin kundang *go to make a way 20. He *leaved his mother alone 21. He *to become a wealthy very rich 22. He there *find women 23. They *become happy family 24. Malin kundang and wife *go to market 25. They *meet old women and *sayed 26. His mother *cryed to *listened it 27. His mother Ø angry and *feel sad 28. His mother *feel not *admitted and *curse Malin Kundang 29. There *lives the mother and her son 30. So, he *lives only with his mother 31. When he *turning home 32. He *success in the country side 33. She really *missing her son 34. The mother *praying to God 35. His mother *have news 36. They *meet up 37. Malin kundang *get permission to his mother 38. His mother *leaved Malin kundang 39. His mother *to think about Malin kundang 40. His mother *seeked Malin kundang 41. His mother *meet with Malin kundang 42. His mother *feeling not admitted 43. His mother *cryed to *listened it 44. His life *to be happy 45. He *get a beautiful wife 46. Malin *did not go home 47. He *was not know about her 48. Sangkuriang also *feel frustrated and *go hiking 49. He *meet a beautiful women 50. Sangkuriang also *feel *frustaited</p>
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	51. Sangkuriang *go away
C. Adverb Morphology Errors	
1. Omission	
2. Addition	
3. Misselection	
D. Adjective Morphology Errors	1. Suddenly, there Ø *biger wave
1. Omission	
2. Addition	
3. Misselection	1. There was a little *pour boy

Based on the findings above, this study revealed that the most frequent category of morphological errors contributed by participants were misselection of verb. Misselection indicated that participants faced difficulties of specific characteristic of the English words which were significantly different from the first language of the agents. It was followed by omission –ed of verb, misselection of noun, overuse of verb, misselection of adjective, and the fewest category of errors were found only one sentence for each of omission of noun, overinclusion of noun, redundancy, misselection of adverb, and omission of adjective.

This finding was generally similar with Al-Badawi (2012) in his research in Saudi Arabian students which also found the most frequent errors of Arabian students were the failure to use or a tendency to misuse certain morphemes arises from lack of knowledge of English morphemes. It indicated that there were the same contribution between Arabian and Indonesian learners in terms of morphological errors.

There were some characteristics of the occurrences of errors in misselection type (vowel based type errors, consonant based type errors, suffix errors) made by the participants in their narrative compositions. The occurrences of formal misselection errors (consonant based type errors, vowel based type errors, suffix errors) were also the influence of L1, this is in line with Ellis (1985, p. 19) who said that it is a popular



belief that second language acquisition (SLA) is strongly influenced by the learner's first language, the clearest support for this belief comes from "foreign accents" in the second language (L2) speech of learner.

Firstly, the causes of occurrences of vowel based type and consonants based types were mainly caused by interferences of the first language sound, the agents contributed this type of errors mainly because of the sound of the English word that were written in Indonesian way of writing, for example in writing verb "succeed", the sound of this word could be listened as "sukses" in Indonesian, then the agent wrote it "suces", as in the sentence "*After some year*, Malinsuces<succeed>*". It seemed right for the agent because of the sound.

Secondly, the cause of suffix type errors was misselection of a particular word classes, where the students found confusion in selecting the part of speech of the words in the sentences, for example: *She *life <lived> with a son*. This finding was consistent with Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) as their findings suggested that the similarity of form and parts of speech (for example, verb, noun, adjective and so on) remained a serious problem in the Thai students' writing. On the other hand, the cause of suffix type errors was the confusion of similar forms. For example: *His wife didn't know Malin's real *doesent<descent>*. Therefore, the possible reasons for the formal misselection errors were lack of knowledge of words.

Next, possible cause why the participants contributed morphological errors were the learners wrongly assume that the new item B behaves like A: they know that *daughter* (A) has its plural *daughters* and assume that *child* (B) behaves likewise, so pluralize to **childs* and also *people* (plural) was thought as singular, so pluralize to **peoples*. This phenomena is called false analogy (James, 1998, p.185). the morphological errors that caused by this source is called overinclusion.

Morphological errors that occurred because of difficulties of the target language were depended on students' knowledge and understanding toward target language itself, for example the occurrence of verb morphology errors (omission errors,



misselection and overused) it could be caused by some characteristics of the words from target language which could not be remembered easily by the learners because of strong differences of accent between first language and target language, for example: a participant wrote “even throught” instead of “even though. In understanding this word, the students were expected to use this word frequently and tried to write it without any aids (dictionary or goggle translate) in order she/he knew how to write this word correctly.

Conclusion

The study has collected some important information from the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang narrative compositions in term of morphological errors using James classifications lexical errors. Based on the findings and interpretations, researcher concluded that:

Firstly, from the four types of morphology errors, the participants (eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Palembang) contributed three types, they are noun morphology errors, verb morphology errors, and adjective morphology errors. The noun morphology errors that occurred in participants' composition were: 1) plural –s, including: omission, redundancy, and overinclusion 2) misselection. The verb morphology errors that occurred in participants' composition were: 1) third person singular –s, including: omission and misplacement where both were not found in this study. 2) past tense –ed, including: omission and overused. 3) progressive –ing, including omission and overused, were not found in this study. 4) misselection. Adjective morphology errors that occurred in this study were: 1) suffix –ed, including: omission and addition, where addition was not found in this study. 2) suffix –ing, including: omission and addition, where both were not found in this study. 3) misselection.

Secondly, this study revealed that the most frequent category of morphological errors contributed by participants were verb misselection. Misselection



indicated that that participants faced difficulties of specific characteristic of the English words which significantly different from the first language of the agents. The frequency of misselection was (45.80%) of all types of morphology errors, and followed by omission (25.96%), and overused (9.93%).

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