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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSITION SIGNAL, MORPHOLOGICAL, AND SYNTACTICAL ERRORS IN VOCATIONAL STUDENT'S RECOUNT TEXT

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Abstract: This study analyzes transition signal, morphological, and syntactical errors in recount texts written by tenth grade vocational school students in Bogor. Using a qualitative descriptive method with purposive sampling, data from 120 students were examined. The results indicate 153 transition signal errors, mostly omission (34%); 556 morphological errors, dominated by misformation (66%); and 656 syntactical errors, also mainly misformation (59%). These findings demonstrate that students encounter significant challenges in maintaining coherence, grammatical accuracy, and sentence organization, which affect the clarity and flow of their writing. The study suggests the importance of strengthening teaching strategies through explicit grammar instruction, practice in using transition signals, and exercises in sentence construction. Such improvements are expected to enhance students' ability to produce coherent and accurate recount texts. Ultimately, this research provides valuable insights for teachers to refine instructional approaches and support students' writing development.

Keywords: error analysis; transition signal; morphological; syntax; recount text.

ANALISIS KESALAHAN SINYAL TRANSISI, MORFOLOGIS, DAN SINTAKSIS PADA TEKS RECOUNT SISWA SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEJURUAN

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis kesalahan sinyal transisi, morfologis, dan sintaksis dalam teks recount yang ditulis oleh siswa kelas sepuluh sekolah menengah kejuruan di Bogor. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan teknik purposive sampling, data dari 120 siswa diperiksa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 153 kesalahan sinyal transisi, sebagian besar berupa penghilangan (34%); 556 kesalahan morfologis, didominasi oleh salah bentuk (66%); dan 656 kesalahan sintaksis, juga sebagian besar berupa salah bentuk (59%). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa menghadapi tantangan signifikan dalam menjaga koherensi, ketepatan tata bahasa, dan organisasi kalimat, yang memengaruhi kejelasan dan

alur tulisan mereka. Penelitian ini menyarankan pentingnya penguatan strategi pengajaran melalui instruksi tata bahasa yang eksplisit, latihan penggunaan sinyal transisi, dan latihan konstruksi kalimat. Peningkatan tersebut diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam menghasilkan teks recount yang koheren dan akurat. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi guru untuk menyempurnakan pendekatan pembelajaran dan mendukung perkembangan kemampuan menulis siswa.

Kata kunci: analisis kesalahan; sinyal transisi; morfologis; sintaksis; teks recount.

INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role in global communication, education, and career opportunities. Among the four language skills, writing is considered the most difficult for students to master because it requires proper grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and coherence. At the vocational school level, students are expected to be able to write recount texts accurately. However, many still struggle with errors in transition signals, morphology, and syntax, which makes their writing unclear and less coherent. Analyzing students' errors is essential because it helps teachers understand where students face difficulties and design effective teaching strategies. By identifying common mistakes in transition signals, morphology, and syntax, teachers can focus on improving students' ability to produce clear and structured recount texts.

English plays a vital role in global communication, education, and career opportunities, particularly in an era marked by globalization and international mobility. Proficiency in English enables individuals to access academic resources, participate in cross-cultural communication, and compete in the global job market (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). In educational contexts, English is often positioned as a key subject that supports students' academic literacy and future employability. Consequently, English language teaching at the secondary and vocational school levels is expected not only to develop basic communicative competence but also to equip students with practical language skills relevant to their academic and professional needs.

Among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—writing is widely regarded as the most challenging for learners to master. Writing requires the integration of multiple linguistic components, including grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and textual coherence, as well as higher-order cognitive skills such as planning and organizing ideas (Harmer, 2004; Richards & Renandya, 2002). At the vocational school level, students are expected to produce functional texts, such as recount texts, accurately and coherently. However, many students still experience difficulties in their writing, particularly in the use of transition signals, morphological forms, and syntactic structures. These errors often result in unclear meaning and poor text organization, reducing the effectiveness of the written message (Hinkel, 2004).

Analyzing students' errors in writing is therefore essential in the teaching and learning process. Error analysis provides valuable insights into learners' interlanguage and helps teachers identify specific areas where students encounter persistent difficulties (Corder, 1981; Ellis, 2008). By systematically examining errors in transition signals, morphology, and syntax, teachers can better understand students' learning needs and adjust their instructional strategies accordingly. This focused approach allows teachers to design targeted exercises, provide appropriate feedback, and develop materials that support students in producing clearer and more coherent recount texts, ultimately improving their overall writing proficiency.

The issues in this research need to be formulated as follows:

1. How is the use of transition signal in students' recount text?
2. How is the use of morphological in students' recount text?
3. How is the use of syntax in students' recount text?
4. What are the implications of the identified errors for teaching practices aimed at improving students' writing accuracy and coherence in recount compositions?

This study is important because it provides practical insights for English teachers at vocational schools. The findings can help improve classroom practices and guide students to become more accurate and confident writers. Readers interested in language teaching and error analysis will benefit from the strategies suggested to address common student difficulties.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to analyze students' errors in recount texts. The research was conducted at vocational schools in Bogor Regency. The subjects were tenth-grade students in the 2024/2025 academic year. The population consisted of all tenth-grade students from both schools, and a total of 120 students were selected as the sample using purposive sampling, focusing on those who had completed recount text writing tasks. The research was carried out over a period of three months (February–April 2025), covering preparation, data collection, and analysis. Data were obtained from students' written recount texts, which served as the main research instrument. Additional instruments included error analysis tables adapted from Dulay et al. (1982) to classify errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

The supporting materials included lesson plans, writing assignments, and documentation from English teachers to ensure the authenticity of students' work. The collected texts were then analyzed to identify transition signal errors, morphological errors, and syntactical errors. To ensure validity, data triangulation was applied by consulting the findings with English teachers and cross-checking the error classifications with existing theories. This methodological approach provides clear information on the research setting, participants, instruments, and procedures, allowing other researchers to replicate or extend the study in different contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data of the research are collected from recount text made by tenth students in Bogor. As stated in the previous chapter, the writer focuses to analyse error analysis about transition signal, morphological and syntactical on student's recount composition. For the further steps, the writer analyses and find the error and classified the errors into surface structure strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al that consists of omission, addition, misformation and misordering. After analysing and classifying the data, the writer found some students made the errors in using transition signal, morphological and syntactical in writing recount's composition The result of the errors can be described as follows:

Transition Signal

There are common errors produced in using transition signal on student's recount composition. The total numbers of errors are 153, which the highest frequency of error is in omission errors which consist of 52 (34%). In omission errors, the writer mostly finds that the students missed using transition signal in their sentences. Almost of them didn't use

transition word to connect one sentence to the other sentence. This lack of transition signals caused a disruption in the flow of their narratives, making their ideas less cohesive and harder to follow. It indicates that the students struggled with linking ideas smoothly, which is crucial for maintaining a clear sequence of events in recount texts. The absence of these transitions also led to incomplete or abrupt shifts between ideas, affecting the overall readability and coherence of their compositions.

The second place and third place are in addition and misformation errors which consist of 49 errors (32%). In addition errors, the writer mostly finds that the students used double transition word in their sentences. Many students tend to repeat the same transition word unnecessarily, leading to redundancy and confusion in their writing. For example, sentences such as "First, then, we went to the park" or "After that, then, we had lunch" demonstrate this overuse of transition signals. In some cases, students also struggled with using appropriate transitions to connect one sentence to the next, causing a lack of fluidity between ideas. This redundancy and misuse of transitions not only affected the clarity of their ideas but also weakened the overall cohesion of the text, making it more difficult for readers to follow the sequence of events effectively.

In mis-formation error, the writer found that the student used incorrect transition word in their sentences. This error occurred when students selected transition words that did not fit the intended meaning or context of the sentence, leading to confusion or disruption in the flow of their writing. For example, students might have used "*therefore*" when the context called for "*for example*" or used "*but*" instead of "*however*". Such misuse of transition words resulted in sentences that sounded awkward or illogical, making it difficult for the reader to follow the sequence of ideas. These errors also hindered the overall coherence of the text, as the transitions failed to create the smooth connections needed to guide the reader through the narrative.

The lowest frequency is mis-ordering errors which consist of 3 errors (2%). In mis-ordering error, the writer found that the students used incorrect transition word in their sentences. This type of error occurred when the transition words were placed in positions that disrupted the logical sequence of ideas, making the connections between sentences unclear. For instance, students sometimes placed transitional phrases at the beginning of sentences when they should have been placed later in the sentence or vice versa. As a result, the intended flow of thought was disrupted, and the reader had difficulty following the progression of the narrative. These misordered transitions led to awkward phrasing, which affected the overall clarity and coherence of the text.

Morphological

There are common errors produced in using morphological on student's recount composition. The total numbers of errors are 556, which the highest frequency of error is in misformation errors which consist of 371 errors (66%). In misformation errors, the writer mostly finds that the students used incorrect verb in their sentences. Most of them used the base form (verb 1) in their sentences, when they should have used the past tense (verb 2), as recount texts require the use of past tenses to describe events that have already happened. For example, students wrote sentences like "We go to the park" instead of "We went to the park." In addition to verb tense errors, students also made mistakes in using articles, pronouns, and singular/plural forms. For instance, some students wrote "a peoples" instead of "people" or "the dog" instead of "dogs,"

which disrupted the grammatical correctness of their sentences. These morphological errors indicate that students struggled with applying basic grammar rules consistently, affecting the overall accuracy and clarity of their recount texts.

The second place is omission errors which consist of 144 errors (26%). The writer found that the student missed verb, possessive pronoun, article in their sentences. For instance, many students omitted auxiliary verbs in sentences like "She ___ to the market," where the correct version should have been "She went to the market." Similarly, possessive pronouns were frequently left out, as in "me family," instead of "my family." Articles were also commonly omitted, as seen in sentences like " Then event Finished direct going go home " instead of " Then, after the event finished" These omissions resulted in incomplete or unclear sentences, affecting the grammatical correctness and coherence of the students' writing. The frequent omission of these essential components indicates a lack of attention to detail in applying fundamental grammar rules, which is crucial for constructing accurate and meaningful sentences in recount texts.

The third place is addition errors which consist of 21 errors (4%). The writer almost found that the students' redundant article in their sentences. For instance, in the sentence "there we can all see a very beautiful scenery to because of very green plants," the article "a" is incorrectly repeated, leading to redundancy. The correct sentence is "There, we could all see a very beautiful scenery because of the lush green plants." Such errors may stem from a lack of understanding of when to properly use articles or confusion with sentence structure. In some cases, students may have translated from their first language, where article usage is different, or they may have overused articles due to uncertainty in applying English grammar rules. These redundant elements not only affect the fluency and clarity of the text but also make the writing sound unnatural and awkward

The lowest frequency is mis-ordering errors which consist of 20 errors (4%). The writer found that some of the students put article, pronoun, verb in incorrect order. For example, in the sentence "The second day my family and I all went to the uncle's house," the article "the" is correctly placed, but the subject and object are not in their natural order. The correct sentence is "The second day I and all my family went to the uncle's house." Such errors may arise from translating directly from their first language, where the word order might differ from English conventions. The misplacement of words not only affects sentence clarity but also disrupts the flow of ideas, making the text harder to follow and less grammatically accurate. This suggests that the students may not have fully grasped the syntactical rules governing the order of elements in an English sentence.

Syntactical

The total numbers of errors are 656, which the highest frequency of error is in misformation errors which consist of 386 errors (59%). In misformation errors, the writer mostly finds that the students used incorrect word choices in their sentences, which can lead to unclear meanings and confusion for the reader. This often occurs when students use words that do not fit the context or when they apply direct translations from their first language, which might not align with English word usage or collocations. For example, in the sentence "I went into the baking area to see how it was made from the baking," the word "baking" is incorrectly used, making the meaning unclear. The correct sentence would be "I went to a bakery to see how traditional baked goods were made." Such errors indicate that students may have difficulty selecting the appropriate vocabulary, which not only affects the clarity

of their writing but also disrupts the overall coherence of their recount text. These misformations highlight the importance of teaching students the correct word choice and context in English, especially when they describe specific processes or actions.

The second place is omission errors which consist of 136 errors (21%). The writer found that almost all of the students missed using prepositions, words, and the verb "to be" in their sentences. These omissions often led to incomplete or fragmented sentences, which made their writing less clear and harder to follow. For instance, some students failed to include prepositions, such as in the sentence "I went the park" instead of "I went to the park." In other cases, they omitted the verb "to be," as seen in "She very tired" instead of "She is very tired." The absence of these essential grammatical elements not only resulted in ungrammatical sentences but also affected the overall readability and coherence of the text. This suggests that the students had difficulty recognizing the importance of certain function words and verbs in constructing meaningful and grammatically correct sentences.

The third place is misordering errors which consist of 70 errors (10%). The writer found that most students used incorrect word order in their sentences. This error occurred when students placed words in an unnatural or incorrect sequence, disrupting the logical flow and meaning of the sentence. For example, students might say "I to the park went" instead of "I went to the park," or "In the morning, went we to school" instead of "In the morning, we went to school." Such errors can make the sentences difficult to understand and affect the overall coherence of the text. Mis-ordering is often a result of students applying their native language's sentence structure to English, which may have different rules for word order. This suggests that students need more practice in recognizing and using the correct syntactic structures in English to improve clarity and readability.

The lowest frequency is addition errors which consist of 64 errors (10%). The writer found that most students used redundant prepositions in their sentences. This type of error occurred when students mistakenly added extra prepositions that were unnecessary or redundant, which made the sentence awkward or grammatically incorrect. For example, a student might write "We went to the park to in have lunch," where the preposition "in" is redundant. The correct sentence would be "We went to the park to have lunch." These redundant prepositions often arise from direct translations of sentence structures from the students' first language, where prepositions might be used more frequently or in different contexts. Such errors disrupted the clarity and fluency of the sentences, affecting the overall coherence of the recount text.

Implications

The writer found that there are some mistakes that had been by the students, the writer suggested to improve the writing skill by: the teacher can give exercise to arrange paragraph in chronological order using appropriate transitions; the teacher can give the students list of regular and irregular verb, especially in past tense. Teacher can provide lists of irregular verbs and conduct verb transformation exercise; the teacher can give exercise to master basic sentences patterns to avoid syntactical errors and conduct sentence reordering and pattern recognition exercise; the teacher can ask the students to make project based on the picture firstly then ask them to make it based on their experiences.

Table 1.1

The Use of Transition Signal in Student’s Recount Text

No	Type	Number of students committed errors	Percentage
1	Omission	52	34%
2	Addition	49	32%
3	Misformation	49	32%
4	Misordering	3	2%
	TOTAL	153	100%

Table 1.2

The Use of Morphological in Student’s Recount Text

No	Type	Number of student committed errors	Percentage
1	Omission	144	26%
2	Addition	21	4%
3	Misformation	371	66%
4	Misordering	20	4%
	TOTAL	556	100%

Table 1.3

The Use of Syntactical in Student’s Recount Text

No	Type	Number of students committed errors	Percentage
1	Omission	136	21%
2	Addition	64	10%
3	Misformation	386	59%
4	Misordering	70	10%
	TOTAL	656	100%

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights that vocational school students in Bogor face persistent challenges in writing recount texts, particularly in the correct use of transition signals, morphology, and syntax. The dominance of misformation errors across morphological and syntactical aspects indicates that students have not yet mastered the fundamental rules of English grammar. Similarly, frequent omission errors in transition signals demonstrate their difficulty in achieving textual coherence. These findings emphasize the urgent need for targeted teaching strategies that integrate explicit instruction, guided practice, and error-based feedback.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to improving writing pedagogy at the vocational level. By understanding students’ error patterns, teachers can design more focused interventions to strengthen writing competence and foster clearer, more coherent compositions. However, this study has not fully addressed the influence of external factors such as students’ motivation, prior exposure to English, or the role of their first language in shaping error patterns. Future research should explore these aspects to provide a more holistic understanding of students’ writing difficulties and to develop comprehensive solutions for enhancing English writing proficiency.

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