

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Nowadays, English language has become one of the world's main lingua francas. Its written and spoken forms are used for communication everywhere. As a result, many people feel that they need to speak and write in the English language. In Malaysia, students especially those at the tertiary level are required to master English because most subjects they learn require them to speak, read and write in English. However, many students are not able to do so because they are not proficient in the grammar of the language.

According to Touchie (1986), students who are in the process of learning a language, unfortunately, make many grammatical errors. Ironically, instead of becoming a nuisance, these errors prove to be significant source of information for language educators. For language teachers, errors are indications of a learner's progress. For language researchers, errors are insights into how language is learnt. Finally, for learners who are learning a language, errors cause them to automatically get involved in hypothesis testing (Selinker, 1969 as cited in Touchie, 1986).

Few studies found that many students find difficulty in understanding the morphological system of a language which deals with morphemes or the minimal units of linguistic form and meaning and how they make up words. Akande (2005) in his study on the morphological errors in the English usage of some Nigerian learners claimed that his respondents' competence in English morphological system was low due to some factors such as the inconsistency in the morphological rules of English,

overgeneralization of rules, misapplication of rules as well as the interference of their mother tongue in learning English.

In addition, Ririn (2010) who examined the morphological errors in the essays of the fifth semester students of English Letters and Language Department of UIN Malang in 2008 found that his respondents made all the types of morphological errors in their writing such as omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Besides that, a study on the errors and variations of TESL students' descriptive writings involving twelve TESL undergraduate students from the Faculty of Educational Studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia carried out by Ahour and Mukundan (2012) reveals that the respondents had problems in the surface structure of the sentences like misformation and its subcategories (regularization and alternating forms) and also omission. The errors in omission were made because the respondents omitted certain grammatical morphemes particularly that of verb or noun inflections (such as *brother's book*) or that of an article (such as *she is a beautiful girl*).

Yet in another study entitled 'Indonesian EFL Advanced Learners' Grammatical Errors', Mardijono (2003) also found omission, addition and also misformation in the written work of the respondents consisting of undergraduate students from the English Department of the university involved in the research. Apart from that, Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah (2013) carried out an error analysis on the use of the Simple Tense and the Simple Past Tense in the writings of TESL College Students. He noticed that his respondents from Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin made errors in omission, addition, misformation and also misordering in their essay writing.

Thus, it can be concluded here that the issue that leads to this present study is ESL and EFL students normally have difficulties in writing because they usually make morphological errors the types of which include omission, addition, misformation and also misordering.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher of the current study likes to agree with Akande (2003) because like Akande, she also finds in the course of teaching English as a second language that many ESL students are unable to use the English morphemes correctly in their writing. For example, when students add -s for plural or uncountable nouns errors arise from determining whether a noun is an uncountable noun or countable noun like*many equipments there....* which by right should be *a lot of equipment*. The noun '*equipment*' is a mass noun and there is no need to add the plural -s to it anymore. Similarly, according to Akande (2003), some of the errors have arisen from double marking of nouns or verbs such as '*The cattles are many*' (*cattle*). '*Cattle*' is already plural and therefore, there is no need to add the plural -s to it. As in the case of '*Did you went yesterday?*' (*go*), the verb '*went*' must assume its base form '*go*' because the auxiliary '*did*' has already shown that the action has been done and completed in the past. There are also cases where ESL students were observed to omit articles from their sentences, for example, '*He is reading newspaper (...reading a/ the newspaper)* and *There is father, mother, daughter (...a father, a mother, a daughter)*' (Ahour and Mukundan, 2012).

The researcher strongly feels that there is a need to carry out this study to find out the types of morphological errors that ESL students normally make in their writing. This study differs from other previous studies as the participants are all TESL students

who will be teaching English to school students after they complete their course. Besides that, the researcher has analysed the errors found in this study using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. The data for this study has been obtained from the respondents' weekly journal writings. Apart from that, the researcher plans to determine whether interlanguage or interference of mother tongue affects the errors that occur in their journal writing.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are;

- (1) to identify the types of morphological errors such as omission, addition, misinformation and misordering used by TESL students in their journal writings.
- (2) to determine which of the errors mentioned in (1) is the most dominant type of morphological errors in journal writing, and
- (3) to ascertain how the interference of the mother tongue affects the morphological errors in students' journal writing.

1.3 Research Questions

Three research questions are;

- (1) What are the common types of morphological errors made by TESL students in journal writing?
- (2) What is the most dominant type of morphological errors found in the students' journal writing?
- (3) How the interference of the mother tongue affects the morphological errors?

1.4 Significance of Study

It is hoped that the findings of this study is able to create awareness about the morphological system of English among teachers who teach the language as well as students who learn the language. For teachers, say Corder (1981), these errors tell them how far towards the goal have their learners progressed and what remain for them to learn (Corder, 1981 as cited in Ririn, 2010). Furthermore, these findings will help teachers to devise their methods of teaching so that they can rectify these errors. As for students, the knowledge about how to form words or sentences and how their mother tongue interferes and affects their writing can help them to not only to learn the language more easily but also to speak and write better.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This present study focuses particularly on the morphological errors as proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). There are four types of errors mentioned in their Surface Strategy Taxonomy and they are a) omission, b) addition, c) misformation and d) misordering. The researcher has chosen only 15 journal writings from 15 Semester Two students who are studying for their Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at Kolej Poly-Tech Mara Kuala Lumpur (KPTMKL). Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all Diploma TESL students in KPTMKL or elsewhere.

1.6 Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 discusses briefly the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of study and last but not least, the scope and limitations of this study.

Chapter 2 discusses the meaning of the term morphology and morphemes. This is done to help readers of the current study to understand the issues in academic writing and the role of errors made in learning a language. Next, the chapter reviews previous studies on morphological errors and also errors that are related to academic writing. The theoretical framework for this study that has been adopted from the Surface Strategy Taxonomy (or otherwise known as the Theory Taxonomy of Dulay) is also explained here.

Chapter 3, on the other hand, discusses the research design, participants, data collection and data analysis while, Chapter 4 reviews and discusses the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusion, suggestions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the terms morphology and morphemes which is followed by a review of issues in academic writing and the role of errors in language learning. Next, it presents a classification of errors and ends with a discussion on previous studies related to morphological errors in academic writing.

2.1 Morphology

According to O'Grady and Archibald (2009), the term morphology refers to the study of words and their formation. Similarly, Katamba and Stonham (2006) assert that morphology is the study of word-structure. The term, in fact, literally means “the study of forms” as it was originally used in Biology but since the middle of nineteenth century, it has also been used to also describe the type of investigation that involves analysing all basic “elements” of something as used in the study of a language (Yule, 2010:67). On the other hand, Aranoffs and Fudeman (2011) utilize the term to refer to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure and how they are formed (Aranoff & Fudeman, 2011).

Students need to have the knowledge about the morphological system of the English language in order to produce a good piece of writing. Akande (2003) asserts that a very good knowledge of morphological system of a language is vital if students intend to master the grammar of that language. If they do not know how words in a

language are formed then how would they know how to combine those words to form correct phrases, clauses and sentences and later able to use these words in appropriate context? Likewise, Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2003) claimed that knowledge of morphological system is defined as “the knowledge of the internal structure of words and of the rules by which words are formed” (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2003 as cited on pg 23 of Lin and Chiang, 2010). In other words, EFL and ESL students should be encouraged to take morphology or the study of the ways that words can be broken up into their smallest units or morphemes (Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo, 2010) and how words are formed.

Many English words are morphologically complex. They can be broken down into smaller units that are meaningful. For example, the word ‘*desk-s*’ (where ‘*desk*’ refers to one piece of furniture) and the suffix-*s* at the end of the word indicates its plurality. Another example, when the suffix *-ish* is added to the noun ‘*child*’, the word changes its category and becomes the adjective ‘*child-ish*’. This complexity of the morphological system of the English language has long caught the interest of many linguists. Among them are Katamba and Stonham (2006) and Jackson (2007) who identify two main branches of morphology; inflectional morphology and derivational morphology. Inflectional morphology deals with the realization of grammatical categories such as plural (*desk-s*) or past tense (*walk-ed*), while derivational is concerned with the processes of word formation such as the addition of suffix to base form of a word such as *-ish* to form the adjective ‘*childish*’ from the noun ‘*child*’. This apparently shows that words in English can be broken up into their smaller units that can be combined to form words of different meanings and this will be discussed below.

2.2 Morphemes

O'Grady and Archibald (2009, p.110) refer to morpheme as the smallest unit of language that carries information about meaning or function. The word '*builder*', for example consists of two morphemes: '*build*' (a verb whose meaning is construct) and *-er* (which indicates a noun with the meaning of one who builds). Similarly, Yule (2010, p.75) defines morpheme as the 'minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function'. Units of grammatical function include forms used to indicate the past tense and plurality. For example, the English word forms such as *talks*, *talker*, *talked* and *talking* are actually made up of the basic element '*talk*' and a number of other elements such as *-s*, *-er*, *-ed* and *-ing* that have been added to it. This is the meaning of morpheme as expressed by Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2010) and Katamba and Stonham (2006) discussed earlier. There are many words that are made up of more than one morpheme. For example, '*eating*' consist of *eat* + *ing* and '*drinking*' consists of *drink* + *ing* where the first morphemes '*eat*' and '*drink*' mean the act of putting something in the mouth and swallowing it and the second morpheme *-ing* indicates the continuing nature of this action.

To explain further, there are two types of morphemes and they are free morphemes and bound morphemes. According to Lin and Chiang (2010), free morphemes exist as independent words (in the form of their allomorphs), while bound morphemes are those that are attached to other morphemes or words. For example, morpheme '*car*' is a free morpheme but when the plural *-s* is added to it, it becomes '*cars*' (the meaning of which is more than one car). In this case *-s* is the bound morpheme. A bound morpheme must attach itself to an affix through the process called affixation. Crystal (1991) in the Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics defines prefixes as 'a term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added initially to a root or

stem' (Crystal, 1991 as cited in Altay, 2006, p.274). An example of prefix is *-ir* in '*irresponsible*'. Again, according to Crystal (1991), a suffix is 'a term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added following a root or stem' (Crystal, 1991 as cited in Altay, 2006, p.36). An example of a suffix is *-er* in '*dancer*'.

Free morphemes can stand on their own or as single words for example '*open*', '*tour*', '*cook*' and '*table*'. The morphemes can be divided into two categories. The first category consists of lexical morphemes that exist in the form of nouns, adjectives and verbs. These words normally carry the 'content' of the messages that need to be conveyed. For example; '*boy*', '*man*', '*walk*', '*house*' and '*car*'. Hence, they are also called 'content' class words. A noun is a name given to a person, an animal, a thing, a place, an idea, an activity, a concept or a feeling (Mustapha et al., 2012). Nouns may exist with adjectives. Adjectives are words that describe and tell more about nouns (Mustapha et al., 2012). For example, *tall man*, '*tall*' describes the noun '*man*' and *beautiful girl*, '*beautiful*' describes the noun '*girl*'. Another category of words is verbs. Verbs can either be described as action and non-action. Action verbs denote actions while non-action verbs indicate state, sense, desire, possession, or opinion. '*Run*', '*walk*', '*jump*' and '*cook*' are examples of action verbs and *be* (indicating state as in *she is a girl*), *hear* (indicating sense), *love* (indicating desire), *have* (indicating possession) and *think* (indicating opinion) are examples of non-action verbs. A verb can also be described as transitive or intransitive depending how it is used in a sentence. A transitive verb normally requires an object, which comes after it. For example, '*Ramlah bought some apples*'. The word '*bought*' is a verb and it is followed by the object '*some apples*'. However, an intransitive verb does not require an object to come after it. A sentence with an intransitive verb is complete although the verb is not followed by an

object. For example, *'The baby is crying'*. The verb *'crying'* does not require an object after it to make the sentence a complete one.

The other kind of morphemes is functional morphemes. These morphemes are those that cannot stand on their own. These morphemes usually exist in the forms of conjunctions, prepositions, articles or pronouns. Functional morphemes are also known as 'function' or 'grammar' words because they cannot exist in isolation but are usually tied up with the grammatical structures. Paul-Evanson et al (2003) defined conjunctions as words that are used to join words, phrases, clauses or sentences to express a particular idea or ideas. Examples of conjunctions include *'and'*, *'but'*, *'when'*, *'because'* and so on (Yule, 2010:76). On the other hand, prepositions are words generally that are used before nouns, pronouns or noun phrase to show their relationship or connection with other words in a sentence. Examples of prepositions are *'on'*, *'in'*, *'about'*, *'at'* and so on. The next category of functional morphemes is the article. *'A'* and *'an'* are indefinite articles. Normally, *'a'* is used before a singular countable noun that begins with a consonant sound such as b, c, d, e, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, t, v, w, x, y and z. For example, *'My mother is **a** doctor'* and *'Ain has **a** gorgeous friend'*. However, the article *'an'* is placed before a singular countable noun that begins with a vowel sound. *A, e, i, o,* and *u* are English vowels. For example, *'She eats **an** egg every morning'* and *'Her father is **an** energetic actor'*. There are some words that begin with vowels but are not pronounced with the vowel sound (Mustapha et al, 2012). For example, *'a university'*. (Sounds like "yu-university"). However, the article *'an'* is also used after adjective or noun when they are pronounced with a silent *'h'* sound. For example, *'an honest girl'*. (Sounds like "on-est"). Another type of article is the definite article *'the'* which can be used before countable and uncountable nouns but of course, there other rules to abide by when using it.

Yet, there is another group of morphemes which do not only normally stand alone but exist typically attached to another morpheme. Such morphemes include; ‘-ist’, ‘-ed’, ‘-s’ and so on. They are described as bound morphemes (Ririn, 2010). Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001) claim that bound morphemes can only exist when they are attached to some other morphemes. When a bound morpheme is attached to a free morpheme, the free morpheme is called the STEM (ROOT) of the word, and the bound morpheme is termed as the AFFIX. A PREFIX occurs before the stem such as *un-* in ‘*unhappy*’ and *dis-* as in ‘*disobey*’. While a SUFFIX occurs after the stem such as *-s* for ‘*cats*’ and *-ing* as in ‘*walking*’.

Bound morphemes exist in two forms, either as derivational morphemes or inflectional morphemes. Derivational morphemes it serves two functions. Firstly, they change the word class or category of the words they are attached to; and secondly, they change the meaning of the words they are attached to. According to Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001), when a suffix is added to the stem of the word, the word will change its class or category. For example, ‘*happy*’ is in adjective but when the suffix *-ly* is added to the word ‘*happy*’ it becomes ‘*happily*’. ‘*Happy*’ is an adjective while ‘*happily*’ is an adverb. The other example is ‘*sad*’. ‘*Sad*’ is an adjective and when the suffix *-ness* is added to the word ‘*sad*’ it becomes ‘*sadness*’ which is a noun.

Similarly, when a prefix is added to the stem of a word, the meaning of the word will change. For example, when the prefix *anti-* is added to the word ‘*slavery*’, the word becomes ‘*anti-slavery*’ which means against slavery or the act of forcing people to do work without paying them (Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo, 2001). This is in line with what Katamba & Stonham (2006) say about derivational morphemes that can form new words by either; changing the meaning of the base words to which they are attached, for

example, ‘*kind*’ vs ‘*un-kind*’ (both are adjectives but with opposites meanings); ‘*obey*’ vs ‘*dis-obey*’ (both are verbs but with opposite meanings); or changing the word-class that a base belongs to, for example, the addition of *-ly* to the adjectives ‘*kind*’ and ‘*simple*’ produce the adverbs ‘*kindly*’ and ‘*simply*’.

Table 2.1 Change in the Word Form

| Effect | Suffix | Examples |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Verb to Noun | -age | coverage, breakage |
| | -al | arrival, refusal |
| | -ance/ -ence | acceptance, emergence |
| | -ion | destruction, production |
| | -ment | confinement, improvement |
| | -er | baker, manager |
| | -ant/ -ent | attendant, dependent |
| Verb to Adjective | -able | believable, readable |
| Adjective to Verb | -ize | civilize, tenderize |
| Adjective to Noun | -ness | fairness, tenderness |
| | -ity | reality, curiosity |

(Source: Aarts and McMahon, 2006)

Table 2.1 shows the examples of words that change their form or category when a suffix is added to them. For example, the word ‘*bake*’ (verb) can be changed to ‘*baker*’ (noun) when *-er* is added to the base word ‘*bake*’. The same goes with the word ‘*believe*’ (verb) which can be changed to ‘*believable*’ (*adjective*) when *-able* is added to the base word ‘*believe*’.

Table 2.2 Change in the Meaning of the Word

| Prefix | Category | Meaning | Examples |
|--------|-----------|-------------|------------------------------|
| anti- | Noun | 'against' | anti-war, anti-government |
| ante- | Noun | 'preceding' | antecedent, antedate |
| un- | Verb | 'reversal' | unpack, unzip |
| un- | Adjective | 'not' | uncertain, unkind |
| in- | Adjective | 'not' | irrelevant, incomplete |
| dis- | Adjective | 'not' | dishonest, disloyal |
| re- | Verb | 'again' | retell, reheat |
| re- | Verb | 'back' | recover, recline |

(Source: Aarts and McMahon, 2006)

Table 2.2, on the other hand, shows some of the examples of words whose meanings will change when a prefix is added to their base forms. For example '*war*' means *a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country or different people or also groups*, but when *anti-* is added to it, it becomes '*anti-war*' whose meaning is *against war*. It is important to note that the words in the table above are unlike those in Table 2.1 because the words in Table 2.2 will only change their meaning but not their form or category.

Unlike derivational morphemes, inflectional morphemes are usually not used to produce new words but rather to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of words (Yule, 2014:68). Deterding and Poedjosoedarmo (2001) point out that an inflectional morpheme normally serves to indicate the structure of a sentence but it leaves the word class of the words it is attached to unchanged because it does not carry much meaning in itself. In other words, the function of inflectional morphemes is largely to help indicate

the structure of a sentence as expressed by DeCapua (2008) who asserts that inflectional morphemes serve only grammatical functions such as marking plurality or tense.

Table 2.3 Eight English Inflectional Morphemes

| Morpheme | Grammatical Function | Attaches to | Example |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| -s | Plural | Noun | Desks, chairs, boxes |
| -‘s | Possessive | Noun | The boy’s hat, the cat’s tail |
| -s | Third person singular | Verb present tense | She drives. He talks. It walks. |
| -ed | Regular past tense | Verb | He talked |
| -ed | Regular past participle | Verb | She has walked |
| -ing | Present participle | Verb | She is driving |
| -er | Comparative | Adjective/ adverb | Taller, faster |
| -est | Superlative | Adjective/ adverb | Tallest, fastest |

(Source:DeCapua, 2008:38)

Table 2.3 shows the eight English inflectional morphemes. The first morpheme *-s* in the above table functions to show plurality when it is attached to a noun such as ‘*desk*’ which is a singular noun to change it into a plural noun ‘*desks*’. The second morpheme *-s* in the above table, however, is used to show possessive when it is attached to a noun. For example; a) ‘*The boy’s hat*’ shows that the hat belongs to one boy, while b) ‘*Boys’ hat*’ shows that the hat is a type of hat that are usually worn by many boys. The third morpheme *-s* will change the verb into its present tense form like ‘*She drives*’. The *-s* at the end of the word ‘*drive*’ shows that the subject *she* is singular. The fourth and fifth morphemes *-ed* function to change verbs into their regular past tense and also regular past participle forms respectively. Next, the morpheme *-ing* functions to indicate the present participle form of a verb. Lastly, *-er* and *-est* serve to change adjectives and adverbs into their comparative and superlative form respectively.

The purpose of presenting the discussions on morphology and morphemes above is to help readers of this present research to make sense of the following discussions.

2.3 Issues in Academic Writing

Of late, there are a few issues in academic writing that have caught the attention of many researchers. Akande (2005), for example, is of the opinion that a number of issues in academic writing have surfaced due to the errors made by students in their writing. He suspects that these students have little knowledge about the English morphological system and therefore, are easily confused by the inconsistency of its morphological rules; overgeneralization and misapplication of these rules; and the interference from students' mother tongue. This is in accordance with Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah (2013) who thinks that some factors that contribute to the errors committed by students in their academic writing are the results of the influence of students' mother tongue; lack of knowledge and competence in English grammar; the influence of 'loan words'; the inherent difficulties of learning English; overgeneralization and lack exposure to the English language. Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah also points out that many students are not able to master the grammatical aspects of the English language especially its Subject-Verb-Agreement, Tenses, Vocabularies and Parts of Speech (Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah, 2013).

According to Crompton (2011), there is no system of article in Arabic. Consequently, many Arab learners tend to make errors involving their use of articles in English writing. Studies conclude that the commonest errors made by them with regard to the article system are the misuse of the definite article for generic reference (Crompton, 2011). Surprisingly, Kwan and Yunus (2014) found that ESL pre-service teachers still make errors involving cohesion like errors in reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion in their writing. That is why Kwan and Yunus (2014) insist that teachers who teach their students language proficiency must themselves be proficient and competent in the language and beyond it (Kwan and Yunus, 2014).

From the discussion of the issues above, it can be concluded that researchers have come to a consensus that some of the issues in academic writing are related to the confusing morphological system of the English language which causes students to make errors and errors that result from the interference of their mother tongue.

2.4 The Role of Errors in Language Learning

Brown (1987) defines an error as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of native speaker, reflecting the interlingual competence of the learner (Brown, 1987 as cited in Ririn, 2010). There are a number of considerations to be made by language teachers when dealing with errors especially those that are found in their students' writing. First and foremost, teachers need to accept the fact that as second language learners, students cannot help but make learning errors. Secondly, learners making errors is closely related to teachers' teaching skills and perseverance. Last but not least, teachers and students should change their negative opinion about errors. Instead of punishing students when they make errors teachers should instil awareness that error

play an important role in learning a language in that errors are actually signs of learning is taking place.

Mhundwa (2003) suggests that the definition of error be made with reference to its effect on the clarity of the message intended by the writer. As such in linguistics discussion, errors can be differentiated from mistakes. Mourtaga (2004) claims that errors cannot be self-corrected because they are caused by a learner's inadequate knowledge of the target language whereas mistakes can be self-corrected (Mourtaga, 2004 as cited in Abushibab, 2014). Hence, it is mandatory for teachers to correct errors made by their students so that they are not fossilised. However, according to Norrish (1987), an error is a systematic deviation which occurs when a learner has not adequately learnt something (Norrish, 1987 as cited in Hasyim, 2002). In other words, it is a deviation from the norms of the language being learned (Cunningworth, 1987:87).

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), there are two benefits of studying learners' errors. The first is to provide data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made and the second is to indicate to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty in producing correctly and which error types detract a learner's ability to communicate effectively.

Touchie (1986) alleges that in the past language teachers considered errors committed by their students as something unacceptable so much so they tried their level best to find ways to prevent them from occurring. Ironically, errors in writing are evidence of a creative process in language learning is taking place. This is why

Abushibab (2014) thinks that error correction is an important part of the learning process of learning a language.

James (1998) recommends that learners be provided with information and hints by their teachers before they are instructed to revise their written works so that they can discover and rectify the errors that they have made (James, 1998 as cited in Abushibab, 2014). But before teachers provide their learners with the information and hints of the errors in writing, teachers themselves need to know the classification of errors in writing first. Hence, the researcher feels that the topic about the classification of errors below needs to be enclosed herewith because it is useful for them.

2.5 Classification of Errors

Thornbury (1999) identified three categories of errors. They are lexical, grammar and discourse errors.

Lexical errors occur when words are wrongly combined as in this example, '*The Sunday night past*' which should be written instead as '*Last Sunday night*'. Lexical errors also occur when students choose the wrong form of a word like '*lower*' instead of '*lawyer*' and '*thinks*' instead of '*things*'. According to Barkman and Winer (1983), lexical error is an incorrect word choice taken from an open or a closed word class. For example, '*I lost the bus (missed)*'. A study undertaken by Yang and Xu (2001) entitled 'Errors of Creativity: An Analysis of Lexical Errors Committed by Chinese ESL Students' reveals that most lexical errors are caused by L1 interference and incorrect application of semantic rules in English. Some examples of such errors are '*I know that my vocabulary is very little*' and '*They'll stop us to adopt to new circumstances*'. Both these errors were caused by direct transfer from students' native language. There is

confusion between '*little*' and '*small*' in the first sentence and between '*adopt*' and '*adapt*' in the second sentence.

Grammar errors, on the other hand, occur in verb form and tense as in these examples, '*The doorbell rangs*' (wrong verb form for (ring) the past tense), '*We speaked*' (wrong form for irregular verb (speak) in past tense) and '*Was the four o'clock*' (the subject of the clause (it) has been left out). According to Barkman and Winer (1983), grammar errors can also occur as a result of changes in word order like '*She has a dress blue*' (*She has a blue dress*) and '*I think we are late a little bit*' (*I think we are a little bit late*). When learners wrongly add on or delete an inflectional morpheme, grammatical errors will take place. Murrow (2005) in the study entitled '*Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students' Writing*' found that a preponderance of errors was related to verb usage. In fact, the most common form of error is the use of incorrect negative verb forms. Many of the respondents were unable to write freely about the given topic because they had insufficient useable grammatical knowledge to do so.

The last type of errors to be discussed here is the discourse errors. This kind of errors occurs due to the way sentences are organised and linked in order to make whole text. For example; a) '*At last when I went to bed*' (it is not suitable to use *at last* because normally *at last* is used to refer to something that happens after a long period of waiting or trying, as such the word *eventually* is more suitable for use in this context). According to James (2013), discourse errors in students' writing are related to coherence and cohesion. Thus, discourse errors happen when there is no coherence and cohesion in writing. This is in line with Nystrom Johnson (1983) who gives a definition

of *discourse errors* as incomplete sentences or overly complex sentences (Nystrom Johnson, 1983 as cited in Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p. 174).

Unlike Thornbury (1999), Abushibab (2014) thinks that there are only two types of errors. They are performance errors and competence errors. He states that performance errors are not very serious and they are made by learners when they are in a hurry and tired. Therefore, these errors can be overcome with little effort by the learners. On the other hand, competence errors are more serious than performance errors because competence errors reflect lack of language learning.

In addition, there are four most common errors as classified by the Surface Strategy Taxonomy that is proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) that will be used as the theoretical framework in this study. These errors are the results of students' omission, addition, misformation and finally misordering. All of the errors above will be elaborated further in the next topic. Surface Strategy Taxonomy is explained here because it is the classification of errors that has been adopted to analyse errors in the present study.

2.6 Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) maintain that surface strategy taxonomy can highlight the ways surface structures are altered. Analyzing errors from the surface strategy perspective makes us aware that learners' errors are based on some logic. They are not the result of laziness or sloppy thinking but of the learners' use of interim principles to produce a new language (Burt, Dulay and Krashen, 1982 as cited in Kafipour and Khojasteh, 2011).

There are four types of errors listed in surface strategy taxonomy. They are omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. The first kind of omission is omission of a content morpheme. According to Ririn (2010), this kind of omission is related to the major constituent of a sentence such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Content morpheme gives meaning to the sentence structure. For example, '*Shehim nothing*'. In this sentence, the writer omits a verb and also third singular marker *-s*. The correct sentence; '*She gives him nothing*'. The second kind of omission is omission of grammatical morpheme. This involves the omission of nouns and verb inflections such as *-s* in '*cats*', *-s* in '*brother's book*', *-ed* in '*stopped*' and so on. Sometimes this kind of omission also involves the omission of conjunction such as *and, or, but* and so on; of auxiliary verbs such as *will, can*; of prepositions such as *of, on, under*; and also articles such as *a, the* and *an*. An example of omission involving article is '*Rina is beautiful girl*'. In the sentence, the writer omits the article 'a' that indicates singularity. The correct version of this sentence is '*Rina is a beautiful girl*'.

The next type of errors is addition. There are three types of addition errors and they are double marking, regularization and simple addition errors. Double marking errors can be described as the result of a failure to delete certain items which are required in certain linguistic constructions, but not in others, for example, '*She didn't went*' which by right is '*She didn't go*'.

Table 2.4 Error of Double Marking in L2 Production

| No | Semantic feature | Error | Example of error |
|----|----------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Past tense | Past tense is marked in the auxiliary and the verb | She didn't went/ goed |
| 2 | Present tense | Present tense is marked in the auxiliary and the verb | He doesn't eats |
| 3 | Negation | Negation is marked in the auxiliary and the quantifier Negation is marked in the auxiliary and the adverb | She didn't give him none He don't get no wings They don't hardly eat |
| 4 | Equational predicate | Equation is marked in two copula positions | Is this is a cow? |
| 5 | Object | The object is both topicalized and expressed in the object pronoun | That's is the man who I saw him |
| 6 | Past tense | The auxiliary is produced twice | Why didn't mommy don't make dinner? |

(Source :Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982)

Table 2.4 shows errors of double marking in second language production. There are six semantic features that have been classified as errors of double marking. The first feature is when the past tense is marked in the auxiliary and the verb as in '*She didn't went*' or '*she didn't goed*'. The second feature is when the present tense is marked in the auxiliary and also the verb as in '*He doesn't eats*' or '*she doesn't walks*'. The next feature is when negation is marked in the auxiliary and the quantifier as in '*She didn't give him none*'. Apart from that, double marking errors can happen when equation is marked in two copula positions as '*Is this is a cow?*'. Furthermore, when the object is both topicalized and expressed in the object pronoun is also considered as another feature of double marking error as in '*That's the man who I saw him*'. The last feature

of double marking errors is when the auxiliary is produced twice as in ‘*Why didn’t mommy don’t make dinner?*’.

The second type of addition errors is regularization. These errors occur as the result of applying a rule to the class of exceptions. Students are often confused when they find a few nouns that have the same singular and plural forms such as ‘*deer*’ and ‘*sheep*’. Furthermore, many of them do not know and unaware that not all of the verbs in past tense need to be added with *-ed* and thus make mistake such as ‘*she runned last night*’ which by right should be ‘*she ran last night*’.

The last type of addition errors is simple addition. An example of simple addition error is ‘*it is consist of*’ which is supposed to be ‘*it consists of*’.

Table 2.5 Simple Addition Error

| No | Linguistic item added | Example |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Third person singular –s | The fishes doesn’t live in the water |
| 2 | Past tense irregular | The train is gonna broke it |
| 3 | Article ‘a’ | A this |
| 4 | Preposition | In over here |

(Source :Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982)

Table 2.5 shows the four types of linguistics items and the examples of simple addition errors that can occur involving them. These four linguistics items are third person singular *-s*, past tense irregular, article *a* and also preposition.

The next or the third type of errors classified by the Surface Strategy Taxonomy is misformation. These errors happen due to the use of the wrong morpheme or

structure. There are three types of misformation errors, namely regularization, archi-forms and alternating forms. Regularization errors are those in which a regular marker is used in place of an irregular one such ‘*runned*’ instead of ‘*ran*’. Another example is ‘*childs*’ which it is supposed to be ‘*children*’. On the other hand, archi-forms errors are those that result from selecting wrong class of forms to represent others in the class. These are errors that involve demonstrative adjectives (such words as *this*, *that*, *those* and *these*). For example, ‘*that dog*’ not ‘***that dogs***’, and ‘*that book is mine*’, ‘***that books are mine***’. The fourth and the last are the alternating forms which normally occur as a result of the use of archi-forms that often give way to the free alternation of various members of a class with each other as ‘*those dog*’ and ‘*this cats*’. The other examples are the use of ‘*she*’ instead of ‘*her*’, the use of ‘*he*’ and ‘*she*’, ‘*they*’ for ‘*it*’ and so on. Thus, this will cause errors in and produce the wrong word especially in writing.

The last type of errors identified by the Surface Strategy Taxonomy is misordering. Misordering happens because of the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance as in the use of the phrase ‘*all the time*’ in ‘*He is all the time late*’ whose correct version should be ‘*He is late all the time*’ and ‘*What father is doing?*’ whose correct interrogative form should be ‘*What is father doing?*’.

There are a number of factors why the errors discussed above occur. Nevertheless, most of them happen as a result of the interference of either learners’ own mother tongue or first language or what is known as interlanguage (IL).

2.7 Interlanguage (IL)

An American linguist by the name of Larry Selinker is the one who introduces the term interlanguage (IL) (Tarone, 2006). Interlanguage refers to the linguistic system

when an adult second learner tries to express meanings in the language he is learning using rules from his mother tongue or first language. This is what Touchie (1986) refers to as interlingual errors.

According to Selinker (1972), interlanguage is defined as the separate linguistic system evidenced when adult second-language learners attempt to express meaning in a language they are in the process of learning (Selinker, 1972 as cited in Tarone, 2006). In addition, Selinker also claims that an adult learner will not learn the linguistic system of the second language if he learns the language after his puberty period. Learning a second language after this period causes five psycholinguistics errors to take place. They are (a) native language transfer – the effect of interference from the native language to the target language, (b) transfer of training – the effect of teaching procedures in the acquisition of the target language, (c) strategies of learning – the effect of the approach employed by teacher to the material to be learnt in the target language, (d) strategies of communication – the effect of the approach taken by the learner to communicate with a speaker of the target language and (e) overgeneralization of target language transfer– the effect of the learner’s over extension of a rule or semantic feature of the target language (as cited in Uthia Malar Thirugnanam, 2004).

Denham and Lobeck (2009) point out that as second language acquirers’ learners have already learnt their first language but now are being exposed to the second one. The duo also claims that these learners’ interlanguage grammar is also tainted by their L1. For example, a speaker whose L1 is French may place adjective after the noun in English, consistent with French placement. So, they may say ‘*coat long*’ rather than ‘*long coat*’. So, interference of L1 will affect learners’ writing as well as their speech. Ho-Peng (1976) for example, notices that interlanguage errors also occur among ESL

learners in Malaysia. By this, Ho-Peng is referring to the students' errors in word order which have resulted from the interference of Bahasa Malaysia, as in '*She saw there several people from Penang*' instead of '*There she saw several people from Penang*' (Ho Peng, 1976 as cited in Ahour and Mukundan, 2012).

Uthia Malar Thirugnanam (2004) in her study entitled 'An Analysis of Verbs Errors in Written Compositions of Upper Secondary School Students' examined the errors using Corder's (1981) taxonomy of errors (which categorises errors into selection, omission and addition). The study reveals that the errors of the highest percentage are wrong selection of verbs, followed by errors involving omission of the verbs and lastly those that are results of addition of verbs. The researcher of this study blames lack of exposure in the language and insufficient of grammar knowledge and practice for causing these errors to occur. The other possible cause identified by Uthia Malar Thirugnanam (2004) of errors is the interlanguage or interference of the respondents' mother tongue. Another study carried out by Alakhras (2008) entitled 'An Error Analysis of the Use of English Prepositions in the Written Work of Third Year Secondary Saudi Students' discloses that ESL students tend to also omit preposition in their writing. This happens because of interference of Arabic, their mother tongue.

What can then be concluded from the discussion above is the interference of mother tongue is the main culprit that affects students' writing and that is causing the morphological errors as shown by the next topic.

2.8 Morphological Errors in Writing

There exist many studies about morphological errors. In the study 'Errors and Variations of TESL Students' Written Description', (2012) used TESL female

undergraduates from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). All of them were in their fourth semester then. The researchers had purposely chosen undergraduates belonging to the three main ethnicities in Malaysia (4 Malays, 4 Chinese, and 4 Indians) who use English as their second language. The objective of the study was to find the similarities and or differences in the emergent errors and variations in their writings. The respondents were given a picture and asked to describe it in one or two paragraphs. The findings of this study show these learners produced different kinds of errors in their writing and that most of these errors occurred due to the interference of their first language. Below are the errors of the respondents of Ahour and Mukundan’s (2012) study:

| |
|---|
| <p>a) misformation- regularization</p> <p><i>error – three person</i></p> <p><i>correct – three persons</i></p> |
| <p>b) alternating</p> <p><i>error – her daughter</i></p> <p><i>correct – his daughter</i></p> |
| <p>c) omission</p> <p><i>error – reading newspaper</i></p> <p><i>correct – reading a/the newspaper</i></p> |

In another study entitled ‘Morphological Errors in the English Usage of Some Nigerian Learners’, Akande (2005) examined the morphological errors in the English usage of 250 senior secondary school students in Nigeria. The respondents were instructed to write a 300 word-long essay entitled ‘A day I will never forget in my life’. Then, the researcher analysed the essays, identified the morphological errors in them, and determined the causes of these errors. The morphological inconsistencies of applying the rule in changing the present form of a verb to its past tense form for example, ‘kill’ (present tense) and ‘killed’ (past tense) which is different from ‘eat’ (present tense) and

'*eated*' (past tense) made the respondents confused. Secondly, Akande also found other errors that resulted from overgeneralization and misapplication of rules. All the errors mentioned are due to interlanguage interference and the fact that the respondents' competence in English morphology was very low.

Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah's (2013) who undertook the study entitled 'Error Analysis on the Use of the Simple Tense and the Simple Past Tense in Writing Essays among TESL College Students' found that there were omission, addition, misinformation and also misordering errors in his respondents' writing. Ahmad Taufik Hidayah set out on the study with three objectives namely, to identify the areas where students make the most errors when using the simple present tense and simple past tense; to find out some sources of errors; and to find the effective way to rectify the errors. The respondents who were TESL students from Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin were instructed to write two essays. The findings show that errors made by the respondents in the Simple Present Tense were due to misinformation-regularization (96%), omission (69%), addition-double marking (56%) and misinformation-alternating forms (47%). While, errors made by the students in the Simple Past Tense were misinformation-regularization (81%), addition - double marking (45%), misinformation-alternating forms (40%) and omission (24%). The factors that contributed to the problems were students' lack of knowledge and competence in English grammar, influence of their mother tongue, loan words and lack of exposure to the English Language.

In other study entitled 'Morphological Error Found in the English Essays of the Fifth Semester Students of English Letters and Language Department of UIN Malang in 2008' (Ririn, 2010), all the participants were students in the fifth semester in the

Department of UIN Malang. In Malang, English considered as their foreign language. The study used descriptive qualitative approach in order to analyse the data and the data were from students' writing of their assignment from that faculty. The objectives were to find out the kinds of morphological error in students' writings and also to describe the dominant morphological error found. The result showed that the percentage of omission was 40.98%, secondly, addition was only 32.79%. Then, misformation and misordering were 24.59% and 1.64% respectively. Thus, the dominant error found was omission.

In addition, Mardijono (2003) who is the researcher of the study entitled 'Indonesian EFL Advanced Learners' Grammatical Errors' examined the proposals written by the seventh semester students from the English Department of Petra Christian University. The objectives of the study were to describe the types of the grammatical errors made by the respondents and to ascertain the frequency of the occurrence of each type of these errors. The study discloses that most of the respondents tend to make omission errors and also addition such as 3rd singular inflection ('-s') and also past tense inflection ('-ed') in their writing. The examples of the errors made are as follows;

a) addition

3rd singular inflection ('-s')

error – ..may represents...

correct – ..may represent..

past tense inflection ('-ed')

error – ..will he analyzed...

correct – ..will he analyze...

present participle inflection ('-ing')

error – ..to following...

correct – ..to follow...

b) omission

the possessive inflection ('-s')

error – ..the writer language... / ..his friend door..

correct – ..the writer's language.../..his friend's door..

omission of indefinite article before a singular countable noun

error – ..using Chinese film..

correct – ..using a Chinese film..

c) misformation

error – ..how someone feeling.../ ...people who known...

correct – ..how someone feels.../ ...people who know...

2.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is hoped that this chapter has comprehensively presented the relevant information needed by help the reader to understand the content of this present study by first explaining the terms of morphology and morphemes, which is followed by a review of issues in academic writing and the role of errors in language learning, a classification of errors based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy and ends with a discussion on previous studies related to morphological errors in academic writing.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses in detail the research design and methodology used in the present study. Other than that, a description of the participants who took part in the study, method of collecting the data and how the data is analysed are also presented here.

3.1 Research Design

This study used the qualitative research method. This is the type of research selected by the researcher of the current study because it consists of an investigation that have the following features: it seeks to answer the research questions stated in Chapter 1; it systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer these questions; it is research that requires the collection of evidence; it is intended to produce findings that were not determined before it is actually carried out; it produces findings that can be applied beyond the immediate boundaries of the study (Family Health International, 2005).

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were selected by means of convenience sampling as the researcher was the instructor who taught all the participants and as such it was very easy for the researcher to get the data she needed for this study. The journals were readily available as they were required to write them weekly and submit them to the instructor at the end of the semester. In addition, the participants were chosen because the researcher was curious and intended to find out whether TESL students make

morphological errors in their writing after all they are expected to be aware of the morphological system and errors of the English language they would later go to school and teach students English.

The participants were second semester students who have enrolled in the programme of Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at Kolej Poly-Tech Mara Kuala Lumpur (KPTMKL). They had been chosen to follow this course because they had obtained five credits in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and at least B+ and above for the English language paper. There were only three groups of this January-May 2014 students. At the time when the study was carried out, they were in semester two. For the purpose of the study also, all of the students were given the consent form and informed about the study that was going to be conducted on them. Then, the researcher collected their weekly journals which they had written throughout the whole semester. However, not all of these journals were analysed. Only journals of fifteen participants that contained evidence of morphological errors belonging to each of the three groups were selected and analyzed.

3.3 Data

The data for this study was procured from the weekly journals that were written by fifteen TESL students from the beginning (first week of the semester) until the end of the semester (the fourteenth week or at the end of the semester). Journal writing was one of the assignments for the course Reading and Writing Development 2 that the participants needed to complete and pass in semester two. These journals may be about anything but must be at least 80-100 words long.

3.4 Data Collection

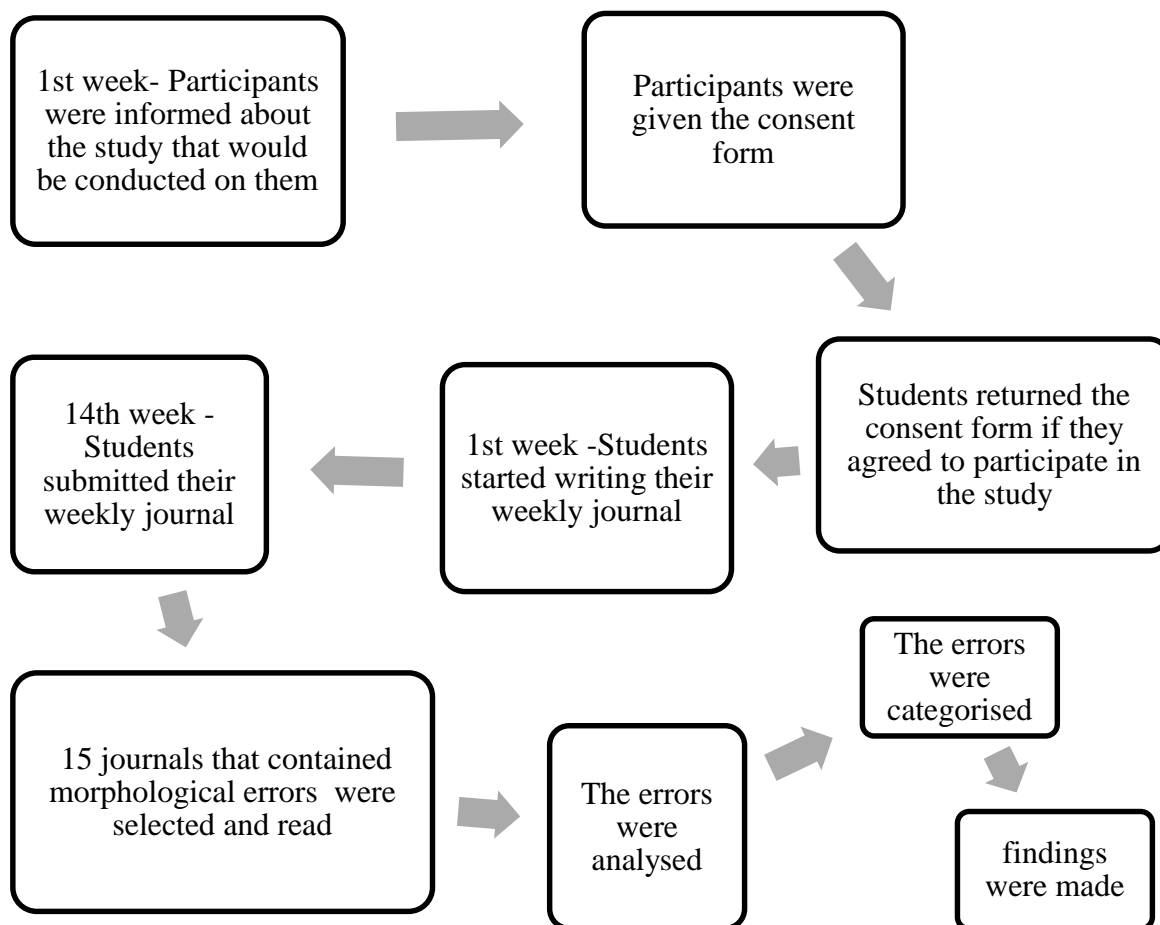


Diagram 1: Data Collection Procedure

Diagram 1 shows the process in collecting data. During the teaching session in the first week, all the participants were informed about the study that would be conducted on them. Then, the consent forms were distributed to them. They are required to return these forms to the researcher/instructor if they wished to participate in this study. It turned out that all of them agreed to take part in it. As such, the researcher was able to obtain all the data she needed for the study by the end of the semester which she read and scrutinised for errors. Next, the researcher identified all the errors and classified according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy adopted from Dulay (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982)

3.5 Data Analysis

The process of analysing the data involved using the Theory Taxonomy of Dulay or Surface Strategy Taxonomy. All the errors found in the participants' journal were first gathered. Then they were separated and categorised into omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. Then, all frequency and the percentage of each error type were calculated and compared to one another in order to determine which of them was the most dominant.

3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter reveals to the reader how the researcher went about conducting the present study. The research design and methodology were deemed suitable because they were able to procure the needed data for this research study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data and also discusses the findings.

4.1 Omission of content morphemes

The participants in other studies have been found to omit nouns, verbs, adjectives and also adverbs from their sentences. Nouns, verbs and adverbs are content morphemes and they are the ones which give meaning to the sentences. However, the participants of the present study were found only to omit verbs 'be' not other kinds of verbs. There was no omission involving nouns and adverbs too.

(a) Omission of Verbs 'Be'

Omission of verbs 'be' happened when 'am', 'is', 'are', 'was' and 'were' are omitted from sentences. On the other hand, the participants of this study are found only to omit the verbs 'be' 'is' and 'are' in their journals.

Example 1:

'She very pretty.'

In the above example, the verb 'be' 'is' is omitted making the sentence incorrect because in such a sentence verb 'be' is required to link the subject of the sentence which is the pronoun 'she' to the adjective describing it. The correct version of this sentence is '*she is very pretty.*'

Example 2:

'The possibility of having problems with our partner when we failed to fix things up and avoid them.'

Similarly, in the example above, the verb 'be' 'is' is also missing. As such, there is no verb to link the subject of a subject-verb-expansion sentence which '*The possibility of having problems with our partner*' with its expansion '*when we failed to fix things up and avoid them*'. The correct version of the sentence is '*The possibility of having problems with our partner is when we failed to fix things up and avoid it*'.

Example 3:

'There a lot of ways to prevent obesity.'

The correct sentence for the example above is '*There are a lot of ways to prevent obesity.*' The verb 'be' 'are' is absent from the sentence in the example. Since the sentence is an expletive '*there is / there are*' the verb 'be' 'is' or 'are' must be used after the word '*there*'.

This discussion on the errors involving omission of content morphemes is summed up here by Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 shows the number and percentage of errors for the omission of content morphemes.

| Types of errors | Number of errors | Percentage of errors |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Omission of verbs 'be' | 3 | 100% |
| Omission of nouns | 0 | 0% |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|----|
| Omission of adjectives | 0 | 0% |
| Omission of adverbs | 0 | 0% |

Table 4.1: Omission of Content Morpheme

Besides the errors involving omission of content morphemes, many of participants in this study also made errors involving the omission of grammatical morphemes as discussed below.

4.2 Omission of grammatical morphemes

These are errors that occurred when the participants of the study were found to omit morphemes such as noun inflections, verb inflections, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles.

(a) Omission of Noun Inflections

It can be divided into three categories namely; omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ denoting possessiveness, omission of noun inflection ‘-ing’ to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund) and omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ to indicate plurality.

(i) Omission of Noun Inflection ‘-s’ Denoting Possessiveness

These are errors involving omissions of noun inflection ‘-s’ to denote ownership or belonging. For example, ‘*Bobby’s house*’.

Example 1:

‘*My sister hobby is to bake cakes.*’

The noun ‘*hobby*’ belongs to ‘*My sister*’ therefore, the ‘-s’ must be attached to ‘*My sister*’ to denote this.

Example 2:

'However, Amin house is near the school.'

The same is the case in the above example, '*Amin house is near to the school*' is incorrect because the possessive '-s' is not attached to the noun '*Amin*' to show that the house belongs to him.

Example 3:

'Nowadays, internet usage is becoming very important in everyone life.'

The correct sentence for the above example is '*Nowadays, internet usage is becoming very important in everyone's life*'. This participant made the error because she has left out the possessive '-s' after '*everyone*'.

(ii) Omission of Noun Inflection '-ing' to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund)

Example 1:

'There are many advantages of live in the hostel.'

The correct form of the word '*live*' to be used in the above example is '*living*'. When a verb is used as noun, the inflection '-ing' must be attached.

Example 2:

'But, overeating protein may increase the risk in get kidney disease.'

The verb 'get' in the example above is should be substituted by the noun form 'getting' in order to make the sentence correct.

(iii) Omission of Noun Inflection '-s' to indicate plurality

Example 1:

'There are many cause and condition that will develop as a result of it (abortion) later.'

The subject –verb agreement rule (concord) of English requires the nouns 'cause' and 'condition' to be in their plural forms following the use of the plural verb 'are' in the sentence. As such, the correct version of the sentence above is 'There are many causes and conditions that will develop as a result of it later'.

(b) Omission of Verb Inflection

However, under the omission of verb inflection it can be categorised into omission of verb inflection '-s' to denote singularity and omission of verb inflection '-ed' denoting tense.

(i) Omission of Verb Inflection '-s' to Denote Singularity

Researcher found three examples for omission of verb inflection '-s' to denote singularity made by the participants in the study.

Example 1:

'She celebrate Chinese New Year. Leen wear cheongsam.'

The subject-verb agreement (concord) of English states that a plural subject takes singular verb and a singular subject takes plural verb. There are two errors regarding concord found in the above example. The first one is 'celebrate' which it is supposed to be 'celebrates' as it follows the subject 'she' which is singular in number. Similarly, the verb 'wears' should be expressed as 'wears' following the subject 'Leen'.

Example 2:

'Shahira love kitten. She also love children.'

Above are another two errors of omission of verb inflections '-s' regarding concord denoting singularity of subject of verb. The first example is 'Shahira' is single in number, so the rule requires the verb 'love' to be changed to 'loves'. The verb 'love' in the second sentence should also be changed to 'loves'.

Example 3:

'My friend, Ali always thinks he is a stupid person, but he always score in his exam'.

This particular participant did not put '-s' at the end of the word 'score'. The correct version of this verb according to the English concord rule is 'scores'.

(ii) **Omission of verb inflection ‘-ed’ Denoting Tense**

Example 1:

‘They are using the internet in promoting various campaigns that will be organize to find long lost friends.

The verb ‘organize’ in verb phrase ‘will be organize’ in the above example should be expressed in its participle form ‘organized’.

Example 2:

‘Air pollution can be describe as contamination of the atmosphere by gaseous, liquid or solid wastes or by products that can endanger human health’.

Similarly, in the example above, the verb phrase ‘can be describe’ is incorrect and should be written as ‘can be described’.

Example 3:

‘As everyone knows, internet can be use properly or misuse it to the extent that we can never imagine. Girls can easily be influence to do negative things’.

Likewise, there are three omissions of the verb inflections ‘-ed’ found in the given example above. Firstly and secondly, the verb ‘use’ and ‘misuse’ are employed without the inflection ‘-ed’. These words should be expressed as ‘..can be used properly or misused..’ In the next sentence, the third omission error occurs because the verb ‘influence’ in

the phrase ‘*can ...be influence*’ is written without its ‘-ed’ inflection. By right, the word ‘*influenced*’ should be expressed as ‘*influenced*’.

(c) Omission of Prepositions

The findings of the study next reveal the existence of errors involving the omission of prepositions such as the ones mentioned below.

Example 1:

‘I will introduce you my friend,’ said Nana to Zu.

In example 1 above, the preposition ‘*to*’ has been omitted from the first sentence. The correct version of this sentence is ‘*I will introduce you to my friend*’.

Example 2:

‘Abu loves play football’.

Example 3:

‘We need get enough sleep’.

The case is the same with example 2 and 3 above. The preposition ‘*to*’ has also been left out from the sentence, ‘*Abu loves to play football*’ as the same preposition has also been omitted from ‘*We need to get enough sleep*’.

Example 4:

'The students will have more time and suitable atmosphere them to study'.

In example 4 the preposition *'for'* has been left out. The correct version of this sentence is, *'The students will have more time and suitable atmosphere for them to study.'*

One of the participants in this study was found to omit the article 'an' from her sentence as shown below.

(c) Omission of Articles (a, an, and the)

Example 1:

'For instance, salmon is ideal food for many reasons'.

The rule for article in English requires the indefinite article 'a' to be used in this sentence *'For instance, salmon is ideal food for many reasons'.*

The correct version of this sentence is, *'For instance, salmon is an ideal food for many reasons.'*

Hence, it is thought that Table 4.2 shown can be used to appropriately sum up the discussion on the errors of omission above.

Table 4.2 shows the number and percentage of errors for the omission of grammatical morphemes.

| Types of errors | Number of errors | Percentage of errors |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Omission of noun inflections | 6 | 35% |
| Omission of verb inflection '-s' | 3 | 18% |
| Omission of verb inflection '-ed' | 3 | 18% |
| Omission of preposition | 4 | 24% |
| Omission of article | 1 | 5% |

Table 4.2: Omission of Grammatical Morphemes

The discussion now continues with the next type of errors in the classification which is errors that occur due to addition.

4.3 Addition/ Double Marking Errors

Another type of errors that the participants of this study made in their journals is addition errors. There are two examples of this type of errors shown here.

Example 1:

'She's is so beautiful'.

The addition or double marking found in the example above is '*She's*' and the word '*is*'. The former already means '*She is*' so there is no need to add on the word '*is*' after it.

Example 2:

'They looks very happy playing the game'.

'*They*' is a plural noun. Verb that appears after plural noun does not require the morpheme '-s' to be added on to it because this morpheme is

only used to indicate singularity with regard to the English language concord rule. For example, '*She looks very happy*' because the subject of the sentence '*she*' is singular in number. The correct sentence is '*They look very happy playing the game*'.

Table 4.3 shows the number and percentage of addition errors found in this study.

| Types of errors | Number of errors | Percentage of errors |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Addition | 2 | 100% |

Table 4.3: Addition

The next type of errors to be discussed in this chapter is misformation.

4.4 Misformation

There are three types of errors of misformation: one is regularization; another is simple addition; and the third is archi-forms.

(a) Regularization

The researcher found four examples of regularization errors. Regularization happens because of the participants 'regularize' the rule in changing the base forms of verbs to their past tense forms by adding morpheme '-ed' to all of them. In English, there are only certain verbs that can be changed to their past tense forms by attaching 'ed' to them. Some English verbs change their forms totally when changed into their past tense forms such as the ones below.

Example 1:

'I went to school at 12.30 last Friday. I tached them reading and students really enjoyed it.'

The correct past tense form for 'tached' in the sentence above is 'taught.'

Example 2:

'My father always tells us that he will pass it to his childs.'

The plural for 'child' is not 'childs' but 'children'. Not all nouns can be changed into their plural forms by adding the morpheme '-s' to them.

The noun 'child' is one of them.

Example 3:

'For example, many transportations in the urban area and some of that came from the construction places'.

'Transportation' is a mass noun. It can be used as both singular and plural. This is another exception of the rule that states that not all nouns can be changed into their plural forms by adding the morpheme '-s' to them.

Example 4:

'In some countries, I think they will fine peoples who throw rubbish in the river or sea'.

The same goes to the noun *'people'* in this example. *'People'* is a noun that carries the meaning of 'many persons'.

(b) Simple Addition

In addition, the present study discloses errors that occur due to simple addition such as the ones discussed below.

Example 1:

'Sarah is a good girl. She always helps her mother's in the garden'.

The morpheme '-s' cannot be added to the noun *'mother'* in the above example because it does not require the morpheme '-s' as we are not referring to anything belonging to *'mother'*.

Example 2:

'Relationship will makes you feel secure and you will not feel lonely anymore'.

The auxiliary verb *'will'*, does not allow the morpheme '-s' to be added to the main verb that follows it. Thus, the correct version of the sentence is *'Relationship will make you feel secure and you will not feel lonely*

anymore'. Anyway, an auxiliary is a verb that determines the mood, tense, or aspect of another verb in a verb phrase.

Example 3:

'Children can reach out the world and can improves the thinking processes'.

Similarly, the verb *'improves'* cannot come with the modal verb *'can'* for the same reason.

Example 4:

'We can define that a good friends helps us to develop our confidence'.

In English, the article *'a'* is used to mean *'one'*, As such, the noun *'friends'* that follows it should also be singular.

Example 5:

'This is because cigarettes contains a lot of dangerous chemical substances such as nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide and the most dangerous is tobacco'.

The word *'cigarettes'* is plural and therefore it cannot be expressed with the verb *'contains'* that shows its singularity.

The last type of misformation errors to be discussed here is archi-forms.

Archi-forms are normally used for demonstrative adjectives.

(c) Archi- Forms

The researcher found only one example of error involving archi-forms.

Example 1:

'It is a bit nervous but I know that I can do it even there is many mistakes that I have made'.

The verb 'is' means singular but in the case in the above example it is used to plural noun 'mistakes'. Then, the determiner 'many' makes it even clearer that the 'mistakes' being referred to here is more than one in number, thus, the verb 'is' is wrongly used here.

Table 4.4 shows the number and percentage of errors for misformation.

| Types of errors | Number of errors | Percentage of errors |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Regularization | 4 | 40% |
| Simple addition | 5 | 50% |
| Archi-forms | 1 | 10% |

Table 4.4: Misformation

Lastly, the researcher found two examples of misordering errors and they are explained below.

4.5 Misordering

Misordering errors normally occur when there is an incorrect placement of morpheme or group of morphemes (word formation or word structure) in a sentence so much so the rule for concord is broken.

Example 1:

'Drug abuse is being seen as a serious problem in the society that could be defined as the lost controlling of drug people who have been used too much'.

The correct sentence is *'Drug abuse is defined as a serious problem that involves people who are using too much drug.'*

Example 2:

'Moreover, we are supposed to get at least 6 hours of sleep every day. We should prevent to not stay up until late night'.

The correct sentence is *'Moreover, we are supposed to get at least 6 hours of sleep every day. We should prevent ourselves from staying up late.'*

Table 4.5 shows the number and percentage of errors for misordering.

| Types of errors | Number of errors | Percentage of errors |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Misordering | 2 | 100% |

Table 4.5: Misordering

On the other hand, Table 4.6 shows the frequency and also the percentage of the all morphological errors found in this study.

| CATEGORY | | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Omission of content morpheme | a) Omission of verbs 'be' | 3 | 8.8 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------|
| Omission of grammatical morpheme | a) Omission of noun inflection | | |
| | i) omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ denoting possessiveness | 3 | 8.8 |
| | ii) omission of noun inflection ‘-ing’ to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund) | 2 | 5.9 |
| | iii) omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ to denote plurality | 1 | 2.9 |
| | b) Omission of verb inflection | | |
| | i) Omission of verb inflection ‘-s’ to denote singularity in subject-verb agreement. | 3 | 8.8 |
| | ii) Omission of verb inflection ‘-ed’ to denote tenses | 3 | 8.8 |
| | c) Omission of preposition | 4 | 11.8 |
| | d) Omission of article | 1 | 2.9 |
| Addition | - | 2 | 5.9 |
| Misformation | a) Regularization | 4 | 11.8 |
| | b) Simple addition | 5 | 14.8 |
| | c) Archi-forms | 1 | 2.9 |
| Misordering | - | 2 | 5.9 |
| TOTAL | | 34 | 100.00 |

Table 4.6 Frequency and Percentage of the Morphological Errors

Based on Table 4.6, the type of errors with the highest frequency is involving simple addition errors whose percentage is 14.8%. The type of errors with the second highest frequency is involving regularization and omission of preposition whose percentage is only 11.8%; followed by the omission of verb 'be' (8.8%), noun inflection '-s' denoting possessiveness (8.8%), omission of verb inflection '-s' to denote singularity (8.8%) and also omission of verb inflection '-ed' to denote tenses (8.8%). In the meantime, omission of noun inflection '-ing' to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund), addition and misordering (5.9%) respectively, while omission of article, omission of noun inflection '-s' to denote plurality and archi-forms share the same percentage (2.9%).

To conclude this discussion, the findings of this study shows that errors involving misformation (simple addition and regularization) and also omission of grammatical morpheme (omission of preposition) are the most frequent errors made by the participants. The next most frequent errors are errors involving omission of content morpheme (omission of verb 'be') and omission of grammatical morpheme (omission of noun inflection '-s' denoting possessiveness, omission of verb inflection '-s' to denote singularity in subject-verb agreement, omission of verb inflection '-ed' to denote tenses). The errors involving misordering, addition and omission of grammatical morpheme (omission of noun inflection '-ing' to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund) are next on the list and finally came the errors involving another omission of grammatical morpheme (omission of article and omission of noun inflection '-s' to denote plurality) and also archi-forms.

4.6 Discussion

First and foremost, this present study finds that the most common types of morphological errors made by TESL students are simple addition, regularization and also omission of preposition. Simple addition is the errors with the highest percentage, which is 14.8%, followed by regularization and also the omission of prepositions which is 11.8%. This finding is line with the findings of studies undertaken by Ahmad Taufik Hidayah bin Abdullah (2013), Ahour and Mukundan (2012), Ririn (2010), and Mardijono (2003).

The most dominant morphological error made by the TESL students in this study is simple addition error. This finding is similar to the finding of Ririn's (2010) study.

Next, the findings also show that the mother tongue of the TESL students in this study which is Bahasa Melayu is the main cause why they made the morphological errors discussed above. This happens because these students were observed to construct sentences in Bahasa Melayu which later they translated into English. Two examples from the study that can be used as proofs of this are shown below:

a) Omission of verb 'be'

Error: *'She very pretty' – Dia sangat cantik.*

Correct: *'She is very pretty' – Dia adalah seorang yang sangat cantik.*

Both of the sentences in Bahasa Melayu are correct but when translated into its English version, the sentence becomes incorrect because the verb 'be' 'is' is left out.

b) Omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ for possessive nouns

Error: *‘Amin house is near to school’ – Rumah Amin dekat dengan sekolah.*

Correct: *‘Amin’s house is near to school’ – Rumah Amin dekat dengan sekolah.*

However, in the case of this example: the English sentence requires the possessive ‘s’ to be attached to the noun ‘*Amin*’ in order to show that ‘*the house*’ belongs to him. Such is not required in Bahasa Melayu. In fact, Bahasa Melayu does not use the inflection ‘s’ to indicate possessive.

Both the above examples mentioned are evidence for the truth in the claims of Uthia Malar Thirugnanam (2004), Akande (2005), Alakhras (2008), and Ahmad TaufikHidayah bin Abdullah (2013) discussed in Chapter Two of this present study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion of the study and also recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings answer all the research questions below.

Research Question 1: What are the common types of morphological errors made by TESL students in journal writing?

The most common types of morphological errors made by TESL students in this study are simple addition, regularization and also omission of preposition.

Research Question 2: What are the most dominant types of morphological errors found in the students' journal writing?

The most dominant type of morphological error made by students is simple addition. Simply adding morphemes without understanding and ability to apply the correct grammar rules in English are the main reasons why students made such errors. The interference of their mother tongue or first language is another reason for the occurrence of these errors.

Research Question 3: How the interference of the mother tongue affects the morphological errors?

When the TESL students in this study translated sentences in their mother tongue, Bahasa Melayu into English, they applied the grammar rules of the former in constructing those sentences, for example, one of the TESL students omitted the verb 'be' 'is' from the sentence, '*She very pretty*' which is a literal translation of the Bahasa Melayu, '*Dia sangat cantik*'. Verbs are the heart of the English sentence but in Bahasa Melayu, a sentence can be constructed without any verb at all, as in '*Dia sangat cantik*'.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has yielded the findings that TESL students did errors for simple addition (14.8%). This caused by students when they did not know the correct grammar rules in English and also because of students' carelessness. Next is regularization (11.8%) and this is because of overgeneralization and also students' carelessness. TESL students also did omission of preposition (11.8%) in their writing because of they did not know certain functions of prepositions.

Apart from that, omission of verb 'be', omission of noun inflection '-s' denoting possessiveness, omission of verb inflection '-s' to denote singularity in subject-verb agreement and omission of verb inflection '-ed' to denote tenses share the same percentage (8.8%). This is also because of students' carelessness in writing, interference of mother tongue (Malay) and lack of grammar knowledge. Some of TESL students did not know grammar rules such as 'subject + verb + agreement' and the rule of passive form in sentences. In the meantime, misordering, addition and omission of noun inflection '-ing' to denote the change from noun to verb form (gerund) have 5.9%

respectively, while omission of article, omission of noun inflection ‘-s’ to denote plurality and also archi-forms share the same percentage that is 2.9%. All of the errors made by the students obviously because of their carelessness and they are confused with certain grammar rules that need to be applied when write in English.

In addition, according to Khansir (2012), interlanguage is called when learners build up a system for themselves which is different in some way from their first language and second language systems. That is why interference of mother tongue leads to the morphological errors that can be found in their writing. This has been discussed in Chapter 4. According to the taxonomy used, only two errors have been analyzed and both of the errors lead to the interlanguage in writing.

Apart from the interference of mother tongue, errors also occur because of students’ confusion, their overgeneralization of the English language morphological rules, and their lack of understanding and knowledge of the English language morphological as well as grammar rules. Thus, in order to rectify these problems the researcher has put forth a few recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are the recommendations that can be undertaken;

- a) ESL students need to understand and know the parts of speech of the English language and basic rules of its grammar. Teachers or educators should start teaching these to their students when they are still at their primary school level so that they have enough time to practise what they have learnt throughout their eleven years at school.

- b) At the secondary school level, teachers or educators should continue to make students practise using what have learnt at their primary level but the practice at this level should involve more complex use of the knowledge learnt.

- c) In the tertiary level, when ESL students already have the basic knowledge of the grammar rules, teachers and also educators can teach them on how to write more complex sentences and later write for academic purposes.

- d) Teachers or educators at any of the three above mentioned levels need to give ESL students more written exercises and also teach them to identify and correct their own mistakes.

- e) Teachers and also educators need to encourage ESL students to not think or translate sentences in their mother tongue to English but to practise thinking and constructing sentences in the later straightaway.

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