

## An Error Analysis of Experiential Meaning in Students' Writing of Recount

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### ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan dan mendeskripsikan analisa kesalahan dalam *experiential meaning* pada teks tulisan *recount* mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan analisis kesalahan dan analisis *experiential meaning* dalam ranah *systemic functional linguistics*. Data penelitian diambil dari 20 teks tulisan *recount* mahasiswa di kelas *Writing 4* di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Unissula. Unit analisa dalam penelitian ini adalah klausa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *omission*, *addition*, *misinformation*, dan *misordering* ditemukan dalam analisa kesalahan dalam teks tulisan *recount* mahasiswa. Tingkat kesalahan tertinggi adalah *misinformation* yang mencapai 64,9 % atau 417 kesalahan tata bahasa. Elemen *process* dari *experiential meaning* merupakan elemen yang memiliki tingkat kesalahan tertinggi pada aspek kesalahan *misinformation* yang mencapai 40,5 % atau 260 kesalahan tata bahasa. Simpulan dari penelitian ini adalah kesalahan tata bahasa yang dominan ditemukan adalah *misinformation* dalam elemen *processes* dari *experiential meaning*. Berdasarkan hasil dari penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa di program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris masih memiliki masalah dalam menulis *recount*, oleh karena itu mahasiswa harus menguasai tata kebahasaan dalam menulis *recount*.

**Keywords:** *error analysis, experiential meaning, writing, recount*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a complicated skill since the students need to share their ideas into the words in which they have to write a certain topic by considering context of situation in. Furthermore, writing becomes one of the difficult English skills to be learned in the university level. It is proved by the preliminary observation toward students' problems of writing in English Department of *Sultan Agung* Islamic University. The students' problems cover the limited range of vocabulary, the use of past verb or past tense, and the use of inappropriate grammatical structure. Moreover, students get barriers in writing since they view that writing in English is a complex and difficult skill to be learned. They are afraid of making grammatical errors which may make their writing not understandable. The students'

barriers can be seen clearly by their writing's products, the use of experiential meanings in the students' writing, and the students' writing errors.

Writing has important roles in helping the students do their written assignments. Regarding the essential roles to acquire writing skill, the students are asked to write in English well, particularly in English Department. Besides, the students have to deal with writing courses and writing assignments. However, the English Department students get barriers in writing. Since writing is considered to be one of the compulsory subjects in the program, the students need to improve their writing skills in different writing courses of the program.

Moreover, the students' problems in writing do not only deal with grammatical rules, but also the coherence and cohesion in writing. The term of coherence proposes the idea that the texts make sense, while the term cohesion deals with the requirement that the texts hang together. Realization of producing cohesive and coherent writing cannot be separated from the notion of experiential meanings. The grammar of experiential meaning is expressed by transitivity system.

Experiential meaning takes an important role to represent the field of the text in this case the students' writing. Therefore, it is important to grasp the concept of experiential meaning in students' writing. Indeed, it will help the lecturer of writing solve the students' problems in relation to experiential meaning in their writing. Therefore, the students will revise the errors in their writing.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. Error Analysis**

Regarding to the significances of errors, it is needed to do Error Analysis (EA). Error analysis is one of the first methods used to investigate learner language (Ellis, 1994:68). Vasquez (2007) in Heydari and Bagheri (2012:1583) proposes that error analysis is a fundamental tool in language teaching to reorganize lecturer's viewpoint and apply their methodology to fulfill the students' differences. The investigation of learner language derives to the learner's competence in acquiring the language. There are five steps that should be considered to do Error Analysis (EA). Corder (1974) in Ellis (1994: 48) suggests five procedures in EA research such as; collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors

In doing error analysis, surface strategy taxonomy of errors categories can be used. The surface strategy taxonomy of error categories is proposed by Dulay et al. as cited in Ellis (1994:6). The surface strategy taxonomy of errors is displayed in the following table.

Table 1 A Surface Strategy Taxonomy of Errors  
(categories and examples taken from Dulay, Burt, and Khrashen 1982)

Category	Description	Example
Omissions	The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance.	She sleeping
Additions	The presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances.	We didn't went there
Misinformations	The use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure	The dog ated the chicken.
Misorderings	The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group or morphemes in an utterance	What daddy is doing?

## 2. Experiential Meaning

Experiential meaning is largely concerned with the contents and ideas. The contents and ideas of the language are used in the context that is in the text. Text does not derive from the reading passage. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:14) propose that when people speak or write, they produce text that refers to any instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language. In Systemic Functional Linguistic, language has been viewed in the metafunctions of language. One of the language metafunctions is ideational meaning that consists of experiential meaning and logical meaning.

The pattern of experiential meaning is realized by the transitivity system. Eggins (2004:206) views that the forming elements of transitivity system are the participant, process and circumstance configuration which represent the real life experiences who is doing what, to whom, when, where, why and how. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:181), Eggins (2004:214), Gerrot and Wignell (1994:52-54) have similar views toward the three functional components of experiential meaning in transitivity system. The descriptions of each component are displayed as follows.

1. Participants

Participants are the people, ideas, or things that participate in the processes. The participants carry out the processes under circumstances. The participants' roles are realized by the nominal groups. The example of participant's role is as the following.

*The youngster wiggled in his seat.*

In the example above, the word 'youngster' takes a role as participant.

2. Processes

The physical activities, mental and verbal activities, state of being and having are referred to as processes. Processes are realized by the verbal group of the clause. The example of process's role is as the following.

*The students write their thesis.*

In the example above, the word 'write' takes a role as process.

3. Circumstances

Circumstances are the conditions in which processes are occurring. Circumstances also answer such as when, where, why, how, how many and as what. Circumstantial elements are represented prepositional phrases or adverbial groups. The example of circumstance's role can be viewed as follows.

*The team completed the document very quickly.*

In the example above, the word 'very quickly' takes a role as circumstances.

### 3. Recount

Recount is one of instructional genres that focus on retelling events or experiences in the past. Gerrot and Wignell (1994:194) contend that the social functions of recount are to retell events in order to inform or entertain. Literacy Secretariat of Department for Education and Child Development of South Australia (2012:1) defines "recount is used to relate experiences or retell events for the purpose of informing, entertaining or reflecting. Recount can be personal, factual or imaginative".

The schematic structure of recount is orientation, sequences of events, and re-orientation. Gerrot and Wignell (1994:194) assert that the orientation focus on the introduction of participants and the setting, the events emphasize on telling what happened in sequences, and re-orientation is closure of events. It can also be stated that the orientation part introduces the participants, place, and time; the events part describes the sequences of events that happened in the past; and the re-orientation part states a writer personal comment of the story.

There are five linguistic features in recount. According to Gerrot and Wignell (1994:194), the significant lexicogrammatical features of recount are it focuses on specific participants, it uses of material processes, it uses circumstances of time and place, it uses past tense form, and it focuses on temporal sequence.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **a. Research Design**

This study uses qualitative approach in the form of Error Analysis and Systemic Functional Approach in order to find out the types of errors of experiential meaning in students' writing of recount.

#### **b. Instrument of Data Collection**

The documents are used to obtain the data about transitivity analysis and error analysis. The documents used in this study are the students' writing of recounts. Gall et al. (2003:278) contends that textbook, students' completed assignments, and other written materials are usually called documents by researchers. In analyzing the documents, content analysis is applied.

#### **c. Unit of Analysis**

The unit analysis of this study is clauses in students' writing of recounts. The clauses are analyzed by applying transitivity analysis and error analysis. Halliday (1989:67) views that "the clause is a functional unit with a triple construction of meaning: it function simultaneously (1) as the representation of the phenomena of experience.... (2) as the expression of speech function.... (3) as the bearer of the message".

### **4. DISCUSSION**

#### **a. Error Analysis in Students' Recount**

In this section, the researcher analyzes the errors in relation to experiential meaning which are made by the students in writing the recount text. This section is attempted to find out the number of frequency in students' errors. The result of error analysis is based on four elements: omissions, additions, misinformations, and misorderings. The result of analysis is tabulated in the table 2 below.

Table 2 Error Analysis in Students' Recount

Texts	Linguistic Features Errors			
	Omissions	Additions	Misinformations	Misorderings
1	4	0	6	2
2	3	0	14	1
3	1	0	14	2
4	1	0	3	0
5	9	0	13	2
6	4	0	17	0
7	7	0	6	0
8	3	0	6	0
9	13	1	16	0
10	25	0	23	0
11	5	1	36	1
12	14	0	47	7
13	7	0	25	1
14	9	1	20	1
15	3	0	28	1
16	13	1	29	1
17	14	1	27	0
18	10	4	25	11
19	13	1	28	11
20	14	2	34	1
Total (643)	172	12	417	42
Percentage (100%)	26.8 %	1.8 %	64.9 %	6.5 %

Based on the table 2, the total number of errors is 643 in which it covers four linguistic features of errors. The omissions are 172 or 26.8 %, the additions are 12 or 1,8 %, the misinformations are 417 or 64.9 %, and the misorderings are 42 or 6.5 %. It can be viewed that the dominant type of errors in students' recount is misinformation.

**b. Omissions**

The first element of error analysis in relation to experiential meaning is omission of words. The number of omission category from all the text is 172 or 26.8 % of the total number of linguistic features errors. Omissions are found in all of the students' recounts. In this case, text 10 shows the highest number of omission. Its omission reaches 25 times. However, the lowest number of omission is found in text 3 and text 4, its omission reaches 1 time. The students' error in term of omission in relation to experiential meaning can be viewed in the following example.

Data 1: Omission – Text 10

Her name Sunia Ayu Lestrai.

Her name		Sunia Ayu Lestari
Participant: Token	Process	Participant: Value
	Error: Omission	

Data 1 shows that the sentence “Her name Sunia Ayu Lestari” is not appropriate because the student leaves out an item that has to appear in a correct grammatical form. The student actually wants to introduce someone’s name, but she or he omits the important item. The sentence is supposed to be “Her name was Sunia Ayu Lestari”. The example displays that the omission exists in the experiential meaning of process aspect.

Data 2: Omission – Text 14

My brother live in South Jakarta with his wife and son.

My brother	live	in South Jakarta	with his wife and son.
Participant: Carrier	Process: Relational- Attributive	Circumstance: Place	Circumstance: Accompaniment
	Error: Omission		

Data 2 displays that the omission exists in the process of experiential meaning. The sentence “My brother live in South Jakarta with his wife and son” is incorrect because the student should use the process of past form because it is about writing recount. The sentence is supposed to be “My brother lived in South Jakarta with his wife and son.”

Regarding to the general findings of omission found in students’ recounts in relation to experiential meaning that reach 172 times or 26.8 %, it is essential to discover the number of omissions found in each element of experiential meaning. The tabulation below is the finding of omission found in participant, process, and circumstance elements.

Table 3 Omission in Experiential Meaning

Experiential Meaning Elements	Omissions	
	Total (172 times)	Percentage (26.8 %)
Participant	63	10.5 %
Process	103	17.1 %
Circumstance	6	1 %

Based on table 3, it can be viewed that the highest omission is found in the process aspects that reach 103 omission or 17.1 %. In this case, the omissions in process aspects cover the absence of verbal group, such as ‘be’ verb and “past tense inflection” verb. It can be inferred that the students mainly make omission in the process because they do not master or forget about the correct form of past tense inflection and the existence of verb groups. It can be reflected that the students need to learn and to review the rules or the pattern of processes aspect in writing recount.

**c. Additions**

The second element of error analysis is additions. The additions are found in 8 out of 20 texts. The total number of additions is 12 or 1,8 %. Besides, text 18 produces the highest number of addition that is 4 times. The students’ error in term of additions in relation to experiential meaning can be viewed in the following example.

Data 11: Additions- Text 18

...the toilet it was very dirty and smelt.

the toilet it	was	very dirty and smelt
Participant: Carrier	Process: Relational- Attributive	Participant: Attribute
Error: Addition		Error: Misinformation

Data 11 shows that the addition exists in the participant of carrier part in which it is stated “the toilet it”. The error of carrier part “the toilet it” is addition because the use of “it” should not appear in the participant part, so that there will be no redundant element. It is incorrect participant because the previous sentence do not expose about “the toilet”. Furthermore, there is the misinformation found in the participant of attributive part “very



dirty and smelt”. It should be “very dirty and smelly”. Therefore, the correct form of “the toilet it was very dirty and smelt” is “the toilet was very dirty and smelly.”

Data 12: Additions – Text 14

It is the most best of the best trip in my life.

It	is	the most best of the best trip in my life.
Participant: Carrier	Process: Relational-Attributive	Participant: Attribute
	Error: Misinformation	Error: Addition

Data 12 shows that the addition is in participant part of attribute “the most best of the best trip in my life.” It belongs to addition because the student has the wrong form of superlative of “good”, she or he writes “the most best...” in which it is false form of superlative “good”. Therefore, the word “most” does not need to appear in the attributive part. It is also found misinformation in the process of relational-attributive part, the student writes “is” that is incorrect. The correct form of the sentence is “it was the best trip in my life”.

To give more complete finding toward the number of additions found in participant, process, and circumstance elements, it can be viewed in the following table.

Table 4 Additions in Experiential Meaning

Experiential Meaning Elements	Additions	
	Total (12 times)	Percentage (1,8 %)
Participant	4	0.6 %
Process	5	0.8 %
Circumstance	3	0.4 %

Table 4 shows that process elements have the dominant number of addition that reaches 5 times or 0.8 %. The students make additions in the processes by writing an item that should not appear in well-formed sentences. It can be stated that the students added redundant item in their writing.

**d. Misinformations**

The third element of error analysis is misinformations. The misinformation is the dominant error feature found in the students’ recounts. The total number of misinformation was 417 or 64.9 %. Moreover, text 12 produces the highest number of misinformations, and text 4 has the lowest number of misinformation. The examples of misinformations that show the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure in the students’ recounts is displayed as follows.

Data 13 : Misinformation – Text 16

I have graduated from my boarding school ...

I	have graduated	from my boarding school,
Participant: Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance: Place
	Error: Misinformation	

Data 13 displays that there is misinformation in process of material part. Since the text is recount text, the student is required to use past tense as the linguistic feature of recount. However, she or he uses present perfect tense in the process part. Therefore, his or her writing of “I have graduated from my boarding school” is incorrect. It is supposed to be “I graduated from my boarding school.”

Data 14: Misinformation – Text 4

I had friend who could accompani me to go around Banjarmasin.

I	had	friend	who	could accompani	me
Participant: Carrier	Process: Relational-Attributive	Participant: Attribute		Process: Material	Participant: Goal
		Error: Omission		Error: Misinformation	

to go	around Banjarmasin.
Process: Material	Circumstance: Place

Data 14 shows that there is misinformation in the material process, it seems that the student commits error due to the selection of wrong vocabulary item. The word “could accompani” is the wrong form. It should be “could accompany”. There is also omission element in the data 14, the student omits the article “a” before the word “friend” as

attributive. Therefore, the incorrect form of the sentence “I had friend who could accompani me to go around Banjarmasin.” is supposed to be “I had a friend who could accompany me to go around Banjarmasin.”

In addition, the dominant number of misinformation is found in processes aspect. The following table displays about the number of misinformation found in participant, process, and circumstanc elements in students’ recounts.

Table 5 Misinformation in Experiential Meaning

Experiential Meaning Elements	Misinformation	
	Total (417 times)	Percentage (64.9 %)
Participant	70	10.9 %
Process	260	40.5 %
Circumstance	87	13.5 %

Table 5, it shows that process elements reaches the highest number of misinformations in 260 times or 40.5 %. Based on the data obtained, the students make errors in misinformations by using the wrong form of the morpheme or structure or by applying the selection of phoneme and vocabulary items.

**e. Misorderings**

The fourth element of error analysis is misorderings. The misorderings found in the students’ recounts in relation to experiential meanings are 42 or 6.5 %. Misorderings are found in 13 out of 20 students’ recounts. The highest number of misordering is produced in text 18 and text 19. The following samples are displayed the misordering found in the students’ recounts.

Data 15: Misordering – Text 19

First, we visited the tourist attractions of the Island Samalana.

First	we	visited	the tourist attractions of the Island Samalana.
	Participant: Actor	Process: Material	Participant: Goal
			Error: Misordering

Data 15 shows that the misordering exists in the participant of goal. In this case, there is the incorrect placement of the goal “the tourist attractions of the Island Samalana.” It supposes to be “... the Samalana Island”. It seems that the student is still influenced by his or her first language in saying “Pulau Samalana” and she or he translates directly into “Island Samalana”.

Data 16: Misordering – Text 12

At present I was studying in the university one of the city in Semarang.

At present	I	was studying	in the university one of the city in Semarang.
Circumstance: Time	Participant:Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance: Place
			Error: Misordering

Data 16 displays that the misordering is in the circumstance of place. The circumstance of place “in the university one of the city in Semarang” is incorrect. It means that the student makes incorrect placement of the circumstance. The correct circumstance is supposed to be “in one of the universities in Semarang city”. Therefore, the sentence will be “At present I was studying in in one of the universities in Semarang city.”

Regarding to the general findings of misorderings found in students’ recount, it shows that participant elements have the dominant number of misordering in which it reaches 21 times or 3.2 % of the total misorderings found in the students’ recount. Below is the table of misorderings found in each element of experiential meaning.

Table 6 Misorderings in Experiential Meaning

Experiential Meaning Elements	Misorderings	
	Total (42 times)	Percentage (6.5 %)
Participant	21	3.2 %
Process	9	1.4 %
Circumstance	12	1.9 %

Comparing with process elements that become the dominant error elements in omission, addition, and misinformation, the process elements are regarded to have the lowest

number in misordering errors. In this case, the highest number in misordering is participant elements that reach 21 times or 3,2 % of the total misordering found in students' recount. It is viewed by students' writing that the students make incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in participants' element.

Regarding to the error analysis in relation to experiential meaning in students' recounts, it can be stated that linguistic features errors of omissions, additions, misinformations, and misorderings are found in 20 students' recounts with the total errors are 643 errors. It can be viewed that the misinformations are the mainly error feature made by the students, then it is followed by omissions, misorderings, and additions.

The findings show that the omissions reach 172 times or 28.6 % with the process elements have the highest result of omission in 103 times or 17.1 %. The additions reach 12 times or 1.8 % with the process elements have the highest result of additions in 5 times or 0.8 %. The misinformations reach 417 times or 64.9 % with the process elements have the highest result of misinformation in 260 times or 40.5 %. The misorderings reach 42 times or 6.5 % with the participant elements have the highest result of misorderings in 21 times or 3.2 %.

It can be inferred that the students have problems in writing of their recount in relation to experiential meaning that cover participant, process, and circumstance. The problems cover the use of singular or plural morpheme, the selection of vocabulary, the use of correct linguistic features in recount, and the incorrect placement of morpheme or group morphemes. Therefore, they produce omissions, additions, misinformations, and misorderings in their recounts.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This paper sets out to discover the frequencies of errors that occur in students' recount in relation to experiential meaning. Based on the error analysis in students' recount, it is found that omissions, additions, misinformations, and misorderings are found in the twenty students' recount with the total errors of 643 errors. It can be viewed that the misinformations type is the mainly error feature made by the students, then it is followed by omissions, misorderings, and additions. The misinformation type reaches 417 times or 64.9 % with the process elements have the highest frequency of misinformation in 260 times or 40.5 %. The omissions type reaches 172 times or 28.6 % with the process elements have the highest frequency of omission in 103 times or 17.1 %. The misordering type reaches 42 times or 6.5 % with the participant elements have the highest result of misorderings in 21 times or 3.2 %.

The addition type reaches 12 times or 1.8 % with the process elements has the highest result of additions in 5 times or 0.8 %.

It can be concluded that the students produce errors in writing of their recount in relation to experiential meaning that consist of participant, process, and circumstance. The errors are the use of singular or plural morpheme, the selection of vocabulary, the use of correct linguistic features in recount, and the incorrect placement of morpheme or group morphemes. Therefore, the students produce omissions, additions, misinformations, and misorderings in their recounts. Talking about the students' problems in making the errors in relation to experiential meaning in their recount, it is important for the lecturer to give the solutions to overcome the students' problems.

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