Micro Editing Common Error Types in Unedited Printed Articles of *The Jakarta Post*

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ABSTRACT

The current study, entitled *Micro Editing Common Error Types in Unedited Printed Articles of The Jakarta Post* investigates the types of errors and the common errors in micro editing of *The Jakarta Post*'s articles. The study used eight business news articles of both unedited and edited versions written by *The Jakarta Post's* journalists as thedata which werecollected from October 23, 2012 to November 1, 2012. The data wereanalyzed qualitatively and the types of errors were classified based on micro editing proposed by Brooks & Pinson (2013) which are grammar, usage, style, spelling and tightening. Further, the types of errors were calculated in percentage to see the common errors. The study reveals that the common errors found are grammar (174 occurrences or 58.6% of 297 occurrences of total error) which is divided into sentence problems, nouns, pronouns, verbs, modifiers, prepositions and conjunctions, then followed by errors in tightening (18.5%), errors in style (10.1%) which consist of capitalization, comma, attribution, abbreviation, hyphen and title, and then followed by errors in usage (10.1%), and spelling (2.7%). The findings indicate that the news writers have lack of proficiency in language skills.

Keywords: *Editing, Micro Editing, News, Newspaper, Errors*

INTRODUCTION

News and information cannot be separated from human's life. West (n.d. cited in Kalsnes, 2002, p.3) and Santana (2005, p.86) believe that "a community needs news for the same reason that a man needs eyes." It means that news is important because it provides information. As a means of communication, mass media aims to disseminate news and information.

Previously, most people of the older generation are used to consuming information from traditional media like newspaper and magazines (Tandon, 2008). Nowadays, the younger generation prefers to consume information from a computer screen like internet to information from the printed page (Brooks and Sissors, 2001; Tandon, 2008).

Yet, newspaper still exists because of its several advantages. As suggested by Brooks and Sissors (2001), newspaper has the advantage because it is portable and can be consumed selectively. It means that we choose what we want to read. Moreover, Patil (2011) proposes that "print media has the advantage of making a longer impact on the minds of the reader with more in-depth reporting analysis" (p.2).

Although there are changes in the way news gathered and disseminated, the writing structure of both online and newspapers news are still the same. Zaenuddin (2011), for example, suggests that there is formula to follow; namely, the formula 5 W + 1 H (what, who, where, when, why and how). Further, Brooks and Sissors (2001) state that both online and printed news have the same stages to publish and dissaminate news.

One of the stages is that all news articles must be edited by the editor before getting published in order to make an error-free publication (Einsohn, 2000). Simply put, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) defines editing as "to prepare a piece of writing to be published by correcting the mistakes, making improvements to it" (p.421). In addition, Greenberg (2010) states that "editing is part of process of text creation—the making of a text which takes behind the scene" (p.8). Hence, editing is a kind of process of creating news articles become 'flawless' before getting printed. It aims to make the articles readable, well-organized and easy to understand.

Actually, the editing in online news differs from printed news specifically in newspaper. Editing in online news is not deep and careful because the correction can be done easily and rapidly. However, editing in newspaper must be done extra carefully. Once it gets printed, it is uncorrectable. This condition is emphasized by Einsohn (2000) and Brooks and Sissors (2001) who state that the news in printed newspaper must be correct, concise, consistent, complete, clear,

and coherent (Einsohn, 2000; Brooks & Sissors, 2001).

Moreover, Brooks and Pinson (2013) suggest that there are two types of editing; namely, macro editing and micro editing. Macro editing ensures that the story is accurate, worth running, objective, legal, ethical, tasteful and sensitive to the audiences. Meanwhile, micro editing ensures that the grammar and its usage are correct meaning that there are no typos, redundancies and misspelled words.

In addition, previous studies on editing have been conducted. Most of them focused on micro editing such as finding the common errors. Hyde (1915), for instance, examined that the common problems found in editing were errors of expression, typographical style, inaccuracies, news values, diction and style, and libelous statement. Other studies which came from Hicks (2007) and Brooks, Pinson, and Wilson (2013) discovered that the common errors were dangling modifier, pronoun abuse, incorrect use of subjunctive and confusion of using that and which.

Those previous studies above were mostly conducted in countries in which English is the first language. Indonesia where English is used as a foreign language also has English newspaper. One of them is *The Jakarta Post*. However, the study about micro editing especially in English newspaper is rarely found in Indonesia. To

fill the gap, the current study was conducted. Since *The Jakarta Post* was accessible, the study was conducted there. The current study attempted to reveal the kind of errors and the common errors found in micro editing by using eight sample of both the unedited version and edited version of *The Jakarta Post*'s business news articles as data.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed descriptive qualitative research because this study describes the types of errors and the common errors found in micro editing of newspaper articles. As suggested by Sukmadinata (2012), qualitative research describes and discovers phenomenon. This is in line with Bogdan and Biklen (1982, cited in Sugiyono, 2011) who state that qualitative is descriptive in which the data collected is in the form of words rather than numbers.

The data were taken from one of the English newspaper in Indonesia, *The Jakarta Post*. The data were collected from October 23, 2012 to November 1, 2012. The study used eight newspaper articles as the sample. Those newspaper articles were written by *The Jakarta Post*'s business journalists and had been edited by their editors.

After gathering the data, the first step in data analysis is comparing the eight

unedited versions to edited versions. Second, the differences found were highlighted. Then, the types of errors were classified based on micro editing proposed by Brooks & Pinson (2013). Next, the types of errors were calculated in percentage to see the common errors in micro editing.

To make analysis become clear, the data of the study were interpreted into words by elaborating it on the result of data identifying and classifying and analyzing it based on theory proposed by Brooks & Pinson (2013).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing eight unedited articles of *The Jakarta Post*, the study discovered that types of errors occurred in grammar, usage, style, spelling and tightening. The total errors discovered were297 errors. The most common error was found in grammar which is 174 occurrences or 58.6% of 297 occurrences of errors. Then, it was followed by errors in tightening (55 occurrences or 18.6%), errors in style (30 occurrences or 10.1%) and errors in usage (30 occurrences or 10.1%). The least frequent error was found in spelling (8 occurrences or 2.7%). The findings alsorevealed that grammar (174 occurrences or 58.6% of 297 occurrences of errors) appears to be the most frequent errors. It is likely that the findings are in line with Hyde (1915), Hicks (2007) and Brooks, Pinson, and Wilson (2013) that

found grammatical errors is the most frequent error occurred in editing news. This finding implies that the journalists have lack of proficiency or deficient in language skills particularly in grammar and usage.

The most dominant errors in grammar are modifiers (52 occurrences or 30% of 174 occurrences of errors), followed by verbs (36 occurrences or 20.7% of 174 occurrences of errors). Errors in nouns come to the third place (27 occurrences or 15.5% of 174 occurrences of errors). Errors in prepositions take place as the fourth frequent errors (23 occurrences or 13.2% of 174 occurrences of errors). The next dominant errors found are pronouns (22 occurrences or 12.6% 174 occurrences of errors), followed by conjunctions (12 occurrences or 6.9% of 174 occurrences). The least dominant error in grammar is sentence problems (2 occurrences or 1.1% of 174 occurrences of errors).

From the distribution of common errors in grammar, the 10 common errors in grammar are incorrect tenses, missing articles, incorrect prepositions, misused articles, singular for plural, plural for singular, incomplete noun phrases, missing possessive pronoun, misused conjunctions, incorrect articles. The most common error in grammar are tenses. This finding suggests that the different structure of English and Bahasa seems to be the cause of errors. In Bahasa, there are no tenses' rule.

Further, errors in tightening take the second place (55 occurrences or 18.5% of 297 occurrences of errors). Style and usage have the same percentage of errors which is 30 occurrences or 10.1 % of 297 occurrences of errors. However, spelling (8 occurrences or 2.7% of 297 occurrences of errors) is recognized as the least frequent error in eight unedited news articles of *The Jakarta Post*.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of analysis, the present study concludes that there are five types of errors found in the unedited version of *The Jakarta Post*'s news articles, which are grammar, usage, style, spelling and tightening. Errors in grammar are divided into seven categories: sentence problems, verbs, nouns, pronouns, prepositions, modifiers (adjectives and adverbs), and conjunctions. The findings indicate that the news writers or the journalists have lack of proficiency in language skills.

In terms of common errors, the most frequent type of error is grammar (174 occurrences or 58.6% of 297 occurrences), followed by tightening (55 occurrences or 18.6% of 297 occurrences) then style and usage, each of them has the same number (30 occurrences or 10.1%). The least common error found is spelling (8 occurrences or 2.7%).

This finding on the common errors suggests that the difference in structure between English and Indonesia causes the grammar as the most common error. Further, the background of the journalists, which are non-native English writers, also seems to be the cause of errors.

Based on the findings and discussions stated previously in this study, there are some suggestions for further study. Since this study only investigated the types of errors and the common errors in micro editing, it would be challenging if further research examines the types of errors in macro editing or both in macro and micro editing.

In terms of data, it would be interesting to use more articles or conduct similar research in other English newspapers in Indonesia. Finally, for *The Jakarta Post,* it would be better if the recruitment of journalists commits strictly or the recruiter provides training for journalists about grammar, usage and its stylebook.

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