

GRAMMATICAL ERROR ANALYSIS IN ESSAY WRITING

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Abstrak

Siswa tidak dapat menghindari untuk membuat kesalahan (error) yang sebenarnya dapat digunakan untuk memperkaya pengetahuan mereka dalam menggunakan bahasa asing. Kesalahan (error) sebagai penyimpangan yang sistematis terjadi ketika siswa belum belajar konsep bahasa tersebut dan membuat kesalahan secara terus menerus karena mereka belum mengetahui bentuk yang benar. Ada beberapa faktor yang menyebabkan terjadinya kesalahan, antara lain: kecerobohan, interferensi bahasa pertama dan penerjemahan. Ketika menggunakan bahasa Inggris dalam tulisan esai, siswa dimungkinkan membuat kesalahan pada beberapa aspek tata bahasa antara lain tenses, aspects, kelas kata, susunan kata, infleksi, dan tanda baca. Oleh karena itu, kecermatan dalam penggunaan aspek tata bahasa tersebut dalam menulis kalimat-kalimat berbahasa Inggris harus diperhatikan, khususnya bagi siswa yang ingin mengembangkan keterampilan menulis dalam bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis kesalahan tata bahasa pada tulisan esai mahasiswa STKIP PGRI Ponorogo dan menemukan faktor-faktor penyebab kesalahan tata bahasa tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Kesalahan Tata Bahasa, Analisis Kesalahan, Tulisan Esai

Abstract

Students cannot avoid making errors which might enrich learners' knowledge in using a foreign language. Error as such a systematic deviation which occurs when the student has not learned something of the language and gets it wrong constantly, because he has not learned the correct form. However, there are some factors that cause the errors such as carelessness, first language interference, and translation. When using English in their essays writing, students might make errors in various aspects of grammar, such as tenses, aspects, word classes, word order, inflections, and punctuation. Therefore, the accuracy of using them in the writing of English sentences must be considered, especially by students who are developing writing skills in English as a foreign language. By writing English sentences according to the grammatical structure, the meaning of it will be accurate, easily understood and acceptable. This article aims to identify types of grammatical errors made by the students of English education department at STKIP PGRI Ponorogo in writing essay and find out the factors causing the students' grammatical errors in writing essay.

Keywords: Grammatical Error, Error Analysis, Essay Writing.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages used in the world. In Indonesia, English is learnt from elementary up to university because it is very important in this globalization era. Language is a system that human beings use to share their feelings or

ideas. In a language, there is a set of rules to be followed with the speakers. This set of rules is called *grammar*, that is an explanation of how the form of words can be changeable and united into sentences in a language (Harmer 2001:12). Grammar organizes the language, so that the meaning of a sentence can be clear and easy to understand. As a means of communication, language consists of form and meaning. Forms of language can be divided into elements such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and even at a higher level called discourse or text. Grammar is the central of the teaching and the basic knowledge to learning language effectively. Grammar plays an important role (Goh, 2007) and becomes one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach as well as to learn (Byrd, 2003). According to Mickan (2001), grammar analyzes the way the sentences work in the writing because writing is one of the skills which is used by people to communicate their ideas, thought, feeling, and emotions into words and paper.

In general, language users often use a form of language to convey information. Therefore, for the meaning of the information submitted is not false and easily understood, language users need to understand the aspects of linguistics, particularly grammatical aspect in formulating phrases, clauses or sentences, and non-linguistic aspects, especially socio-cultural aspects that surround the language. They should understand the broad sense of sentence, which includes a sentence pattern or elements, sentence structure and functions of sentences. Understanding these differences thus need to be considered because grammatical structures of one language to another language tend to differ. Callow (Baker, 1995: 180) states that Each language has its own patterns to convey the interrelationships of persons and events.

In using a foreign language, learners cannot avoid making errors which might enrich learners' knowledge about the language they are learning. In the process of learning a foreign language, making errors is a common thing that the Indonesian learners face when they write an essay. They necessarily need knowledge of the grammatical rules. Norrish (1983:7) defines error as such a systematic deviation which occurs when the learner has not learned something of the language and gets it wrong constantly, because he has not learned the correct form. However, there are some factors that cause the errors such as carelessness, first language interference, and translation. When using English in their essays writing, English students of STKIP PGRI Ponorogo in the academic year of 2018/2019 might make errors in various aspects of grammar, such as tenses, aspects, word classes, word order, inflections, and punctuation. Therefore, the accuracy of using them in the writing of English sentences must be considered, especially by students who are developing writing skills in English as a foreign language. By writing English sentences according to the grammatical structure, the meaning of it will be accurate, easily understood and acceptable. In this context, the grammatical errors analyzed are limited on tenses, aspects, and word classes.

Error analysis is a procedure used by researchers and educators that includes sampling, identifying errors in the sample, evaluating the seriousness of the error. Teachers should understand better about the mistakes made by students. Ellis states that Error Analysis is a procedure used by researchers and teachers which involves collecting samples of learner, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness (1994: 50 – 57).

The sentence, which is free from error must have two criteria namely acceptability and appropriateness. Acceptance means the sentence is spoken or written by students

must be understood by native speakers as the owner of that language. Acceptance here is not referring to the rules of grammar but in the context of suitability. While appropriateness refers to the ability of constructing sentence that fits the context. Lyons in James (1998: 67) says that an acceptable utterance is one that has been, or might be, produced by a native speaker in some appropriate context and is, or would be, accepted by other native speakers as belonging to the language in question. To decide on the acceptability of a piece of language we refer not to rules, but the contexts, trying to contextualize the utterance in question.

It is important to analyze the errors made by language learners because those errors will be such a constructive input of language learning process for learners. According to Brown (2007: 226), an error is a deviation from the adult grammar of native speakers which signifies the inter language capability of the language learners, while error analysis (James, 1998:1), is the process of concluding the occurrence, nature, reasons and effects of unsuccessful language.

Analyzing the errors made by learners provides many benefits in teaching and learning. For this reason, understanding errors is a very valuable feedback to evaluate, plan teaching materials, and implement teaching strategies. By knowing the similarity type of error will be greatly useful in determining the sequence of teaching and the emphasis in the classroom.

Familiarity in the types of errors that learners actually make is as a valuable guide for determining the sequence and emphasis of instruction in the English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Dulay, Burt and Krashen in Fauziati (2002: 75) said that Error Analysis has several major purposes. The first is providing data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. And, it is to indicate teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly, and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively.

There are some factors that cause errors in a sentence (Norrish, 1983:21) such as: (1) Carelessness, which is the error caused by less inspiration of the students while they learn the second language or the uninteresting material that makes students less enthusiastic in learning the language; (2) First Language Interference, which is caused by the mother tongue that gets involved while the students are using the foreign language. The errors caused first language interference mostly in the area of misusing verb, using incorrect prepositions and redundant preposition, omitting and misusing articles, misusing plural/singular agreement, adjectives, and conjunctions; and (3) Translation, which is because of students blindly translating a sentence, phrase or an idiomatic expression from their first language into the language they are learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the qualitative descriptive which was chosen to present and describe the grammatical errors found in the essays written by English Department students of STKIP PGRI Ponorogo in the academic year 2018/2019. The data collected taken in the form of words. To analyze data, the writer adopted from Miles and Huberman, there are three steps in qualitative data analysis; data reduction, data display and verify conclusion (Emzir, 2010: 129-133). The writer used the procedure of error analysis by Ellis (1997: 15 – 19). There were four steps in analyzing the errors: identification, description, explanation, and evaluation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Grammatical Errors

After checking the entire student's essay and categorizing relevant data, it was found that there were 110 errors. 81 errors concerned with grammatical errors and 29 errors related to the factors causing errors. The findings showed that the most common errors which the participants did were English determiner (19 errors or 23.5 %) followed by errors in using noun (16 errors or 19.8 %), preposition (11 errors or 13.6 %), tenses and aspect (10 errors or 12.3 %), adjective (8 errors or 9.9 %), conjunction (8 errors or 9.9 %), pronoun (4 errors or 4.9 %), verb (4 errors or 4.9 %), and adverb (1 error or 1.2 %).

Table 1 Grammatical Errors

No.	Type of error	Number of errors	Percentage
1.	Tenses and aspect	10	12.3 %
2.	Noun	16	19.8%
3.	Pronoun	4	4.9 %
4.	Verb	4	4.9 %
5.	Adjective	8	9.9 %
6.	Adverb	1	1.2 %
7.	Preposition	11	13.6 %
8.	Conjunction	8	9.9 %
9.	Determiner	19	23.5%
Total		81	100%

As presented in the table 1, the most common grammatical errors were in English determiner (19 errors or 23.5%). It became problematic for participants. They made errors in the use of indefinite article (a/an) and definite article (the), because they did not know how to use indefinite articles in generic reference and definite article in specific reference. Not only misusing the articles, the errors in *the* and *a* also appeared because the participants added them, for example...*There will be many opportunities to get high income and *a better lifestyle* instead of *There will be many opportunities to get high income and better lifestyle*. The participants added article *the* in their writing, for example *Take care is not only give the affection but also *the education* instead of *Take care is not only give the affection but also education*. Some participants also omitted article *the* in sentence, for example, *Education is most important thing in our life* instead of *Education is *the most important thing in our life*. The participants omitted articles *the* and *a* in their writing works, because they did not notice their usage in a sentence. Incorrect application in article also appeared when the participants added article which was not needed, for example in the sentence *Education is *an essential*. Here, article *an* should not be used, because the following word is adjective.

The participants got confused in using article, because they referred to Bahasa Indonesia as the L1. The use of *a* and *an* in Bahasa Indonesia was commonly omitted in a sentence. Bahasa Indonesia did not have article *the*. According to Celce-Muria and Larsen-Freeman (1999) in Bataineh (2005), articles were one of difficulties in learning English, especially for learners whose language did not have articles.

Besides using English determiner, the participants made 19.8% or 16 errors in using noun. The participants misused word class in sentence, for example ... *in getting well *educated in academic* ...instead of ... *in getting well education in academic*

They also used incorrect uncountable noun, for example *They have experienced *many experiences in the field of education and community* instead of *They have experienced much experience in the field of education and community*. In addition, the participants were indicated to use incorrect use singular or plural noun. It occurred because in Bahasa Indonesia, there was no addition forms for plural things. The participants made errors in applying the plural form. They omitted suffix *-s* for plural things, for example ... *1 – 2 *dress for years* instead of ... *1 – 2 dresses for years*. Here, the participants omitted suffix *-s* in plural form of *dresses*. Errors also occurred when participants missed the use of noun in sentence, for example *the greater *_____ to get ...* instead of *The greater chance to get*

Participants errors in using noun included incorrect use of word class, uncountable noun, singular or plural noun, and missing noun. As the result of L1 interference, the participants' errors in singulars and plurals occurred because Bahasa Indonesia has the same form without any addition whether for singular or plural, for example, *satu baju* (one dress) and *dua baju* (two dresses) had the same noun *dress* (baju). It was different from English which stated *a dress* and *two dresses*. Some participants realized the rule of singulars and plurals, but they misused this rule.

The next error that the participants made was preposition (11 or 13.6 %). The participants made errors in using prepositions of *of*, *in*, *for*, *to* and *at*. Some participants faced confusion because they did not master the application of preposition. For example, *highly educated is the spearhead *for a happy life* instead of *Highly educated is the spearhead of a happy life*. Here, the participant substituted preposition *for* into *of* the other example occurred when the participants substituted *at* into *in*; *Education must be truly directed *at producing ...* instead of *Education must be truly directed in producing ...*

Errors in prepositions appeared because there was uncertainty in participants to select the correct preposition (Darus & Ching, 2009; Dyarenggasti, 2012). It also happened because Bahasa Indonesia did not use preposition in its sentence. It made participants could not find the relevant preposition to be used in English sentence. Learners tended to omit the prepositions when they could not find appropriate preposition.

Tenses and aspect (10 errors or 12.3 %) also became problematic for participants. Tenses are a temporal linguistic quality that indicates a meaning and a function, for example, the simple present tense is usually show the present time (I am a student), simple past tense is to express the past activity (I was a student) and the future tense is to show the future events (I will be a student).

Errors in tenses occurred because participants used wrong verb tense. It should be occurred in simple present tense, but the participants used simple past, for example, ... *we *learned from 1st class to 12th in schools* instead of ... *we learn from 1st class to 12th in schools*. Other example occurred in the sentences like, *there are private and government jobs in which *required a bachelor degree* instead of *There are private and government jobs in which require a bachelor degree*. Errors which participants produced in word form occurred because they did not master the rule of tenses or the pattern. In order to use simple present tense, the participants should use simple form of the verb, such as *learn* rather than *learned*, *require* rather than *required*. The occurrence of errors in present tense was not surprising, because English tense forms were quite different from Bahasa Indonesia. English indicated the use of time with past, present, and future tense. On the other hand, Bahasa Indonesia did not have tenses. These errors possibly occurred because of the lack of knowledge in using present tense. The participants might directly translate the word from Bahasa Indonesia into English. Errors also occurred in the use of

incorrect subject verb agreement, for example *as we know that time *have changed* instead of *As we know that time has changed*.

The participants made 8 errors or 9.9 % in the use of adjective. They made error and mistake in their writing by using incorrect adjective, for example **Highly educated is the spearhead for a happy life* instead of *High education is the spearhead for a happy life*. Table 6 showed the participants' errors in using adjective. The participants also made errors in using comparative, for example *So that they have *more broad insight ...* instead of *So that they have broader insight* The error occurred because the participants didn't understand well about the pattern of comparative degree. The other error also happened in the use superlative adjective, for example *It is the *easy generation ...* instead of *It is the easiest generation ...*

The next errors were in the use of conjunction (8 errors or 9.9 %). The participants used incorrect conjunction in their sentence, for example **... because without human education it will be difficult to develop ...* instead of *... without human education it will be difficult to develop* They also misused conjunction which, for example *...we can obtain a competent young generation *which is a combination ...* instead of *...we can obtain a competent young generation who is a combination ...* The conjunction *which* should be substituted by *who*.

The next error that the participants made was pronoun (4 or 4.9%). The pronoun errors were classified into object pronoun and possessive pronoun. The participants still got confused to write the correct pronoun. The participant used incorrect object pronoun. As an example of the sentence *...remain strong in all difficulties and be able to solve* it* instead of *...remain strong in all difficulties and be able to solve them*. In this case, participant substituted object pronoun *them* to *it*. The participant also misused possessive pronoun, for example *When someone is responsible for *their own works ...* instead of *When someone is responsible for his or her own works* The participant should use possessive pronoun *his or her* rather than *there*.

Verb was the next error that the participants made (4 errors or 4.9 %). The participants made errors in using subject-verb tense agreement, for example *... educated people *helps the progression of society* instead of *... educated people help the progression of society*. The participant should use *help* without addition *s* because of plural subject. Errors in subject-verb agreements occurred due to the L1 interference. In Bahasa Indonesia, participants did not distinguish the usage of verb for different subjects. They also used incorrect verb form for passive sentence, for example *School education goals can be to *understand ...* instead of *School education goals can be understood ...* . The participants made errors in using verb because they did not understand about subject verb agreement and verb used for passive sentence.

The last error that the participants made was adverb (1 error or 1.2 %). The participant made error in the use of adverb of manner due to L1 interference, for example *That is to say every problem will be dealt *with wisely* instead of *That is to say every problem will be dealt wisely*. The use of *with* should be omitted instead of *wisely*.

The Factors Causing Errors

In addition the result of the study shows that 14 errors or 48 % of all errors were indicated in carelessness which was the most common errors, followed by 10 errors or 35 % of all errors in translation, and 5 errors or 17 % of all errors in first language interference. The total error was 29. Table 2 showed the factors causing errors produced by the participants.

Table 2 The Factors Causing Errors

No.	Type of error	Number of errors	Percentage
1.	Carelessness	14	48 %
2.	First language interference	5	17 %
3.	Translation	10	35 %
	Total	29	100%

As presented in table 2, the most common factor causing errors carelessness (14 errors or 48 %), followed by translation (10 or 35 %), and first language interference (5 or 17 %).

The most common factor causing the error was carelessness. Participant made error in using comparative degree, for example *They have *more broad insight because ...* instead of *They have broader insight because ...*. The next error was incorrect use of determiner, for example *Education is *an essential ...* instead of *Education is essential...*. The participant did not consider the word used after determiner. It should be noun or noun phrase. Incorrect use of subject verb agreement was also indicated, for example *Educated people *has intelligence and skills ...* instead of *Educated people have intelligence and skills ...*. The last error was the incorrect use of word choice, for example *.. the next generation who are *experts ...* instead of *.. the next generation who are expert ...*

The next error that the participants made was translation. Participant made error in using word order, for example **Because, with education means that a nation has prepared generations of nations ready to use...* instead of *Nation has prepared ready to use generations with education*. English and Indonesian have different sentence structure. The phrase *generations of nations ready to use* in the sentence is possibly the Indonesian translation, because the order or words is acceptable in Indonesian but not in English. The next error was repetition, for example *We can be proud of ourselves and especially *be proud of our parents* instead of *We can be proud of ourselves and especially our parents*. The participant should not repeat the same word. The last error was incorrect use of conjunction, for example *...competent young generation *which is combination ...* instead of *...competent young generation who has combination*. The participant did not consider the use of conjunction for personal subject.

The last error that the participants made was first language interference. Participant made error in making incomplete sentence, for example **Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) where they have devoted all their energy and thought to the activity* instead of *Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) where they have devoted all their energy and thought to the activity is ...*. The next error was diction, for example *We will be placed in a good position *according to our expertise* instead of *We will be placed in a good position based on our expertise*. The participant had problem in choosing appropriate word in the sentence. It also occurred in using inappropriate preposition in which the participant tended to follow L 1 pattern, for example *Every problem will be dealt *with wisely* instead of *Every problem will be dealt wisely*. The error proves that the difference between the first language of the students (Indonesian) and the foreign language learned (English) system influences the learners to commit errors in their essays. The participant also omitted be used in nominal sentence, for example *...we *as young people ...* instead of *...we are as young people ...*. It happened because there is no use of be in Bahasa Indonesia. The last error was the use of superlative pattern that should be applied in the sentence, for example *It is *the easy generation ...* instead of *It is the easiest generation*. This error occurred

because the participant had lack of knowledge about the use of superlative pattern in the sentence.

By knowing the types of these grammatical errors, it is hoped that the teachers or lectures can help and guide the students to write English using better grammar and reduce the errors. It is also expected that that this study will help the English Department students to recognize the failure in using English grammar. By recognizing their grammatical errors, the process of learning can be more fluent, specifically to Indonesian students who learn English; they will require it in the use of English grammar.

CONCLUSION

The study directs to a pedagogical implication on Second Language Acquisition. It was essential for the English lectures to focus on students' weakness and needed to strengthen students' understanding especially on grammar. The learning strategies should be enhanced. The lectures could create teaching-learning activities which carry important effects for students in learning L2.

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