

AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON STUDENTS' WRITING

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Abstract

This study was conducted to find out the grammatical errors on students' writing. Grammatical errors were analyzed based on surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen. It consisted of four types, they were omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. There were 27 students that became the subject of this research. The purpose of this research was to identify and describe the dominant types of grammatical errors on students' writing and to know to what extent the factors cause grammatical errors on students' writing. Qualitative and quantitative were chosen as the research design. Library research, analysis, documentation, writing test result, questionnaire, and interview were used as the instruments of the data collection. The result of this research showed that the number of errors occurred was 810 errors. Omission errors had the biggest percentage with the percentage of 37%, followed by addition errors with the percentage of 32%. Misformation errors was in the third position with the percentage of 30% while misordering errors became the lowest errors with the percentage of 1%. The factors causing errors were carelessness (73%), first language interference (61%), translation (67%), teacher's explanation and students' incomprehension about grammar. Based on the result of the data, the more factors faced by the students, the more frequency of errors on writing occurred. Therefore, the teacher should recognize the students' errors and encourage the students to learn grammar.

Keywords: grammatical errors, students, writing

Introduction

In Indonesia, students who learn English are expected to master all language skills, so do English Education students. They are required to communicate in English well. English learning has main concern on the mastery of language competences to achieve functional level for communication both spoken and written. Therefore, students are demanded to earn spoken and written products such as short functional texts, transactional texts, essay, etc.

English subject has four language skills to be mastered by students as the goal of learning English. Those language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and reading are referred as receptive skills, it is related with inputs which are comprehended by students when they are learning English. Meanwhile, speaking and writing are referred as productive skills, it is related with outputs or products which are produced by students

after getting inputs from listening and reading activities. However, all of the skills are to be improved in the process of teaching and learning English.

Among the four skills above, writing is the most difficult one to be learnt by students. Writing needs broad knowledge and deep thinking process to produce words, sentences, and paragraphs at the same with good English grammar. As Palmer (1994, p. 1) cited in Alfiyani (2013, p. 1) states that writing is difficult to learn because the writer should involve a process that includes planning, organizing, and revising to present meaning in words or sentences. It means that writing requires capability at organizing and combining information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts in order to be understandable. Because writing is not simple and easy, the students need to practice a lot in writing to make a readable and meaningful writing.

The learners must apply the five general components of the writing process; they are content, form, grammar, style and mechanic. In fact, in writing process students cannot avoid making mistakes and committing errors especially when they are trying to arrange sentences or use tenses. Consequently, they commonly write sentences which are grammatically incorrect. In order to compose good writing, students should understand grammar well. If their writing has incorrect grammar, the readers cannot understand about the meaning inside. According to Alufohai (2016, p. 62) grammar at the sentence level is fundamental for the writing of compositions in English language. There are many rules in grammar, including articles, parts of speech, sentence pattern, and tense, etc (Cook and Ricard, 1980) cited in Muhsin (2016, p. 81). Some mistakes and errors occur when the students do not understand well about the English grammar. If the teacher does not realize about students' mistakes and errors, those mistakes and errors may occur repeatedly because they do not have the correction.

The statement above is reinforced by the description of pre-observation in English Education Department of University of Muhammadiyah Semarang in the academic year 2016-2017. Based on the pre-observation, the researcher found that there were grammatical errors in students' writing. It should not be ignored because it will give impact on communication in English.

Most of the students stated that grammar is difficult especially in writing. Then vocabulary mastery becomes the second problem, and organizing ideas is the next problem in writing. Consequently, those problems give impact on students' writing performance.

Many factors which cause the learners of English as a foreign language make errors and sometimes first language interference also becomes one of the causes. The different structures in the first language and the second language potentially generate error in writing. The way Indonesian

sentences formed is different from the English way. So, it is normal when learners make errors in language in writing. Therefore, when the teachers teach, they will find their students face some difficulties.

In this research, the researcher would like to analyze the students' errors of grammar on students' writing. The researcher wants to know what errors are mostly made by the students on grammar under the title "An Analysis of Grammatical Error on Students' Writing". It is very important to know how many types of errors in writing to help them understand writing skill well. This result of the analysis hopefully gives some contribution in attempting to decrease errors done by the students and help them to improve writing skill in learning English.

Methodology

This research was designed by using descriptive qualitative research because it was aimed to describe grammatical errors on students' writing. The data about grammatical errors in students' writing were analyzed based on the results of the data collection instruments.

Descriptive qualitative method is called as interpretive method because the result of the research is related to interpreting about data found in the field. (Sugiyono, 2013, p. 14). Arikunto (2007, p. 234) states that descriptive research has not purpose to test the certain hypothesis, but just describe some variable and condition naturally. So the researcher described and explained about anything related to this analysis.

The researcher used writing test result, questionnaire, and interview as the instruments of data collection. They were analyzed comprehensively. Although this research more focused on descriptive qualitative method, but serving numerical data in order to get valid and countable data was needed. So, the quantitative method has conducted in this research to see the percentage and frequencies for supporting the research.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the researcher showed the analysis data of grammatical errors on students' writing which was analyzed based on surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen. All of the data were presented in Table 1 below.

Table. Data Result of Errors on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

No.	Surface Strategy Taxonomy	Component	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Omission		300	37%
2.	Addition	Double marking	0	32%
		Regularization	60	
		Simple addition	200	
		Total	260	
3	Misformation	Regularization	209	30%
		Archi-form	6	
		Alternating	24	
		Total	239	
4	Misordering		11	1%
Total			810	100%

The result of the research showed that omission errors became the most errors made by second and fourth semester students with 300 errors or 37% from the total 810 errors. The reason was because the students omitted items that must appear in the sentences. The errors were mostly about the elimination of correct linguistic words, morphemes, and phrases. From the data of students' writing, the researcher found the common errors such as the students omitted "be", final "-s" or "-es" for plural noun, and subject. The example of omission error was "Mr. Smith always on time." From the sentence, the student omitted be "is" after the subject. The sentence above was nominal sentence. To construct nominal sentence, the students need be (e.g. is, am, are, was, were, etc.) which has function as predicate. So, it should be "Mr. Smith is always on time".

Addition errors became the second place or lower than omission with the number of errors were 260 errors or 32%.

This was because the students often added some items which were not needed in the sentences and made the sentences had unclear meaning. The example of addition error was "They know how to teaching students". From the sentence, the student added final "-ing" in the end of "teaching" in which it should be infinitive verb. So, the best correction was "They know how to teach students".

Misformation errors became the third rank with the number of errors as many as 239 errors or 30%. It was because the students used the wrong forms of the morpheme or word, moreover the students did not give attention to grammatical rules. The example of misformation error was "Mr. Smith have enjoying lecturing". From the sentence, the student used the wrong form of "have" which should be "has", because the subject was singular noun. Moreover, the student wrote "enjoying" instead of "enjoyable". The student could not change the word "enjoy" into adjective form to make a phrase. It could be seen that the student could not perform the right formation process. So, the sentence above should be "Mr. Smith has enjoyable lecturing".

The other result was misordering errors which became the lowest percentage of errors made by students. The students made errors 11 times or 1 % out of the whole errors. This happened because actually the students did not put words in the right order. The example of misordering error was "Jakarta's inhabitant almost 85.36% are moslem". In that sentence, the student wanted to write "Warga Jakarta hampir 85.36% adalah muslim" but the student failed to arrange the sentence in the right order. Furthermore the student use "inhabitant" as diction to translate "warga" instead of another word "citizen". Therefore, best correction was "Almost 85.36% citizens of Jakarta are moslem".

In addition, the further discussion would be correlated to the factors causing errors. The data result from questionnaire and interview revealed the factors causing

errors on students' writing. Those factors were carelessness (73%), first language interference (61%), translation (67%), teacher's explanation, and students' incomprehension about grammar.

The first factor was carelessness. Carelessness referred to students' motivation in learning English. It happened because the students had lack of attention or slip of the pen, for instance when the student wrote "*On the other hand, there is Mr. Jones. Although Mr. James is not young anymore, but his spirit of lecturing/teaching beating young students*". From the sentence, it could be seen that the student replaced "*Mr. James*" for "*Mr. Jones*" in the previous sentence. The researcher was sure that actually the student would like to write "*Mr. Jones*" but he failed to write "*Mr. Jones*" in the next sentence because the subject was "*Mr. Jones*" not "*Mr. James*". But it happened because he had lack of attention. It was also supported by the data from the interview in which some of the students sometimes wrote hurriedly and did not check their writing. Finally, that error could result alternating error.

The second factor was the first language interference. It could be seen from the sentence "*Different with Jakarta, Semarang is the capital Central Java*". The student would like to write "*Berbeda dengan Jakarta, Semarang adalah ibu kota Jawa Tengah*", but "*berbeda dengan*" was translated by the student into "*different with*" in which in English it should be "*different from*". It could be said that the sentence made by the student was interfered by the first language (*Bahasa Indonesia*). Another example was "*The first one is develop country and the second one is country which progressed*". The student would like to write "*Negara maju*" and "*Negara berkembang*" in which in English it should be "*developed country*" and "*developing country*". Those errors could be categorized as misformation. It was also indicated that the students translated the sentences literally. Based on the data, the percentage of first language

interference and translation which were caused the errors were 61% and 67% which meant high. Surely, those factors become obstacles when the students were learning English. Therefore, the errors of misformation appeared on students' writing.

In addition, considerable factors which caused error were teacher's explanation and students' incomprehension about grammar. Teacher's explanation would influence students' incomprehension about grammar. The teacher should make the students understand and use the rules of English grammar correctly. If the teacher could not explain English lesson clearly, it would harm students' comprehension. As a result, the students made mistakes and errors. The students often generalized some rules. They did mistakes and errors at using auxiliary, diction, passive form, subject verb agreement, singular and plural nouns, and basic grammar terminology.

From the explanation above, it could be summarized that the factors mentioned caused the errors occurred. However, those factors related to students' characteristics, background knowledge, and experiences in learning English would give impact on the students' writing performance. Therefore, the more factors faced by the students, the more frequency of errors on writing occurred.

Conclusions

The analysis of grammatical errors on students' writing in English Education Department of University of Muhammadiyah Semarang had been conducted by the researcher, based on the result of this research, it could be concluded that:

1. Omission errors became the highest errors on students' writing with the percentage of 37%, the second place was addition errors with the percentage of 32%, the third place was misformation errors with the percentage of 30%, and the last was misordering with the percentage of 1%.
2. The factors causing errors were carelessness (73%), first language

interference (61%), translation (67%), teacher's explanation and incomprehension about grammar.

3. Based on the result of questionnaire, carelessness became the dominant factor which influenced the students in making errors with the percentage of 73%.
4. The more factors faced by the students, the more frequency of errors on writing occurred.

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