

AN ANALYSIS OF COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH MADE BY STUDENTS OF THE FOURTH SEMESTER IN THE FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURE IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2021/2022

Author: Roesitha

e-mail: roesitha2@gmail.com

Affiliation: Bimbel Smart Kids

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out common errors in English made by students of the fourth semester in the Faculty of Languages and Culture in the academic year of 2021/2022. The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method. Thornbury and Richard theory becomes the main key in this research. The result of this research showed that 544 items of grammatical errors. The most frequent type of grammatical error is verb tense with the total number is 137 items or 6,3 %. The second is errors of article which consist of 123 items or 5,6%. The next are errors of pronoun (97 items or 4.3%), errors of preposition (77 items or 3.3 %), errors of capitalization (60 items or 2,6%), errors of subject-verb agreement (30 items or 1,3%) and finally is errors of spelling as the least number of errors with 20 items or 1%.

Key Words: Writing Skill, Error Analysis, Narrative Text, Grammatical Errors

INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine common errors in English made by students of the fourth semester in the Faculty of Languages and Culture in the academic year of 2021/2022. The research method used is the descriptive qualitative method. The documentation of students' report texts will be used to collect data. The subjects of this study are the fourth semester students of the Faculty of Languages and Culture in the academic year of 2021/2022. The purpose of this research is to describe (1) what kinds of grammatical errors are made by students of the fourth semester of the Faculty Languages and Culture, and (2) what errors commonly appear in their writing. This research will be very useful to make the students realize their errors and mistakes after the writing which are made by them. In consequence, the students will get better at writing.

This research used the descriptive qualitative method 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. There were two kinds of data that were collected in this research: the most frequent errors on the use of grammar, and the factors influence the errors. The most frequent errors on the use of grammar were obtained by analyzing students' writing samples. There were 10 texts written by the students of the fourth semester in the Faculty of Languages and Culture in the academic year of 2021/2022 as the samples. This study used an elicitation technique (through WhatsApp video call) to get valid data. The questions in this interview consisted of questions relate to sources of errors: grammar, interlingual, and intralingual. The result of the interview and 10 narrative writing samples identified, classified into each category of answer and counted then interpreted as the factors that influence their errors on using grammar as the researcher will explain further in this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Skinner (1957), proponent of the behaviorist approach to language learning, defined language as a "process of habit formation - the acquisition of a series of responses to external stimuli developed through a process referred to as operant conditioning" (cited in Roberts & Griffiths, 2008, p. 282). Also, Lado (1957), who introduced the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, stated that the differences and similarities between the two languages explained the "relative ease or difficulty of learning various language features" (cited in Roberts & Griffiths, 2008, p. 282). According to those theories, old habits hinder or facilitate new habits. There was the danger of errors becoming habits if they were tolerated, so they should be avoided. According to the cognitive approach, the making of errors is inevitable and a necessary part of learning that is why in this chapter, the researcher presents the review of theoretical writing and research related to the subject matter as the basis of conducting of the research. Also there are two parts discussed in this chapter: definition of writing skill and definition of errors.

1. Definition of Writing Skill

Writing skills means the ability to convert thoughts into words, with proper standards, punctuation, grammar and other important aspects of writing. Davies-Pearse (2002: 101) classify 'writing into low-level skills (handwriting or typing, spelling, constructing grammatical sentences, punctuating) and high-level cognitive skills (gathering ideas, organizing and sequencing, structuring, drafting, and editing)'

2. Definition of Errors

According to Ellis (1997:17), mistakes reflects occasional lapses in performance, they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what she or he knows while errors reflect gaps in learners knowledge that occur because learners do not know what is correct and they are still in the learning process. Mistakes refer to performance errors or unsystematic errors which are caused by inattention while errors refer to competence. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that the students may not be aware that they make the errors and they really need help from another person who really knows about grammar to correct them or to find other resources to help themselves. Everything needs a process and takes time to correct the errors.

2.1 Misformation errors in grammar

According to Scott Thornbury (1999) said that grammar is an analysis of the form of the sentences which has meaning. Also, grammar is the forming of meaning from the combination of words and it describes the language works (Ur, 1991).

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of grammar structure. It often happens in writing. The researcher analyzed three types of misformation errors:

- Regularization errors

e.g., it is common errors because the participants are still confused about when to use "Have or Has" in a sentence. They translated "Dia (laki-laki) telah belajar" became "He have study." It should be "he has studied".

- Alternating forms

Vocabulary and grammar development errors caused by the students.

e.g., one of the participants translated "Sayapergike Bali duaminggulalu" became "I goed to Bali two weeks ago." It should be "I went to Bali two weeks ago". The participants didn't realize about their mistakes about when tense should change.

- Errors in articles

The students don't know exactly how to use articles correctly "a, an or the" in a sentence.

e.g., another mistake made by the students. They still don't know exactly how to use articles correctly "A, AN or THE" in a sentence. They translated

"Ada perbedaanantara orang yang berpendidikan dan orang yang berilmu" became "There is difference between a educated person and knowledgeable person." It should be "There is a difference between an educated person and a knowledgeable person."

2.2 Interlingual errors

Richard (1974:173) states if the learners of a foreign language make mistake in the target language by effect of his mother tongue that is called as interlingual. As stated by Brown (1980: 160), most of the learners' errors in the second language result primarily from the learner's assumption that the second language forms are similar to the native language.

e.g., His hand dirty, he have to wash his hand.

It should be "His hand is dirty; he has to wash his hand". This sentence is caused by interference of native language sentence (tangannyakotor, diaharusmencucinya).

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative descriptive method was used to investigate common errors in English made by students of the fourth semester of Faculty of Languages and Culture in the academic year 2021/2022. This section presents information about the

participants, describes the data collection instruments and technique, and also describes the data analysis.

1. Participants

This research was conducted in Faculty of Languages and Culture by focusing on Writing of the fourth semester students as the research respondents. The research data were taken from the Writing class which has 15 students and 4 transfer students. The researcher took 10 students' narrative writing to represent the whole students. The participants were 1 male and 9 females whose age ranged from 19 to 21 years old. The researcher chose the fourth semester students, not including the transfer students, because they were still in the early phase of learning so they will be more enthusiastic to learn English and give a good feedback for making changes. Also they will be more open to correction and pay attention to the errors they made. The grammatical errors they committed will assist them in learning proper English language.

2. Data Collection Instrument and Technique

The data of this research were the students' erroneous sentences in narrative writing. The sentences were taken from 10 pieces of the fourth semester students' narrative writing. The researcher used the students' narrative text writing as data sources. Also, this study used an elicitation technique (through WhatsApp video call) to get valid data, because the data were taken directly from the students.

3. Data Analysis

According to the purposes of the study, the data analysis procedure consisted of two points:

- Each error type was classified into seven main groups: verb tense level errors, article level errors, pronoun level errors, preposition level errors, capitalization level errors, subject-verb agreement level errors, spelling level errors then all of the collected errors were analyzed and labeled according to the types of errors to get the frequency and the percentage.
- To find the most dominant errors, the information from the sample form of narrative text and the interview was analyzed.

DISCUSSION

Getting information about the students of the fourth semester of Faculty of Languages and Cultures' ability in writing shows that they still have difficulties in structure that's why it is not easy for them to put their ideas on paper. Of 10 writing samples from the ten students, the researcher analyzed seven grammatical errors. Here are the data:

Type of Errors	Frequency	Proposition of incorrectness total words
1. Verb tense	137	6,3 %
2. Article	123	5,6 %
3. Pronoun	97	4,3 %
4. Preposition	77	3,3 %
5. Capitalization	60	2,6 %
6. Subject-verb agreement	30	1,3 %
7. Spelling	20	1 %
Total	544	24,4 %

Of the seven errors classification, this study found that the students had the greatest problem in verb tense (6,3 %), followed by article (5,6 %), pronoun (4,3 %), preposition (3,3 %), capitalization (2,6 %), subject-verb agreement (1,3 %) and spelling (1 %).

Richard (1974:173) states if the learners of a foreign language make mistake in the target language by effect of his mother tongue that is called as interlingual. As stated by Brown (1980: 160), most of the learners' errors in the second language result primarily from the learner's assumption that the second language forms are similar to the native language. The common errors shown in that table might suggest that students committed interlingual errors. They may be influenced by the structure of their first language, Bahasa Indonesia. This might have made the students not aware of the use of the grammatical features in English. For example, in the first excerpt, the

student mistakenly described the features of “his hand dirty, he have to wash his hand” in the wrong tense, they didn’t use simple present tense for stating a fact

The first excerpt:

Incorrect: His hand dirty, he have to wash his hand

Correct: His hand is dirty; he has to wash his hand.

The second most frequent error committed by the students was found in the article. They still don’t know exactly how to use articles correctly “a, an orthe” in a sentence as shown in the second excerpt.

The second excerpt:

Incorrect: There is difference between a educated person and knowledgeable person.

Correct: There is a difference between an educated person and a knowledgeable person.

The third most frequent error was found in the verb. According to Scott Thornbury (1999) said that grammar is an analysis of the form of the sentences which has meaning. Also, grammar is the forming of meaning from the combination of words and it describes the language works (Ur, 1991). The error might be caused by knowledge errors in the verbs. Bahasa Indonesia does not have verb tense in its structure. Also Bahasa Indonesia does not change the form of verb to differentiate a fact and an action because their knowledge in Bahasa Indonesia, they always make errors in their writing. One example of the verb errors which might be caused by knowledge error is shown in the third excerpt

The third excerpt:

Incorrect: I goed to Bali two weeks ago.

Correct: I went to Bali two weeks ago.

CONCLUSION

From the result, it could be concluded that the participants in this study are lack of vocabulary and structure knowledge that is why it was not easy for them to write

their ideas into narrative writing. They had limited opportunities to use English outside classroom because they lived in a country where English is a Foreign Language and they learn as a foreign language which English is not used as a means of daily communication. That is why the influence of Bahasa Indonesia gave the deep impacts for students' writing. The students still follow the old habit of translating the words from their mother tongue that causes such error in grammar and vocabulary. In grammar, error in verb tenses is the highest number of error made by the students with the percentage of 6, 3 %. The next are errors of article which consist of 5, 6%, pronoun is 4.3%, preposition (3.3 %), capitalization (2,6%), errors of subject-verb agreement (1,3%). Spelling errors is the lowest one that only has 1%.

By knowing the result of the research, the researcher recommends some suggestions for students, teachers, and for other researcher.

- For the students

By knowing the types of grammatical error made by the students in their writing, the students should get rid of their old habit of translating the idea from Bahasa Indonesia word by word. These habits can cause such error in grammar and vocabulary. In learning vocabulary, the students should not only know the meaning of English word in their mother tongue, but they have to use the word appropriately. They should change their habits to recheck their writing before they submit it. They are careless because they didn't recheck their writing after finishing their writing. The last, the students still need more practice to write, so their English will be more natural.

- For the teachers

The teachers should be more attentive in teaching grammar to build a strong grammatical foundation for students and to create a better understanding in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teachers should give more exercise to improve the students' ability in evolving four skills (mostly in writing skill) because the students can increase their vocabulary by doing the exercise. They should create an enjoyable and fun teaching to make the students learn grammar easily.

- For the next researcher

The researcher thinks it would be better if the next researcher will investigate more about difficulties in writing and how to improve the students' ability in writing English.

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