An Analysis of Writing Errors Made by the First Semester Students of Management Program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang

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Abstract. Grammar obviously has the main role in learning a foreign language because it is the way to construct the sentences correctly. It seems that the grammar is quite difficult to learn because of the differences of rule system between the first language (Indonesian) and the second one (English). It is used as the rule system to construct the sentences in essay writings is inevitably essential for the students. Thus, error analysis on grammar is potentially considered to be important to conduct to know the students' learning problem in mastering the target language. This study was previously conducted to find out the grammatical errors through their essay writings by applying descriptive design with a sample of 23 students who were all students at the first semester students of management program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. The study separately classified the students errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. which classifies errors into four categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. After the students' essay writings were collected, the writer identified and classified grammatical errors and next, the writer counted, tabulated, and presented them in the form of percentage to indicate the prominent difficulties faced by the students in constructing English sentences. The findings of the study clearly revealed that 124 sentences out of 2018 sentences were identified to contain errors. Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy classification, there were 302 errors. The order of errors frequency was misinformation 147 (48.7%), omission 102 (33.8%), addition 48 (15.9%) and misordering 5 (1.6%).

Keywords: Essay Writing · Grammatical errors · Surface Strategy Taxonomy

1 Introduction

English language is essential to be a means of global communication. For communication, English is international language widely used throughout the world. The users of English both native speakers and non-native speakers rapidly change into ever more numerous and unrelated to the nationality of the speakers and writers. English definitely constitutes a window to the world of science and technology in the globalization era.

Grammar is one of the important components that should be considerably mastered by students in learning a language [1]. For most people, grammar is really considered to

be the essence of the language. If someone is said to be deviant from Standard English, it should be referred to the grammar. Grammar is defined as description of the structure of the language and the way in which linguistics units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in language [2]. It means that people have to use grammar to make sentences in order to make them understandable [3].

In fact, grammar is still a problem based on the experience faced by the students of Management Program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang in making errors. Considering the importance of using grammar in the process of writing, the writer decides to conduct a study in this field to find out the types of error and its frequency. The main goal of this study is to make teachers/lecturers aware of the errors and improve well-prepared process of learning and using English grammar.

The scope of this study is on language used as communication in the written form. This study is limited to the students' errors in sentences which appear in writings made by the first semester students of Management Program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. In this study, the term error covers any deviations found in the students' English sentences. Then, the errors were identified, classified, and tabulated in term of its frequency using surface strategy taxonomy.

The significance of this study is deliberately expected to be an outcome for the teacher to improve English teaching in English grammar. Furthermore, by knowing the students' problem of making frequent grammatical error, the teacher/lecturer will be able to select the most appropriate technique to overcome the students' learning problems. It can be used as a reference in conducting further research, particularly those related to grammar.

2   Methods

The study is designed as a descriptive study which is usually not directed toward testing a hypothesis. In this respect, descriptive study is intended to make a description about the collected data as accurately as possible. Descriptive studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomenon and are directed toward determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study [4]. Next, the qualitative research commonly reflects as descriptive [5]. Besides, qualitative approach is an approach which is important to understand a social phenomenon and individual perspectives under investigation [6].

The descriptive research aims to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. Descriptive research is used to establish the existence of phenomena by explicitly describing them. This research attempts to describe the linguistic categories of the grammatical errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy, and to find out the error types of the linguistic categories based on the surface strategy taxonomy [7]. In general, a descriptive research is non-hypothesis research. Therefore, it is not necessary to determine the hypothesis in conducting a descriptive research. This research is not intended to prove a hypothesis but it is attempted to describe the linguistic categories of the grammatical errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy, and to find out the error types of the linguistic categories based on the surface strategy taxonomy. After finding the types of grammatical errors, then the researcher investigated the frequency of each type of the grammatical errors made by the first semester students in writing.

The subjects of the study are the twenty three students or all numbers of students at the first semester of management program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang in academic year 2021/2022. They were chosen with a consideration that they had already studied grammar. Theoretically after passing senior higher school, they had already known how to produce right sentences. Therefore, they were assumed to have sufficient knowledge and skill in constructing English sentences. The data gained through the essay writing assignments then reflect their true abilities in constructing English sentences in their writing.

The data were collected from June 1st to July 31st, 2021. All the data were in the form of the first semester of students' essay writings. The data was collection of students' writing exercises in narrative, descriptive, procedural, comparison, classification, and cause-effect types which were done by the students in one semester.

The instrument of this study is the writer himself as the human instrument. In this case, he did this activity in many ways as the data collector, analyzer, conclusion drawer, and finally as the final research reporter. In collecting data, he was helped by the writing lecture of at the first semester of management program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang who taught Writing. After getting the data, he decided to analyze the data based on surface strategy taxonomy which categories errors into omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Then, he made a conclusion from the data analysis. Finally, he reported those activities in this research.

The essay writings made by the students were analyzed descriptively. To know the types of grammatical errors made by the first semester students in essay writings, the researcher used the surface strategy taxonomy. Then to seek the frequency of the grammatical errors made by the students, the researcher used the procedure of error analysis that are (1) identifying the errors (2) classifying the errors and (3) tabulating the errors [8].

In classifying the errors, the researcher uses a surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al. [9]. Surface strategy taxonomy categories errors into errors of omission, addition, misinformation and misordering. After classifying errors, the writer used tabulation. Tabulating is the recapitulation from many sources of information that was found in the research. In tabulating the errors, the frequency of occurrence of the errors previously identified and classified are counted and tabulated. Then, the number of errors is presented in the form of percentage. The formula as stated by Ali is as follows [10].

$$\% = \frac{n * 100}{N}$$

The % refers to the percentage of each grammatical component. **n** is the number of errors of each grammatical component, but capital N is the total number of all the grammatical errors.

The procedure was expected to show the students' problem in constructing English sentences. The higher percentage in the students' errors would indicate the prominent difficulty faced by the students in constructing English sentences.

3 Findings and Discussion

This section presents the result of identifying and classifying errors, and hence tabulating the frequency of errors to get research goals. The students' sentences were collected and analysed by error identification and clasification. The writer then determined every grammatical error found in each sentence. From twenty three (23) writings which consists of 218 sentences, there are 124 erroneous sentences.

3.1 Findings

The classification of errors into each type of error was conducted in accordance with Dulay's classification i.e. errors of omission, addition, misformation, and misordering by comparing the original sentences in target language. As stated in previous part that the classification was done in terms of any possible properties of grammar used by the students in constructing the sentences, some sentences were found containing one error and some others were containing more than one error type.

3.1.1 The Types of Error Made by the Students

Errors of misformation are identified by the use of wrong form of the morphemes or structure. While in omission, the element is not supplied at all but in errors of misformation, the students supply something although it is not correct. The errors of misformation occured in 19 cases. They were 1) misformation of noun, 2) misformation of adverb, 3) misformation of capitalization, 4) misformation of third person singular verb, 5) misformation of pronoun, 6) misformation of preposition, 7) misformation of verb, 8) misformation of adjective, 9) misformation of verb-ing for gerund, 10) misformation of passive verb, 11) misformation of article, 12) misformation of to be, 13) misformation of auxiliary, 14) misformation of verb in past tense, 15) misformation of conjunction/linking word, 16) misformation of third person plural verb, 17) misformation of noun phrase, 18) misformation of verb in present tense, and 19) misformation of subordinator.

Errors of omission are identified by the absence of one or more morphemes that must appear in a wee-formed sentence. Thus, they are indicated by the absence of any grammatical morphemes in a certain construction where they are actually required.

The errors of omission identified in this study were because of omitting 1) article, 2) plural marker -s/-es, 3) to be, 4) preposition, 5) pronoun, 6) auxiliary verb, 7) noun, 8) conjunction/linking word, 9) time signal, 10) punctuation, 11) expression of quantity, 12) adverb, 13) third person singular verb, and 14) comma.

Errors of addition are characterized by the presence of one or more unnecessary items in a well-formed sentence. Thus, errors of addition are indicated by the presence of any grammatical morphemes when those items are not required. The erroneous addition identified in this study were becauses of adding unnecessary 1) noun, 2) preposition, 3) noun phrase, 4) article, 5) conjunction/linking word, 6) plural marker -s/es, 7) verb, 8) to be, 9) pronoun, 10) auxiliary verb, 11) adjective, and 12) comma.

As the name suggest, errors of misordering are characterized by the incorrect placement of morpheme or a group morphemes. In this study, this type of error has the least occurrence compared to the other three types (omission, addition and misformation).

There were only two types of misordering errors. They were 1) misordering of sentence and 2) misordering of noun phrase.

3.1.2   The Frequency of Error Types Made by the Students

The writer resulted the frequency of each error type by the formula

$$\% = \frac{n * 100}{N}$$

The description of errors in the present study is presented in percentage of errors from the total number of errors made by the students. Next, the writer did tabulating the result so it can give clearer description of error frequency as presented in the Table 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The errors of misformation of noun was the highest. Its frequency is 40 or 27.2% means that there 40 errors made by the students in misformation of noun. It is followed by misformation of adverb (14 or 9.5%), misformation of capitalization (13 or 8.8%), misformation of third person singular verb (12 or 8.1%), misformation of pronoun (11 or 7.5%), misformation of preposition (10 or 6,8), misformation of gerund (6 or 4.1%), misformation of passive verb (5 or 3,4%), misformation of article (4 to 2.7%), misformation of to be (3 or 2.0%), misformation of auxiliary verb (2 or 1,4%) and misformation of verb in past tense 2 or 1.4%, misformation of conjunction or linking word (1 or 0,7%), misformation of third person plural verb (1 or 0,7%), misformation of noun phrase (1 or 0,7%) misformation of verb in present tense (1 or 0,7%) and misformation of subordinator (1 or 0,7%).

Omission error of article occured 29 times or 28.4%. Omission of plural marker -s/-es was 20 times or 19.6%. Omission of to be was 12 times or 11.7%. Omission of preposition was 11 times or 10.7%. Omission of pronoun was 6 times or 5.9%.

Omission of auxiliary verb was 6 times or 5.9%. Omission of noun was 4 times or 3.9%. Omission of conjunction/linking word was times or 3.9%. Omission of time signal and space was 2 times or 2%. Omission of punctuation was 1%. Omission expression of quantity was 1%. Omission of adverb was 1%, and last omission of third person singular verb was 1%. Omission of comma was also 1%.

Errors in addition of noun phrase was 7 times or 14.6%. Next, the writer also found addition of article (5 or 10,4%), addition of plural marker -s/-es (4or 8.3%) and addition of conjunction/linking word (4 or 8.3%), addition of verb (3 or 6.2%), and addition of to be (2 or 4.2%) addition of pronoun (2 or 4.2%), and addition comma (2 or 4.2%). The errors of misordering of noun phrase was the only one type of misordering which was found in students' Essay writings. Its frequency is 5 or 100%.

Based on surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay which was tabulated, it reveals that the smallest number of error found in the students' sentences is error of Misordering, followed by Addition, Omission and Misformation (Table 2). Errors in misformation are the highest. Its frequency is 147 or 48.7% means that there are 147 errors of misformation type made by the students. The second position is errors of omission. Its frequency is 102 or 33.8%. The third position is errors of addition. Its frequency is 48 or 15.9%. The lowest position is misordering. Its frequency is 5 or 1.6%.

Table 1. Frequency of Misformation Error

Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Misformation of noun	40	27.2
Misformation of adverb	14	9.5
Misformation of capitalization	13	8.8
Misformation of third person singular verb	12	8.1
Misformation pronoun	11	7.5
Misformation of preposition	10	6.8
Misformation of verb	10	6.8
Misformation of adjective	10	6.8
Misformation of verb-ing for gerund	6	4.1
Misformation of passive verb	5	3.4
Misformation of article	4	2.7
Misformation of to be	3	2.0
Misformation of auxiliary	2	1.4
Misformation of verb in the past tense	2	1.4
Misformation of conjunction/linking verb	1	0.7
Misformation of third person plural verb	1	0.7
Misformation of noun phrase	1	0.7
Misformation of verb in present tense	1	0.7
Misformation of subordinator	1	0.7
Total	147	100

Table 2. Frequency of All Error Types

Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Misformation	147	48.7
Omission	102	33.8
Addition	48	15.9
Misordering	5	1.6
Total	302	100

3.2   Discussion

The students' errors found in this study make the writer curious why it happened. To understand it, the writer need to review that there were two factors of the sources of error found in the study; interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The interlingual error was

divided into three categories, namely overextension of analogy, transfer of structure, and interlingual/intralingual errors [11, 12]. Another type is intralingual errors which can be divided into four categories. They were overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application, and false concept hypothesis [13].

Interlingual errors are errors in the students' language that can be caused by the difference structure of the first language and the target language. Overextension of analogy occurs when the students misuse an item because they share features with an item in the first language, for example **They drive at excessive speed and don't bring their SIM and STNK.** The sentences is considered ill-form because the learners used the words which are not English word at all. The words SIM, STNK are Indonesian words. In this case, those errors caused by items shared features with items in the first language. In other words, the learners still use their native language. The correct words should be driver license, vehicle regulation, hair strainer, and relax.

Next, intralingual errors are errors caused by the negative transfer of items within the target language or the incorrect generalization of rules within the target language. It can be caused by the factors of context of learning and communication strategies. Intralingual factors can be overgeneralization when the students tend to use the previous strategies in new situation to organize the rule of target language [14]. They generalize form that.is easy to learn in producing sentences. It can be also influenced by ignorance of rule restriction. In the source of errors of ignorance of the students do not apply the rule context as their failures to observe the existing structure restriction.

The source of error on incomplete application of rules involves a failure to develop the target language structure [15]. In other word, it involves a failure to learn the more complex types of structure because the students find the way to achieve communication by using relatively simple rules. False concept hypothesis can cause errors. In false concept hypothesis, the students falsify comprehension of distinction in the target language.

4   Conclusion

This study aimed to find out the grammatical errors made by the first semester students of management program at ITB Widya Gama Lumajang, in their sentences. The grammatical errors covered all possible properties of grammar found in from the students' sentences. The study clearly revealed that sentence construction (active and passive tense), S-V agreement, word order, conjunctions (because, but, and, etc.), pronouns (as 'subject, object, and possessive'), articles (a, an, and the), tenses (present, past and present perfect tense), comparative, time sequence words, verbs (in present, past and past participle forms), verb + s, plural marker -s/-es, to be, auxiliary verb, preposition, time signal, gerund, noun, noun phrase, subordinator, adverb, adjectives, phrase, expression of quantity, punctuation, and capitalization were common problems among the students.

After the writer analyzed the students' sentences, he found out that from twenty three (23) writings which consisted of 218 sentences, there were 124 erroneous sentences. Then, those errors were classified into four type categories based on surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (2012:152). They covered errors of omission, addition, misformation and misordering. The study also revealed that the highest number of error found in the students' sentences was error of misformation. Its frequency

is 147 times or 48.7%. The second position was errors of omission. Its frequency was 102 times or 33.8%. The third position was errors of addition. Its frequency was 48 times or 15.9%. The lowest position was misordering. Its frequency was 5 times or 1.6%.

The students' errors were caused by interlingual errors and intralingual factors. Interlingual refers to the difference structure of the first language and the target language, while intralingual relates to the negative transfer of items within the target language or the incorrect generalization of rules within the target language. Due to facts in this research, teacher/lecturer are suggested to improve English teaching techniques especialy in teaching English grammar so students can overcome their errors and perform better writing.

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