An Analysis of Grammatical Errors Committed by Students in Writing Argumentative Paragraph

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A B S T R A K

Keterampilan menulis sangat penting dikuasai siswa untuk membantu mereka dalam mempersiapkan masa depannya. Namun grammar menjadi salah satu hambatan siswa dalam menulis bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesalahan gramatika yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa dalam menulis paragraf argumentatif dan untuk menganalisa sumber kesalahan tersebut. Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris semester dua dipilih sebagai subjek dari penelitian ini. Lebih lanjut, dalam menganalisa data, penelitian ini mengaplikasikan metode gabungan kualitatif deskriptif dan kuantitatif deskriptif. Selain itu, data dikumpulkan melalui pengoleksian dokumen dari test akhir semester. Prosedur analisis data terdiri dari tiga langkah khusus yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Hasil dari penelitian menemukan bahwa mahasiswa melakukan 11 jenis kesalahan dengan jumlah 165 kesalahan. Sebagian besar dari mereka melakukan kesalahan omission of article dengan 39 (23.63%) kesalahan, lalu simple addition 33 (20%) kesalahan, alternating form 27 (16.36%) kesalahan, omission of to be 21 (12.72%) kesalahan, kemudian omission of preposition 17 (10.30%) kesalahan, omission of plural –s dengan 15 (9.09%) kesalahan, misordering 6 (3.63%) kesalahan, regularization 3 (1.81%) kesalahan, dan terakhir double marking dan archi-form masing-masing 1 (0.60%) kesalahan. Selain itu, sumber kesalahan ditemukan dalam empat jenis: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, dan communication strategy. Sebagain besar mahasiswa melakukan kesalahan karena intralingual transfer, ditemukan 119 (72.12%) kesalahan, kemudian diikuti oleh interlingual transfer 41 (24.84%) kesalahan, communication strategy 3 (1.81%), dan context of learning 2 (1.21%) kesalahan. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa tata bahasa perlu diajarkan secara menyeluruh kepada siswa.

A B S T R A C T

Writing skills are very important for students to master to help them prepare for their future. However, grammar is one of the obstacles for students in writing English. This research aims to analyze grammatical errors made by students in writing argumentative paragraphs and to analyze the sources of these errors. Second semester English Language Education students were chosen as the subjects of this research. Furthermore, in analyzing the data, this research applies a combination of descriptive qualitative and descriptive quantitative methods. Apart from that, data was collected through collecting documents from the end-of-semester tests. The data analysis procedure consists of three specific steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The results of the research found that students made 11 types of errors with a total of 165 errors. Most of them made omission of article errors with 39 (23.63%) errors, then simple addition 33 (20%) errors, alternating form 27 (16.36%) errors, omission of to be 21 (12.72%) errors, then omission of preposition 17 (10.30%) errors, omission of plural –s with 15 (9.09%) errors, misordering 6 (3.63%) errors, regularization 3 (1.81%) errors, and finally double marking and archi-form each 1 (0.60%) error. In addition, sources of errors were found in four types: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategy. The majority of students made mistakes due to intralingual transfer, 119 (72.12%) errors were found, followed by interlingual transfer 41 (24.84%) errors, communication strategy 3 (1.81%), and context of learning 2 (1.21%) errors.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized era, English has become an important language to be learned by people. English acts as a global language in which this language is used by society in almost all of the countries in the world (Fatimah & Santiana, 2017; Rao, 2019; Rojabi, 2020). In Indonesia's education system, English itself is learned by the students as foreign language from primary school to university (Cahyono & Rahayu, 2020; Castillo-Cuesta, 2022). As a result, language teaching for English becomes important to be done. In English language teaching, the students will be taught language skills which are the skills to listen, speak, read, and write (Baran-Łucarz, 2019;

Grabe, 2014). Students are required to master the skills for accomplishing the purpose of learning, as a result the students are able to perform good communication either spoken or written. All of the skills are important, yet writing is seen as something essential to the educational field and in the workplace (Herder et al., 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2018).

Writing is one of the language skills in which students have to be good at. Writing skill is necessary to be mastered by the students to assist them in preparing their future (Gilakjani et al., 2016; Lee, 2022). For instance, students will need this skill in accomplishing final project reports or doing assignments which most of them will be in the written form and this also can help them in making application letters when they apply for jobs later on. In addition, students who have good ability in writing skills will help them in making excellent performance both as researchers and professionals (Bakoko & Pratiwi, 2021; Maba, 2017). Compared to the other three language skills which are listening, speaking, and reading; writing is considered as a tough skill for the students. It is because of its complexity, besides writing also involves aspects of English which are phonology, morphology, semantic, and syntax (Gottardo et al., 2018; Ngoc Tu & Thao, 2019). Other than that, in producing words, sentences, and paragraphs, students are required to think deeply and have good knowledge as well as grammar in order to make the writing is logical and comprehendible. Therefore, students discover it so hard to perform good writing because of the involvement of various elements such as vocabulary, spelling, meaning, structure of the sentence, and grammar (Atmaca, 2016; Wu & Huang, 2017).

Regarding to the statements above, grammar plays an important role in producing good writing. Having a good comprehension of grammar will be necessary for the students. Grammar is a set of rules that governs the traditional placement and connection of words in a sentence (Amalia et al., 2021; Meiranti, 2012). In addition, good grammar mastery will assist the students in creating well-produced sentences. Further, grammar is a base to compose writing in English language at the level of sentence. To conclude, grammar mastery needs to be acquired by the students in order to assist them to create good writing. However, as a matter of fact students still find it hard to write without making mistakes and errors. In producing writing, grammar mistakes and errors are unavoidable (Castillo-Cuesta, 2022; Debata, 2013). Further, students are often having difficulties to implement grammar in writing as result errors are emerged. Grammatical error is an error which makes the writing inappropriate due to the incompatibility towards the grammatical rules (Amalia et al., 2021; N. P. I. M. C. Manik & Suwastini, 2020). So that recognizing grammatical errors is necessary because it is unsuitable with the rules of grammar in a language.

There were several previous studies which conducted in grammatical errors. For instance, previous study analysing errors in the aspect of grammatical errors in essay writing (Islamiyah & Fajri, 2019). The result of the study found that 23.5% errors in determiner, 19.8% errors in noun, errors in preposition about 13.6%, errors in tenses and aspect about 12.3%, errors in adjective and conjunction with the same amount respectively 9.9%, and errors in pronoun also verb 4.9% each of them, the last is errors in adverb with 1.2%. Another study was also conducted by other study found 56.3% errors in tenses, 12.6% for errors in the use of preposition, 11.8% errors in article, 8.6% errors in using singular/plural, 4.5% errors in irregular verbs, 2.9% errors in adjectives, 2.5% errors in the rules of concord, and the last errors in possessive case about 0.8% (Linda & Dardjito, 2020). Conclusively, grammatical errors in writing are still often made by students.

In analyzing the grammatical errors, this study applied the theory from Dulay, Burt, and which is Surface Strategy Taxonomy. Based on this theory, grammatical errors are classified into four namely: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Kharmilah & Narius, 2019). Further, for sources of errors this research used theory proposed which categorized sources of errors into four namely: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategy (Robinson & Feng, 2016). From the research problems the objectives of this study is to analyze the types of grammatical errors committed by the students of English Language Education department in argumentative paragraph writing and to analyse the sources of errors committed by the students of English Language Education department academic year 2020/2021 in argumentative paragraph writing.

2. METHOD

This study was using mixed method of descriptive qualitative and descriptive quantitative. Mixed methods research is a combination methods both quantitative and qualitative research in which each of them will give information for better comprehension towards the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Descriptive qualitative method was dominantly used. It functioned to give clear description for the data of students' grammatical errors and sources of the errors (Seixas et al., 2018). Furthermore, descriptive qualitative method was also applied to analyse the sources of errors. On the other hand, descriptive quantitative method was used to determine the frequency of errors and sources. From the result, it can be utilized to rank the types of errors from the highest to the lowest frequency produced by the students as well as the sources. The subject of this study was four classes of second semester students of English Language Education academic year 2020/2021, Ganesha University of Education. Furthermore, the objects were argumentative paragraph writings composed by students.

Final semester test was used as the instrument of this study and it was collected through document collection method.

The data analysis procedures consist of three steps to be specific are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction in this study was carried out by collecting final semester tests from the students. After collecting the writings, then it was sorted again in order to obtain the needed data to be displayed, which were the suspected sentences in the writing that contained errors. The last stage of the procedures is conclusion drawing and verification. Conclusion of a study can be seen from the beginning of collecting data however it can be changed as the analysis is still on process. The conclusion will be valid if there is finding or evidence found through the process of analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Grammatical Errors Classification

To obtain information regarding the types and sources of grammatical errors in the process of data analysis, 90 paragraphs written by the students were collected where the chosen type of text is argumentative. These 90 paragraphs include the final semester test that students wrote within 70 minutes with 12 minimum sentences. After that, these writings were analyzed in order to acquire the needed information related to the types and sources of grammatical errors. After doing identification 90 paragraphs of students' writings to find the erroneous sentences, there were found 52 paragraphs that contained errors. Further, from those 52 paragraphs, the writer found 165 grammatical errors produced by the students. The classifications of grammatical errors are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Grammatical Errors Classification and Percentages

No.	Classifications of Errors	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Omission	Omission of to Be	21	12.72%
		Omission of Article	39	23.63%
		Omission of Preposition	17	10.30%
		Omission of Verb	2	1.21%
		Omission of Plural –S	15	9.09%
	Total Omission		**94**	**57.22%**
2	Addition	Double Marking	1	0.60%
		Regularization	3	1.81%
		Simple Addition	33	20%
	Total Addition		**37**	**22.42%**
3	Misformation	Regularization Errors	0	0%
		Archi-Form	1	0.60%
		Alternating Form	27	16.36%
	Total Misformation		**28**	**16.96%**
4	Misordering		6	3.63%
	Total Errors		**165**	**100%**

From Table 1, it can be concluded that there were 165 errors found in students' argumentative paragraphs. The most frequent type of errors committed by the students was *omission of article* with the amount about 39 errors (23.63%) out of all errors. Then, it was followed by *simple addition* errors about 33 errors (20%). The third place was owned by errors of *alternating form* around 27 errors (16.36%) and after that, followed by *omission of to be* with 21 errors (12.72%); *omission of preposition* about 17 errors (10.30%) out of all errors. The next was errors of *omission of plural –s* with 15 errors (9.09%). The less frequent errors belong to *misordering* errors with 6 errors (3.63%); then, it was followed by *addition of regularization* around 3 errors (1.81%). The next was *omission of verb* with 2 errors (1.21%); then, errors of *double marking* and *archi-form* were only 1 error (0.60%) respectively. The last errors was *misformation of regularization errors,* it was found 0 errors (0%) on this type in students' writings. Each of the types of errors will be described further below to give detailed information about the data.

Sources of Errors

There are four sources that cause the students committing errors. The four types of sources above were used to analyze the students writing and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sources of Errors

No.	Sources of Errors	Total Accumulation	Percentage
1	Interlingual Transfer	41	24.84%
2	Intralingual Transfer	119	72.12%
3	Context of Learning	2	1.21%
4	Communication Strategy	3	1.81%
	Total	**165**	**100%**

From Table 2, the conclusion can be drawn as first, the highest source of errors was caused by intralingual transfer with the amount is 119 (72.12%). The more students obtain information about the rule of the new language, the more intralingual transfer occurred. It is because the students are trying to apply the rule, yet because of their lack of understanding the students tend to generalize the rule and use it in sentence that has different rules. So that, the students produce wrong structured sentences.

The second highest source of errors was interlingual transfer with 41 (24.84%) errors. Interlingual transfer is occurred due to the influence of the native language. When using the language, the students are still interfered with by their mother tongue in terms of the linguistics system as they are not yet familiar with the target language. From the example, it was caused by interlingual transfer in which the students were implementing rules owned by their native language. It can be analysed by comparing or translating the sentence into the native language *(Bahasa Indonesia)* however it does not suit the rule of the target language.

The third source of errors was communication strategy with 3 (1.81%) errors. Errors because of communication strategy happened because of the style owned by the students in learning language. Learners are sure having their style or strategy in delivering messages, however the strategy they used often made them produce errors. The students tried to deliver their message by using their strategy. All of the three sentences are still comprehendible even though there is inappropriate pronoun *'them'* yet, the intended meaning can be caught. It was the students' way to express or convey their message, opinion, or idea. The lowest source of error was context of learning with 2 (1.21%) errors. Context of learning is occurred because of the teacher's explanation, textbook, or learning material. At a certain time, teachers are possible to give explanations that will mislead the students; or, it is because the students learn the language through textbooks without tutoring so that having misconceptions may be happened.

Discussion

According to findings that have been described in the previous part, it can be seen that the students were still having difficulties in performing well-formed writing. They struggled to apply the grammatical rule. Reflecting on the result of the analysis, the students were not able to use proper *to be, articles, preposition, verbs,* and placing the words in a good order (Dewi & Huda, 2020; Muhsin, 2016). They tended to misuse and omit those items in writing. Further, the students were also often found adding unnecessary words or morphemes into their argumentative paragraph. As a result, the writings contained errors. It was proven by the findings in which there were 165 grammatical errors discovered in paragraph writings produced by the second semester students of English Language Education, Ganesha University of Education academic year 2020/2021. The errors were classified into four namely: *omission, addition, misformation,* and *misordering* (Atmaca, 2016; Islamiyah & Fajri, 2019).

Regarding to the findings of previous related studies, the findings of this research are in line with the study conducted that show that the highest error made by students is omission errors with 37% and the lowest is misordering with 1% (Kumala et al., 2018). In addition, addition errors occurred around 32% and misformation 30%. On the other hand, a study from previous study has different findings in which the results show that misformation becomes the highest frequency of errors made by students with 22 errors, followed by omission with 6 errors and the lowest errors are addition and misordering with only 1 error (Kharmilah & Narius, 2019).

Moreover, the result of sources of errors is similar to the study conducted by previous study in which the highest frequency of source is intralingual transfer with 248 (43.43%), then followed by interlingual transfer as the second highest with 223 (39.05%), communication strategy 67 (11.73%), and the lowest is context of learning with 33 (5.78%) errors (N. I. Manik & Suwastini, 2020). In contrast, the result of this study related to the sources of errors is different from the result of the study (Bungsu et al., 2021). The differences lie in the second and the third highest of sources of errors. Their study found that the second highest source of error is communication strategy with 64 (17.82%) and the third highest is interlingual transfer with 54 (14.85%). In addition the highest frequency is intralingual transfer with 226 (61.39%) and the lowest frequency is context of learning with 21 (5.94%) errors.

By identifying common grammatical errors made by students in writing argumentative paragraphs, teachers can design more effective and specific learning programs to help students improve their writing skills. In

addition, correcting grammatical errors in writing will help students convey their arguments more clearly and persuasively. This is not only useful in academic contexts, but also in everyday life where effective communication skills are invaluable. However, this research also has limitations, the findings of this research may only apply to students in certain schools or educational environments. The results may not be directly applicable to different student populations or in non-academic settings.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, there were several points that can be concluded. According to the analysis related to the types of grammatical errors made by second semester students of English Language Education, it showed that there were 165 grammatical errors committed by the students. From 12 types of error that the researcher used, it was found only 11 types of grammatical errors namely: *omission of to be, omission of article, omission of preposition, omission of verb, omission of plural –s, double marking, regularization, simple addition, archi-form, alternating form,* and *misordering.* The highest errors committed by the students is omission. Based on the the results of analysis showed that there are four sources of errors namely: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning, and communication strategy. The highest sources of errors was intralingual transfer.

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