

**AN ANALYSIS ON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING
PARAGRAPH BY THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS AT
ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM UNIVERSITAS RIAU**

Lia Nurikawati, Eliwarti, Fakhri Ras
lnurikawati@gmail.com, elieliwarti@gmail.com, fakhrras@yahoo.com
No. Hp. 081362951995

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP
Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru

Abstract: *This study was conducted to analyse the grammatical errors made by second semester students in writing paragraph at the English Study Program of Universitas Riau. The aim of this study was to find out eight types of common grammatical errors they are Passive Voice, Verb Tense and Form, Subject- Verb Agreement, Word Order, Preposition, Articles, Plurality, and Auxiliary that made by the participants of the study. Writing a paragraph test were administered to twenty seven participants. They were asked to write a paragraph in 90 minutes and based on the three topics provided by the writer. Three raters were involved in checking the grammatical errors on the participants' paragraph writing. Then, the errors were classified and described. From the analysis, it was obtained that the participants of study made 80 errors. They were errors in terms of Verb Tense and Form (32.50%), Plurality (21.25%) and Subject-Verb Agreement (12.50%). The lowest percentage of errors was in terms of Word Order (5%) and Passive Voice (5%). Thus, it needs more concern on these aspects. Moreover, the other errors are need to be focused as well. It is recommended that other reseachers find the reasons of those comitted errors.*

Key Words: *Error Analysis, Grammatical Errors, Writing Paragraph*

AN ANALYSIS ON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING PARAGRAPH BY THE SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS AT ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM UNIVERSITAS RIAU

Lia Nurikawati, Eliwarti, Fakhri Ras
lnurikawati@gmail.com, elieliwarti@gmail.com, fakhrras@yahoo.com
No. Hp. 081362951995

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP
Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru

Abstrak: Penelitian ini diadakan untuk menganalisis kesalahan tata bahasa oleh mahasiswa semester dua di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan apa saja kesalahan tata bahasa yang di buat oleh peserta penelitian. 27 peserta terlibat dalam tes menulis paragraf. Mereka di minta untuk menulis paragraf dalam 90 menit berdasarkan tiga topik yang telah disediakan peneliti. Tiga orang *rater* membantu dalam memeriksa kesalahan tata bahasa dalam paragraf yang ditulis. Kemudian, kesalahan tersebut di klasifikasi dan di deskripsi oleh peneliti. Dari hasil tes, di dapatkan 80 kesalahan. Dalam *verb tense and form* (32,50%), *plurality* (21.25%), dan *subject-verb agreement* (12.50%). Presentasi terendah yaitu dalam *word order* (5%) dan *passive voice* (5%). Oleh karena itu, perlu diperhatikan kesalahan dengan persentase tertinggi. Lagipula, kesalahan yang lain juga harus di perhatikan. Direkomendasikan juga untuk peneliti yang lainnya untuk menemukan alasan di balik kesalahan tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Analisis kesalahan, kesalahan tata bahasa, menulis paragraf

INTRODUCTION

As students who learn English subject, they are intended to learn four language skills; reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Writing is one of four language skills that is essential to learn. It is deemed as language macro skill. Through writing, people can inform, persuade and convey the ideas to others. Writing is not only to express the ideas directly. In writing process, especially in English writing, it needs some particular aspects to be noticed.

According to Nunan (1999), writing is not a spontaneous skill or acquired easily, it is considered as 'probably the most difficult thing to do in language'. In other words, writing skill needs a repetitive practice. It is because according to Brown (2001), writing is culturally specific learned behaviors which are acquired only if someone is taught, much like the ability to swim. Even though one may learn to swim and to write this does not imply that the skill will be mastered, even if one is proficient in a language.

In addition, Nunan (1999) states that writing is a complex cognitive process that requires sustained intellectual effort over a considerably period of time. According to Hedge (2005), there is a need to organize the development of ideas or information; ambiguity in meaning must be avoided through accuracy; the writer must choose from complex grammatical devices for emphasis; and finally, learner must pay attention to the choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures to create a feasible meaning and an appropriate style to the subject matter and reader. Thus, based on explanation above it can be meant that, in order to compose a good writing, students need to focus on the complexity of writing mechanics.

Moreover, Heaton (1975) also classifies that there are four skills necessary for writing; grammatical, stylistic, mechanical and judgment skills. As mentioned above, grammatical pattern is an essential aspect that needs to be taken into account. It is because grammar has close correlation with the result of writing, whether it is good or bad. Baststone (1974) argues that language without grammar would be chaotic and cause the communication problem, such as grammatical errors in writing and speaking. According to the explanation, the writer means that grammar is definitely a resource for a good communication.

As second semester students in English Study Program Universitas Riau, they are at the beginning phase of writing that later will be expected to have a good writing competence. According to Hyland (2002), writing competence includes a good ability concerning grammar, arrangement, and punctuation. However, good grammar will be resulted good writing so that it makes a writing become readable and the meaning will be conveyed easily. For that reason, it can be concluded that they are supposed to practice their writing competence from the beginning.

In second semester, the students exercise their writing skill in the form of composing paragraph. A paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main idea (Oshima and Hogue, 1991). Writing effective paragraphs require to fulfill writing aspects as already mentioned above. However, based on the researcher observation, students makes some grammatical errors while composing a paragraph. For example, they sometimes forget to add *be*, misuse of tense, wrong choice of preposition, the singular subject which does not agree with plural verb and the other grammar items need to be classified soon with the valid data.

Furthermore, the students of English Study Program are intended to write thesis as their last project in Universitas Riau. Consequently, they have to eliminate the grammatical errors from beginning phase of writing in order to be able to compose a good thesis writing. It is also essential for them to minimize grammatical error since they learn writing paragraph in second semester. In accordance to eliminate it in writing paragraph, English teachers or lecturers need to recognize students' common grammatical errors. Even, for the students itself, it is necessary to diagnose their grammatical error in writing soon. Therefore, the researcher will conduct the study entitled "An Analysis on Grammatical Errors in Writing Paragraph by the Second Semester Students at English Study Program Universitas Riau".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at English Study Program of Universitas Riau-BinaWidya Campus. This research conducted in June 2016. This research is a descriptive quantitative research. This research describes about analysis of grammatical errors made by second semester students of English Study Program through writing paragraph. The second semester students of English Study Program involved in this quantitative study.

In this study, the researcher decides to have sample since the data is deemed homogenous enough. According to McMillan (1996) the sample was the group of elements, or single element, from which data were obtained. This research used cluster random sampling technique. The writer wrote *non-sample* and *sample* on two different pieces of rolled paper in the box. Then, the chairman of each class took one piece out of the box. Those who took *sample* written in the rolled paper would be sample in this study. This technique used by the writer under a consideration that they had the same age and thought with the same time allocation and material. Moreover, Gay (1987) suggests that if the population is assumed to be homogenous and if it is a large population, the sample is taken 10%. Besides, if it is small population, the sample is taken minimum 20%. Since the number of population considered as small population, the researcher took the sample 30% of 93 participants. Therefore, the researcher took 27 students as sample.

The instrument of this research used written test. In this test, the students wrote the paragraph based on the title given by the researcher. The sample of the study chose one title based on three titles given. The following topics are:

- 1) An important event in my life
- 2) Reasons I choose English as my major
- 3) Two music styles/ two sports/ two well-known people.

The participants wrote the paragraphs in 90 minutes. They wrote a paragraph from 7-10 sentences based on the suggested topics. The entire test has done in the classroom.

The writer collected the data from the written test that analyzes grammatical errors made by students in writing paragraph.

The procedures to collect the data are:

- The participants were given direction by the researcher
- The researcher asked the participants to make writing paragraph on a sheet of paper. This writing process is individual test so that the participants were prohibited to cheat with others. During the test, they were allowed to use dictionary. They composed the paragraph of writing paragraph in 90 minutes.
- The participants submitted their paper.

The researcher analyzed the grammatical error in writing paragraph by the rules Corder(1974) in Barkhuizen (2005) distinguished five steps in conducting error analysis:

1. Collection of sample of learner language
To provide data for error analysis, it is necessary to collect a sample of learner language. In this step, the researcher may control the data by narrowly specifying the sample that intends to collect.
2. Identification of errors,
The identification of errors involve a comparison between the sentences made by sample and the sentences are supposed to be in good grammatical pattern in the same context. Then, the researcher could identify which part of sample sentences is different from reconstruction version. In identifying the errors, the data will be presented in percentage, according to Hatch and Farhady (1982: 46), to obtain the percentage, we can divide the F of the level that we want to check by the sum of frequencies (N) and multiply by 100%. It is formulated as follow:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

In this study, F is the number of common grammatical errors that we will want to count, and N is the total number errors.To ensure the validity of the data, these data were checked by 3 raters. They were all coming from English teachers.
3. Description of errors
The description of errors usually employs either linguistic taxonomy or surface structure taxonomy to describe the differences between sample's sentences and native speakers' sentences.
4. Explanation of errors
Explaining errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made. Obviously, learners make errors due to the difficulties in accessing their second language knowledge in communication.

5. Error evaluation

Error evaluation is supplementary stage in error analysis. It involves determining the gravity of different errors with a view to decide which one should receive instruction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the research was conducted, the writer found numerous data to be presented. The distribution grammatical errors in writing paragraph were shown in the following table.

Table 4.1 The Result of Grammatical Error in Writing Paragraph

No	Grammar items	Frequency	Percentage	Number of participants made errors
1	Passive voice	4	5%	4
2	Verb Tense and Form	26	32.50%	12
3	Subject-Verb agreement	10	12.50%	8
4	Word Order	4	5%	3
5	Prepositions	6	7.50%	6
6	Articles	5	6.25%	4
7	Plurality	17	21.25%	10
8	Auxiliaries	8	10%	4
Total		80	100%	

The following table shows the result of grammatical errors in writing paragraph made by 27 participants of study. The participants made 80 errors in writing their paragraphs. There are 4 errors (5%) in making passive voice, 26 errors (32.50%) in writing verb tense and form, 10 errors (12.50%) in writing subject verb agreement, 4 errors in word order (5%), 6 errors (7.50%) in using preposition, 5 errors (6.25%) in using articles, 17 errors (21.25%) in writing plurality, and 8 errors (10%) in writing auxiliaries.

In addition, the study involved 27 participants of study and they made several grammatical items errors. There are 4 students made errors in passive voice, 12 students in verb-tense and form, 8 students in subject-verb agreement, 3 students in word order, 6 students in preposition, 4 students in article, 10 students in plurality and 4 students in auxiliary. Thus, almost a half of participants of study made errors in term of verb-tense and form.

From all the data presented by the table 4.1, it can be concluded that the second semester students of English Study Program of FKIP Universitas Ria need to be concerned on the writing verb tense and form since it is the highest percentage of errors (32.50%). Moreover, the second highest errors made by the participants of study is in writing plurality (21.25%) and also need to be concerned in writing subject and verb agreement (12.50%). However, the lowest percentage of errors are in terms of word order and passive voice

Discussion on Research Findings

From the research finding, it shows that from 27 participants of study, they only made errors under a hundred. It can be indicated that they remain in term of “Passive voice”, they might be confused between using active and passive sentences. They frequently forget to add ‘be’ before the passive verb. Moreover, in “verb tense and form”, participants mostly made errors in simple present tense form that 11 errors of 26 errors (42.3%). In terms of “subject-verb agreement”, their all errors are in “singular subject does not agree with plural verb”. In other words, they mostly left out the ‘s’ after the verb for the third person singular subject. In term of word order, the participants made errors. They made some reverse phrases that might indicate that they sometimes got influence by Indonesia language order. Furthermore, the students prominently use inappropriate choice of preposition and also left out the ‘s’ in countable nouns for plurality. Last, the sample of this study mostly use wrong ‘be’ and miss the ‘be’ in term of auxiliary type.

As the errors analysis has been done by the researcher, hopefully it can be contributed the students itself to correct themselves. It essential to realize that as stated by Gass and Selinker (1994) an errors are systematic likely happen regularly and not recognized by the students. Moreover, the students have to write in English which is as their foreign language. They need to memorize and practice to use the rules of the language so that the errors are unavoidable. In writing skill, the students may lack of practice so that they can not locate their erros directly and need others to find them. In this part, teacher can assist students in order to correct the writing work.

Furthermore, in learning certain language, it is essential to use the correct grammatical rules in order to convey meaning well. As Carter (1997) stated that knowing more about how grammar works is to understand more about how grammar is used and misused. Through this error analysis study, the students can recognize the significant errors which appear in their writing and understand the nature of errors made. The difficulties of students regrading to English grammatical can be learnt as well by the teachers or even lecturer in order to find the method to teach those items. Relating to this study, the students and teacher may focus on the top three errors made by the participants such as “verb tense and form” (32.50%), “plurality” (21.25%), and “subject-verb agreement” (12.50%) without ignoring the other grammtical items.

Conclusion

After conducting this research, the writer concluded that the second semester students of English Study Program of FKIP Universitas Riau made some errors in writing paragraphs. 27 samples of study made 80 error items in writing paragraphs. The highest percentage of error is in term of “verb tense and form” (32.50%) while the lowest percentage of error is in term of “word order” (5%) and “passive voice” (5%). The comparison of percentage between those two grammar items is quite significant.

Recommendations

Since the result of the study describes that the highest percentage of error made by the second semester students is in verb tense and form (32.50%), plurality (21.25%) and subject-verb agreement (12.50%), the writer would like to suggest students to be concerned toward these grammar items. They can improve those structure items in writing through practice.

Based on the research finding, the researcher would like to recommend other researcher to conduct such research upon those top three errors made by the students and also can find the sources of errors. The application of this recommendation is expected could help researcher, teacher or lecturer and also students to draw a holistic picture of correlation between self-perception and language skills.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Azar, Betty Schampfer. 1989. *Understanding and Using English Grammar 2nd Edition*. New Jersey. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Azar, Betty Schampfer. 2000. *Understanding and Using English Grammar 3rd Edition*. New York. Longman.
- Baststone, R. 1974. *Grammar*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Bradshaw, William B. 2013. *Why Grammar Is Important*. www.huffingtonpost.com. Retrieved 10/1/2017.
- Brown, H. D. 1980. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Brown, H. D. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy (Second Ed)*. New York. Addison Wesley Longman.
- Bryne, Donn. 1979. *Teaching Writing Skill*. Hongkong. Longman Group Ltd.
- Carter R. 1997. *The new Grammar Teaching in Carter R Investigating English Discourse*. London. Routledge.
- Chin, Beverly Ann. 2000. *The Role of Grammar in Improving Students Writing*. University of Montana. Oxford.
- Cohan, C. 1976. *Writing Effective Paragraphs*. College Composition and Communication Vol. 27, No. 4 pp. 363-365

- Corder, S. P. (1974). Error Analysis. In J. P. B. Allen and S. Pit Corder (Eds.) *Techniques in Applied Linguistics (The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics:3)*, London: Oxford University Press (Language and Language Learning), pp. 122-154.
- Corder, S.P. (1967). *The significance of learners' errors*. Reprinted in J.C. Richards (ed.) (1974, 1984) *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman, pp. 19 - 27 (Originally in *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 5 (4)).
- Corder, S. P. (1971). Idiosyncratic dialects and error analysis. *IRAL*, 9 (2), 147-160.
- Crystal, D. 1987. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Second Edition. New York. Basil Blackwell.
- Dulay, Burt, and Krashen. 1982. *Language two*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R and Barkhuizen, G. 2005. *Analysing Learner Language*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Folse, Keith S et al. 2001. *Great Paragraphs: An Introduction to Writing Paragraphs*. Boston New York. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Gass, S, and Selinker, L. 1983. *Language Transfer in language Learning*. New York. Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Gass, S, and Selinker, L. 2008. *SLA: An Introductory course (3rd ed)*. New York. Routledge.
- Gay, L.R. 1987. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application* 3rd Edition. Indiana. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Hatch, F and Farhady. 1982. *Research Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Los Angeles. Newbury House Publishers. Inc.
- Heaton, JB. 1975. *Writing English Language Tests*. London. Longman group Ltd.
- Hedge, T. 2005. *Writing*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Hendriwanto and Bambang Sugeng. 2013. *An Analysis of the Grammatical Errors in the Narrative Writing of the First Grade of SMA 6 Yogyakarta*. *Journa of Education* Vol. 6 No. 1 November 2013. Yogyakarta.

- Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 1978. *Teaching Reading Vocabulary*. New York: Pearson Education. Inc.
- Hornby, A. S. et. al. 1974. *The Advance Learners of Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Hornby, A. S. 1995. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. London. Oxford University Press.
- Hourani, Taiser M.Y. 2008. *An Analysis of the Common Grammatical Error in the English Writing made by 3rd Secondary Male Students in the Eastern Coast of the UAE*. A dissertation. Institute of Education British University in Dubai.
- Hughey, Jane B. et. al. 1983. *Teaching ESL Composition: Principles and Techniques*. New York. Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Hyland, K. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Writing*. London. Longman.
- Johansen, Stig. 1975. *The Use of EA and CA*. English Language Teach 2. 29.
- Kumar D, Dr. Pradeep. 2013. *The Importance of Grammar in English Language Teaching*. A Reassessment. Language in India 7 vol. 13. India.
- Langan, John. 2001. *English Skill*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Lim Ho Peng. 1976. Errors and error Analysis in TESL: *The Malaysian experience*. RELC Journal. 9(2) 335-351.
- Limengka, P.E and Kuntjara, E. 2008. *Types of Grammatical Errors in the Essays Written by Fourth-Semster Students of English Department*. Surabaya. Petra Christian University.
- Lynch, Tony and Kenneth Anderson. 2013. *Grammar for Academic Writing*. University of Edinburgh. English Language Teaching.
- Meyers, Alan. 2005. *Gateways to Academic Writing: Effective Sentences, Paragraphs, and Essays*, New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- McCarthy, Andrew and Rudy Hariyono. 2008. *ABC Plus English Grammar*. Surabaya. Gitamedia Press.

- McMillan, James H. 1996. *Educational Research: Fundamental for the Consumer 2nd edition*. Virginia. Virginia Commonwealth University
- McWhorter, Kathleen. T. 2015. *Successful College Writing: Skill-Strategies-Learning Styles 2nd Edition*. St. Martins. Bedford.
- Murcia, Celce M and Larsen, Freeman, D. 1999. *The Grammar Book: An ESL Teacher's Course*. Boston. Heinle and Heinle.
- New South Wales Department of Education and Training. 2006. *Aspect of Writing: a handbook for writing assessment*. Wales.
- Nunan, David. 1999. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston. Heinle & Heinle.
- Oshima, Alice and Hogue, Ann. 1991. *Writing Academic English (Second Edition)*. Boston. USA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Ping-Wu, Hsio and Garza, Esther. 2014. Types and Attribute of English Writing Errors in the EFL Context-A Study of EA. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* Vol. 5 No. 6. Helsinki. Academy Publisher.
- Richards, J. C. 1977. *Error Analysis: Perspective on Second Language Acquisition*. London. Longman Group Limited.
- Siahaan, Sanggam. 2008. *The English Paragraph*. Yogyakarta. Graha Ilmu.
- Sugiyono. 2013. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung. Alfabeta.
- Teh, G. C. 1993. *Error Analysis and Error Correction of Written Work in the Classroom*. A Paper presented at the Language Lectures' and Teachers' Seminar in ITM. Malacca.
- Tomiyama, Machiko. 1979. *Grammatical Errors and Communication Breakdown*. CSE Report No. 125. California.
- Voss, Ralph F and Michael, L. Keene. 1992. *The Heath Guide to College Writing*. Lexington. D. C Heath and Company.
- White, R and Arndt, V. 1991. *Process Writing*. Addison Wesley Longman Ltd. Essex.
- Zamel, V. 1982. *The Process of Discovering Meaning*. TESOL Quarterly.