

Grammatical Error Performances in Indonesia EFL Learners' Writing

Astri Dwi Floranti

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Bahasa Asing (STIBA) Invada Cirebon, Indonesia
e-mail : astri.floranti@gmail.com

Hanif Nurcholish Adiantika

Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, Indonesia
e-mail : hanifadiantika@gmail.com

Abstract:

The present study attempts to investigate the grammatical error performances in Indonesia EFL learners' writing through the framework of Error Analysis (EA). The errors are examined and categorized based on the integration of linguistic and surface strategy to gain detailed and comprehensive results. This study was conducted through a qualitative approach within an intrinsic case study design. This study was initiated in 1 senior high school of Kuningan city, West Java. It involved one hundred participants in the twelfth grade. The data were mainly obtained through written test and interview. The results reveal that the learners commit numerous error types in fourteen linguistic categories, especially in the verb areas. The errors are dominated in the form of misinformation and omission type. Furthermore, the possible sources of errors is obtained through the learners' personal perspectives and analyzing the errors themselves. The sources involves the incapability to accomplish, recognize and comprehend the foreign language rules and its restrictions, less mastery of vocabulary and grammars. Hence, these shortcomings should be great concerns for the involved authorities. It is suggested to consider some advanced actions to overcome the errors and fulfill the learner needs.

Keywords: *error analysis, writing, surface taxonomy, linguistic taxonomy, narrative text*

1. Introduction

Since the Indonesia independence in 1945 until nowadays, English skills have been indispensable for academic and profesional purposes (Lauder, 2008; Lie, 2007). Despite of the investments and efforts for many years in educational institutions, English implementation may be considered less satisfying due to the poor achievement of EFL learners' language proficiency (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Nur & Madkur, 2014). Out of four skills, writing is regarded as the most challenging skill for both native and non-native speakers (Al-Gharabally, 2015; Husin & Nurbayani, 2017; Sukandi, 2013; Thuy, 2009).

In spite of many advantages of mastering writing skill, especially in the context of formal communications which apply numerous of writing types (Walsh, 2010), writing receives least attention and priority from both the teachers and the learners. The negative attitudes toward writing arise due to some possible issues. Writing is not an innate ability, but it is acquired through years of learning and training. It involves socio-cognitive process with the mastery of certain competencies to produce understandable and make sense texts such as knowledge of vocabularies, grammar, syntax, writing style and system, etc. Additionally, due to the limited time in the class, this skill cannot be performed properly (Ariyanti, 2016; Hyland, 2003; Kroll, 1990).

Previous studies have emphasized that grammars have been remaining as a problematic issue for most EFL learners at most educational levels to create qualified and appropriate writings. The learners often consider grammars as horrifying or boring subjects due to the differences of language rules from their native languages. Hence, it is both challenging task and an obstacle for them to become proficient at this ability (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Alhaysony & Alhaisoni, 2017; Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal, 2016; Mustafa, Kirana, & Bahri, 2017).

Grammars are perceived strongly from prescriptive or traditional view. It is consciously learnt and presented as rules of forming correct language. It preserves the teachers' role as the adjudicators of grammatical accuracy and errors. Even though this view is criticized by the descriptionist for its dogmatisms (Kroeger, 2005), its realization is demanded for certain reasons. A constant rules are required to assess validity and reliability objectively in language testing or writing and to guide the learners to understand the foreign language (Artini, 2001). Thus, the EFL learners may be expected to be persistently precise and to produce standard forms. Despite of creating errors in speaking are acceptable as long as the listeners grasp the meaning, it is regarded as unacceptable and understandable text in writing.

According to the reviews aforementioned, grammatical errors are inevitable in writing. Errors occur due to the gaps in knowledge and can only be judged by the language practitioner (Gass & Selinker, 2008). This study supports the view which considers both errors and mistakes as main products of learning which can be observed and analyzed and need not be distinguished further. Hence, the errors are defined as 'any deviation from a selected norm of language performance'

in terms of grammaticality and not acceptability (Brown, 2007; Corder, 1981; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

In regards to investigate the errors in productive data like writing, error analysis (EA) is suitable approach to be conducted. EA successfully accounted learner errors which could not predicted by Contrastive Analysis (CA), involved linguistic analysis to the concepts and evaluated the errors. It provides set of procedures to identify, examine and portray the learner errors. Principally, EA was promoted in 1960s as part of linguistic branch and as an alternative approach which contrasts with CA. EA was motivated by beliefs that the interference of learner's mother language and target language (TL) was not the only source of errors as CA claimed. The theoretical underpinning of EA was closely based on the nativist view and the emergence of interlanguage theory which viewed that the learner linguistic background contributed to the errors as well (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

At last, the errors are natural process in EFL learning. They should be interpreted as 'red flags', not 'flaws' which indicate learner attempts to gradually construct rule systems of foreign language and as warning signs to be improved (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In line with the problems aforementioned, this study is highly motivated through the previous empirical studies to investigate the EFL learner errors in writing and the factors that generate those errors in the level of senior high school as a sample of writing problems in Indonesia. There are high expectations toward those samples because writing has been taught in numerous text genres since in the elementary school. This study incorporates between linguistic and surface taxonomies in order to produce a depth result which is different from previous studies. *In the end*, the result of this study is expected to contribute either for EFL learners or teachers and being reference guides *either in theoretical or practical*. The results can be applied as the basis of evaluation and reflection to improve English proficiency.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1. The Challenges of Writing

Online speaking, writing is regarded as visual form of communication in the form of written text offered to the readers for any kind of communicative purposes. In addition, writing is classified as as productive skills in which the authors are urged to produce the texts in appropriate ways and rules and deal with the its process (Özdemir & Aydın, 2015).

As far as the importance of writing is concerned, the challenges in writing have been acknowledged by numerous educationalists. Writing is considered as great challenges for most learners in the view of second or foreign language researchs. It consists of some complicated steps which involves organizing ideas or information, outlining, drafting, revising and editing. It is not straightforward process which does not involve with cognitive process on learner minds. It is recursive process indeed. Furthermore, depending on the type of writing texts, it is needed different strategies and formulations of writings as well.

Several aspects such as the accuracy, the readability, the correctness in regards to the grammars, the organizations of writing, the vocabularies, the mechanics of writing and the writing style should be considered carefully (Harmer, 2004). Based on the reviews aforementioned, writing challenges may appear at each phase of learning writing which can be categorized into psychology, cognitive, linguistic and pedagogy problems (Hyland, 2003)

2.2. The Role of Grammar in Writing

All language possess their own language system, known as grammar, which involve sound, structure and meaning system. The system organizes the arrangements of language units to be meaningful elements. In the context of writing, grammar performances involves the instructions to how words, phrases or sentences should be presented in a proper way. The aims is to provide clear communication of meaning to the readers. To become effective writers, learning rules of grammars and possessing adequate knowlegde of grammars are obliged requirements for the learners. It is one of essential competency in writing which determines how the ideas are organized systemically and clearly.

It has been acknowlegded that there are two contrasting grammar approaches. A descriptive grammar concerns with the observing and analyzing the use of grammar naturally and unconsciously by the learners by deducing the rules in their own way. On the other side, a prescriptive grammar tend to provide a set of explicit rules which are taught conciously to use the language in standarized ways (Kroeger, 2005).

Based on the reviews aforementioned, both writing and grammar are intertwined and effect each other. Writing skill need grammar competencies to produce the understable and logical texts. At the same time, the learner competencies of grammar enhance in practicing writing skill. In the context of EFL teaching and writing, the latter approach is considered suitable. In exploration of a grammar of a language, it deals with the forms as being 'correct' or the acceptability of the forms themselves. The prescriptivism is needed for some particular reasons, such as language test or rigid guidances for EFL learners (Artini, 2001).

2.3. Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) is known as a procedure in second or foreign language studies which consists of a set of methods to account and explore the learner errors (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). In the view of those studies, errors demonstrates the state of learner knowledge of second or foreing language in construcing new language systems. Rather than judging them as learner shortcomings, they should be regarded as imperfect learning evidence or performance which must be evaluated and corrected (Gass & Selinker, 2008). The aims for observing the learner errors serve two purposes: (1) to obtain the data which show the sources of interference types and; (2) to inform the teachers or curricullum developers about common error types committed by the learners. It is expected that further actions are taken to improve the learner competencies (Dulay et al., 1982).

The rise of EA approach arose from the dissatisfaction of Contrastive Analysis (CA) approach regarding the source of errors which claimed the L1 interferences as the only one and main source of errors (interlingual effect). In other words, the linguistic background of learners is the greatest barrier which badly affected to acquire the second or foreign language systems. After having been dominant approach in accounting of the learner errors, in 1960s, EA was established as an alternative approach motivated by behaviorism which view the intralingual errors as the other significant source of errors. There are four taxonomies in EA to classify the errors: (1) linguistic category; (2) surface strategy; (3) comparative analysis; and (4) communicative effect. The comparison was made between the errors a learner makes in producing the TL and the TL form itself. A great deal of the work on error analysis was carried out within the context of the classroom. The goal was clearly one of pedagogical remediation (Dulay et al., 1982; Gass & Selinker, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

The present study puts an emphasis on the learner errors in writing through the Error Analysis approach (EA). It was conducted by a qualitative approach with intrinsic case study design. That approach was suitable because this study was carried out in the natural setting which provided deep information about the learner experiences and attitudes. The data were described in interpretive inquiry and holistically. Then, the case study design was employed to document and portray certain issues and participants in depth due to the limited time or space (Creswell, 2008; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

This study was initiated in 1 senior high school of Kuningan city. The number of participants was one hundred students in the twelfth grade. The school was chosen due to some considerations. As known that the school was regarded as one of greatest senior high school in the city. Then, based on the observation, the teacher shared similar interest to discover the learner problems and competencies in writing. The teacher considered writing as difficult skill as they should pay attention to many aspects, i.e. one of the most important and difficult aspect is grammar. Thus, the teacher was motivated to improve writing skill by understanding the EFL learner concerns.

This study employed written test and interview as the main of data collection technique. Firstly, the observation was conducted to gain some insights about the learner attitudes and activities in the settings. This study took non-participant observation in which the researcher did not participate directly in the activities. Following steps of EA were applied in this study in regards to the learner grammar performances: (1) collecting the data; (2) identifying the errors; (3) classifying the errors; (4) quantifying the errors; (5) analyzing the errors. This study did not take the remediate procedure yet (Gass & Selinker, 2008). The interview was conducted in the semi-structured format. The results were presented both in the form of chart and tables to reflect the classification obviously. Secondly, written test was employed to examine the learner grammar performances. The learners were instructed to compose a narrative text in the theme of Malin Kundang. The narrative text was selected because they had learned this genre in the previous

meetings. The theme itself was a well-known legend story in Indonesia occurred in West Sumatra. It had been confirmed that the learners recognized the story plot. This legend story told about a rebellious child to his mother after being a successful man and he was cursed into a stone. The analysis was emphasized on the error classification and descriptions. At last, the interview was conducted to obtain deeper answers dealing with the factors that generate the errors after categorizing their errors in previous step.

4. Findings and Discussion

This chapter mainly portrays two purposes of the study: (1) to analyze and classify the learners' grammar incompetencies or errors in certain parts as described in section 4.1, and; (2) to examine and explore the possible error sources. Different techniques have been employed to gather the results as described in section 4.2. Based on the preliminary result in observations, the English teaching process ran smoothly. Both the teacher and the learners actively involved during learning process. The teacher took time and patience to teach the learners carefully. In response, the learners give positive reviews. Furthermore, the description of the data are presented based on the instrument used.

4.1. Error Types in EFL Learner Writings

Written test

To accomplish the first purpose of the study, it mainly employs written test to assess the learners' grammar performances. The test was conducted in the class and they were instructed to compose narrative texts in the theme of Malin Kundang.

First of all, the result of written tests present that most learners generally applied each part of generic structures of the narrative texts correctly. They could tell the story properly in line with the function of each stage: (1) orientation tells the story background to introduce the characters and setting; (2) complication offers the problems faced by the characters and resolving them; (3) resolution is the closure of story by giving the solution at last (Sudarwati & Grace, 2007).

This result indicates that the knowledge of the concept and purpose of narrative texts are accomplished. The learners can present sequence of events that occurred to the characters. They involve the problem solving leading to the change of social opinions and attitudes (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Even though the teaching process is well-carried out and the learners produce appropriate story, the grammatical errors on their writing texts cannot be inevitable as part of learning process. Hence, the error performances are categorized in linguistic and surface taxonomies.

In linguistic strategy, the errors are classified based on the general categories of descriptive grammar in the target language (English) that have been deviated. The components usually relate to the basic sentence structures in the field of syntax or morphology. Each category can be further sub-divided. In surface strategy, the errors are classified based on 'the ways surface structures are altered' in four ways: omission, addition, misinformation and misordering (Dulay

et al., 1982). The results of this study are mainly categorized by means of linguistic, then supported by surface strategy.

Based on the analysis, the total number of errors is 1138 occurrences. The learners commit various errors. Their distribution is fully presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 based on the perspective of two taxonomies.

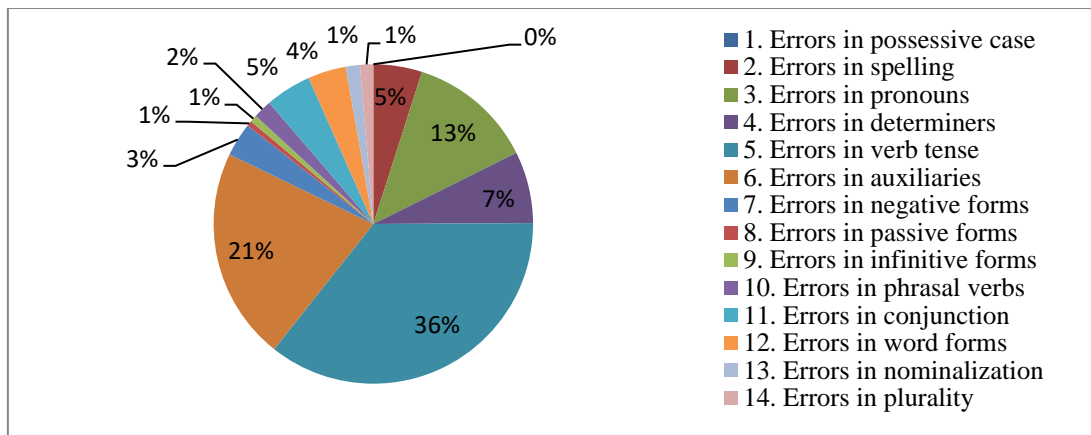


Figure 1 : Error Distributions from Linguistic Strategy

Figure 1 reveals that there are fourteen types of error distributions in linguistic strategy. The verb errors are sub-divided into six detailed types as in point 5 till point 10. This case can increase the percentage of verb errors than other types. In fact, the verb errors achieve the highest frequencies achieving more than a half of total errors (712 occurrences or 62,6%). These results may indicate that the verb constituents are the most challenging area for the learners due to the complexity of verb elements depending on the tense and other language elements in the sentence.

In detail, the two highest errors are occupied by errors in verb tenses (399 occurrences or 36%) and auxiliaries (240 occurrences or 21%). It is followed by errors in pronouns (142 occurrences or 13%) and determiners (81 occurrences or 7%). There are five percent of errors in spelling (55 occurrences) and conjunction (52 occurrences). The other types of errors are discovered in the inappropriate choice of word forms (43 occurrences or 4%). As for the rest, there are seven types of errors below three percentage points, i.e. negative forms (38 occurrences), possessive case (22 occurrences), phrasal verbs (21 occurrences), nominalizations (16 occurrences), pluralities (15 occurrences), infinitive forms (8 occurrences) and passive forms (6 occurrences).

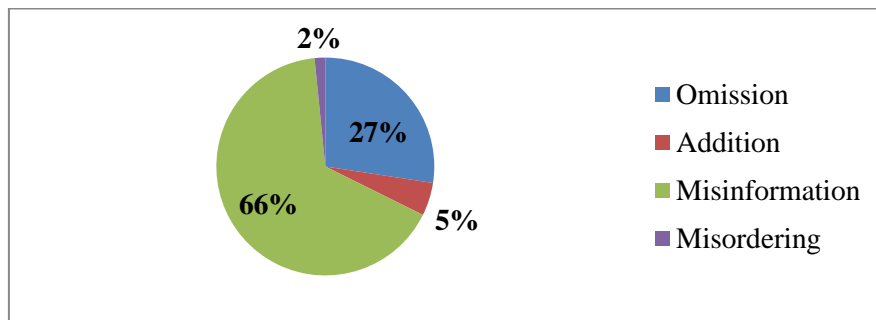


Figure 2 : Error Distribution from Surface Strategy

Figure 2 reveals the error distributions in surface strategy which is dominated by the form of misinformation (752 occurrences or 66%) and omission type (312 occurrences or 27 %). It is followed by errors in the form of addition type (56 occurrences or 5%) and the least is errors in the form of misordering type (18 occurrences or 2%). These results indicate that the learner flaws are principally related to the incapability to select proper phonemes, morphemes, words or structures. Different forms of the same language category in which the application is determined under certain conditions can misperceive the learners if they are unable to understand the requirements. In the following tables, the error distributions are fully demonstrated by the integration of two taxonomies

Table 1 : Error Distributions and Examples

Error Types		Examples	Suggested Correction
A. Errors in Possessive Case			
1	Omission of marker 's	Malin huge ship ; Malin wife	Malin's huge ship ; Malin's wife
2	Misordering of marker 's	Mother's Malin	Malin's mother
3	Addition of marker 's	Her's son	Her son
B. Errors in Spelling			
1	Omission of letters	<i>Faktors ; dilligen ; verry; someone; believ; merried; begar; hugh; cleaver</i>	<i>Factors; dilligent; very; someone; believe; married; beggar; hug; clever.</i>
C. Errors in Pronouns			
1	Omission of the subject pronoun	(..) lived a poor woman; (..) said a bad word	<i>There</i> lived a poor woman; <i>he</i> said a bad word
2	Omission of the noun as the object of determiner	that (..) Malin asked his mother for this (..)	that <i>news</i> ; Malin asked his mother for this <i>news</i>
3	Addition : Double Marking of pronoun	You make <i>me my</i> expensive clothes dirty	You make <i>me</i> my expensive clothes dirty
4	Misinformation : alternating form between possessive adjectives	<i>her</i> mother; <i>him</i> mother	<i>his</i> mother; <i>his</i> mother

5	Misinformation : alternating form of possessive adjective with personal pronoun	<u>He</u> mother, <u>he</u> father, <u>he</u> ship, <u>they</u> son, <u>them</u> village	<u>His</u> mother, <u>his</u> father, <u>his</u> ship, <u>their</u> son, <u>their</u> village
6	Omission of the antecedent of pronoun	He was asked to go with <u>him</u>	He was asked to go with <u>him</u>
7	Misinformation : alternating form of subject pronoun	<u>He</u> cursed her son	<u>She</u> cursed her son
8	Omission of possessive pronoun	Malin's life was happy with (..) <u>wife</u>	Malin's life was happy with <u>his wife</u>
9	Misinformation : alternating form of subject pronoun with possessive pronoun	<u>his</u> wanted to, <u>her</u> was, <u>they</u> daily need, <u>her</u> went to the ship	<u>She</u> wanted to... , <u>she</u> was... , <u>their</u> daily need... , <u>She</u> went to the ship...
D. Errors in Determiners			
1	Omission of article	live in (..) beach, to (..) stone, MK was (..) good looking and smart	live in <u>a</u> beach, to <u>a</u> stone, MK was <u>a</u> good looking and smart
2	Addition of article	the her son, in the West Sumatra	the her son, in the West Sumatra
3	Misinformation of quatifier	a money, very ships	<u>much</u> money, <u>many</u> ships
E. Errors in verb and verb tenses			
1	Omission of verbs	Malin (..), she was sad if her son (..) far away	Malin <u>went</u> , she was sad if her son <u>stayed</u> far away
2	Misinformation of verb tense	<u>Lives</u> , <u>leave</u> , <u>goes</u> , <u>helps</u>	<u>Lived</u> , <u>left</u> , <u>went</u> , <u>helped</u>
3	Misinformation of verb forms for nouns	There <u>live</u> a poor family	There <u>lived</u> a poor family
4	Misinformation of perfect verbs (V ₃) for past verbs (V ₂)	Malin <u>gone</u> a work, Malin <u>grown up</u>	Malin <u>went</u> a work, Malin <u>grew up</u>
5	Addition of verbs	He <u>is</u> always go, there's <u>live</u>	He always <u>went</u> , there <u>lived</u>
F. Errors in auxiliaries			
1	Misinformation of auxiliary tense	He <u>is</u> a porter	He <u>was</u> a porter
2	Misinformation of verb in reporting speech	"why <u>did</u> you leave me?" ; "I <u>cursed</u> you"	"why <u>do</u> you leave me?" ; "I <u>curse</u> you"
3	Misinformation of to be	Malin <u>to be</u> a rich man	Malin <u>became</u> a rich man
4	Omission of auxiliary verbs	You (..) very ugly	You <u>were</u> very ugly
G. Errors in negative forms			

1	Omission of auxiliary verbs	Malin (...) not come, He (...) not admit	Malin <u>did</u> not come; He <u>did</u> not admit
2	Misinformation of negative constructions	<u>not admitted, not accepted</u>	<u>Did not admit; did not accept</u>
3	Addition : Double marking in negative forms	<u>not never</u> go.	<u>not</u> go.
H. Errors in passive forms			
1	Omission of auxiliary Verb	The ship (...) hit by a storm, MK (...) invited by the merchant	The ship <u>was</u> hit by a storm, MK <u>was</u> invited by the merchant
I. Errors in infinitive forms			
1	Omission of preposition <i>to</i>	wander (...) find	wander <u>to</u> find
2	Misinformation of infinitive forms	He wander to <u>looking</u> for a job, MK want to <u>saw</u> his mother	He wander to <u>look</u> for a job, MK want to <u>see</u> his mother
J. Errors in phrasal verbs			
1	Omission of preposition in phrasal verb	search (...), asked (...) permission	search <u>for</u> , asked <u>for</u> permission
2	Misinformation of preposition in phrasal verbs	asked <u>to</u>	asked <u>for</u>
3	Misorder of phrasal verbs	wants <u>go to</u>	wants <u>to go</u>
K. Errors in conjunctions			
1	a. Addition : Double Addition of conjunction	<u>After that when, and then a few year later, and then, then finally</u>	<u>(may choose one of the conjunction)</u>
2	b. Omission of article in conjunction	Once upon (...) time	Once upon <u>a</u> time
3	c. Misinformation of conjunction	<u>Long long long</u> time a go, many <u>year</u> later,	<u>Long</u> time a go, many <u>years</u> later,
4	d. Omission of conjunction	a good (...) smart boy; Malin was a good (...) wise boy.	a good <u>and</u> smart boy; Malin was a good <u>and</u> wise boy.
L. Errors in word forms			
1	Misinformation of word forms (untranslated words)	<u>Sumatera Barat, mengutuk, just terdiri dari, mencaci maki, sederhana, sengsara, rindu, legendaris, ternyata,</u>	<u>West Sumatra, curse, consist of swear, simple, misery, miss, legendary, in fact</u>

<i>M. Errors in nominalizations</i>			
1	Misinformation of word forms for nominalizations	she was very happy <u>listen</u> his arrival; he went for <u>obtain</u>	she was very happy <u>listening</u> his arrival; he went for <u>obtaining</u>
<i>N. Errors in plurality</i>			
1	Misinformation of noun and its number	an old & ugly <u>women</u> , the <u>women</u> , the <u>islands</u> , many <u>woman</u> , <u>a lot of moneys</u>	an old & ugly <u>woman</u> , the <u>woman</u> , the <u>island</u> , many <u>women</u> , <u>a lot of money</u>

The errors are dominated by the verb errors with numerous types. The learners may be confused to select proper constituents in the verb areas, particularly in the verb tenses. There are many inconsistency use of verb and auxiliary tenses which are mixture of present and past tense in the text unless the knowlegde of narrative text's language features using past tense has been delivered. Instead using past verb either in auxiliary form 'was' in 'he is a porter' or verb form 'went' in 'Malin goes to the city', the usage of present tense dominates the total.

The most obvious differences is verbs in English are determined by tenses while Indonesia language does not have similar concepts. Based on the result of interviews, there are a few learners who tend to choose completing the story rather than paying attention to the verb tenses or difficult vocabularies. As a result, they may misinform or omit their concerns of verb tense using present, perfect or other tenses they merely know.

Other related errors are in the negative forms dominated by the omission of auxiliary verbs and the misinformation of negative constructions. To express negative form, the learners merely build with the structure of 'not' and 'verb' as in 'Malin not come' with the omission of auxiliary *did*. In other case, there are found out the incorrect forms as in 'not admitted' which shows the lack of understanding of negative constructions.

Another set of errors belong to the passive forms, infinitive forms and phrasal verbs which are the least verb errors. Firstly, the omission of auxiliary verbs in the passive forms can be found due to its familiarity story. Corresponding to the story in which the men character (Malin) was cursed into a stone when he sailed in the sea in line, thus 'the ship hit by a storm' can be regarded incorrectly because it is inappropriate with the storyline. Secondly, the incorrect infinitive form occur in the omission of preposition *to* as in 'wander find' and in the misinformation of verb tense for infinitive forms as in 'want to saw'. Infinitive form sholud be followed by preposition *to* and bare infinitive. Thirdly, the learner may be lack of the knowledge of phrasal verb itself, an idiomatic phrase consisting of a verb and another element such as certain prepositions. Most of the errors are in the form of omission and misinformation of the preposition. The learners may not know about this requirement.

The other predominant errors are found in the errors in pronouns which lead the most to the incorrect of alternating forms of pronoun types. The problem relate to the lack understanding of agreement between pronoun and its antecedent based on the position of the pronoun itself.

Instead of *'his mother'* which refers to Malin's mother, *'her mother'* is incorrect choice. Then, the omission of the noun either as the subject in the beginning of the sentence or as the object for the determiners are often found which leave up the ambiguity.

Other errors are found in the errors of word forms where the learners merely utilize their native language due to their limited vocabularies as in *'mengutuk'* (curse) or *'rindu'* (miss). In addition to the noun errors, the violations of number agreement in nouns are often performed. Most of their errors are incorrect because they refer to the plural noun which should be regarded as singular noun as in *'an old & ugly women'* in which they refers to Malin's mother.

Additionally, there are found many errors in the use of conjunctions. Most errors are in the form of double addition where the learners add up two conjunctions at the same time as in *'and then'* which should be removed one of them. The learner should select an appropriate conjunction to connect phrases or sentences. On the other hand, the omission of conjunction in the noun phrases constructions are often found as in *'a good smart boy'*. This noun phrase should be added by the conjunction *and* to complete the adjective meaning. In regards to the error of morphemes, it is merely discovered in the possessive case. Most errors are the omission of possessive marker *'s* as in *'Malin huge ship'* or *'Malin wife'*. Some of the errors are the misplacement of the marker *'s* as in *'Mother's Malin'*.

Due to the limited space, the error descriptions can not be fully-conducted. The results imply the learner grammatical difficulties which should be resolved and improved. The errors are varied and unpredictable. The result can emphasize previous studies (Fareed et al., 2016; Mustafa et al., 2017; Singh, Jageer Singh, Abd Razak, & Ravinthar, 2017) that subject – verb agreement, verb tense, pronoun and basis phrase or sentence structures are the most of learner challenges. Referring to Burt and Kiparsky's error types (1975) in Dulay et al., (1982), most errors in this study are dominated in local errors or minor violations rather than global errors. It means that the errors solely affect certain part of word, phrase or sentence which do not affect the whole meaning and interpretation of sentence. Consequently, the local errors do not arise much confusion in the readers' mind. The readers still can make a proper guess about the intended meaning. The application of grammar is not solely independent, but it is connected to particular requirements and agreements to other constituents which may confuse most EFL learners. Further discussion of error sources in EFL learner writing appears in the following sections.

4.2. The Possible Error Sources in EFL Learner Writings

Observation and Interview

This section reveals the possible error sources which were obtained through (1) observation toward the learner errors and (2) strengthened by interview them. Both techniques were conducted to gain broad perspective about the learner errors both from the researchers as the adjudicator of errors and from the learners as the participants who create the errors.

Firstly, the observation is performed by learning and investigating the learner errors based on the experts' source classifications. As known that each expert proposed their own interpretation (Brown, 2007; Corder, 1981; Richards, 1973). There are two significant sources of errors called as interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. However, some experts suggest that it is quite tricky to classify the sources of errors obviously due to the absence of clear-cut limitation in practice. There can be huge tendency of overlapping between each type of sources.

The most recognized source is the interference of learner's native language. In language acquisition views, it can prevent the acquisition of language rules being learned (Corder, 1981) due to the assumptions that the second language systems are similar to the mother tongue (Brown, 2007). In this condition, the researchers are the adjudicator of errors.

In present study, the interlingual transfer occur at some extent. It can be seen by the characteristic of most learners' texts that may be classified as language transfer or literal translation either the forms or the meanings from Indonesia into English. This case corresponds to Lado's work (Gass & Selinker, 2008). However, the major source of errors in this study may not arise from the interlingual transfer as Brown (2007) agreed. This study may supports that the interlingual transfer indicates the learner strategies in the early stages of learning due to unfamiliar target language systems. In this study, it may consider successful at some extent due to the similarities of Indonesia and English structures at minimum requirements, i.e. Subject – Verb – Object - Complement.

Language transfer can be regarded as positive process to assist the learner in delivering the idea (Gass & Selinker, 2008). The learners have spent many years in learning English. Once they gradually acquire the new system, they can commit errors during learning process. Hence, the errors is more possible to be classified as intralingual transfers. In addition, it can be strengthened through the interviews.

Once the experts led many language researches, it is known that the most significant source of errors exist beyond the interlingual transfer within the foreign language itself called as intralingual transfer (Brown, 2007). Then, it is sub-divided into four categories: (1) incomplete application of rules; (2) false concepts hypothesized; (3) ignorance of rule restriction; (4) overgeneralization (Richards, 1973). Due to uncertain limitations, there may be huge tendency of overlapping between each type of sources. Looking at the data carefully, there may be three predominance of error sources.

When the learners may not employ the complete rules yet, it is categorized as source type of 'incomplete application of rules'. In other words, the learners fails to operate full rules. The predominance of its examples is in the form of omissions since the omission frequency is significant, e.g. 'Malin not come' in place of 'Malin did not come' or 'Malin was a good wise boy' in place of 'Malin was a good and wise boy'. Other examples are omission of the subject pronoun as in 'said a bad word' which construct a incomplete sentence.

When the learners lack knowledge of certain subject, it can lead to 'false concepts hypothesized', e.g. 'he cursed her son in place of 'she cursed her son'. The error occur due to learner's faulty in understanding the concept of pronoun types. The misinformation occurs due to alternating form of subject pronoun between male and female gender pronoun.

When the learners employ the rules in a context which is actually unnecessary. In this case, they fail to examine the restrictions of those rules. Some rule restriction errors may occur in the form of addition because there are unnecessary elements added by the learners. For instances, the error in the possessive case 'her's son' is caused by the attachment of the marker '-s' to the possessive pronoun.

At last, the predominance of these sources can express the learner obstacles in forming a foreign language system based on the errors they created. In addition, to reinforce the sources aforementioned, the interviews was conducted. The present study support that the sources of errors can be strengthened by involving the learner perspectives. The result in Figure 3 can potray the learner problems genuinely in the real practice and the learner personal experiences during writing process, obtain a proper sense of meaning and information.

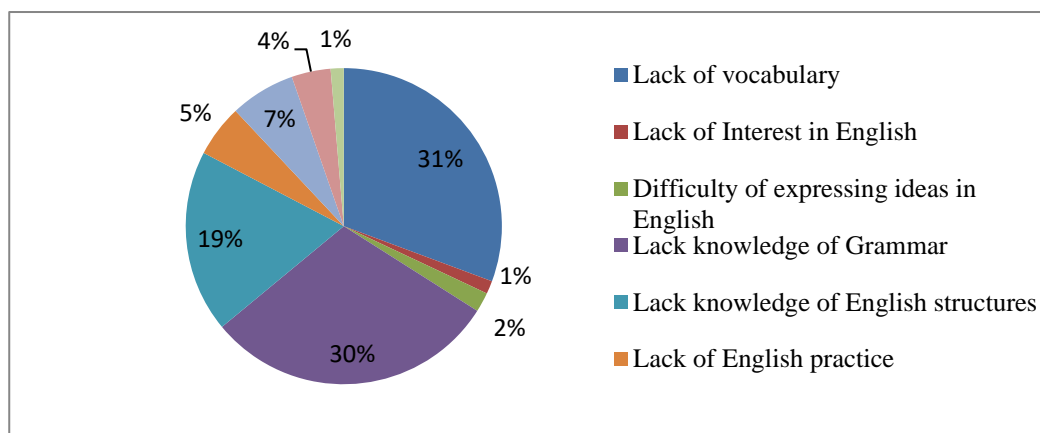


Figure 3: A Possible Sources of Errors

As the result shows, the learners may actually possess huge interest and motivation to practice in English. It can be demonstrated by their low percentage as sources of errors, (1%), (5%). Then, the learning methods may not the major sources (1%) as well. It means that the they may enjoy the teaching process. Hence, there are other sources which affect greatly to the existence of learner errors.

As a matter of fact, the learners strongly agree that limited vocabularies are the major problems (31%) rather than the difficulties in expressing ideas in English (5%). Eventhough the errors in word forms (the presence of Indonesia vocabularies) are not significant, the learners support that lack of vocabularies can prohibit in delivering their ideas and emotions. Extensive vocabulary mastery is indispensable skill. The understanding of vocabularies need much effort.

It involves recognizing the words and their meanings, concepts, referents, collocations and grammatical functions. It covers three main aspects related to form, meaning, and use. The learner statements in the interview to support the data are stated as follows :

"Saya sih sebenarnya tidak masalah dalam proses belajar di kelas. Saya suka English kok. Cuma saya tuh suka gatau gimana nyari kata atau nyusunnya, miss"

"Actually I don't think that I have difficulties in the learning process. I like English but I do not know how to express them in words or structures, miss"

"Bingung cari kata dalam bahasa Inggrisnya, miss. Jadi yaudah seadanya pake bahasa Indonesia dulu"

"I'm confused to look for English vocabularies. So, I just use Indonesia vocabularies instead"

"Aduh, miss. Saya gatau banyak kosa kata – kosa kata bahasa Inggrisnya. Jadi aja nulisnya makin susah"

"Ouch, miss. I do not know much about English vocabularies. So, it will make much difficult in writing process"

Additionally, lack knowledge of foreign language systems (30%) are definitely one of the biggest challenges for EFL learners, especially in the area of English structure (19%). Either English or Indonesia language share similarities or differences. The errors can appear due to the differences between both languages. Unlike Indonesia language, English has 16 different tenses which apply different auxiliaries verb. Furthermore, there are between nouns and their auxiliaries. The tense is one of the core subject in English grammar which affect greatly to other constituents such as pronoun types and auxiliary verbs. Unlike Indonesia, English has gender pronouns which affect the verb types. Then, English plural forms are quite complicated because they can occur regularly or irregularly. The learner statements in the interview to support the data are stated as follows :

"Susah kalo paham struktur bahasa Inggris, kadang ada yang beda ada yang sama juga"

"It's difficult to understand English structures. Sometimes, there may be difference and sameness"

"Mungkin karena strukturnya beda dengan bahasa Indonesia ya miss, terutama di tenses. Kadang suka bingung cara pemakaiannya dan kapan"

"There may be different in Indonesia structures, mayn't there? It is especially in the tense area. Sometimes, I'm confused how and when to use the tenses"

In regards to setting problems, they relate to the time and condition during writing process which are experienced by the participants. This case can affect for their concentration (7%). To fully engage with the writing process, many participants do not want any kind of distractions and need much time and the class may not be the best workplace. Then, due to limited time in school, the participants tend to complete the story, focusing to the length of the text, rather than

thinking about grammar or revising step. Hence, there is tendency that the learners may depend on the software online (4%). Eventhough, the results can not be guaranteed, it will be much help to make the process at ease.

“Waktunya yang kurang miss karena kita diburu-buru selesai padahal kita perlu waktu banyak untuk nyusun bahasanya. Kan bahasa Inggris ga gampang miss. Kita perlu waktu lebih banyak dari pada jam dikelas”

“The time is limited, mis, because we hurry to complete fully the texts. We need more time to arrange the language because English is not easy. We need more time rather than the time in the class”.

Menurut saya, keterbatasan waktu jadi salah satu kendala karena kebanyakan writing dikerjakan dikelas. Mungkin kalo dibawa tugasnya ke rumah, waktu untuk menyusunnya lebih lama, jadi bisa lebih baik lagi.”

“According to me, the limited time is one of the problem because most of the writing are conducted in the class. If the writing assignment is brought to home, the time to arrange is longer and the results is better”

In conclusion, the sources of errors are obtained from two perspectives. It is very essential to identify the cause behind their occurrences. In most cases, the significant sources can arise from the inability: (1) to accomplish the rules; (2) to recognize the rule restrictions; (3) to comprehend the rule concepts. On the other side, based on the learners' personal experiences, they struggle a lot in mastery of vocabulary and english grammars which are high potentials to cause difficulties.

4. Conclusion

In the present study, the efforts have been carried out to identify and categorize the EFL learner errors and sources of errors. Based on the results, it is found that out of fourteen error types, the predominance of errors is in the verb areas. Then, the errors are dominated in misinformation and omission type. On the other hand, the sources of errors involves the learner incapacibilities of employing and understanding foreign language system. In addition, there are several identified sources that occur during writing process faced by the learners.

The challenges of EFL may be actually faced in the countries. Behind the poor achievements, numerous efforts have been conducted for the past decades. Consequently, it must be great concerns as the problems must be overcome. Hence, this study may put forward a few corresponding suggestions. Producing good writing is a challenging task for most of EFL learners. Writing is complex cognitive activity in which the writer must pay attention to the writing rules in order to produce qualified and readable texts. It involves the development of the ideas through written form systemically, and the process of arranging words syntactically.

At the class environment contexts, the teachers can integrate the application of grammar in writing. At the same time, there will be a progress in the proficieny of writing skill. The teachers

should take considerable time and attention to provide some feedback, evaluate and guide the learners to practice concisely applying proper grammars. The modifications and variation of learning method may be needed in more communicatively oriented approach. After that, the teachers may establish group discussion consisting of some learners to do proofreading step. However, writing depends on the learner competencies. The teachers should gradually motivate the learners to engage in practice actively. The learners should be supported to express themselves in foreign language.

At last, the result of present study is expected to be helpful both theoretically and practically. Eventhough the present study is undertaken in a small scale, the result is expected to be information and caution for concerning authorities.

References

- Al-Gharabally, M. (2015). The Writing Difficulties Faced By L2 Learners and How To Minimize Them. *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, 3(5), 42–49. Retrieved from www.eajournals.org
- Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam. (2011). Difficulties in Teaching and Learning Grammmar in an EFL Context. *International Journal of Instruction*, 4(2), 69–92.
- Alhaysony, M., & Alhaisoni, E. (2017). EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions of Grammatical Difficulties. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 8(1), 188–199. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.8n.1p.188>
- Ariyanti. (2016). The Teaching of EFL Writing in Indonesia. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 16(2), 263. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v16i2.274>
- Ariyanti, A., & Fitriana, R. (2017). *EFL Students' Difficulties and Needs in Essay Writing*. 158(Ictte), 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.2991/ictte-17.2017.4>
- Artini, L. P. (2001). Prescriptive Grammar in Teaching English in Indonesian Schools. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, Vol. 8, pp. 225–232. <https://doi.org/10.17977/JIP.V8I3.564>
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Corder, S. . (1981). Error Analysis and Interlanguage. In *The Modern Language Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/326720>
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing Learner Language.pdf*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fareed, M., Ashraf, A., & Bilal, M. (2016). ESL Learners' Writing Skills: Problems, Factors and Suggestions. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, 4(2), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.20547/jess0421604201>
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in*

- Education* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course* (3rd ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.53025-6>
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Husin & Nurbayani. (2017). The Ability of Indonesian EFL Learners in Writing Academic Papers. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 17(2), 237–250.
- Hyland, K. (2003). Second Language Writing. In *TESOL Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588251>
- Knapp, P., & Watkins, M. (2005). *Genre, Text, Grammar: Technologies For Teaching and Assessing Writing*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd.
- Kroeger, P. R. (2005). *Analyzing Grammar: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kroll, B. (1990). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for The Classroom.pdf*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lauder, A. (2008). the Status and Function of English in Indonesia: a Review of Key Factors. *Makara, Sosial Humaniora*, 12(1), 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.7454/mssh.v12i1.128>
- Lie, A. (2007). Education Policy and Efl Curriculum in Indonesia: Between the Commitment To Competence and the Quest for Higher Test Scores. *TEFLIN Journal*, 18(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/http://www.teflin.org/journal/index.php/journal/article/view/130>
- Mustafa, F., Kirana, M., & Bahri, S. (2017). Errors in EFL writing by junior high students in Indonesia. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 6(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsl.2016.1366>
- Nur, M.R. & Madkur, A. (2014). Teachers' Voices on the 2013 Curriculum for English Instructional Activities. *IJEE*, 1(2), 120–134.
- Özdemir, E., & Aydın, S. (2015). The Effects of Wikis on Motivation in EFL Writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191(June), 2359–2363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.241>
- Richards, J. C. (1973). Error Analysis. Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition. In *The Modern Language Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/325758>
- Singh, C. K. S., Jageer Singh, A. K., Abd Razak, N. Q., & Ravinthar, T. (2017). Grammar Errors Made by ESL Tertiary Students in Writing. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p16>
- Sudarwati, M., & Grace, E. (2007). *Look Ahead_ An English Course for Senior High School Students Year X (Jilid 1)*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Sukandi, S. S. (2013). Teaching Writing to Indonesian EFL Learners: Challenges of The “Voice” And “Style” in Adjusting Cross Cultural Communication Skills. *Proceedings International Seminar: Language Teaching in Cross Cultural Communication Context*, 136–147. Sumatera Barat: STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat.
- Thuy, N. H. H. (2009). Teaching EFL writing in Vietnam: Problems and Solutions - A discussion from The Outlook of Applied Linguistics. *VNU Journal of Science Foreign*

Lanuguages, 25, 61–66.

Walsh. (2010). The Importance of Writing Skills: Online Tools to Encourage Success — Emerging Education Technologies. Retrieved from <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2010/11/the-importance-of-writing-skills-online-tools-to-encourage-success/>