

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY SECONDARY STUDENTS IN WRITING: FROM INTERLINGUAL TO INTRALINGUAL

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ABSTRACT

Secondary students need to learn some genres in writing. One of them is recount. This kind of genre involves certain feature performance regarding generic structure and language features. However, many students indicated that they had constraints in applying these rules even though the students had gotten special training. This is a case study in writing recount texts held as a competition part of English Olympiade for Secondary Schools in Wonosobo, Indonesia. The purpose is to reveal grammatical errors in students' writing recount texts. The writer collected the data from students' written texts of this event. The findings were considered important to improve secondary students' writing performance, especially related to grammar problems features and to develop approaches of teaching writing for English teachers toward their students.

Keywords: *interlingual, intralingual, grammatical errors*

Introduction

Wonosobo English Teacher Association (WETA) in March 2018 held English Olympiade which involved students of *Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP)*. This kind of competition is annual event which was done every year, announced, and planned in advance Neuman (2000: 370). There were four parts of competition including writing recount texts. One of the purposes was to develop students' English performance. In this paper writing was categorized as performance rather than competence. Brown (2007: 36) states that performance is actual production, involving speaking and writing, or the comprehension such as listening and reading which involved linguistic events.

Logically the students who participated represents the best ones of every school in Wonosobo since they were labelled their school honour. However, many students still made some errors in writing texts related to grammar. Through this research, the writer truly hopes that the Secondary English teachers in Wonosobo can get some benefits since this study reflects the real condition faced by their students. Moreover, this study is able to be used as such kind of assessment in student achievement in writing recount texts as this is a kind of

assessment-related activities which offered reporting results of student learning achievement (Stiggins and Chappuis, 2012: 14).

This study offers three types of important points, namely grammar, interlingual, and intralingual errors. Applying grammar rules in writing sentences needs certain basic concept of understanding which covers aspects of subjects, verbs, objects, and adverb. James (2013: 65) contends that grammaticality is synonymous with well-formedness. Furthermore, he describes it is grammar (not you or I) who decides whether something said by a learner is grammatical or not. One case problem sample is subject-verb agreement. Phillips (2001: 248) states that subject-verb agreement is actually simple. Verb of the sentence is singular if the subject of the sentence is singular and verb of the sentence is plural if the subject is plural. Therefore, it must be "Jane and Betty **are** charming or Marry **is** the most charming" (Krohn, 1986: 216).

General grammar rules for recount texts whose function is to talk the events in the past are in line with simple past. Thus, the verb of the sentence in recount texts must be in past forms. Azzar (1992: 18) states that the simple past is used to talk about activities or situation that began and ended in the past.

Beside grammar, another important point discussed in this study is error. Corder in Richard (1973: 19) proposes that errors are every thing resulted of interference in the learning of a second language from the habits of the first language. Moreover, James (2013: 83) explains that errors cannot be self-corrected until futher relevant (to that errors) input has been provided and converted into intake by the leaners. It means leaners' first language has significant role to learned second or foreign languages.

Conducted to errors, Corder in Richards (1973: 25) states that leaners' errors provide evidence of the system of the language that they are using at particular point in the course. This point of view correlates with James (2013: 178-179) who proposes four categories of errors: interlingual, intralingual, communication-strategy, and induced. Furthermore, he (2013: 179-187) explains interlingual errors are influenced by mother-tongue (L1) influence. Onthe other hand intralingual errors happen as some factors related to the second language (L2), namely false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking cooccurrence restrictions, hypercorrection/monitor overuse, and overgeneralization/system-simplification.

In line with James, Richards as cited by Richards (1973: 6) refers intralingual to items produced by leaners reflecting not the structure of L1, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language (TL). Furthermore, he categorizes factors affecting intralingual errors to be overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and semantic errors.

Concerning error analysis, many studies have been conducted by the resechers,

one of them is Sukarno (2014) who investigates grammatical errors made by the first year students of the English Departement, Faculty of Letters, Jember University. His study reveals that the students' grammatical errors related to six mostly prominent problems caused by different linguistics principles of Indonesia and English namely overgeneralization.

In accordance with theoritical review above, Some secondary students showed their problems in writing recount texts. The following list presents the error sentences found in their writing.

1. It **was felt** the niceday.
2. I still **remember** when my father took me to see many interesting shows I really enjoyed.
3. I felt happy **have** a great experience in parangtritis beach.
4. Each **groups** consisted of 10-15 students.
5. I **was ate** greedily because I was very hungry.
6. We **have** the game.
7. When we doing this game **get** music, and the music **are** very sad.
8. I **busy admiring** the clown from the distance.
9. I **seen** many games.
10. I **think** they **leave** me alone in the place.
11. My mother and sister would get **a some drink**.
12. I stepped **to left**.
13. My brother had to **continued** his work.
14. You **is** beautiful girl.
15. I couldn't **to sleep** because I had **being drunk** on the journey.
16. I felt pity with **them** condition.
17. My little sister **very affraid** and **get** cried.
18. That was two **month** ago.
19. So, I asked **she** to take me to there and she agreed.
20. My sister that **relizing** her fault said surprisingly "It's my fault".

Based on some writing errors above, the problems made by the students deal with various aspects. Then, it becomes interesting since secondary students who had gotten special treatments in writing recount texts before the competition was held still made some errors in grammar. It means other secondary students who do not get the treatments need more intention to make correct grammatical writing performance.

Method

The data analyzed are from students' written texts which were collected in April

2018. The data then were analyzed qualitatively. Written texts are considered important as they can reflect students’ learning achievement in applying grammatical rules. With this reason, the writer believes the real problems faced by the students in Wonosobo regency can be found and resolved.

The participants of this research are all competitors in writing recount as a part of English Olympiade for Secondary Schools in Wonosobo regency. The students participating in this event were considered as the best students in English lessons as they were chosen by their teachers to represent their schools. The number of the students were 46 participants who came from private and state secondary or Junior High Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*) and also private and state *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*.

The theme of the writing recount in this study included *funny, sad, happy, and scary*. The various topics were hoped to enable students explore their writing well. Then the data were analyzed to reveal grammatical problems found from students’ writing production. Due to the same errors made by the students, the data used in this research was sampling data. The writer analyzed students’ written texts which were then used to meet students’ achievement in learning recount texts.

Findings and Discussion

This study explores the grammar errors made by the students based on main verbs in recount, and in [not] recount. Futhermore, the paper discusses factors causing grammar errors out of main verb aspects which are then categorized into interlingual and intralingual errors. Other important points that should be considered are suggestion related to teaching recount approaces for English teachers of secondary level.

Errors in Recount Scopes

Verb forms of sentences in recount must be in past tense. Unfortunately some students still made some errors in this kind of verb. The following sentences (in table 1) showed that the students made meaningless sentences because of verb forms.

Table 1.

Errors in Recount Scopes (Main Verb Usage)

No	Sentences	Errors	Correction	Types of Errors
1	I still remember when my father took me to see many interesting shows I really enjoyed.	Remember	remembered	Main verb usage

2	We have the game.	Have	had	Main verb usage
3	You is beautiful girl.	Is	were	Main verb usage
4	I think they leave me alone in the place.	think, leave	thought, leaved	Main verb usage

The sentences above reflected that some students got difficulty to distinguish present and past forms. In these samples, a student wrote “We **have** the game”, instead of “We **had** the game”. This student’s constraint showed that aspects of verb forms caused him/her make errors to write simple present rather than simple past in recount texts.

The interesting finding is when a student wrote “You **is** beautiful girl” in a recount text. The student first is not aware that she or he makde an error for subject-verb agreement. Therefore, she or he actually should write “You **are** a beautiful girl”. The second error is that the student ignored verb form aspects in writing recount text as she or he should apply past verbs and not present verbs as main verbs of sentences in recount texts.

The terrible problems appeared because of gap of similiarity between students’ first language (L1) and their leaned foreign language (FL). Indonesian language as students’ L1 does not say verb forms and subject-verb agreement, so they transfered L1 grammar rules to FL grammar rules like their knowledge. And these phenomena caused errors in their writing.

Errors in [Not] Recount Scope

Some students seemed that they had problems to write verb forms correctly both functioning as main verb and fuctioning as not main verb. Other problems that were faced by the students were missing verb of the sentences, pronoun, and quantifier-noun agreement. The students also found difficulty to express nominal and verbal structures, as presented in table 2.

Table 2.
Missing Verb Errors

No	Sentences	Errors	Correction	Types of Errors
5	My little sister very affraid and get cried.	very affraid, get	was very affraid, got	Missing main verb
6	I busy admiring the clawn from the distance.	busy admiring	was busy admiring	Missing main verb

7	When we doing this game get music, and the music are very sad.	doing, get, are	were doing, got, were	Missing main verb
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Based on writing products collected above, it is indicated that students were still unaware of the roles of grammar. As English Foreign Language (EFL) Learners, they still found it difficult (if not fail) to understand the predicate of the sentences. Furthermore, the students did not realize that they did not put the verbs of the sentences. The errors appeared as it is right to write subject followed directly by adjective as the predicate in Indonesian language. The findings demonstrated that secondary students in Wonosobo still faced problems in nominal and verbal sentences. They transferred double verbs in target language to express active meaning, as shown in table 3.

Table 3.

Main Verb Errors

No	Sentences	Errors	Correction	Types of Errors
8	It was felt the nice day	was felt the nice day	felt nice today	Main verb usage
9	I was ate greedily because I was very hungry.	was ate	ate	Main verb usage

However, the errors made by the students also involved pronoun problems. They seemed to get difficulty to distinguish kinds of pronoun as reflected in the sentences presented in table 4 below.

Table 4.

Pronoun Errors

No	Sentences	Errors	Correction	Types of Error
10	So, I asked she to take me to there and she agreed.	She	her	Object pronoun
11	I felt pity with them condition.	Them	their	Possessive pronoun

The interference of the first language can be explained when the students wrote pronoun subject rather than pronoun object in: "So, I asked **she** to take

me to there and she agreed”. This reflects the leaners’ non-standart English because they should express: “So, I asked **her** to take me...”. the errors happened as in leaners’ first language (Indonesian language) has no different forms between *kata ganti subjek* and *kata ganti objek*. The students then seemed to have difficulty to decide pronoun objects and possessive pronoun. This can be seen in: “I felt pity with **them** condition” that it correctly should be written: ” I felt pity with **their** condition”.

Beside above errors, the students were also indentified to lack awareness in quantifier-noun agreement as seen in the following sentences in table 5.

Table 5.
Quantifier-Noun Agreement Errors

No	Sentences	Errors	Correction	Types of Errors
12	That was two month ago.	month	months	Quantifier-noun agreement
13	My mother and sister would get a some drink .	a some drink	some drink	Quantifier-noun agreement

The other errors in previous sentences are quantifier-noun agreement. Some students of secondary schools in Wonosobo failed to apply this rule. They wrote “That was two **month** ago”. In this case L1 patterns were transferred to the FL patterns (L1 pattern that has no certain rule which says that nouns should be pluralized after quantifier (numeral)).

Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

The interference cases of Indonesian language to English as FL as 13 sentences above are called as interlingual errors. Interlingual errors made by the students indicate that language interference happens when an item or structure in English manifests some degree of contrast forms, and some degree of the sameness with the equivalent item or stucture in Indonesian language. The findings then strengthen Krasen’s point of view (1982: 64), stating that the first language has influence on errors to the second language.

On the finding which shows students’ intralingual errors, James (2013: 184) states that intralingual errors happen when leaners are ignorant of a target language on any level and of any class. The case can be seen in the sentences “My brother had to **continued** his work”. A sample error of this sentence is caused by ignorance of the fact that the verb **had to** selects a bare infinitive complement. Another example is “I stepped to **left**”. Those sentences indicate

that learners make errors in overlooking cooccurrence restrictions.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the students of secondary schools in Wonosobo regency have frequent grammatical errors in verb forms as main verbs and as non main verbs of the sentences as well as pronoun forms and quantifier-noun agreements. These errors occur as those students are confused to write correct forms of grammatically English sentences.

Another factor that affects the students to make errors in writing recount texts is since Indonesian language/L1 interferes in English (the learners' foreign language/FL). The students notice that their L1 has no items or structures stating that verb forms, pronoun, and quantifier-noun agreements have certain rules in sentences. It means their native language is one of the sources of problems in learning foreign language.

Beside their L1 interference, the students also fail to write correct sentences because of foreign language problems. They have inadequate knowledge in English grammar, so they cannot apply the needed rules of target language in writing. It means English as FL contributes in the students' writing errors. It can be concluded that in this occasion those students make intralingual errors.

As verb forms, pronoun, and quantifier-noun agreements are the major problems in writing correct sentences of recount texts faced by secondary students in Wonosobo, they should be more aware of these points. Thus, it is necessary that secondary English teachers in Wonosobo should teach certain rules in constructing grammatical sentences in English to their students in early meetings since the students face complex problems. The English teachers need to teach them step by step to avoid students' further difficulties because of bank of grammar concepts. Freire in Ricards (2002) believes that depositing knowledge in the learners' heads make the concepts rejected from the heads if they are not ready to receive the concepts. Task of writing grammatical sentences should be given to make them familiar with grammar rules in English. The English teachers should make students understand that writing recount texts grammatically is important since writing recount grammatically make their writing product meaningful and understandable.

In addition, the English teachers in Wonosobo should use various approaches in teaching recount and grammatical aspects. They need to apply direct approaches, i.e. explaining grammatical rules to the students, then they apply the rules in writing sentences in recount texts. To enrich the learning approaches used, the students can also learn how to write recount grammatically through peer correction directly in class. This approach can give students learning experience. Beside those approaches, the teachers are then able to use remedial and enrichment programs to increase students' writing performance quality. In line with this suggestion, Corder (1982: 46) believes that remedial program can help students develop their incomplete knowledge that actually has been given

in the classroom learning teaching activities.

Conclusion

The research indicates that the students of primary schools in Wonosobo face problems to perform correct writing. Through writing, they reflect that they have incomplete understanding of verb (whether it uses as main verb or not), pronoun, and quantifier-noun agreement. The problems involve interlingual and intralingual features. Interlingual errors made by the students are caused by students' first language. Indonesian language as students' L1 influences their learned language (English). Another errors made by the students are their carelessness of target language rules which cause intralingual errors in their writing. Furthermore, these students need to write recount texts correctly since this kind of genre is frequently used in formal education. Therefore, secondary English teachers need to give their students such certain programs as learning material step by step via exercises, tasks, remedial and enrichment programs to help them to write recount in the correct forms. Then secondary students also need to encourage to do peer correction, of course under English teachers' supervision, in their writing class so that they are able to develop their grammatical accuracy in writing.

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