

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMAR IN WRITING
(A Mix Method at Darul Ulum, A Private Islamic Boarding Senior High School in
Lhokseumawe)**

Helmiyadi
STKIP Bumi Persada
Email: helmiyadi_1987@yahoo.com

Abstract

The aim of the research is to find out the grammar errors which are commonly made by the students of Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding Senior High School in their writing and to find out the causes of grammar errors which are commonly made by the students of Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding Senior High School in their writing. This research uses a qualitative and quantitative approach and its type is a mix study. The population is the total object of the research. In this research, the population was all the students of the first year students of MAS Darul Ulum in academic year 2015/2016, they are 120 students and divided into 56 male students and 64 female students. Result of the research from test most of the first year students of MAS Darul Ulum Lhokseumawe made many errors in grammatical aspects in writing, a high percentage of errors was found in one out of three categories. The highest error category was tense errors. They occurred 88 errors, while article is 19 time of errors and sentence 10 of errors. Total of all errors found in these three categories are 117 errors occurring in whole categories. Moreover, the students felt difficult in getting ideas to begin free writing. The causes of errors were made by the students because of lack of interactive facilities is one of the problems to develop interactive classroom activities. The errors made by students were influenced by their mother tongue, and were also caused by the difficulties of the students in learning the second language.

Keywords: *Error Analysis, Grammar, Writing*

INTRODUCTION

It has been known that language is a means of communication to convey our ideas, opinions, and feelings. This indicates that language has an important role in many parts in human life which is particularly realized in communication activities. According to Lazaraton (2001:19), knowing the language well is indicated by their abilities to speak the language because speech is the most means of human communication.

In the context of language teaching, English as a foreign language for Indonesian students have become a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. Every level of education starting from kindergartens up to

universities includes English as one of the obligatory subjects in their curriculum. In this context, students are supposed to be able to apply English to interact and to use it to get more knowledge as much as possible since the world of knowledge is commonly written and spoken in English. This indicates that mastering English is a must for students to actively engage in international relationships and to gain more knowledge about the world.

One of important aspects in language teaching is grammar because it helps students to combine words to be a good sentence or paragraph. However, students need to increase the knowledge about grammatical concepts before starting learning any skills in English. Regarding

this, Made (2000: 20) states that whether students are conscious or not they will deal with grammar orally or written. It means that grammar has an important role in language. This statement is in line with Chomsky *et al.* (1965: 94) who states that grammar is one aspect necessary to be mastered by learners to enable themselves to use the target language.

In teaching grammar the teachers should have interesting ways to prevent students from getting bored. According to Sudjana (2004:47), teaching grammar by asking students to remember the pattern of grammar generally is not the good point to help the students to develop their language competences. Therefore teachers should find out the appropriate teaching aids to help students in mastering grammar without making them feel suppressed. Nunan (1995: 39) believes that in order to make grammar lesson effective and interesting, teachers should develop some techniques in the classroom.

Many students found some difficulties while learning a foreign language, especially grammar, Nunan (1995: 117) states that one of the obstacles that the students face in learning English is grammar lesson because it is difficult and boring. Besides the other reasons why students have difficulties in learning grammar are students learn more slowly and forget things quickly, get bored easily, may not be motivated to learn if they are not interested (Ellis, 1997:27).

They usually make mistakes in grammar. Grammar is one of English components that play an important role to avoid misunderstanding in communication. In senior high school, the students are usually confused to write correct grammar although they can speak English. They do

not understand about the grammar so that they cannot analyze sentences correctly.

Rodney (2002: 1) states the description of a language comprises three major components: phonology, grammar and lexicon. The phonology describes the sound system: consonants, vowels, stress, intonation, and so on. The two most basic units grammar are the word and the sentence: one subcomponent of grammar called morphology, deals with the form of words, while the other called syntax, deals with the way words are combined to form sentences. The lexicon-or dictionary, to use a more familiar term- list the vocabulary items, mainly words and idioms (such as *red herring, give up*, and so on), specifying how they are pronounced, how they be have grammatically, and what they mean. This research focused on subcomponent of grammar called morphology because the researcher only focuses with the form of word or word structure.

Grammar was integrated in other four skills, in this research the researcher wants to analyze the students' errors in writing skill. Based on the curriculum, it has been mentioned that the first level students of senior high school was required to be able to understand and express meaning in short functional text and simple written monologue in forms of descriptive in their daily life context.

It is true that grammar is not only aspect that the teacher focuses on when grading students' writing, but basic grammar is the most important thing to check before other aspects such as diction or relation between paragraphs. Teachers' feedback on students' grammatical and lexical errors resulted in a significant improvement in both accuracy and fluency in succeeding writing of the same type over the same semester (Chandler, 2003: 113).

In order to make students' grammar exercise better than the previous one the researcher should remind them simultaneously about the mistakes they have made and tell them how to avoid their mistakes in order to make the next writing better than before, nevertheless, the result is not always satisfied.

Based on the preliminary Observation in May 2013, the researcher found that the students at MAS Darul Ulum Lhokseumawe are so hard to master writing so that they got the lower scores. Many students got the scores under 70 the criteria of success (KKM) which has been determined by the school, 70 % to 80 % the students got the score under 70, and only 20% to 30% students got the score up to 70, this information based on the teacher explanation. Their abilities in understanding and mastering writing were low, and in fact the teachers when teach the material to the students they do not care about these problems, they do not try to overcome these problems. The researcher tries to find out the causes from this problem, what the problems are faced by the students when they learn writing.

It is a serious problem and impact to the student's achievement, especially in English subject and also gives a bad effect to school development, in this private boarding school all of the students communicate in English language in their daily life, they always speak in English but in fact their grammar scores especially in writing skill were low. Based on this reason, the researcher interested to conduct a case study to find out the causes and to analyze their grammar errors in writing. In conclusion, understanding the grammar is very important to have a good score in students' grammar mastery that is relevant to the students' need in order to be success

in teaching- learning process. Based on the preliminary observation result the researcher can identify that the students got some difficulties in constructing the sentences in a good grammar. Firstly, the students cannot differentiate the verbs that should be added "s" and the verbs that should not be added "s" in simple present tense sentences.

Examples:

My mother cook every morning (wrong)

My mother cooks every morning (right)

From these examples the students do not add "s" after "cook".

Secondly, the students cannot use "to be" correctly, they often used "to be" after subject in verbal sentences in simple present tense, and they are difficult to differentiate "to be" that should be used after subject in nominal sentences in simple present tense.

Examples:

I am go to school everyday (wrong)

I go to school everyday (right)

Rina and Winda is the students (wrong)

Rina and Winda are the students (right)

Based on the examples above, the students are still confused in using the suitable "to be".

Thirdly, the students cannot differentiate when to use do or does in interrogative sentences in simple present tense.

Examples:

Do Rina buy a new dress? (wrong)

Does Rina buy a new dress? (right)

Lastly, the students cannot identify the past verb when they make a sentence in

simple past tense, and they also cannot differentiate “to be” which are used in simple past tense.

Examples:

We study in the classroom yesterday (wrong)

We studied in the classroom yesterday (right)

We was junior high school students last year (wrong)

We were junior high school students last year (right)

Based on the example above, the students got difficulties in identifying the past verb, and they cannot identify “to be” should be used after subject “we”.

To know the difficulties faced by the students at MAS Darul Ulum Lhokseumawe in mastering grammar in writing, the researcher needs to search these problems more deeply in that school by doing research. Finally, the purposes from this research are (1) to find out the grammatical errors are commonly made by the students of Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding Senior High School in their writing and (2) to find out the causes these errors for the students of Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding Senior High School in their writing.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative and quantitative approach and its type is a mix study. The population is the total object of the research. In this research, the population is all the students of the first year students of MAS Darul Ulum in academic year 2015/2016, they are 120 students and divided into 56 male students and 64 female students. The sample of this research was taken from the population

above. The sample of this research selected by using random sampling technique, it is by using lottery. All of students' name was written in a sheet of paper, and the researcher take twenty of them as the sample in this study. In this study, only 20 students and one English teacher involved as the sample.

In this research, the researcher use two kinds of instruments, they are test and interview guide.

1. Test

The instrument in this study was a test, the test constituted the instruction which the researcher gave to the students through their English teacher. The students were instructed to write a descriptive essay or composition freely, then the students could chose any topic as far as it was narrative writing.

2. Interview

Interview guide is the questions are going to be asked to the students and teachers to get the data about the student's problems in mastering grammar in writing, interview guide divided into two forms, they are interview guide for English teachers and interview guide for English Students.

Sugiono (2008:180) states that interview is a communication form between two persons, involving a person who wants to get information from another one by asking some question based on particular objective. Sugiono (2008:182) also states that interview can be characterized into three kinds of interviews namely, structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview, but in this research the researcher used structured interview which the researcher provided some written questions for teachers and students and each respondent will be asked the same

question, because the researcher wants to get detail information.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

As mentioned in Chapter one, this study was only focused on the grammatical errors are commonly made by the students in writing. The grammatical errors are classified based on the scope of the research. Therefore, it was found from the students' writing that they made many grammatical errors when they were asked to write. Here is the chart of the errors is commonly made by the students:

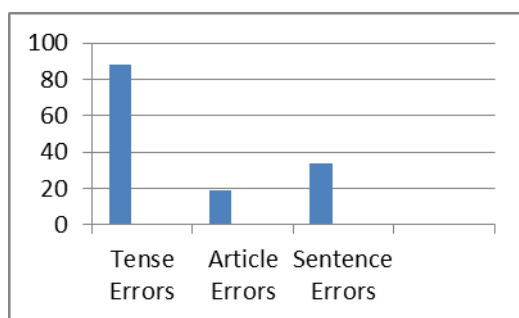


Chart 1. Grammatical Errors

The chart shows the frequency of the occurrences of three grammatical errors categories found in the students' writing. They are tense errors, article errors and sentence errors. A high percentage of errors were found in one out of three categories. The highest error category was tense errors. They occurred 88 of errors, while article 19 of errors and sentence 10 of errors. Total of all errors found in these three categories are 117 errors occur in whole categories.

Discussion

The frequency of the occurrences of three grammatical errors categories found in the students' writing. They are tense errors, article errors and sentence errors. A high percentage of errors were found in one out of three categories. The highest error

category was tense errors. They occurred 88 of errors, while article 19 of errors and sentence 10 of errors. Total of all errors found in these three categories are 117 errors occur in whole categories.

Almost all students made errors in using past tense, especially in the changing of the verb to past form for activities done in the past. The students tend to use the simple verb form instead of past tense verb while they write about their writing. This is called as misinformation errors. The students actually wrote correctly for what they wanted to tell but they made these errors grammatically in meaning. In this case, Norrish (1983) says that these errors might occur because of interference by students' first language and translation from the first language. Moreover, the errors are also characterized by the omission both affirmative and negative sentences.

The highest type of errors made in this category was past tense. The errors in this category were related to the use of past verb form (main verb and auxiliary), incorrect use of infinitive, and use of pronoun. These errors commonly appear when the students did not put any verbs of auxiliaries or action verb in sentences. The most frequent errors made when the students attempt to write nominal sentences, they omitted auxiliary. They failed to put auxiliary 'was' in their sentences. It is also found in the writing the omission of 'ed' in using regular verb. In other words, the errors of omission occurred as the students did not understand the use of auxiliary and morpheme both in nominal and verbal sentences.

There are 33 cases occurring in the students' writing in the category of simple present tense, such as when the students put the past form instead of simple form, and

when the verb is added with third singular inflection (-s).

The errors on the use of article both definite and indefinite articles were also found in the students' writing. There were 9 errors dealing with definite article and 10 errors with indefinite article. There were 5 errors related to the incorrect use of word order. There is a problem of the position of adjective as modifier noun. These errors are identified easily when the students put something which not appears.

According to Gustian (2012), these errors can be seen when they put auxiliary 'was' and 'were' in verbal sentences. From the students writing the writer found that the students made this very often. For example, the students attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence since they have not mastered the language yet as in 'I was sent you'. We simply know that there should not be put an auxiliary in the sentences. In this study, errors of addition are commonly found in the use of article.

The students failed to put the correct position of the article in sentences. For example, they wrote 'we go to the Suzuya in the Monday'. This condition caused by lack of understanding about the correct use of the article in the sentences they had written. Therefore, it would be necessary for the students to learn more not only about the correct use of articles but also the correct use of verb tense.

The second research question is about the causes of errors in learning writing, based on the result of interview with the teacher, the researcher concluded that the teacher is communicative enough in teaching writing for students. He tried to motivate his students to love English as an international language. The method used in his teachings mostly direct method and

communicative approach. The errors were made by the students because of lack of sense of vocabulary use so they cannot develop their writing as effectively as possible.

Beside that, lack of interactive facilities is one of the problems to develop interactive classroom activities. In addition, decision maker should have a real action to support toward the improvement of English acquisition, especially in writing mastery. Finally, the teachers hardly focused the lesson plan development on writing. In other words, the teacher might have a great concern on developing students' vocabulary mastery. So they have a very limited time to focus deeply on students' writing. Therefore, the errors were still committed by students when they produce writing. These occur because the students do not know what the correct answer is, and thus it cannot be self correction.

As mentioned previously, the errors made by students were influenced by their mother tongue, and were also caused by the difficulties of the students in learning the second language. The students have not mastered the rules of structure of English for the reason. Based on this reasoning, it can be concluded that many of the students made errors because of interlingual and intralingual transfer. Ellis (1997) states that some errors seem to be universal, reflecting learners attempts to make the task of learning and using the target language simpler.

The researcher also interviewed the students to know how they felt in the process of teaching and learning writing, especially when they were instructed to write a composition. When the researcher questioned about that, their responses are little bit different. Nevertheless, the average answers were that the like English, but not

like writing very much. According to them, writing is difficult not only because their lack of knowledge about constructing sentences, but also because of their difficulties of collecting ideas in order to put it in a composition. There are some persons though, who like to write and they expressed that in their composition, although the sentences still contained an error. If learners perceive writing tasks to be useless, they may approach them in a careless manner.

The errors produced by the students could be indicated that the students attempt to try to activate their linguistics competence communicatively like the use of verb, articles, modality, negatives, etc in producing an utterance in writing. This condition is very essential for second language learners because students wanted to develop their communicative competence to others, but they might still have difficulties to perceive the rules of grammar while they write something. Whereas this problem could be solved if they just do a lot of practices and learning like using the rules of grammar in communicating their ideas as they are the heart of language to produce semantics function as Block (2003) claims that the students have already had linguistics competence in their mind or Universal Grammar.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data, a high percentage of errors was found in one out of three categories. The highest error category was tense errors. They occurred 88 of errors, while article 19 of errors and sentence 10 of errors. Total of all errors found in these three categories are 117 errors occur in whole categories.

The most common errors made by the first year students for grammatical errors are in tense errors category. It is found frequently in students' writing. Meanwhile, other errors are also found since they have not understood the use of verb form correctly. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the students have a serious problem in verb tense, especially in changing the verb form.

The causes of errors were made by the students because lack of interactive facilities is one of the problems to develop interactive classroom activities. The errors made by students were influenced by their mother tongue, and were also caused by the difficulties of the students in learning the second language. The students have not mastered the rules of structure of English for the reason. Based on this reasoning, it can be concluded that many of the students made errors because of interlingual and intralingual transfer.

With regard to the result of the study there are some suggestions that the researcher intends to offer, as follows:

To the students, they should learn more the changing of the verb in past tense both in regular and irregular. They should give more concern about the use of auxiliary verbs both in nominal and verbal sentences. Therefore, the students need to give more attention in English as one of National Examination (UN) subjects.

To the teachers, they understood the source of the errors so that they could provide appropriate remedy, which will resolve the learners' problems and allowed them to discover the relevant rules. Thus, the source of errors is an important clue for the teacher to decide on the sort of treatment. The teacher should know serious and minor errors. Distinguishing between serious and minor errors may be a good

guide in choosing what to correct and can be items when grading the students.

The teacher should prioritize what he/she is correcting and grading, the teacher did not force only on grammar because students started to think that grammar is only thing that counted in writing. Lower level learners particularly will have trouble with finding the appropriate word and they needed more modeling. The teacher had better provide them correct vocabulary choice, most of the time word choice is idiomatic or conventionally agreed upon and it is difficult for the learners to come up with the correct or appropriate word even if they consult the dictionary.

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