

## CORRECTION OF GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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### *Abstract*

*This study aims at describing the grammatical mistakes at the first year classes of English Department of State University of Jakarta and to investigate the correction of those grammatical mistakes. This study used a case study as a method. It used non-participant observation as the instrument of the study. There are six classes were being observed more than five times, total of the data sources is 39 classroom activities. The result of this study shows that students at the first year classes of ED UNJ made grammatical mistakes mostly in number while the students did not make mistakes in definiteness. It also shows that most teachers are aware to students' grammatical mistakes since more than 50% of the mistakes were corrected by the teacher. The result of this study shows that the most effective correction of grammatical mistakes is clarification request.*

*Key words: Grammatical Mistakes, Correction of Grammatical Mistakes, Classroom Interaction*

## CORRECTION OF GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan kesalahan tata bahasa yang dilakukan mahasiswa tingkat pertama jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Jakarta dan meneliti perbaikan yang dilakukan dosen pada kesalahan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kasus. Penelitian ini menggunakan non-participant observasi sebagai instrumennya. Enam kelas diamati dalam penelitian ini, yaitu Listening 1, Speaking 1, Reading 1, Writing 2, Vocabulary, and Introduction to Language. Masing-masing kelas diamati sebanyak lebih dari lima kali, total sumber data yang diamati adalah 39 aktifitas kelas. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa tingkat pertama jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Jakarta banyak membuat kesalahan pada number sementara mahasiswa tidak melakukan kesalahan pada definiteness. Faktor utama dalam kesalahan ini adalah dikarenakan adanya transfer-language. Hasil penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa dosen jurusan Bahasa Inggris UNJ menyadari akan kesalahan tata bahasa yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa, hal ini ditunjukkan dengan lebih dari 50% kesalahan yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa mendapatkan reaksi dari dosen. Hasil penelitian ini juga menunjukkan metode perbaikan yang paling banyak digunakan oleh dosen adalah recast. Akhirnya, metode perbaikan yang paling efektif berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini adalah clarification request.

Kata kunci: Kesalahan tata bahasa, Perbaikan kesalahan tata bahasa, Interaksi Kelas

### **INTRODUCTION BACKGROUND**

Making mistakes in language learning is a natural process since mistakes are part of the learning

process. Bartram and Walton define mistakes as the inescapable fact of language learning (2002: 11). Without making mistakes, students would not know the differences between the right

language and the wrong one. By knowing what the mistakes are and why those are called as mistakes, students learn more about language they are studying. The mistakes that happened repeatedly are called as errors. Corder in Gustineva noted that there are three functions of error: provides teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt, provides the researcher with evidence of how language was learnt, served as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of target language (2007: 124).

One of the mistakes that students did in oral communication in the classroom is grammatical mistake, whereas, grammar is one of the important things in English language. Without grammar, people cannot understand the meaning of what people are saying accurately. One of the ways to increase students' skills of grammar is by giving correction when they made grammatical mistakes. Teachers' correction would make the students aware of their mistakes and then give them clues to correct their mistakes. Some experts argued that grammatical mistakes should be corrected to let the students know the mistakes so that they can improve their language. Grammar correction is given from the teacher to prevent the students make the similar mistakes. On the contrary, other experts argued that error correction should be avoided in language teaching (Lee, 2009: 13). Considering this situation, the researcher is interested in conducting this research in order to analyse the correction of grammatical mistakes occur at the first year classes of English Department of State University of Jakarta.

## **PROBLEMS AND PURPOSE**

Based on the discussion above, there are two main questions in this research, as follow:

1. What are the grammatical mistakes made by the students of the first year classes of ED UNJ?
2. How do the teachers respond to the students' grammatical mistakes?

## **DISCUSSION**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **The studies on Grammatical Mistakes and Errors**

Mistake refers to an inappropriate way of expressing something, while errors are mistakes that happened repeatedly done by one person. Corder in Gustinefa defines mistakes as goofs or slips of tongue (or the pen) that everyone makes, even in their native language (2007:127). Some experts differentiated Mistakes considering several factors: the self-correctible, the frequency of occurrence, and the factor of making mistakes. James differentiates error and mistake based on their self-correctible (2003: 78). Edge in James divided mistakes into three types. There are slips, errors, and attempts (2003: 80-81). Hammerly in James classified learners' deviance into two types. He divided this in terms of classroom. There are distortion and Faults (2003: 82-83). The clearest and most practical classification of deviance is a four-way one given by James (2003: 184): slips, mistakes, errors, and solecism. Based on studies above, it can be inferred that grammatical mistake is the slips of tongue or pen that everyone made related to grammar.

Grammar includes all aspects in language such as phonology, semantics, lexicon, morphology, and syntax (Fromkin, 2003: 18). There is also the term grammatical notion used while discussing grammar. Brinton used the

term grammatical notions refers to grammatical category. It is divided into two types: the nominal categories and verbal categories (2000: 103-117). Nominal categories are related to nouns. It regulates the rules of using nouns in a sentence. Verbal categories are related to verbs. It regulates the rules of using verb in a sentence. One, the nominal categories consist of such as number, gender, person, case, degree, definiteness, and deixis. Second, verbal categories consist of tense, aspect, mood, and voice. There are several factors that influence students to make grammatical mistakes. Corder in Gustineva explained that there are three causes of mistakes; transfer errors, overgeneralization, and error arising from the methods or material used in the teaching (2007: 130-131)

### The Studies on the Correction of Grammatical Mistakes

Grammar correction is aimed at make the students aware of their grammatical mistakes. Lee and Thomas argued that the effectiveness of a grammar correction method depends on the students itself, whether or not they make sense in their mistakes (2003: 15). Grammar correction can improve the students' grammatical competence if only they make sense in the mistakes so that they will not make the similar mistakes.

Correction can be differentiated based on a number of considerations. Some researcher differentiate correction based on the explicitness and implicitness of the correction (Ellis; 2006 and Sheen; 2007). Lyons and Heasley in Fikri differentiate correction or feedback into formative and summative feedback (2008: 12). Lyster and Ranta's in Gustinefa propose six categories of correction / corrective feedback (2007: 362).

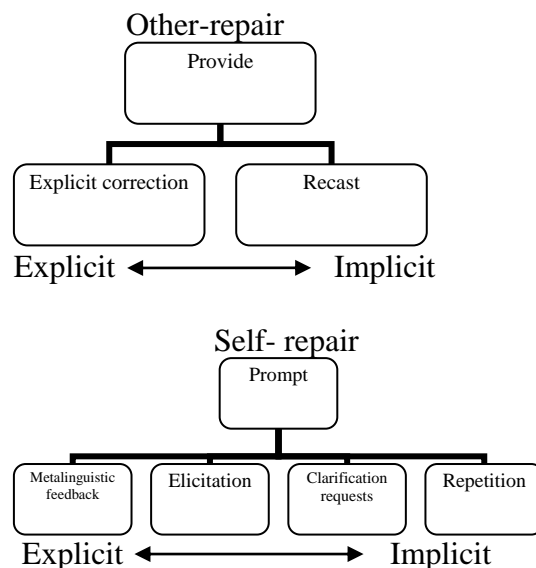


Table 1. Types of correction proposed by Lyster and Ranta's

The diagram above describes that at the first level, correction can be differentiate according to the person who stimulate the repair. In other repair, students are provided the correct form of the mistakes from the teacher, while in the self-repair, students are prompted to produce the correct form of the mistakes by using clue from the teacher. The other-repair type of correction can raise the efficiency of time in the teaching-learning activities since the teacher did not have to wait for the correction from the students. Bartram and Walton stated that there are four advantages of doing self-repair or self-correction; students feel more involved in learning, students also learn to be more independent, students' feeling of co-operation is greater, and it reduces the time of teacher talking (2002: 43).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Method

This study was conducted by using a case study method. This study is concerned in the correction of grammatical mistakes only in the first year classes of English Department of State University of Jakarta. The result

of this study can only be applied in English Department of State University of Jakarta. The researcher observed the classroom activities in one semester. It aims to gather the data without manipulating the phenomena occur.

### Data and Data Source

The data sources of this study are the voice recording which are taken from the first year classes of English Department of State University of Jakarta: Listening 1, Speaking 1, Reading 1, Writing 2, Vocabulary, and Introduction to Language classes. The data collections are the correction of the grammatical mistakes occur in the above classes. The data collecting is appropriate with this study because the researcher wants to find out the grammatical mistakes done by the students, the way teachers respond to the students' grammatical mistakes, and the way teachers correct the students' grammatical mistakes.

### Instrument of the Study

The data of this study were gained through observation. During the observation, the researcher takes notes and records the activities in the classroom using voice recorder. The record of the activities then transcribed in order to find out the correction of grammatical mistakes occurred in the first year classes of ED UNJ. Next, the transcription of the data became the base for the analysis.

### Data Analysis Techniques

In analysing the data, this study was conducted in several stages. The first stage is collecting the data. The data were collected through observation. To record the observation, the researcher used voice recordings. Every teaching-learning activities are recorded so that the correction of

grammatical mistakes occurred could be described. Then, the collected data in the form of recorded material are transcribed. The second stage, the researcher classified the grammatical mistakes based on grammatical category proposed by Brinton (2000: 103-117): number, gender, person, case, degree, definiteness, deixis, tense, aspects, mood, and voice. Next, to see what kinds of teachers' correction of the grammatical mistakes, the researcher used the types of corrective feedback given by Lyster and Ranta in Loewen and Nabei (2007: 362) explicit correction, Recast, Metalinguistic Correction, Repetition, Elicitation, and Clarification Requests to analyse the data collected. Last, the researcher analyse the effectiveness of the types of teacher's correction.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings of the types of grammatical mistakes

Grammatical Mistakes	Total	Percent
1. Number	29	26.85%
2. Gender	2	1.85%
3. Person	1	0.93%
4. Case	3	2.78%
5. Degree	6	5.56%
6. Definiteness	0	0%
7. Deixis	5	4.63%
8. Tense	23	21.30%
9. Aspect	9	8.33%
10. Mood	11	10.18%
11. Voice	19	17.59%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2. Types of Grammatical Mistakes

The students at the first year classes of English Department of State University of Jakarta made grammatical mistakes mostly in number. The highest percentage of grammatical mistakes made by the students are related to numbers, followed by tenses, voices, mood, aspect, degree, deixis, case, gender, and person. There are no

grammatical mistakes made by the students of the first year classes of ED UNJ related to definiteness.

### Findings of the correction of grammatical mistakes

After investigate the data of correction of grammatical mistakes, the researcher found that there are 69 of 108 or 63.9% of mistakes that corrected by the teacher, and only 39 of 108 or 36.1% mistakes were not corrected by the lecturer.

### Findings of the types of the correction of the grammatical mistakes

Types of correction	Total	Percent
1. Explicit correction	17	24.64%
2. Recasts		
3. Metalinguistic correction	26	37.68%
	6	8.7%
4. Elicitation		10.14%
5. Repetition	7	2.9%
6. Clarification requests	2	15.94%
	11	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3. The Types of Correction of Grammatical Mistakes

The result of this study also shows that in grammatical mistakes related to number, the teachers give correction mostly by recasts. In grammatical mistakes related to gender, there were two types of correction used by the teachers. The teachers used one repetition and one clarification requests. A grammatical mistake related to person was not being corrected by the teachers. In case, there were two types of correction used; recasts and metalinguistic correction. The teachers used a metalinguistic correction and a clarification request to correct the students' grammatical mistakes related to degree. In definiteness, the teachers used two explicit correction, a metalinguistic correction, and a clarification request. In tense, the

correction mostly used by the teachers to correct students' grammatical mistakes is recasts.. The teachers used four recasts, two clarification requests, and an explicit correction to correct students' grammatical mistakes related to aspects. In grammatical mistakes related to mood, the teachers used three explicit correction, two recasts, two elicitation, and a metalinguistic correction. There were also four explicit correction, two recasts, and an elicitation used by the teachers in correcting students' grammatical mistakes related to voice.

### Findings of the effectiveness of the correction of grammatical mistakes

Types of correction	Total	Correction		percent
		Yes	No	
1. Explicit correction	17	13	4	76.47%
2. Recasts	26	11	15	42.31%
3. Metalinguistic correction	6	6	0	100%
4. Elicitation	7	7	0	100%
5. Repetition	2	0	2	0%
6. Clarification requests	11	11	0	100%

Table 4. The effectiveness of the correction of grammatical mistakes

### Discussion

After calculating the findings of the research, the researcher tries to investigate and make the connection between the findings and the research questions. The research questions of this study are: 1) What are the grammatical mistakes made by the students of the first year classes of ED UNJ? 2) How do the teachers respond to the students' grammatical mistakes?

The first research question has already answered in the finding parts point 4.2.1. It can be seen that there are 108 grammatical mistakes occurred in the classroom. The mistakes are related to number, gender, person, case, degree, definiteness, deixis, tense, aspect, mood, and voice. The mistake on number has the biggest percentage from the others. The findings shows that there are 29 mistakes or 26.85% of the whole mistakes are related to number. Students mostly made mistakes on number in terms of the use of singular form in simple present tense. It also occurred in the use of suffix *-s* in the plural forms. There are a number of students did not realize the absence of suffix *-s* while they used plural form. It can be caused by the different rules of Bahasa Indonesia as students' first language and English as students' target language that called as language transfer. Both singular and plural noun in Bahasa Indonesia use similar verb for example; *saya makan or mereka makan*, while in English they use different forms for example; *she is eating and they are eating*. Below are the examples of mistakes in number that occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ:

1. There **are** free **morpheme**
2. When he **become**

There are also 21.30% mistakes made by the students at the first year classes of ED UNJ related to tense. Students made grammatical mistakes in term of past tense. Similar with the mistakes related to number, it is occurred because of the transfer language. Bahasa Indonesia as students' first language did not have past form to express activity happened in the past. Here is the example of grammatical mistakes related to tense:

1. My mom were dog tired after she **cook** for my birthday party

2. Why **don't** you **made** more elaboration?

The third type of grammatical mistakes occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ is voice. There are 17.59% of grammatical mistakes made by the students related to voice. Students made mistakes in terms of passive voice. This mistake is occurred because the students want to directly express their idea without considering the grammatical rules as far as the teacher understand the meaning of their statement. It is called by Abbott (1981: 78) as the strategies of second language communication. They did not want the listener or the teacher wait too long. The example of grammatical mistakes related to voice is presented below:

1. **And the water pour** to the pregnant woman
2. Mirror **after cleaned** by super sol

The students made grammatical mistakes related to mood as much as 10.18%. This kind of mistakes refers to the wrong form in using modality. Almost all mistakes related to mood is in the use of modality in past tense. It is caused by the overgeneralization of the past form. The students taught that all verbs in past tense should be changed into past form including verbs after modality. Below is the example of grammatical mistakes related to mood:

1. He wants to picking
2. The topic that will discussing the essay

The fifth grammatical mistakes occurred during the observation is aspect. There are 8.33% of grammatical mistakes occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ related to aspect. Aspect is related to the activity of the sentence. The activities that are still unfinished should be expressed in perfect form. Students made mistakes in

aspect because of the strategies in second language communication. Similar with tense, this mistake is occurred because the students want to directly express their idea without considering the grammatical rules as far as the teacher understand the meaning of their statement. The example of grammatical mistakes related to aspect is: when she woke up, **her heart beat** faster. The sixth type of grammatical mistakes is degree. There are 5.56% of grammatical mistakes are related to degree. It is occurred because of overgeneralization from the students to the use of more in comparative degree and most in superlative degree. Here is the example of grammatical mistakes related to degree: write the introduction **more clear**. The seventh type of grammatical mistakes is deixis. There are 4.63% of grammatical mistakes related to deixis. There are 4.63% of grammatical mistakes made by the students at the first year classes of ED UNJ related to deixis. Here are the examples of grammatical mistakes related to deixis:

1. I don't believe **it that**
2. What if stands alone by self

There are also 2.78% of grammatical mistakes related to case. Case is represented by personal and interrogative or relative pronouns. It is occurred because of the transfer language from students' first language. Here is the example of case: cook are **job wife**. The next type of grammatical mistakes is gender. It is occurred in the use of pronouns he or she. It is occurred because of the transfer language. In *Bahasa Indonesia*, there are no differences between he or she. It is the example of gender: My sister ... **he** is.

The last type of grammatical mistakes is person. It is because of the transfer language. In English, there are

three terms related to person: first person, second person, and third person, while in Bahasa Indonesia there are no differences between them. Here is the example of person: the one **who feeling**. The lowest percentage of grammatical mistakes is in the definiteness category. The students did not make any mistake in terms of definiteness category, it can be inferred that all English Department's students who is following the first year classes is fully understand the concept of definiteness. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that most grammatical mistakes made by the students at the first year classes of ED UNJ is caused by the transfer language. The differences between the rules in Bahasa Indonesia and the rules in English made students confused, so that they made a number of grammatical mistakes.

To answer the second research question, the researcher investigated the teacher's response related to the students' grammatical mistakes in two ways. First, the researcher analyzed whether the mistakes are corrected by the teacher. Second, the researcher categorized the correction of grammatical mistakes by using the six types of correction proposed by Lyster and Ranta's. The findings show that there are 69 of 108 or 63.9% of mistakes that corrected by the teacher, and only 39 of 108 or 36.1% mistakes were not corrected by the lecturer. More than 50% of grammatical mistakes were corrected by the teachers and the teacher sometimes ignore the students grammatical mistakes when they already got the students idea and when they think it will decrease the students' confidence in speaking. It can be inferred that most teachers of English Department of State University of Jakarta who teach the first year classes

are aware to the students' grammatical mistakes.

Then, in the findings of the types of correction of grammatical mistakes, we can see that all types were used by the teacher when correcting the students' grammatical mistakes. It shows that teachers of ED UNJ used varieties types of correction. From the table 4, it can be seen that the type of correction mostly used by the teacher of English Department of State University of Jakarta is Recasts. There are 37.68% of the corrections of grammatical mistakes which is used recasts. In recast, teacher did not tell students that they made mistakes but s/he paraphrase the students' mistakes into the right form. Recast belongs to the implicit other-repair type of correction. The teacher tried to make the teaching-learning atmosphere more relax. They tend to act like both teacher and students are in a daily conversation through not interrupting when students made mistakes in their statement, but this type of correction did not really make sense for the students of English Department of State University of Jakarta. Since it also belongs to implicit correction, it did not give clear clue for the students when they did mistake. Only few students are aware of their mistakes when they are given this type of correction. Recasts also belongs to other-repair type of correction, as discussed above this type of correction did not give chance for the students at the first year classes of ED UNJ to improve their skills of grammar through correcting their mistakes. Correcting their mistakes will give them chances to apply their skills since students can understand a language easily if they are allowed to apply it. This can be seen in table 5 that shows only 42.31% of mistakes that corrected by using recasts were improved by the students. Below

are the example of recast occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ:

S : All my family **is stay** in Jakarta

T : Oh, you and your family **stay** in Jakarta

S : Ya, **stay** in Jakarta

S : cook are **job wife**

T : so, do you think cook is **wife's duties?**

S : ya, cook **is wife's duties**

In the second position, there are 24.64% of the corrections of grammatical mistakes done by the teacher of first year classes of ED UNJ is explicit correction. In explicit correction, the teacher explicitly corrects the students' mistakes by interrupting their sentence or statement. Explicit correction belongs to explicit other-repair type of correction. Table 5 shows that 76.47% of mistakes corrected by using explicit correction got improvement from the students. It showed that although all the right forms of the mistakes are given by the teacher, there are still some of the students did not aware of their mistakes. Almost similar with recast, this type of correction did not give students chances to improve their skills of grammar. Since students are given the right form of their mistakes, they did not learn how to be more independent in learning. Below are the examples of explicit correction occurred during the observation:

S1 : We are from the group one and we **want to presentation**

T : You **want to present**

S1 : we **want to present** about morphology

S : the job **is make** me

T : the job **makes** me

There are also 15.94% of the corrections of grammatical mistakes



using clarification requests. When teacher corrected students' grammatical mistakes by using clarification requests, they ask questions to give clues for the students. Teacher usually uses expressions like "pardon?", "what do you mean by..?", or "I don't understand". This type of correction sometimes makes an ambiguity for the students. They might think that students cannot hear their voice or did not understand the meaning of their statement rather than correcting their mistakes. But, the data in table 5 shows that 100% or all of the mistakes corrected by using clarification requests were improved by the students. This condition is happened because the mistakes done by the students are only because of the carelessness of the students. When students are given chance to restate their statement, they are aware that they made mistakes and then correct it at the second chance. The example of clarification requests done by the teacher at the first year classes of ED UNJ are:

S : Um, **when I ten years old**,  
T : **when you?**  
S : **ten years old**  
T : **when you what?**  
S : **ten, when I was ten years old**

S : **She have a lot of**  
T : **pardon?**  
S : She **has** a lot of

Other type of correction used by the teacher is elicitation. There is 10.14% of correction using elicitation. In elicitation, the teacher asks for a reformulation of the students' mistake. S/he only gives clues to the students in order to encourage them correcting their mistakes. When the teacher asks for reformulation to the students, they were trying to raise the awareness of grammatical mistakes to the students.

The teacher sometimes gives clues for the students by using choices. This type of correction not only can raise the students' awareness but make the students more involved in learning through questioning for them. It can be seen in table 5 that all the mistakes corrected by using elicitation were corrected by the students. Below is the examples of elicitation:

S : Um, I just **run** away from  
T : **You run away or you ran away?**  
S : **run**  
T : **run? You ran away or you run away?**  
S : **ran**  
S : Oiya, **ran**  
T : you **ran** away

The next type of correction is metalinguistic correction. There are 8.7% of the correction occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ used metalinguistic correction. In metalinguistic correction, the teacher explained the rules of the grammatical mistakes done by the students. Even though students are already understand about the grammatical forms, they sometimes still confused to apply it while expressing their ideas. It is necessary for the teacher to explain it again for the students, so that students can raise their knowledge on grammar. Therefore, the data on table 5 shows that all mistakes corrected by using metalinguistic correction were corrected by the students. Here are the examples of using metalinguistic correction:

S : He **wants to picking**  
T : **bukan picking ya, karena to**  
S : He wants to pick

T : Okay, how about I took **another shorts**. Is it common to use another shorts? Is it

another? Refers to singular.  
And **short is never singular**.  
Ya, a pair of?

S : shorts

T : ya, pair of shorts. Kan gak mungkin sebelah kan?ya, so, a pair of shorts.

The type of correction that rarely used by the teacher at the first year classes of ED UNJ is repetition. There are only 2.9% of the correction used repetitions. In repetition, the teacher simply repeat the students' statement but in a higher intonation. It is quite ineffective since it cannot raise the students' awareness of their grammatical mistakes. Students might think that the teacher only want to more about their statement rather than correcting their mistakes. This can be seen from the data in table 5 that shows from two mistakes that were corrected by using repetition; none of them were improved by the students. Below are the examples of repetition occurred at the first year classes of ED UNJ:

S : My favorite **snacks is**

T : my favorite **snacks is**

S : is

S : My sister ... **he is**

T : **He is?**

Both mostly used corrections belong to other-repair type of correction. In these types of correction, the students are given the appropriate form of their mistakes from the teacher. It can raise the efficiency of time in the teaching-learning activities since the teacher did not have to wait for the correction from the students. On the contrary, Bartram and Walton agreed that self-repair correction is better than other-type correction since it made students feel more involved in learning, made students learn to be more

independent, made students have a greater feeling of co-operation, and it reduces the time of teacher talking (2002: 43). From the explicitness of the correction, the data in table 5 showed that the correction that mostly guides students to improve their mistakes is the explicit correction, while the mistakes were corrected by using recasts and repetition got little improvement from the students. If the teacher used more explicit type of correction, the students can be more aware of their mistakes and also easier to improve it. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that most teachers of English Department of State University of Jakarta used inappropriate types of correction since the data showed that the types of correction mostly used by the teacher of English Department of State University of Jakarta is recasts.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study shows that students at the first year classes of ED UNJ made grammatical mistakes mostly in number while the students did not make mistakes in definiteness. The biggest factor of these mistakes is transfer language. It also shows that most teachers of English Department of State University of Jakarta are aware to students' grammatical mistakes since more than 50% of the mistakes were corrected by the teacher. The result of this study also shows that the type of correction mostly used recasts. Finally, the most effective correction is clarification request.

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