Grammatical Errors in Indonesian University Students' Posters in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate grammatical errors in posters published by Indonesian University students' in Yogyakarta. The errors are classified based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) mixed with linguistic categories. Based on the data analysis on 97 posters from 7 universities in Yogyakarta, there are 201 errors found. The highest frequency of errors is Omission in terms of number with 122 occurrences (60.69 %), followed by Omission in subject-verb concord with 45 errors (22.38 %), and Omission of preposition with 6 occurrences (2.98 %). In total there are 182 (90.56%) Omission errors, while the other errors only occur less than 10%. The result shows that there are tendencies to omit necessary items rather than add, misform, misorder, or misuse items.

Keywords: *grammatical errors, error analysis, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, university students' poster.*

INTRODUCTION

Posters are easily found in public places especially around campuses, cafeterias, cafes, restaurants, and other public places, even on the streets, and also on SNS (Social Networking Sites). It has become an effective way for publication. According to Hornby (2009) poster is "a large notice, often with a picture on it, that is put in a public place to advertise something" (p. 942).

In Indonesia, the use of English in posters is very common. It is most likely because English is an International Language, which is used by people around the globe, including Indonesia. Not all the posters are presented fully in English; many of them are bilingual. Posters, which are presented in English and Indonesian language, are easily found in many places in Indonesia.

As non-native speaker of English, Indonesian learns English as a second or even third language. Learning second or third language is not easy. As stated by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), "… making errors is an inevitable part of learning. People cannot learn language without first system-atically committing errors" (p. 138). In the use of English as a foreign language, it is very likely that some errors occur in writing, speaking, listening, and reading.

Moreover, this paper studies posters published by university students, who are assumed to have learnt English for several years. They are at least in intermediate level of English proficiency because

universities usually have a minimum standard of English proficiency for their students. But still, the number of posters which have grammatical errors in them is high.

In general, this research aims to investigate grammatical errors in posters published by university students. In particular its objectives are: (1) to identify the errors which occur in the posters made by the students; and (2) to classify the errors according to their grammatical features and to find the most frequent error in the posters.

The focus of this study is limited only to the grammatical features of the posters. The analysis is only focused on the morphology and syntactic aspects. Therefore, the semantic and pragmatic aspects are excluded.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There were several researches on error analysis that had been conducted. One of the researches was a journal article by Tizazu (2014) published in *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research Volume 2.* The title of the article was *A Linguistic Analysis of Errors in Learners' Compositions: The Case of Arba Minch University Students*. The research examined the nature of the errors that AMU students committed in expressing their ideas in writing. Another research was conducted by Farrokh (2011) in a journal article entitles *Analysing of EFL Learners' Linguistic Errors: Evidence from Iranian Translation Trainees* published *Theory and Practice in Language Studies Volume 1.* The objective of the research was to find the most frequent linguistic error of 50 junior students of translation training program from the Islamic Azad University of Lahijan.

Apart from those journal articles, there were also several undergraduate and graduate papers from Universitas Gadjah Mada which analyzed grammatical errors. The most recent research was conducted by Hasan (2017) entitled *Grammatical Errors Made by the Students of English Department UGM Year 2012 in Their Writing Class.* Another research was conducted by Sinaga (2015). She studied the grammatical errors found in the "Portal Nasional Republik Indonesia" Website. The research attempted to investigate and to classify the errors, which were found in "Portal Nasional Republik Indonesia" website. In the same year, Wulandari (2015) conducted a research for her thesis about grammatical errors on English essay made by first year students. The aim of this research was to describe grammatical errors made by the first-year students of Islamic Banking Economics of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Simbolon (2013) from Universitas Gadjah Mada also studied error analysis on websites. The research aimed to identify the grammatical errors in three Indonesian universities' websites; Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Indonesia, and Universitas Airlangga.

Those researches on grammatical errors above show that research using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy and linguistics category, the same theories used in this research, have been conducted before. However, the objects of the research are different. The previous research studied the grammatical errors in websites and student's writings. Unlike those previous researches, this research studies grammatical error analysis on posters.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In 1970s, *Error Analysis* (EA) was part of *Contrastive Analysis* (CA) that was used to foresee the errors by identifying the differences between the learners' L1 and their target language (Ellis, 1994, p. 47). In other words, in the process of learning a second language, learners tend to bring the habits of their first language. This is in line with Corder's argument (1967) that says, "people now believed they had a principled means for accounting for these errors, namely that they were the result of interference in the learning of a second language from the habits of the first language," (p. 162). While CA only pays attention to the learner's native language and the target language, EA has a methodology for investigating learner language (Ellis, 1994, p. 48).

Errors are defined as idiosyncrasies in the language caused by lack of grammatical knowledge that reflects the competence of target language learners (Brown, 2007, p. 258). However, there is

another term called mistakes, which should be carefully distinguished from errors (Brown, 2007, p. 258). Errors represent the learners' lack of competence while mistakes show the learners' failure to perform their competence (Ellis, 1994, p. 51). The difference between error and mistake is whether the speaker is capable of self-correcting such error or mistake or not.

In writing skills, errors usually occur in the grammar. By grammatical structure, it means the organization of morphemes and words into larger meaningful utterances. Grammar, then, can be defined as the branch of linguistics, which deals with the organization of morphemic units into meaningful combinations larger than words (Francis, 1958, p. 223). Furthermore, Francis (1958) explains the subject matter of grammar includes, first, the mechanism and devices by which words are combined into larger units of discourse; and second, the total linguistics structure of such units (p. 225). Another definition of grammar of a language is a theory or set of statements, which tells us in a formal and explicit way which strings of the basic elements of the language are permitted (Bach, 1964, p. 13). In other words, from the two definitions, we can say that grammar is a set of rules to organize morphemes and words into a larger meaningful unit such as sentence.

In order to analyze the grammatical errors, this research uses the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). According to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the errors are classified into four categories:

1. Omission errors are indicated by the absence of a morpheme that must appear in a well-formed utterance (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 154). It means that any morphemes, both free morphemes and bound morphemes, which are omitted can be categorized as Omission error. By the term morpheme, it means the minimal meaningful units of which the language is composed (Nida, 1970, p. 6).

2. Addition errors are marked by the presence of an item that must not occur in a well-formed utterance (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 156).

3. Misformation is marked by the use of the incorrect form of the structure or morpheme

(Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 158). Different from omission errors that the item is not supplied at all, in misformation errors the learner supplies something, even though it is incorrect.

4. Misordering error is identified by the incorrect arrangement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in an utterance (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, p. 162).

METHODS

This research applies qualitative method with simple calculation. The data sources of this research are images contain texts and then the data are transformed into texts contain grammatical errors. Meanwhile, a simple calculation is used in order to find the most frequent error.

Purposive sampling technique is used to collect the data sources of this research. Instead of picking random posters found in the street and in SNS (Social Networking Sites), we selected the posters which met the criteria. The criteria are: (1) they were published by university students in Yogyakarta; (2) they were written in English or English-Indonesian; and (3) they had at least one grammatical error.

All of the poster samples are taken from SNS (Social Networking Sites), most of them are taken from Line, and the others are from Instagram since nowadays students like to publish their posters in various social media.

After collecting the posters, we classified the posters based on the university and numbered the posters in each university. For instance: A-1, A-2, B-1, B-2, C-1, C-2, D-1, D-2, E-1, E-2 and so on. There are 60 posters from University A, 11 posters from University B, 5 posters from University C, 4 posters from University D, 2 posters from University E, 13 posters from University F, and 2 posters from University G. Consequently, there are 97 posters from 7 universities in Yogyakarta.

In order to achieve the first objective, we put the data, subsequently from error number 1 to error number 201, in a table. When all of the data had been listed and numbered, we analyzed and

categorized the data based on the four categories in the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). In this step, we found some data that could not be classified into the four categories, therefore we put those data into *Others*.

However, to accomplish the second research objective and to get deeper analysis on the errors, we classified the errors into their linguistics categories, for instance concord, preposition, determiner, verb, number, noun phrase, etc. There is also a miscellaneous category for error like omission of direct object. In this process, we employed a more detailed analysis than the first step. After that, the result of the second analysis was merged with the result of the previous analysis. As a result, the data were classified into more detailed categories rather than using both of the categories separately. After that, the total occurrence in each category was summed up in order to find the most frequent error.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The frequency of errors in the posters

No.	Error Type	Raw	%
1.	Addition	7	3.48
2.	Misformation	9	4.48
3.	Misordering	1	0.50
4.	Omission	182	90.54
5.	Others	2	1.00
	Total	201	100.00

The result shows that there are 182 Omission errors found, which means 90.54% of the total errors are in this category. Meanwhile the second and third place is Misformation and Addition. The difference of number between the two categories is not really significant. In Misformation category there are 9 errors (4.48%), while in Addition category there are 7 errors (3.48%). The fourth place is errors that fall into Other category, with total occurrences 2 (0.98%). And the least frequent error is Misordering that only occur once (0.50%) among total 201 errors.

Omission

There are 182 omission errors which are distributed into six linguistics categories: concord, preposition, determiner, verb, number, and miscellaneous.

Concord

According to Leech and Svartvik (1975) concord is also called agreement (p. 200). They point out that concord means "certain grammatical items agree with each other in (A) number or (B) person" (Leech & Svartvik, 1975, p. 200).

In this research, omission in subject-verb concord is the second most frequent error with 44 occurrences. Below is an example of disagreement in subject-verb found in the posters.

(1) HIMAVI UGM Proudly <u>Present</u> EVOFEST (A-13)

The subject of the sentence above is HIMAVI UGM. According to Leech and Svartvik's rules (1975), that plural words and phrases count as singular if they are used as names. HIMAVI UGM is a name of an organization. For that reason, the subject of the sentence is regarded as singular. The subject must agree with the verb. In simple present tense, a third person singular subject must be followed by the inflected form of the verb by adding –*s* to the verb. Consequently, the sentence should read, "HIMAVI UGM Proudly Presents EVOFEST."

Preposition

Curme (1935) argues that, "A preposition is a word that indicates a relation between the noun or pronoun it governs and another word, which may be a verb, and adjective, or another noun or pronoun" (p. 87). For instance, in 'I walk with her' the preposition *with* indicates a relation between the verb (walk) and the pronoun (her).

There are 6 errors that belong to this category. One of the examples is shown below.

(2) Deputy President Director Ø PT Vale Indonesia (A-1)

The phrase above needs a preposition as a postmodifier in a noun phrase. The preposition is also needed to show the relation between the two noun phrases (*deputy president director* and *PT Vale Indonesia*). Therefore, the phrase should read, "Deputy President Director *of* PT Vale Indonesia."

Most of the omissions of preposition that are found are similar with the case above. The students who make the posters tend to omit the preposition *of* between two noun phrases. From the total 6 occurrences, 5 of them are omission of preposition *of*. These might be interlingual errors since in *Bahasa Indonesia*, no prepositions are needed to form noun phrase which indicates someone's functional position. For example, "Director of PT Vale" will be "*Direktur PT Vale*" in *Bahasa Indonesia*, without any preposition.

Determiner

Leech and Svartvik (1975) define determiners as "words which specify the range of reference of a noun in various ways, *e.g.* by making it definite (*the boy*), indefinite (*a boy*), or by indicating quantity (*many boys*)" (p. 225). When the speaker uses the definite article *the* the speaker assumes that both the speaker and the hearer know what they are talking about. Differently, when the speaker wants to convey indefinite meaning but does not add meaning of amount, the speaker uses the indefinite article *a(n)* (with singular count nouns), or the zero-indefinite article with mass nouns or plural count nouns (Leech & Svartvik, 1975, p. 52).

In total, there are 3 omission errors in determiner. One of them will be discussed below.

(3)   BE Ø TRULY ENGINEER (A-9)

There are two errors in the phrase above, but in this section, we are only discussing the error in terms of determiner. The phrase above needs an indefinite article before the noun phrase *true engineer*. There should be an *a* placed before *true engineer* because *true engineer* is a singular count noun. Consequently, it should read, "Be a true engineer."

Verb

According to Cobuild (1993) a verb is a word that is used along with a subject to express what someone or something does, what happens to them, or what they are. (p. 749)

There are 5 omissions of verb found in the posters. One of them is error in auxiliary verb, while the other four are errors in linking verbs. Below is an example taken from the data.

(4)   Registration Fee Ø only 100K Certificate Ø Included (A-24)

The example above has two errors, both of them are omission of verb. The first error is omission of linking verb and the second error is omission of auxiliary verb in passive voice construction. The passive voice construction in the example above does not have any *be* before the past participle (*included*). According to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1986) there are two functions of auxiliary *be*: "as aspect auxiliary type C, and as a passive auxiliary type D (p. 80). Passive auxiliary type D consist of the auxiliary *be* + the *−ed* participle of the verb-phrase head. For example: He *is examined*" (Quirk et al., 1986, p. 73). Based on that rule, the sentence should read, "Registration Fee is only 100K Certificate is Included."

This kind of error happens as a result of the learner's L1 interference. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) call it interlingual errors, "…refer to L2 errors that reflect native language structure, regardless of the internal processes or external conditions that spawned them." (p. 171). The word-for-word translation of datum number 61 above will be, *Biaya Registrasi Hanya 100K Termasuk Sertifikat* without any verbs, which is acceptable in *Bahasa Indonesia*, but not acceptable in English.

Number

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2007) number is the name of the system contrasting singular and plural. (p. 85)

This category of error has 122 occurrences which is 60.09 % of the total errors found. Therefore, omission of number is the most frequent error found in the university students' posters. All of the errors that fall into this category use the singular form of the noun to express something that is supposed to be plural. The substitution of singular for plural may occur more than once in a poster.

Most of the errors occur in the same phrase, media partner, whereas they usually have several media partners. One of the examples is shown below.

(5)   MEDIA PARTNERØ: SKM UGM
       BULAKSUMUR, RRI, SWARAGAMA
       (A-3)

The noun phrase above refers to three media that has become the partners of the event. Therefore, it should read, "Media Partners: SKM UGM Bulaksumur, RRI, Swaragama."

Other common errors are found in nouns or noun phrases like *our speaker*, *ticket box*, *guest star*, *contact person*, and *facility*. Those nouns and noun phrases refer to something which is more than one, thus they should use the plural forms instead of the singular forms of the noun. Because of that reason, the nouns and noun phrases should read, "our speakers", "ticket boxes", "guest stars", "contact persons", "facilities."

Miscellaneous

There is one datum that falls into this category. The datum shows error in omission of direct object. The example is shown below.

(6)   Fill and send Ø to
       inmmscugm@gmail.com (A-28)

The verb *send* in the example above is a transitive verb. According to Crystal (2008), a transitive verb is a verb which can take a direct object (p. 494). For that reason, the example above needs a direct object after the transitive verb *send*. Referring to the information in poster UGM-28, the object is *the formulir of Nuclear Orientation School 2018*. Therefore, the direct object can be *the form* or pronoun *it* that refers to the form. The example should read, "Fill and send the form to inmmscugm@gmail.com" or "Fill and send it to inmmscugm@gmail.com."

Addition

Unlike omission errors that have 90.54 % of occurrences, addition error only has 3.48% of the total occurrences. In total there are 7 addition errors which are distributed into four linguistic categories.

The categories are concord, preposition, number, and noun phrase.

Concord

While most of concord errors fall into omission category, there are few concord errors that fall into addition category. They are only 6.25 % from the total of concord errors, 48 occurrences.

In previous section, the omission in concord section, it has been mentioned that most of the errors in concord occur in this case: a singular subject followed by a plural verb. While in this section, all of the errors are the opposite: a plural subject followed by a singular verb. The 3 errors found in this category occur in the same verb *present*. One of the examples will be discussed below.

(7)   IKATAN MAHASISWA GEODESI
       INDONESIA X KMTG FT – KMDG SV
       UGM PRODLY <u>PRESENTS</u> SEMINAR
       NASIONAL IMGI 2016 (A-7)

The sentence above has two subjects, they are *Ikatan Mahasiswa Geodesi Indonesia* and *KMTG FT – KMDG SV UGM*. For that reason, the sentence requires a plural verb instead of a singular verb. The verb does not need the inflection form of *present*. Therefore, the sentence should read, "Ikatan Mahasiswa Geodesi Indonesia and KMTG FT – KMDG SV UGM Proudly Present Seminar Nasional IMGI 2016."

Preposition

There is only one error in this category. It is shown below.

(8)   We want you to join <u>with</u> us (A-21)

The sentence above does not need preposition *with* after the verb *join* because the verb *join* is a transitive verb. A transitive verb does not need any preposition, but need a direct object afterward (Crystal, 2008, p. 494). Thus, the sentence should read, "We want you to join us."

The use of preposition "*with*" in the example above is possibly because of the influence of the learner's L1. In Indonesian, the sentence would read, *kami ingin kamu bergabung dengan kami.*

Thus, the word-for-word translation would be exactly like the example.

Number

While omission in number placed the first as the most frequent error, there is only one error of number that falls into addition category. Different from the other number errors that substitute the singular forms for the plural forms, the example below substitutes the plural form for the singular one.

(9)   Media Partners: Info Lomba (A-26)

The noun phrase *media partner* only refers to one thing, *Info Lomba*. Consequently, the noun phrase should use the singular form instead of the plural form. On that account, the phrase should read "Media Partner."

Noun Phrase

The example of error that classified into addition in noun phrase is shown below.

(10)   CONTACTS PERSONS: Viony +62 822 2934 0981 & Amal +62 821 3824 0086 (E-1)

Noun phrase can form plurals. But the plural form does not need to be in every element of the noun phrase. The head of the phrase, *person*, does need to form plurals since there are two persons mentioned afterward, but the pre-modification does not need to form plural. Therefore, the noun phrase should read, "contact persons."

Misformation

Misformation error is in the second place of the most frequent error according to the classification using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy. But the difference of number with Omission error is quite significant. While Omission error has 182 occurrences (90.54%), Misformation has 9 occurrences, only 4.48 % from the total occurrences. Those 9 errors are distributed into three linguistic categories: noun phrase, pronoun, and genitive case.

Noun Phrase

Leech (2006) argues that, "The structure of noun phrases can be stated simply as follows: (determiner[s]) + (modifier[s]) + head + (modifier[s]) where brackets represent optional elements." (p. 73)

Some examples of data that classified into misformation in noun phrase are discussed below.

(11)   Blood Donate Partner (B-1)

(12)   Fill in the originally letter (B-10)

Both of the examples above contain errors in the modifiers. One of the modifiers of datum number 134, *donate*, is a verb. According to Leech (2006), modifiers of various kinds may be added either before or after the noun head in order to form more complex noun phrases. One-word modifiers, especially adjectives and nouns, generally occur before the head: a hungry child, Russian folk music, these lively young animals (p. 74). For this reason, a verb cannot modify a noun, so the modifier of datum number 134 should be the noun form of the verb *donate*, *donation*. Thus, the noun phrase should be, "blood donation partner."

Pronoun

Misformation of pronoun that found in the posters is error of demonstrative pronoun. Richards and Schmidt (2009) define demonstrative as, "a word (a pronoun or a determiner) which refers to something in terms of whether it is near to or distant from the speaker. The demonstratives in English are: this, that, these, those. For example: You take these books (here) and I'll take those (there)" (p. 161).

There are 2 errors in this category. Both of them will be discussed below.

(13)   GET THIS: SHARING PENGALAMAN, SEMINAR WAWANCARA, 1-1 INTERVIEW, SNACK N LUNCH (A-9)

(14)   FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK THIS OUT LINE@btl0896y INSTAGRAM @kmhdugm (A-20)

Both of the errors in this class can be categorized in alternating-forms according to three types of misformation errors by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982, p. 161).

Genitive Case

There are two possessive case incorrect are found in the posters. One of the examples will be discussed below.

> (15) <u>It's</u> Potential, Careers and Sustainability (A-40)

The example above uses the incorrect form of possessive case. Generally, genitive-s is used to form possessive case, but pronouns have their own form of possessive case. As cited in Quirk et al. (1986) possessive pronouns are divided into two groups based on their functions, they are determiner function and nominal function (p. 209). Pronouns that fall into determiner function are *my, our, your, his, her, its,* and *their*. Whereas pronouns that classified into nominal function are *mine, ours, yours, his, hers,* and *theirs*. Based on that explanation, the datum should read, "Its potential, careers and sustainability."

Misordering

Misordering error is the least frequent error found in the posters. It only occurs one time, which made up 0.50% from the total occurrences. The discussion, along with the example is presented below.

Miscellaneous

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) call this type of error as a "creative" error (p. 162). Furthermore, they argue that learners make written misordering errors that are word-for-word translations of their native language surface structures (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982, pp. 162-163). There is one error that falls into this category.

> (16) Only available limited seats! (A-24)

The example above shows incorrect word order. It shows a word-for-word translation of *Hanya tersedia kursi terbatas* in *Bahasa Indonesia*. The correct order is "Only limited seats are available" and it would be even better and sounds more natural to native speakers if they write, "Only limited seating is available."

Others

There are two errors classified in Others, both of them are errors in the use of prepositions. But those two preposition errors cannot be classified into the four categories of the Surface Strategy Taxonomy because they are not omission errors, addition errors, misformation errors, neither misordering errors. Both of the errors are misuse of prepositions.

Preposition (Misuse of Preposition)

Quirk et al. (1986) define the general function of preposition is to express a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement (p. 306). Furthermore, they also explain, "Of the various types of relational meaning, those place and time are the most prominent and easy to identify. Other relationship such as instrument and cause may also be recognized although it is difficult," (Quirk et al., 1986, p. 306).

> (17) Get on Board and Get Ready <u>in</u> Our Maiden Voyage around the World (A-34)

The example above shows that there is a misuse of preposition. Preposition *in* is used to imply position especially area (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 137). However, in the sentence above, the preposition does not imply posistion, but intended destination. The suitable preposition to imply intended destination id *for*, as explained by Quirk & Greenbaum (1973,), "Phrases of purpose or destination answer the question 'Why …?', 'What … for?', 'Where … for?', or 'Who … for?'…" (p. 147). Therefore the sentence should read, "Get on Board and Get Ready for Our Maiden Voyage around the World."

CONCLUSION

The result of this research shows that the most frequent error found in university students' posters is Omission errors with 182 occurrences or 90.56 %

from the total errors. In detail, Omission in terms of number is the most frequent error with 122 occurrences (60.69 %). The poster makers often use the singular form of the nouns instead of the plural form although they refer to something plural.

The second place for highest frequency of error is Omission in subject-verb concord with 45 occurrences (22.38 %). The students often omit suffix-*s* that should be attached to verbs that complement third person singular subjects. The third most frequent error is Omission of preposition with 6 occurrences (2.98 %), followed by Misformation of noun phrase which has 5 errors (2.48 %). However, the other categories of error only have 1, 2, or 3 occurrences or less than 1.5 % of the total errors.

There is a significant difference of occurrences between Omission and the other categories. Students tend to produce omission errors rather than addition, misformation, misordering, or misuse errors. Most of the errors are interlingual which occur as the result of the learner's L1 interference.

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