Articles

An Analysis of Errors in English Writing: A Case Study the Third Semester Students of UBSI

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A B S T R A C T

The objectives of this research are to know the errors in the third semester students' writing of Bina Sarana Informatika University and the most frequent error. It is concerned to the grammatical and semantic and substance errors. The data is analyzed by using James' theory in (Mungungu, 2010). The findings show that errors done by the students are spelling 50.9%, fragment 15.7%, punctuation 9.8%, adjective 3%, subject-verb agreement 3.9%, preposition 3.9%, capitalization 3.9%, tenses 2%, verb 2%, literal translation 2%. It can be concluded that the most frequent error is spelling. It because the students missed a letter, added more letter in a word, and exchange the letter. While In grammatical category, the most frequent error is fragment. It is because the most students do not put a subject in a sentence.

I. INTRODUCTION

The varieties of students' ability in writing English make the class condition are more colorful. Even though this condition makes students cannot get the same material at the same time. So that the lecturer must find the problem making the low-motivated students are hard to finish their writing. According to (Al-Khresheh, 2016) that errors were not explained will definitely be underestimated. Therefore, there was a need for another approach to describing foreign language learners' errors clearly. The researches on grammatical erros has been conducted by many reseaercher (Hourani, 2008), (Habibullah, 2010), (Limengka, P.E., Kuntjara, 2000), (Mohammed, 2016), (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009), and (El-farahaty, 2017).

Grammar is one of the common error in EFL students (Novita, 2014). Some common grammatical error in EFL students inculde, tenses, prepositions, articles, and spelling (Lennon, 2008), (Tizazu, 2014) and, (Mungungu, 2010). Nunan (2001) mentioned every learners does an error, even though they are master it. But, when they continually learn, improve, and be conscious to their errors, they can handle it by time. Hence, it is important for teachers to provide suitable materials for their students based on the most common errors the students make.

James (1998) he stated that the errors of writing in EFL learners happened in the following things as a grammatical error, syntactic, and semantic, and substance. The grammatical errors involves articles, prepositions, singular or plural, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, reported speech, concord, and possessive case). Syntactic includes nouns, pronouns, and word order). Semantic and substance includes capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Te current research focuses on grammatical and semantic and substance errors.

Research on error in writing has been done by many researched (Al-Khasawneh, 2014; Mul, 2014; Sermsook, Liamnimitr, and Pochakorn, 2017; Yin Mei and Ung T'Chiang, 2001; Emmaryana, 2010). Al-Khasawneh (2014) analyzed the errors in writing paragraphs of students at Ajloun National University in Jordan. The findings of the study reveal several errors such as spelling, word

order, and subject-verb agreement. The results also showed that the most frequent error is improper use of English articles.

Mul (2014) has done a reserach toward students' writing ability in SMK Bakti Purwokerto at grade XI could be reflected in this result: none of the student (0% it is about error analysis of students' English writing. The results show that the mother tongue influences the most common grammatical and lexical errors. It can be concluded that mother tongue impacts students' EFL writing ability.

Sermsook, Liamnimitr, and Pochakorn (2017). investigated the written English sentences of Thai EFL learners. The errors are divided into two types: errors at the sentential level and word level. The errors at the sentential level are tenses, subject-verb agreement, fragment, word order, punctuation, and capitalization. In contrast, errors at the word level are articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives, literal translation from Thai, part of speech, word choice, spelling, transition words. Therefore there are six types of errors to be the most difficult of the participants were punctuation marks, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization, and fragments.

Yin Mei and Ung T'Chiang (2001) reported about errors made by ESL students in their written books. The analysis investigates the incorrect item caused by the L1 and low proficiency of the second language. The errors found in this analysis are an approximation, slang words, language switch, transfer, wrong tenses used, omission, etc.

The current research highlights the low-motivated students in the third semester of Bina Sarana Informatika University. Low-motivated means the students who are hard to do the task on time get a low score in essay writing. (Student Motivation — An Overlooked Piece of, n.d.). Hence, the current research focuses on grammatical and semantic and errors of English writing by Bina Sarana Informatika University.

II. METHODS

The data were taken from essays written by the English third-semester students with low writing subjects at Bina Sarana Informatika University. There are 10 essays taken as the sample, the topic essay is "what can you do to make Indonesia

proud of you". The data were collected by sorting errors in students writing, such as sentence, word, punctuation, capitalization, etc. Then the data were grouped in to grammatical and semantic and substence errors. The data were analyzing using James's theory (1998). The number of errrors will be counted and measure using percentage.

III. RESULT

The result of the error analysis can be seen in table 1

Table 1. Error Analysis

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Grammatical		
Tenses	1	2%
Subject-verb agreement	2	3.9%
Fragment	8	15.7%
Verb	1	2%
Preposition	2	3.9%
Adjective	3	5.9%
Semantic and substance		
Punctuation	5	9.8%
Spelling	26	50.9%
Capitalization	2	3.9%
Literal translation from Indonesian	1	2%
Total	**51**	**100%**

It can be seen from the table above that the most common errors done by the students are spelling 50.9%, followed by Fragment 14%, punctuation 8.7%, adjective 15.7%, subject-verb agreement 3.9%, capitalization 3.9%, preposition 3.59%, tenses 2%, verb 2%, and literal translation form Indonesian 2%.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1. Grammatical Errors

The students' grammatical errors are fragments, subject-verb agreement, the wrong use of adjectives, verbs, tenses, and prepositions.

4.1.1 Fragment

A fragment means no verb or no subject in the sentence (Sermsook et al., 2017) . The case is in the following examples.

Example (1) parents always say that <u>must be pursued</u> for a sharp future.

The underlined part shows there is no subject in the sentence. The complete sentence must be

Example (1a) parents always say that <u>we</u> <u>must be pursued</u> for a sharp future.

A subject is needed in that sentence. 'we' can be added as a subject.

Example (2) <u>The first support</u> the advancement of Indonesia's education.

The underlined part shows there is no verb in the sentence. The complete sentence must be

Example (2a) <u>The first *is* support</u> the advancement of Indonesia's education. To be is needed in the sentence.

4.1.2 Subject-verb agreement

Subject-verb agreement means the subject and the verb must agree with each other. Deeper explanation as to the following examples;

Example (5) teaching <u>staff who are</u> less professional…

The subject 'staff' is singular while the verb is plural 'are'. It means the subject and the verb are not agree with each other. It might be;

Example (5a) teaching <u>staff who *is*</u> less professional…

Or teaching <u>*staffs* who are</u> less professional…

Example (6) <u>He is a people…</u>

Subject 'he' is singular, and to be 'is' is also singular, but 'people' is plural. The correct sentence might be as the following example;

Example (6a) He is a person...

4.1.3 Adjective

There are found three data of adjective error. Here is the example;

Example (9) …speaking <u>soft, polite, ethical,…</u>

The underlined part is all adjectives, however, the phrase above needs adverb

Example (9a) …speaking <u>softly, politely, ethically,…</u>

4.1.4 Verb

The error of using verb reach 1.7%, here is the data;

Example (14) to <u>studying</u> the culture of the Republic of Indonesia….

The underline part above must be 'verb infinitive' not 'present participle'

Example (14a) to <u>study</u> the culture of the Republic of Indonesia

4.1.5 Preposition

The error of using preposition reach 3.5%, the case is in the following example;

Example (12) …for <u>all us.</u>

The case above need the preposition 'of'

Example (12a) …for <u>all of us</u>.

4.1.6 Tenses

There is only one data of tenses error found in the analysis. Here is the explanation;

Example (8) Indonesia education <u>system has not show</u> good success.

The example above is present perfect tense. It should use the participle verb. The correct sentence might as follow;

Example (8a) Indonesia education <u>*system has not shown*</u> good success.

4.2. Semantic and substance Errors

4.2.1 Spelling

Spelling is the most errors found in the analysis. One of the causes is because of the omitting a letter and adding a letter. Here is the deep explanation;

Table 2. Example of spelling errors

No	Spelling error	Corrected
1	succeded	Succeeded
2	adquatly	Adequately
3	qulity	Quality
4	canges	Changes
5	internasional	International
6	admistrator	Administrator
7	the govement's	The government's
8	meansured	Measured
9	huma	Human

The Table 2 shows some examples of words from 26 words spelling error.

4.2.2 Punctuation

Punctuation is the second most error in the analysis. The punctuation error can be addition or omission. The deeper explanation can be seen in the following examples;

Example (3) Therefore the substance of education, and management...

The error is the addition punctuation category. In this sentence, punctuation is not needed. The correct writing can be;

Example (3a) Therefore the substance of education and management…

Example (4) other fields such economic, social, cultural and security.

In the above example, the error is in the omission punctuation category. It can be seen in the underlined part, it needs a 'coma'. It might be in the following sentence.

Example (4a) other fields such economic, social, cultural, and security.

4.2.1 Capitalization

The capitalization errors found in the analysis are two data. All the errors happen in writing the word 'I', deep explanation as to the following example;

Example (7) I will try to contribute in any aspect i could do.

'I' is always capital, so that the sentence above must be as the following sentence;

Example (7a) I will try to contribute in any aspect *I* could do.

Based on the analysis, the Capitalization error can be minimized when the students write the essay using Microsoft Word or other tools with an automatic capitalization system.

The errors that happen at the words' level are spelling, adjective, pronoun, conjunction, preposition, noun, verb, literal translation from Indonesian, and word choice.

4.2.4 Literal translation from Indonesian

The case is as the following example;

Example (15) my bias is Siwon

The word '*bias*' comes from Indonesian, which means refraction. The figure of Siwon inspires the writer.

V. CONCLUSION

The conclusion can be taken as the following explanations. Firstly, the most error made by the students is spelling, 50.9%. The wrong spelling was that the students missed a letter, added more letters, and exchanged the letter in a word. In the Grammatical category, the most error made by students is fragment, 14%. The most cause of fragment because the students missed a subject. It might be influenced by Indonesian language, Indonesian sometimes do not use any subject while making a conversation. In conclusion, the researchers can give a suggestion that in teaching writing for low motivated students, lecturers must intend to the basic understanding, such as vocabulary and arranging a good sentence because they still need used to it. The last, this research is very limited, so it needs a deeper analysis to have a big contribution in teaching writing and error analysis.

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