



GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY FINAL YEAR STUDENTS IN WRITING: A STUDY AT STBA PRAYOGA

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ABSTRACT

This study reported the grammatical errors made by final year students in STBA Prayoga. The errors were investigated through students' theses writing as their final project before graduate. This study aimed to determine the students' grammatical errors made by the final year students of STBA Prayoga in writing their theses, specifically the morphological errors. The data were gotten from 12 randomly selected students' backgrounds of theses. The type of the research used was descriptive research with documentary technique in collecting data. The data collected were simplified and transformed from raw data into manageable form. After that, the data were classified based on indicators of morphological error proposed by James (2014). Based on the findings, it was shown that not all errors were found on final year students' theses writing. The errors detected in sequence were in using articles (58 errors), using prepositions (48 errors), using plural forms (44 errors), using concord (37 errors), using correct verbs (24 errors), using correct noun (22 errors), using apostrophe (4 errors), and using correct adjective (3 errors). No error in using adverb was identified on the study. By detecting grammatical errors through the types of errors, educators can see the difficulties experienced by students and help overcome these obstacles by choosing strategies and innovative teaching methods that are appropriate to solve the problems of grammatical errors students face. The study's findings are then recommended as input to help Indonesian learners understand the target language, which in this case is English.

Keywords: Error analysis; grammatical error; morphological error

1. INTRODUCTION

Using English in daily communication nowadays is not a gawky thing to do for Indonesian. Even though not all Indonesians use English actively, most of them, especially teenagers, have been wanted with English. However, Indonesian and English structures have different rules for making sentences. Most Indonesian, especially students often get confused about the different rules when they write or speak English. That means the influence of the mother tongue impacts to students' production. The more the students get influenced by the mother tongue the more errors could be made. According to Gass and Selinker (2001), errors are systematic; occur repeatedly and are not perceived by the learner. It means that there is a chance that learners do not know that they are making mistakes. This idea is in line with Isyam (2010) who claimed that mistakes depend on a few rationales and not the consequence of sluggishness or messy reasoning but rather the students' utilization of break rules to create new dialects.

Furthermore, Brown (1994) claimed that there are four sources of inaccuracy in students' grammatical use. They are as follows: interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, learning context, and communication strategy.

- a. Interlingual Transfer. The interlingual transfer is widespread among new language learners. The learner, or student in this situation, is influenced by the role of their first language in the target language. This is frequent when the first language interferes with language acquisition processes.
- b. Intralingual Transfer. This blunder happens when students who have not mastered the target language generalize one rule to another. The majority of these cases occurred due to the use of tense. Misformation is the classification of an error.
- c. Context of Learning. Context of learning is a source of error that arises when the teacher misleads the explanation based on the textbook when the textbook itself provides a difficult to comprehend answer, or when the student misinterprets what their teacher taught them.
- d. Communication Techniques. This inaccuracy occurs as a result of the pupils' learning method. They attempted to devise their approach to learning a new language and to administer their message in their vision, but this can result in an error.

The discussion about grammatical errors has traditionally been discussed in terms of morphology and syntax by experts. This level of error touched two aspects of structure; morphology and syntax. Morphology error is defined as a failure to furnish any part of any stance of word classes following the norm. Nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives can be defined as morphology, while prepositions have no morphology (James: 2014). This is also known as a little error because the speaker frequently ignores the usage of plurality, genitive, and even third-person singular markers. Meanwhile, syntax errors affect text that is greater than a single word, namely phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph. This research only discussed the morphology error since the writers only analyzed the mistakes that happen in word classes.

2. METHODS

The research carried out was qualitatively descriptive research. Sheliger and Shohamy in Isyam (2010) further express that a descriptive study could portray a perspective of a second/unknown dialect securing from a different viewpoint or may center on the depiction of a particular constituent of the interaction. They add that in an engaging report, the teachers start with general inquiries in mind about the peculiarity they are examining or with additional particular inquiries what's more, with a particular concentration. Since the questions are chosen ahead of time, the research just spotlights on specific parts of the potential information accessible in the language it being depicted to learn setting.

The research participants were the final year students of STBA Prayoga for the academic year 2021/2022. The class consisted of 24 students. Only 12 selected students were chosen to be the data source. There were nine forms covering types of grammatical errors being discussed in this research. The indicators were arranged based on the types of morphological errors proposed by James to analyze the data. Then, the researchers identified them into each indicator.

Table 1. Indicators of morphology errors

No	Types of grammatical errors	Indicators
1	Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific identity known: Use the definite article "the" • Specific identity not known: Use the indefinite article "a" only with a singular count noun whose specific identity is not known to the reader, Use "a" before nouns that begin with a consonant sound. • Specific identity not known: Use the indefinite article "an" only with a singular count noun whose specific identity is not known to the reader, use "an" before nouns that begin with a vowel sound • <u>Prepositions of Direction</u> To refer to a direction, use the prepositions "to," "in," "into," "on," and "onto." • <u>Prepositions of Time</u> To refer to one point in time, use the prepositions "in," "at," and "on."
2	Prepositions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Prepositions of Place</u> To refer to a place, use the prepositions "in" (the point itself), "at" (the general vicinity), "on" (the surface), and "inside" (something contained). • <u>Prepositions of Location</u> To refer to a location, use the prepositions "in" (an area or volume), "at" (a point), and "on" (a surface).
3	Singular and Plural form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular nouns plural, add "s" to the end. • nouns that end in "s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, or -z," plural add "es" to the end. • Nouns that end in "f" or "fe" often have the ending changed to "ve" before adding s to make them plural. • make a noun that ends in a consonant and "y" plural, replace the "y" with "i" and add "es". • if the noun ends with a vowel and "y", then you can simply add "s" to make it plural.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For nouns ending in "is", the "I" is often replaced with "e" when making them plural. • A number of nouns don't change between their singular and plural forms. • Irregular Plural Nouns • more than two singular nouns or pronouns joined by "and" require a plural verb. • the noun suggests one singular idea or person than the verb is singular • the words are joined by "with, as well as, etc" to a singular subject then verb should be singular • A singular verb is used if the two or more than two singular nouns are connected by "nor" or "or".
4	Concord <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the subjects are joined by "or" or "nor" and it signifies different persons than the verb has to agree to the nearer • When some nouns are singular in meaning but are plural in the form then the verb is singular • If the noun is plural in meaning but is singular in form than it will take up plural verb • If two nouns are connected by and, but are qualified by "every" or "each" then, it must take singular verb
5	Verb Errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verb tense errors (past,present,future,past perfect, present perfect, past perfect) • The use of the right verb and not reversed with a noun
6	Noun Errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of nouns in the plural and singular forms • the proper use of nouns and not reversed with adjectives
7	Adjectives Errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives should be listed in order from most important to least important • using words that are technically not adjectives but are often used as such • using the wrong form of the adjective • placing an apostrophe before the s of a plural word.
8	Apostrophe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the plural form of a word is most commonly shown by adding an s to the end • the use of apostrophe as a form of possession • Errors of adverb spelling
9	Adverb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverbs and adverb phrases indicating frequency • Adverbs and adverb phrases indicate time • Adverbs and adverb phrases indicate time

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table reviews grammatical errors detected in the student's essay writing. A total of 240 grammar errors were discovered in twelve students' writing samples as they were collected and examined. Students commonly commit eight types of errors: articles, prepositions, singular and plural forms, concord, nouns, verbs, apostrophes, and adjectives. No error was noticeable for the adverb.

Table 2. Students' morphological errors found in writing

No	Types Of Errors	Number	Example
1	Articles	58	<i>*a young woman has been released from prison after tragic accident</i> Instead of: a young woman has been released from prison after a tragic accident
2	Prepositions	48	<i>*It has a question mark in the end of the sentence</i> Instead of: It has a question mark at the end of the sentence
3	Singular/Plural	44	<i>*the capitalist think they should get massive income</i> Instead of: the capitalists think they should get massive income
4	Concord	37	<i>*they likes cartoons</i> Instead of: they like cartoons

5	Verb Errors	24	<i>*women try to defiance their rights</i> Instead of: women try to defy their rights
6	Noun errors	22	<i>*patriarchal cultural can be found in literature</i> Instead of: patriarchal culture can be found in literature
7	Adjective errors	3	<i>*because the Palestinian are religion</i> Instead of: because the Palestinian are religious
8	Apostrophe	4	<i>*Theory of gride maxim is not clear</i> Instead of: theory of gride's maxim is not clear
9	Adverb	0	-

From Table 2, it was clearly shown that STBA students mostly made morphological mistakes, especially on using articles. This demonstrates their understanding of using articles is restricted. According to the findings of students' writing, they frequently omit using articles in correspondence. Furthermore, pupils may believe that articles have little effect on the meaning of their sentences. It is because they could not tell the difference between when to use the articles. As a result, they cannot properly locate the use of articles in their sentences. One of the key causes is the pupils' negligence.

From 35 out of 58 data analyses, it was found that the omission of articles dominates the errors in this category. The mistakes in articles are classified into the errors arising from the omission of an article when needed. Zero articles are "terms" or terms used when a "noun" or noun is not preceded by any articles, either definite articles (the) or indefinite articles (a, an). Articles are "conditions" or terms used when "noun" or noun is not prefixed to all articles, whether definite articles (the) or indefinite articles (a, an). However, they are used to the omission of an article when needed. Besides that, article errors also occurred in the incorrect use of a/an in front of the vocal or consonant. For example like, "The novel defines a patriarchal system in the plot" instead of "The novel defines the patriarchal system in the plot." In this case, the student ignored using the article "the" in front of the "patriarchal system" as a specific identity noun. However, the missing of article "the" did not make any difference in meaning.

The second error is the Prepositions. Pupils mostly made some errors in grammar, counting prepositions. That shows that their acquaintance of prepositions is limited. From the findings of students' writing, 30 out of 48 prepositional errors are from the use of prepositions correspondently. For example, as it was stated in this sentence. The student tends to make "It has a question mark in the end of the sentence" instead of "It has a question mark at the end of the sentence". The persistence of this preposition is to describe a more specific place, and in this sentence, it explains that the question is at the end of the sentence, not in the end of the sentence. Further, students perhaps consider that prepositions do not modify the sense of their sentences. It is because they have not been able to distinguish the placement from the preposition. Thus, they cannot precisely locate the use of prepositions in their sentences. Moreover, the use of "to" as a

preposition is also a dominant problem, for example "according to feminist experts" instead of "according to feminist experts". In this sentence, the student needed to add "to" after the word "according to" since the rules of prepositions must be obeyed. One of the key conditions is the carelessness of the students.

The next error is the use of singular and plural forms. All of the samples had problems when they had to change the singular forms into plural forms. All of the errors are adding 's' or 'es' at the end of the nouns, resulting in malformation errors. For example, "there are several types of personality disorders such as schizoid, avoidant, depressive, and narcissistic." Instead of "there are several types of personality disorders such as schizoid, avoidant, depressive and narcissistic." It can be seen that students are not too concerned with the use of the plural form in "disorder" which should be "disorders" since the subject in the sentence described "several types" which means more than one. According to the findings of students' writing, they frequently omit using "s" or "es" in correspondence. Furthermore, pupils may believe that singular and plural forms have little effect on the meaning of their sentences.

The afterward mistake is the use of concord in a sentence. All of the pupils made the same mistakes. Concord refers to how a word has a form appropriate to the number or gender of the noun or pronoun it relates to. For example, in "She hates it", there is a concord between the singular form of the verb and the singular pronoun "she". Pupils have not been able to distinguish between a singular subject must have a singular verb, and a plural subject must have a plural verb. The rule of a singular subject must have a singular verb was still the most frequent mistake being found and the rule of a plural subject must have a plural verb was the least frequent rule being found. For example, "the patriarchy system put the woman as the object of the man" instead of "the patriarchy system puts the woman as the object of the man". The subject and verb must agree in number, however, they are used to use plural verbs in the singular subject.

Subsequently, the verb and noun blunder comes to be the next error. In this case, 38 out of 46 total errors on verbs and nouns were caused by using verbs as opposed to nouns and vice versa. The pupils often equated between nouns and verbs with significantly diverse functions. For instance, "literary works displayed various themes such as history, health, and feminist" instead of "literary works displayed various themes such as history, health, and feminism". Feminism refers to the various movements to defend women's equal social and economic rights.

On the other hand, the word 'feminist' refers to a person whose beliefs and behavior are based on feminism. Pupils tend to make errors in this aspect because they lose control over the correct verb or noun they should use. Also, blunders in verbs are also caused by changing tenses, for example, "patriarchy is the belief in society that men were those who have more power than women" instead of "patriarchy is the belief in

society that men are those who have more power than women". The tense in a sentence must be in line, especially in this sentence it already uses the present verb "is" but uses "were" on the dependent clause. It means that both verbs do not use the aligned tense. In addition, the information about the patriarchy system is still valid to this day, so it can be categorized as a truth classified into the present tense.

Successively, the adjectives error. Although this error is relatively small, this is one of the particular concerns because this error is incurable. 3 out of 3 adjective mistakes were made. All of them were mistakes in distinguishing adjectives and nouns. For instance, "because the Palestinian are religion" instead of "because the Palestinian are religious". In the previous example, the student used an incorrect form of word classification. The "religion" should be changed into "religious" since it described the Palestinians. Therefore, the sentence needed an adjective, not a noun. Here it can be settled that pupils still underestimate the difference between the two types of words. If this error were overlooked, the meaning of the text would be very diverse.

The last error is the use of apostrophes. 4 out of 4 apostrophe errors made were mistakes in possession of the singular noun. In English, the writer uses apostrophes to indicate possession or ownership. "Mary's book" and "The cat's tail" are examples of singular nouns, and "The girls' dresses" and "The cats' beds" are examples of plural nouns. Based on the data, apostrophe errors done by the students are about the possession of the singular noun. One student makes "theory of Grice's maxim is not clear" instead of "theory of Grice's maxim is not clear". In this case arranged that Grice makes theory of Maxim, so the apostrophe is used to express the possession of Grice. It showed that there are still students who do not comprehend or care about the use of apostrophes in a sentence to express possession.

On the other hand, there is no hard and fast rule that adverbs should rarely be used in a thesis. However, the academic writing style encourages the use of precise and concise language, and adverbs sometimes have a reputation for being vague and imprecise. Additionally, adverbs are often used in creative writing, which is meant to entertain and engage the reader. In contrast, academic writing is more concerned with conveying information and arguments clearly and objectively. However, there are certain situations in which the use of adverbs can be helpful in a thesis. For example, they can provide further detail or clarification on a particular point, or convey a sense of emphasis or intensity. Ultimately, it comes down to the writer's style and the specific requirements of the research project.

As discussed in the previous explanation, the students possibly made nine kinds of grammatical errors. One of the possible reasons underlying the student's grammatical errors in writing is mother tongue disruption. The target language, such as English, has a different system to the students' first language, which in this case, could be Indonesian

or even Minangnese. However, practicing errors is a consequence of natural learning (Al-Shujairi et al., 2017), and it is crucial to recognize the causes of their appearance. Moreover, errors mainly occur due to limited knowledge over grammatical rules.

From the study findings, students frequently used prepositions concurrently, followed by articles and tenses. Prepositions and articles, especially, were the most difficult elements of English for second-language students. It was also estimated by Izumi et al (2003) and Bitchener et al (2005) (as the previous researchers) that it was found there were approximately 20%–50% of all grammar and usage errors made by second-language students. Besides, they were complicated since their usage depends on the interaction of various factors.

Furthermore, words with similar meanings cannot be depended on to follow the identical prepositional, such as 'reason for' and 'cause of'. Accordingly, students face difficulties in learning preposition rules. Further, it is usually evenly hard for native speakers to explain the causes of these differences or provide guidance on how to deal with such difficulties.

In brief, grammar is required for accurate writing. When students disregard linguistic structure, their writing becomes difficult to understand. As a result, it is of the utmost importance to spot students' grammatical errors in writing, particularly while producing their thesis as their final work before they graduate. It is critical to understand the mechanisms that lead to the occurrence of errors. This analysis in writing practice can be an effective way for teachers to determine the level of student's understanding of grammar. By writing, students can practice their critical thinking and develop their ideas in written practice. Lastly, students' language skills will improve because writing can combine English components in a sentence such as tenses, prepositions, articles, concords, and active/passive.

All of the discoveries must be subsequently followed up on with the aim to find suitable solutions to the pupils' faults. This study could potentially be used to clarify similar studies in the future or in various circumstances. The more such studies that are undertaken, the more teachers learn about the prevalence of students' grammatical errors. Furthermore, this study will greatly impact how teachers should give grammatical instruction to their students. Finally, the current study recommends that EFL teachers should enhance their capabilities in assessing and providing feedback on students' work. As a result, the student's writing skills will steadily improve.

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