

LINGUISTIC ERRORS IN STUDENTS' UNDERGRADUATE THESIS BACKGROUND AT STAI MIFTAHUL 'ULUM TANJUNGPINANG

Dwi Nur Wulandari¹⁾, Taufik Afdal²⁾, Joko Iswanto³⁾

¹ STAI Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang
Email: dwinurwulandari25@gmail.com

² STAI Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang
Email: taufikafdaltranslator@gmail.com

³ STAI Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang
Email: jiswanto704@gmail.com

Abstract

This research was aimed to find out: (1) Types of linguistic errors that students of English Education Department of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang commit in writing a thesis, especially in the background section. (2) The most and least dominant linguistic errors were found based on Dulay's surface strategy taxonomy theory in students' thesis of English Education Department of STAI Miftahul 'Ulum Tanjungpinang, especially in the background section. This research used a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative method). The qualitative method was used to describe 4 types of linguistic errors based on Dulay's theory such as addition, omission, misformation, and misordering. While the quantitative method was used to calculate the data include the 4 types of linguistic errors. The data collected in this research were analyzed by using Dulay's theory and percentage formula. There were 110 students' theses which were the populations of the data and 10 of them were the samples. The result of this research revealed that there are 128 sentences were contained linguistic errors. The 128 sentences were classified based on 4 types with each presentation. They are addition (11%), omission (30%), misformation (59%), and misordering (1%). Based on the result, it can be concluded that misformation was the highest percentage of types of linguistics errors were found in students' thesis background. Where such errors included subject-verb agreement (31 errors), spelling (18 errors), preposition (14 errors), pronoun (5 errors), capitalization (4 errors), and article (3 errors).

Keywords: *Error, Linguistic, Linguistic Error, Error Analysis*

Background

In Learning English, it is common that students make mistakes or errors in written form, especially in a way to use the verb correctly supported tenses. As said by Brown (2007) that second language learning could be a process that is not unlike first language learning in its trial-and-error nature. Inevitable learners will make mistakes within

the process of acquisition, which processes are impeded if they are doing not commit errors then like various varieties of feedback on those errors.

Students inevitably make errors, the same as errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve. The absence of self-awareness in improving their English skills especially in writing is what

seems to be the problem all the while. They tend to rely on their perceived knowledge gained from the school education system in which they are taught grammar and tenses. Even though the students have studied certain rules of grammar, some students exhibit remarkable consistency: they commit the same types of errors from one essay to the next.

Besides grammar errors, in writing, students tend to be short of ideas. Their minds wander and tend to take a long time to produce a sentence. It is due to the lack of writing practice at school and self-practice. EFL writing is generally shorter, less cohesive, and fluent, and contains more errors. In addition to the lack of the number of words, they also inevitably produced easy-to-spot errors.

Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) is related to the analyses of the errors made by second language learners by comparing the learners' acquired norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors as stated by James (1998). He also said that from the perspective of the norm or well-formedness of a sentence, the error is considered as an infringement or deviation of the code of the formal system of communication through which the message is conveyed.

Error Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Dulay (1982) has stated that taxonomy works on mechanisms in which surface forms are modified or altered in erroneous utterances. Among the common errors are: (a) **Addition errors**; Dulay (1982) argued that addition errors are the presence of an element or a form that must not appear in a well-formed utterance. For example, "**There a lot of a languages used by the human being**". The correct one is "**There lot of languages used by the human being**". An addition error

happens when the students confuse about using the singular or plural form in the sentence. (b) **Omission errors**; based on Dulay (1982) omission errors are the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. For example, "**Four productive skills must mastered in learning a foreign language**". The correct sentence is "**Four productive skills must be mastered in learning a foreign language**". Based on Dulay (1982) these errors occurred because of the ignorance of how to produce correct words in speaking or writing. (c) **Misformation errors**; Dulay et al (1982) define that misformation errors are caused by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. For example, "**Vocabulary is a smallest element in English**". The correct sentence is "**Vocabulary is the smallest element in English**". In this sentence the students used the wrong form for the superlative adjective. (d) **Misordering errors**; Dulay (1982) states that misordering errors are caused by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. For instance, "**A game word a simple and enjoyed**". The correct sentence should be "**A simple and enjoyable game word**".

Research Methods

Arikunto (2013) defines that research designs are a program or plan that is made by the researcher because of the preparation of activities that may be done. To conduct this research, the researchers used the descriptive qualitative method.

The method was intended to describe exactly a phenomenon or problem that the researchers observed. It implies that the researchers investigated the linguistic errors in students' thesis backgrounds. In this way, the researchers collected the data from the students' undergraduate thesis and investigated whether the use of linguistics is

correct or made errors, and identified the errors based on the instrument to conclude the result.

To gather the data, the researchers used a note-taking document of 10 undergraduate theses that have been submitted by the students before. The researchers read the thesis background carefully and took a note to record any errors. The researchers analyzed the data by **reading the background section carefully, identified tenses-specific errors, counted the frequency and percentage of each type of linguistic error, and defined the most frequent linguistic errors.** The percentage of the most dominant error was calculated by using the following formula stated by Anas (2008).

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P: Percentage
 F: Frequency
 N: Total errors

Next, the researchers explained the errors in detail discussion based on the category of error. For this section, the researchers have limited the category to 7 categories. They are prepositions, articles, subject-verb agreement (SVA), nouns, pronouns, capitalization, and spelling.

Finding and Discussion

The Findings

Regarding the linguistic errors made by the students of English Education Department of STAI Miftahul ‘Ulum Tanjungpinang, it occurred in the great number of each linguistic errors. Each category of errors in linguistic taxonomy and surface taxonomy is analyzed, explained, and evaluated using error surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay (1982) to find the most dominant errors made by the students. It can be seen in the following tables and discussion.

Linguistic Taxonomy

Table 1. Recapitulation of Linguistic Errors

NO	Type of errors	Frequency of Error	Percentage
1	Preposition	24	19%
2	Article	34	27%
3	SVA	37	29%
4	Pronoun	9	7%
5	Noun	1	1%
6	Spelling	18	14%
7	Capitalization	4	3%
TOTAL		127	100%

Based on table 1 above, it was found that the Subject-Verb Agreement was the highest errors in total made by the students. The students have committed 37 SVA errors or 29% out of the whole error. The second highest was the article with 34 errors or 27% out of the whole error. The third was the preposition with 24 errors or 19% out of the whole error. The fourth was spelling with 18 errors or 14% out of whole errors. The fifth was the pronoun with 9 errors or 7% out of the whole error. The sixth was capitalization with 4 errors or 3% out of the whole error and the lowest was the noun with 1 error or 1% out of the whole error.

Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Table 2. Recapitulation Errors of Surface Strategy Taxonomy

No.	Taxonomy	Frequency of Error	Percentage
-----	----------	--------------------	------------

1	Addition	14	11%
2	Omission	38	30%
3	Misformation	75	59%
4	Misordering	1	1%
TOTAL		128	100%

From the research data, it can be seen the number of linguistic taxonomy errors made by the students English Education Department at STAI Miftahul ‘Ulum Tanjungpinang in their writing thesis background. The data contains 14 addition errors with 11% percentages, 38 omission errors with 29% percentage, 76 misformation errors with 59% percentages, and 1 misordering error with 1% percentage (or 0.77%). It turns out that omission and misformation errors are the two highest errors made by the students with comprise 88%.

Discussion

Varieties errors were found in students’ undergraduate thesis background of STAI Miftahul ‘Ulum Tanjungpinang. Elaborated below are the description or error category including addition, omission, misformation, and misordering which were taken from the students’ thesis. As some of the students’ sample of errors are taken and explained as follow as:

Incorrect : There a lot of **a** language used by the human being,...

Correct : There lot of languages used by the human being,...

The sentence is indicated as addition of article “**a**”. As defined by Altenberg (2010) that article “**The**” is commonly called the definite article, it can use by singular or plural; “**a**” and “**an**” are called indefinite articles that only can be used by singular. The sentence was plural, so there is no need for an article “**a**” there. It can be simplified by removing the article.

Incorrect : Writing narrative **it is** very necessary for the student and writing this is very important to explain.

Correct : Writing narrative **is** very necessary for the student and writing this is very important to explain.

From the second sentence above, it can be seen that there is an unnecessary pronoun “**it**”. The subject in the sentence is “**writing narrative**”, therefore there is no need to add another subjective pronoun “**it**” in the sentence, or else the sentence would be redundant.

Incorrect : Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching, it’s an art of communications and one of 4 productive skills, that **must mastered** in learning a foreign language.

Correct : Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching, it’s an art of communications and one of 4 productive skills, that **must be mastered** in learning a foreign language.

As stated by Eastwood (2002) the passive construction for the simple tense is **modal + form of be + past participle**. In the sentence above, there is an omission of the form ‘**be**’ that should appear after the modal verb ‘**must**’ because a modal verb cannot be followed by a past participle.

Incorrect : With regard to a new word by **looking the** dictionary based on the word or phrase given.

Correct : With regard toa new word by **looking at the** dictionary based on the word or phrase given.

The sentence above missed the preposition “**at**”. Stated by Herring (2016) that the preposition “**at**” defines the specific noun at the point. Therefore, to specific the noun, the sentence need preposition “**at**”.

Incorrect : Therefore, the right technique is needed to learn vocabulary, one of them is using **crossword puzzle**.

Correct : Therefore, the right technique is needed to learn vocabulary, one of them is using **the crossword puzzle**.

The sentence indicates omission of article “**the**”. Definite article “**the**” is used to indicate or refer to a particular thing that is mentioned before.

Incorrect : Hence they just remembered the word for a while and did not **save in** their long term memory.

Correct : Hence they just remembered the word for a while and did not **save it in** their long term memory.

The sentence above indicated omission of the pronoun “**it**”. There is missing the target object “**it**” in the sentence.

Incorrect : This situation **make** some of students fail to reach the standard score (minimal completeness criterion score) for the daily test.

Correct : This situation **makes** some of students fail to reach the standard score (minimal completeness criterion score) for the daily test.

The sentence shows there is a misformation error with the use of subject-verb agreement. The sentence is singular, which means the verb did not agree with the subject. It should be with ‘s’ or ‘es’ as the correct form of simple present tense.

Incorrect : They **was** confused and they often forgot the spelling of the word.

Correct : They **were** confused and they often forgot the spelling of the word.

The sentence before shows an error with the use of the form “**be**”. The subject of the sentence is plural, but the form “**be**” is used for a singular.

Incorrect : Vocabulary is **a** smallest element in English that had to be mastered by students because without vocabulary they could not understand each other’s and **they** could not express **our** opinion, feeling and ideas.

Correct : Vocabulary is **the** smallest element in English that had to be mastered by students because without vocabulary they could not understand each other’s and **they** could not express **their** opinion, feeling and ideas.

The sentence above indicates a misformation error of article and pronoun. As defined by Eastwood (2012) that an article always precedes a singular noun or adjective unless a noun or adjective is universal or all-encompassing. And for the superlative adjective, it generally used the article “**the**” before it for specific the adjective. The subject pronoun in the sentence is “**they**”, but the object pronoun is “**our**” which a possessive adjective from “**we**”.

Incorrect : The mean score of the **eighth** students’ daily test is 60 these scores are lowerthan the minimal completeness criterion score.

Correct : The mean score of the **eight** students’ daily test is 60 these scores are lowerthan the minimal completeness criterion score.

The sentence above indicates misformation error of spelling. The spelling in the sentence should be “**eight**”.

Incorrect : In Indonesia English is taught **in** elementary until university level.

Correct : In Indonesia English is taught **from** elementary until university level.

The sentence above indicates misformation error of preposition. The preposition was not used properly in the right place. As defined by Melvin (2015) that this kind of preposition error is common among ‘Non-native’ speakers of English. When we use a ‘motion’ verb, we use the preposition of movement ‘to’. It is correct to say: ‘I went to London last year.’ The only exception to the rule in English is ‘go home’, otherwise we need the ‘to’.

Incorrect : This method is **a game word a simple and enjoyed** so that the student does not feel bored with these lessons they are received.

Correct : This method is **a simple and enjoyable game word** so that the student does not feel bored with these lessons they are received.

The researchers find it as a misordering error because the sentence has an ambiguous meaning. Within noun phrases, nouns can be modified. As defined by Payne (2011) that modification is a very general syntactic function that can be filled by several different syntactic categories, including adjectives, nouns, adverbs, prepositional phrases, and even whole clauses. The word “**game word**” in this sentence is a noun that has been modified. The word “**simple**” and “**enjoy**” in the phrase “**simple and enjoyable game word**” attribute the properties of simplicity and enjoyments to the bare schematic image evoked by the word “**game word**”.

Conclusion

From the research data, shows the number of linguistic taxonomy errors made by the student English Education Department at STAI Miftahul ‘Ulum Tanjungpinang in their writing thesis background. The data contains 14 addition errors with 11% percentages, 38 omission errors with 29% percentage, 76 misformation errors with 59% percentage, and 1 misordering error with 1% percentage (or 0.77%). It turns out that omission and misformation errors are the two highest errors made by the students with 88%.

The students have committed 76 sentences or 59% out of the whole error in the misformation that makes the misformation the most error found in students’ thesis. From the data, the researchers found 31 misformations of subject-verb agreement, 6 misformations of pronoun, 17 misformations of spelling, 14 misformations of preposition, 4 misformations of article, 4 misformations of capitalization.

The second-highest percentage of student errors was an omission. The students committed 38 omission errors or 29% out of the whole error. From the data, the researchers found 5 omission errors of subject-verb agreement, 7 omissions of the preposition, 22 omissions of articles, 1 omission of noun, and 3 omissions of pronoun.

The third percentage of students’ error was addition. The students have committed 14 addition errors or 11% out of the whole error. From the data, the researchers found 4 additions of prepositions, 7 addition of articles, and 3 additions of pronouns. And the lowest percentage of the error was misordering error. The researchers found 1 misordering error from the data.

REFERENCES

Anas, Sudjono. (2008). *PengantarStatistik*

- Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Arikunto, Suharsimi. (2013). *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: RinekaCipta.
- Brown, D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman.
- Dulay, H. C., et. al. (1982). *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University.
- Eastwood, John. (2002). *Oxford Guide to English Grammar*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Herring, Peter. (2016). *The Farlex Grammar Book: Complete English Grammar Rules*. Pennsylvania: Farlex International.
- James, C. (1988). *Errors in Language Learning Use: Exploring Error Analysis*. Harlow Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- Melvin, Jacqueline. (2015). *English Grammar Reference Book*. England: CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
- Payne, Thomas. E. (2011). *Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.