

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN WRITING ANALYTICAL EXPOSITION ESSAY: A Study at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstrak

This research was aimed to find out the students' grammatical errors in writing analytical exposition essay. Besides, it is also to find out the processes of how the errors occur on the students' writing and the causes of the errors. Sources of data were English department students of UNP in the fourth semester that were from four different classes, namely K1, K2, K3, and K4 in which each of the classes consisted of 30 students. So, total of the students was 120 students. However, only 30 students that were chosen randomly as samples of this research. The type of this research was a descriptive research. The data were collected by using writing test and interview. The findings of this research showed that the students' grammatical errors in using simple present tense were in the use of subject, verb/ predicate, object, complement, and prepositional phrase. Besides, there were also the causes of the students' errors, namely overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of the rules, dan false concept hypothesized. From the data gotten, it could be concluded that the students made errors in six elements of grammar in analytical exposition essay.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors, The Causes of Errors, Analytical Exposition Text

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of English skills that the EFL students must study. In order to be able to write in English well, the students need to take writing subject. In the writing subject, the students will learn how to write simple sentences, until they became a paragraph and even an essay. In syllabus of English writing subject of English Department of UNP, the students are taught how to write in English from the basic level until advanced level which are studied in the subjects of Paragraph Writing, Essay Writing, Academic Writing, and Paper/Thesis Writing. In those subjects the students learn how to write simple sentences, paragraphs, essay, academic paper until they write their thesis.

Based on the researchers' observation in English Department of UNP, the students had some problems in writing their essay, especially in writing analytical exposition essay. The problems were lack of vocabulary, having mechanical errors and grammatical errors. In using grammar, the students often make errors in writing the essay, especially in using the subject, verb/ predicate, object, complement, and prepositional phrase.

Based on the phenomena above, the purposes of this research are to find out the grammatical errors made by English Department students in writing analytical exposition essay, also to find out the causes of the errors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing cannot be learned in a short time. According to Vallete (1985: 81), writing skill requires more capabilities than other language skills and needs special preparation. It requires the students to understand the spelling and punctuation, the sentence structures, the vocabulary, and the paragraph development. Because of that, writing is one of the four skills which has a high status as a part of the culture of society or institution. It means that writing is one of the communication means by which the students can communicate their ideas and messages.

According to Miles (1982: 4), writing process is easier than speaking process because people who write something have time to think about the idea and find out the right words then express them into writing. It means that the students should choose suitable words to be arranged into sentences and determine the right verb that is suitable to the tense. It also means that the students have time to prepare their writing such as the topic that they are going to write, to revise and rearrange into a good composition. Although writing is easier than speaking but the students still say that writing is difficult because the English rules are very complicated and different from their native language. They often make incorrect construction of structures or break the language rules. They still use Indonesian English in their sentences. In fact, a wrong sentence can disturb the meaning of the sentence. Braganza (1998: 14) says that by breaking the fundamental rules and grammar, our ideas become wrong, the sentences become erroneous and we stand self-condemned.

The difficulties in applying the rules of language in writing cause the students to make errors. Error is different from mistake. If the student is unable or in any way disinclined to make the correction, we assume that the form the learner use is the one intended, and that is an error. It means that error arises because of students' inadequate proficiency in the target language (L2). It occurs repeatedly because of lack of knowledge and hardly difficult for students to recognize it. If, on the other hand, the student is inclined and able to correct a fault in his or her output, it is assumed that the form he or she selected is not the one intended, and we shall say that the fault is a mistake.

Brown (1980) states that mistake refers to a performance error that is a random or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. While an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of native speaker reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. In addition, Porte (1993) explains that errors tend to occur again and again until someone masters the language well. While, mistakes can be corrected just at the time. Because the students tend to make errors again and again in writing their essay, the grammatical errors occurred.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of the research is a descriptive research. This type of the research was used to describe the errors found in the the students' writing. The data of this research were types of grammatical errors on the students' writing of analytical exposition essay, and the causes of errors. The sources of data was the students of English department in the fourth semester of UNP. The students were from different classes, namely K1, K2, K3, and K4. Each class consists of 30 students, so total of the students was 120. However, only 30 students were chosen randomly from those classes as the sample of the research to take writing tests. This research used two instruments, namely writing test and interview guideline.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are explained into two main points. Each of those main points is discussed in detail as follows:

4.1 Grammatical Errors found in the Students' Writing of Analytical Exposition Text

There were types of errors found in the students' writing of analytical exposition essay, they are:

a. The Use of Subject

In constructing a sentence, the students made errors in using *subject* of a sentence. The total number of the students' errors in using *subject* was 41. Therefore, it was as the reflection that the students made errors in using *subject*. From the data gotten from students' writing, there were many kinds of errors in the use of *subject* done by the students. For example, the students did not give the *subject* to sentences they wrote. In other words, they missed the role of *subject* in their sentences. Whereas, the *subject* in a sentence was important to tell the actor of the action whether living or non living. The following data can be seen as the examples of the students' errors in the use of *subject* of the sentences.

1. In conclusion, *SMS while driving* has serious distraction
2. In our world, *so important* to have ability in English language
3. *Not really* too difficult to type SMS

Based on the data above, it could be seen that the students missed the *subject* in their sentences. The students failed to recognize the importance of the *subject* in sentences to give statement. Whereas, in writing the sentences, the students should mention the *subject* to make them accurate. In sentence number 1, the student missed the *subject* that showed an activity of a noun. It meant that the student should use *gerund* (V_{ing}) at the beginning of the sentence as the *subject*. The student should write *Typing SMS while driving has serious distraction* to make the sentence clear and accurate instead of *SMS while driving has serious distraction*. It was because the word of *SMS* in this sentence was not as the *subject*, but it was as a noun of the *subject*.

In sentence number 2, the student also ignored the use of *subject* to indicate *adjective*. The student directly used *adjective* at the beginning of the sentence without using *subject* and *tobe*. Whereas, to indicate adjective, there should be subject and *tobe* before it. It should be *it is so important to have ability in English language* instead of *so important to have ability in English language*.

This was same with the case in sentence number 3. The student also omitted the *subject* of the sentence to indicate *adverb*. The students directly used *adverb* at the beginning of the sentence without using *subject* and *tobe*. Whereas, to indicate adverb, there should be subject and *tobe* before it. Therefore, the student had to write *It is not really too difficult to type SMS* than *Not really too difficult to type SMS*.

Besides, the students also had errors in using subject in the form of *phrase*. In a sentence, the students used the *phrase* as a *subject* since the position of subject in a sentence can be in a single word, phrase, and clause. To use phrase in a subject, the students could not use it appropriately. The following data can be seen as the students' errors to use *subject* in the form of *phrase*.

4. *Many society* learn English language
5. *One of the benefit* is very beneficial according to all of students

From the data, it can be seen that the students did not recognize the rules to make a phrase. In the sentence number 4, the student had decided to use *many* to show the quantity. Because of that, the phrase must be *many societies* rather than *many society* since after the word *many* must be followed by plural noun. In the sentence number 5, the student used *of* to show the quantity of the noun. He had to put plural form after *of* in that sentence. Hence, he had to write *one of the benefits* instead of *one of the benefit*.

In addition, the students made errors in using subject in the form of *interrogative sentence*. In making a question, the use of *subject* should be put after *tobe* or *modal*. In fact, the students had difficulties in using subject in the form of interrogative sentence. The following data can be seen as the examples of the students' errors in the use of *subject* of question word.

6. Why *it is* very dangerous?

7. How *it can* happen?

From the data, it can be seen that the students made errors in ordering the *subject* of the interrogative sentences above. In the sentence number 6, the student put the *subject* before *tobe* *is*. It should be *Why is it very dangerous* rather than *Why it is very dangerous* since the use of *subject* in the form of interrogative sentence should be put after *tobe*. The same case was in the sentence number 7 in which the student also put the *subject* after *modal* to make a question. He had to put the *subject* before *modal* in order to get right order. It should be *How can it happen* instead of *How it can happen*.

b. The Use of Verb/ Predicate

Besides having errors in the use of subject, the students also had errors in the use of *verbs* in constructing a sentence. The number of students' errors in using the *verbs* was 101. The first error related to the use of *verb* was *verb agreement*. The agreement between *subject* and *verb* was needed in a sentence. The agreement of *verb* was influenced by the *subject* form whether it was singular or plural. Therefore, to create a correct sentence structurally, the *verb* must agree with the *subject*. The examples of errors which the students produced can be seen in the following data.

8. Many jobs that *requires* people who understand and speak in English

9. It probably *help* students to prepare their carrer

The data consisted of verb agreement errors. They were verbal sentences errors. The students did not recognize the agreement of the *subject* and the *verb*. In fact, when the *subject* was plural, they had to agree the *subject* with the *verb* which was used for plural *subject*. In the sentence number 8, the *subject* was plural, it was *many jobs*. Hence, the student should use *require* instead of *requires*.

In addition, when the *subject* was singular, they had to agree the *subject* with the *verb* which was used for singular *subject*. In the sentence number 9, since the *subject* was singular, so the student should put *-s/es* ending to the verbs, not using the *verb* which were appropriate to be used for plural subject. It should be *helps* rather than *help*.

Furthermore, related to the use of *verb* in a sentence, the students also had errors in stating the *verb*. In other words, many students missed the *verb* in their sentence. In fact, the *verb* could be action verbs or linking verbs.

The use of the *verb* was to tell the readers what the subject did. In this part, the student had problem to put *tobe* (*is, am, are*) in the nominal sentence. For the example of the student's error in using verb can be seen as follow:

10. Many people in rush everyday

From the data, it could be seen that the student did not put the *verb* in his sentence. The student did not recognize that in constructing a sentence, he must not only have the *subject*, but also the *verb*. When he did not give the *verb* to the sentence, he made error. In fact, mentioning

verbs in a sentence was very important to make the sentence structured well. Then, the data in the sentence number 10, it consisted of the plural *subject* but there was no finite to make the nominal sentence. For the sentence, the student needed to put to be *are* so that the sentence was accurate, so the sentence could be *Many people are in rush everyday*.

In addition, when the students used modal auxiliary in their verbs, the students made errors in using the rule. Most of them did not use V1 after the modals since in the use of modals should be followed by V1. The students' errors related to the use of modals in their verbs can be seen in the following data.

11. You *must to spend* all of your times with him or her
12. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend *may disturbing* your time

From the data, it can be seen that the students did not recognize the rules to construct verbs by using modals. In using modal, the student was not allowed to use *to infinitive* after the modal verb. So, in the sentence number 11, the student had to write *must spend* instead of *must to spend*. Then, in the sentence number 12, the student was also not allowed to use *V_{ing}* after the modal verb. Therefore, the student should write *may disturb* rather than *may disturbing*.

c. The Use of Object

In using the simple present tense, the students also had errors in the use of *object*. In grammar, the object was needed for transitive verbs which the students employed. The number of the students' errors in using *objects* was 24. The following part was the examples of the students' errors in using object on their writing.

13. It will make *he* or *she* forget about their study
14. Typing SMS while driving makes the driver needs *addition cost*

The data in the sentences above proved that the students had errors in using *object*. The errors were identified by the form of *object*. In the sentence number 13, to use object appropriately the student did not recognize that the object must be in the form of object pronoun instead of subject pronoun. Therefore, the student must employ *him* and *her* as the objects rather than *he* and *she*. Then, in the sentence number 14, the student made errors in the form of phrase as the object. S/he had to write *additional cost* instead of *addition cost*.

d. The Use of Complement

In using simple present tense, the students also had difficulties in using *complement*. The *complement* was used to complete the meaning of subject, object, or verb in a sentence. It was also used in nominal sentences. The *complement* was used when the students used linking verbs in their sentences. The number of the students' errors in using *complement* was 17. The examples of the students' errors in using the complement can be seen as follow.

15. Nowadays, having a boyfriend or girlfriend is *a wonderful something*
16. *Tragicly*, the users are often found dying because they *overdoze* the drugs
17. English language is *one of foreign language* that should be learned by the students in Indonesia
18. Consuming drugs *is danger* for us for two reasons

The data show that the students had errors in using *complement*. When the students used linking verbs as the verbs in their sentences, they had to use *complement*. The *complement* could be noun, noun phrase, adjective, or adverb. In the sentence number 15, the student used to be *is* as the linking verb. For the *complement*, the student used noun phrase with article *a* that showed the noun was singular. However, in using noun phrase, the student used the word *something* that the meaning was same with article *a*. It meant that the student should write *a wonderful thing*, not *a wonderful something*.

In the sentence number 16, the student had errors in using *complement* in the form of adverb and adjective. The formation of *adverb* was wrong so that it did not have meaning. The student should write *tragically* instead of *tragicly*. Then, the student also made error of *complement* in the form of *adjective*. To stated the *adjective* the student should use linking verb like *tobe (is, am, are)* depended on who the subject was. Besides, using linking verb, the students should use correct *adjective* so that the sentence could be understood easily. Therefore, the student should write *Tragically, the users are often found dying because they are excess the drugs*.

Besides, in sentence number 17, the student used noun phrase with quantity word of which must be followed by plural noun. Because of that, the student had to write *one of foreign languages* than *one of foreign language*. In addition, in sentence 18, the student had errors in using *complement* in the form of *adjective*. S/he should write *dangerous* instead of *danger*.

e. The Use of Prepositional Phrase

The last problem which the students had in constructing a simple present sentence was the use of *prepositional phrase*. The number of students' errors to use the *prepositional phrase* was 38. The examples of the students' errors in using prepositional phrase can be presented below.

19. Students must be good *in manage time* to divide their time for school, study, and work

20. You do not have time to study, work, or take a rest because they always *ask for* your news

The example above proved that the students had errors in using *prepositional phrase*. In the sentence number 19, the student made error in using *gerund* after preposition as an *object*. In using *gerund* after preposition, the student should use *V_{ing}*, not *V1*. Therefore, the student had to write *in managing time* instead of *in manage time*. In addition, in the sentence number 20, the student used inappropriate preposition in constructing a phrase so that the meaning could be different. The student should write *ask about* rather than *ask for* because they had different meaning.

4.3 The Causes of Errors

There are five indicators which are used to find out the causes of students' errors in writing, especially to the use of grammar. The indicators are based on the theory of intralingual errors. Those indicators are language transfer, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rule, and false concept hypothesized.

a. Language Transfer

Language transfer was the process of the occurrence of students' errors in using English, especially in using English grammar rules. Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005: 65) who state that this process happens because there is confusion between target language and mother tongue structurally. These errors are caused by the interference of mother language. It is because the features of two languages are different. When the students wrote the analytical exposition essay, they did not only transfer the word but also the rules to make sentences by translating word by word. It means that the students tended to use their L1 structures in writing the essay. Consequently, they made errors in their writing to use the second/ foreign language. It can be seen in the following examples:

1. Many people *in rush* everyday
2. Having a boyfriend or girlfriend *can disturbing* your time

For the sentence number 1, the equivalent in the first language is *Banyak orang terburu-buru setiap hari*. In Indonesian language, this sentence grammatically correct. However, in English, this sentence is ungrammatical because to state nominal sentence the student should put *tobe* after the subject. The student should write *Many people are in rush everyday*. Then, for the sentence number 2, the equivalent in the first language is *Memiliki pacar bisa mengganggu waktumu*. In Indonesian language, this sentence grammatically correct. However, in English, this sentence is ungrammatical because to use modal, the following verb should be just in base form or V1. Therefore, the student should write *Having a boyfriend or girlfriend can disturb your time*.

The language transfer that the students did when they wrote the essay was as the first process of how the errors occurred on their writing, especially errors in using simple present tense. The students stated that they got difficulty to choose the appropriate words and the English grammar. They were influenced by the different rules that Indonesian and English language had.

b. Overgeneralization

Richards & Schmidt (2010: 416) state that overgeneralization happens because the learner creates deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. They make errors as they want to reduce their linguistic burden in using the language. This kind of error occurs when the learners are given different kind of sentence patterns and rules but sometimes she or he uses them in different situation, in which particular generalization does not apply.

In this case, the students extended the use of simple present tense rules beyond its accepted uses, generally by making words or structures follow a more regular pattern. It means that the students tended to generalize the rules of simple present tense without concerning about the importance of the rules to make correct sentences in the form of simple present tense so that it caused the errors in the students' writing. It can be seen in the following example that shows the student did overgeneralization:

1. The students must prepare *their self* before the test

From the sentence above, it can be seen that the student produced new rule for the use of reflexive pronoun so that it caused error on her writing. In the use of reflexive pronoun, the students should write *themselves*, not *theirself*.

Based on the interview, the student produced new rules of English grammar while she was writing. She did it because she had inadequate knowledge about the rule so that the new rule was built that caused the student made errors in her writing.

c. Ignorance of Rule Restriction.

In this case, the application of the rules of grammar was not used correctly. It means that the students omitted the rules of grammar that caused errors in their writing. According to Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005: 65), ignorance of rule restriction is the application of the rules of grammar to contexts in which the correct rules are not applied correctly. This cause of error results from the learners' failure to observe the restrictions of the existing structure. This is also supported by Richards & Schmidt (2010: 324) that say that ignorance rule restriction means the learner violates the restriction of existing structure which is the application of rules to context where they do not apply. From the interview, most of the students did not pay attention to the rule of simple present tense in their writing, and even they did not follow the rules so that it caused the errors. Whereas, by using correct rules in writing, it would make their writing

structured well. It can be seen in the following examples that show the students ignored the rules of grammar:

1. English as universal language is a language that *has been using* by many countries
2. In national examination, English language *is also include* to exam

Based on the examples above, it could be seen that the students made errors in creating passive verbs. The errors which the students made related to the rules since the rule is *tobe + V3*. In sentence number 1, the student had to write *has been used* rather than *has been using*, and in the sentence number 2, the student should write *is also included* instead of *is also include*.

d. Incomplete application of rules.

In this cause of error, the students did not use all the rules completely. They found that they could have successful communication by using simple rules rather than more complex ones. They did not apply some of the rules and continue to make themselves easily understand with their way. This was supported by Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005: 66) that state that this cause of errors deals with an incomplete application of rules in which grammatical rules are not used fully in constructing the sentence. In this case, the students did not use the simple present tense rule completely. It means that the rule was not used well in the students' writing so that it caused the errors. Whereas, by using complete application of rules would make their writing understandable. It can be seen in the following examples that show the students applied the grammar rules incompletely:

1. In our world, *so important* to have ability in English language
2. *Not really* too difficult to type SMS

Based on the data above, it could be seen that the students missed the *subject* in their sentences. The students failed to recognize the importance of the *subject* in sentences to give statement. Whereas, in writing the sentences, the students should mention the *subject* to make them accurate. In sentence number 1, the student also ignored the use of *subject* to indicate *adjective*. The student directly used *adjective* at the beginning of the sentence without using *subject* and *tobe*. Whereas, to indicate adjective, there should be subject and *tobe* before it. It should be *it is so important to have ability in English language* instead of *so important to have ability in English language*.

This is same with the case in sentence number 2. The student also omitted the *subject* of the sentence to indicate *adverb*. The students directly used *adverb* at the beginning of the sentence without using *subject* and *tobe*. Whereas, to indicate adverb, there should be subject and *tobe* before it. Therefore, the student had to write *It is not really too difficult to type SMS* than *Not really too difficult to type SMS*.

e. False Concept Hypothesized

In this cause of error, the students did not fully understand about the rule distinction in the target language. It happened because of misconception of the difference in the language. It was supported by Richards and Schmidt (2010: 325) that state that this cause of error is from students' faulty knowledge or innacurate ideas about language rules. Based on the interview, the students did not fully understand about the use of passive voice rule. They got difficulties in using it and just used their limited knowledge so that it caused errors in their writing. It can be seen in the following examples that show that the students did not understand about the use of the correct rules of grammar.

1. You *must to spend* all of your times with him or her
2. Indonesian students *must can speak* English well

The examples above proved that the students got difficulties in using correct rules of modal so that they made errors in their writing. In constructing modal verbs, the students had to

use V1 without adding *-s, -ed, -ing, to infinitive*, and even *other modals*. However, in sentence number 1, the student used *to infinitive* after the modal. To make it accurate, the student had to write *must spend* instead of *must to spend*. Then, in sentence number 2, the student made error by using *other modal* after the modal in his sentence. He should write *must be able to speak* rather than *must can speak* to avoid double modals.

5. CONCLUSION

An analytical exposition essay has special grammatical features as well as the other essays. The students who learn about the essay are expected to be able to use the grammar in writing accurately. The grammar is needed to master by the students since they contribute the quality of writing. In fact, when they ignore the structure of language, the language which they use are difficult to be understood. Because of that, it is important to see the students' grammatical errors in writing analytical exposition essay. It is also essential to know the processes of the occurrence of students' errors and the causes of the errors.

Based on the data analysis, the students made errors in using grammatical features in writing the analytical exposition essay. In using the grammatical features, there are six of grammatical features of analytical exposition essay that the students made errors. In other words, the students made errors in using simple present tense, passive voice, conjunctive relation, direct and indirect object, linking and possessive verbs, and modal verbs. Actually, those elements of grammar were needed to be concerned to get good quality of writing.

The students' grammatical errors in writing analytical exposition essay were caused by some causes. The first cause was language transfer. Transferring two different languages by the students who did not master the languages affected their English use. The second cause was overgeneralization. In this cause, the students tended to extend the rules of English grammar on the basis of their experience of other structures in the target language. Third, ignorance of rule restriction. In this cause, the students ignored the rules of grammar by not paying attention and not following to the rules while writing. Fourth, incomplete application of the rules. In this cause, the students did not use the rules completely so that there were missing rules in the students' writing. Fifth, false concept hypothesized. In this cause, the students did not fully understand rule distinctions in the target language. It was from the students' faulty knowledge or inaccurate ideas about language rules.

All of those research findings need to be followed up to find out some solutions which are appropriate to solve the students' errors. Besides, these research findings proved that the students of English Department of UNP made grammatical errors in writing analytical exposition essay. In other words, the use of the grammatical features needs to be improved by the students. Therefore, the result of the students' writings is good in the language use.

Besides, the researcher has some suggestions which are aimed to the students and other researchers. First, the students should practice using English to communicate in their environment since quantity and quality of L2 interaction influence on ultimate success of L2 learning. Second, the students should master two languages, English and Indonesian language so that they know the different rules used to express something. The last one, the other researchers are suggested to continue this research to get a solution to solve the students' grammatical errors by using an effective technique so that the ability of students' grammar can be improved.



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