

An Analysis on the Students' Error in Writing Argumentative Essay of the Fourth Semester Students in STKIP PGRI Pasuruan

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ABSTRACT

For Indonesian learner produce an organized writing in correctly grammar have always been a difficult problem in making written text. It happened since the first language learners have already become the learners' habit and it influences the process of using the foreign language. This study investigated common English language errors made by fourth semester students. 34 writing participated to be the subject of this research and it were obtained from the students' writing task. Errors were involved by collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their gravity (Keshavarz, 2012). The nine most common errors committed by the participants were, article, tenses, gerund, preposition, word order, agreement, modal, to-infinitivem and active & passive. The study is important to educators and study material developers who should become aware of the kind of errors that their target learners make, so they can take into consideration while preparing the teaching material. For learners, error analysis is important as it shows the areas of difficulty in their writing.

Key words: *argumentative essay, error analysis and writing*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In fact, for Indonesian learners create a good writing in correctly grammar becomes the problem in making a written text. The reason is most of Indonesian learners do not use English as basic of communication. In daily life, they use Indonesian to communicate with their family and friends. In this case, Indonesian language is more dominant and strongly used by them in all aspects. Then, it makes sense if English is categorized as a foreign language in Indonesia. According to Richards (2010) stated that a foreign language indicated for a particular reason in teaching learning process.

In addition, Pudiyono (2012) stated that the fact that English has been categorized as a foreign language makes English learning process far from a success. The role of the first language is one of strongly reasons that caused the failure. It cannot be denied that first language learners have already become the learners' habit before they start to learn a new language and it will influence the process

of using the foreign language. The crucial of English particularly in grammar makes the Indonesian learners are difficult in mastering grammar. It caused English grammar is quite different with Indonesian grammar especially in tenses. In English grammar tenses mean the aspect of time, while in Indonesian tenses have no meaning. So, it makes the Indonesian learners still use Indonesian pattern and rule when they use English.

Likewise, university learners which often use to think and get a concept from their first language to express their ideas in English confess writing in a foreign language becomes the greatest challenge to the them. Especially for the learners in the fourth semester in essay writing's subject, because it becomes harder than writing in a short paragraph. Although, the fourth semester learners have already studied English for more than twelve years and their vocabulary is expected to be increased and their knowledge of grammar and the structure of writing is also improved, most of them are still not able to write a correct paragraph using the basic structures of the English language. In many cases, the majority of the learners are still translating words, phrases, and sentences from Indonesian language to English. As Richards & Renandya (2002) claimed there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to be mastered. The difficulty lies not only in organizing ideas, but also in translating these texts into legible text.

Since English Education students are prepared to be English teachers, they should have mastered in all language skills in order to be professional English teacher. They should not only become good listeners and speakers, but also become good readers and writers too. It is impossible for them if their quality in mastering English is low. They will teach writing effectively if they have already mastered it all. Thus, it is necessary for the researcher to analyze the grammatical error of the students' written text to find out the acquisition that the students get in teaching and learning process.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Keshavarz (2012) in second language learning, errors were no longer considered as the signs of failure moreover, in teaching and learning process errors are seen as a necessary part of language learning process. In foreign language learning contexts, errors play a significant role both in learning and teaching process. Making mistakes and committing errors are natural for language learners. It is believed that in language learning always involves the making of errors. Making errors is one of the most unavoidable things in the world. Errors can be seen as the process of learners in acquiring knowledge.

As Dulay, Burt & Krashen in Keshavarz (2012) argued that people cannot learn language without systematically making errors first. For learners themselves, errors are very necessary, since the making of errors can be stated as a device for the learners in order to learn. The learners get profit

from their errors, use them to acquire feedback from the environment and practice that feedback to test and modify their arguments about the language successfully and approximately.

Mitchell and Myles in Keshavarz (2012) claimed that if errors was studied, it could reveal a developing system of the student's L2 language and this system is dynamic and resetting of parameters. Keshavarz (2012) mentioned that error analysis is a procedure used by both researchers and lecturers which involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating the learners' seriousness. He continued to state that there are three underlying assumptions which error analysis is based on. First, as a language learner, we have to make errors and they are impossible to be avoided. Second, we can get benefit from errors. Third, the source of all errors is not only the learner's mother tongue.

Errors could be divided into interlingual (transfer errors) or intralingual (overgeneralizations) errors. Interlingual errors may occur at different levels like transfer of phonology, morphology, grammar and lexis from the native language into the target language. While, Richard in Heydari and Bagheri (2012) stated that intralingual error is the kind of errors occurs during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. In addition, errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself. This kind of errors are part of a natural acquisition process. When second language learners make errors, they indicate a part of the natural process of language learning.

To classify the errors made by the students, the researcher conducts the analysis from Keshavarz (2012) which divides error error into nine categories. Those are: (1) errors in the use of tenses, (2) errors in the use of to-infinitive, (3) errors in the use of gerund, (4) errors in the use of preposition, (5) errors in the use of active & passive voice, (6) errors in the use of agreement, (7) errors in the use of word order, (8) errors in the use of article and (9) errors in the use of modal.

If learners are continually provided with corrective feedback during their classes and oral feedback sessions, their writing habits could be improved and their errors may be lessened. Therefore, this study aims to find out the errors committed by fourth semester students in STKIP PGRI Pasuruan. In sum, the study aims to find out: the types of error are made by the students and the most frequent errors occur the students' writing.

Methodology

This research is included in case study. While according to Latief (2016) a case study is one of the qualitative research methods used to study a unit of a person, a family, a social group, a social institution, or a community for the purpose of understanding the life cycle or an important part of the life cycle of the unit. The subject of the study is the fourth semester students in the academic year of 2017/2018. There are 2 classes in fourth semester. In class A there are 25 students and in class B there

are 25 students. So, there are 50 writing of argumentative essays that will be the subject of this research.

The students wrote the argumentative essays and the researcher collected the data by copying the students' assignments. This study was a descriptive since it was just collecting data and analyzing the students' writing. After having the data, the researcher used qualitative research which is conveyed in descriptive analysis to describe and interpret the result of qualitative data factually, and accurately about the fact.

There were two types of data collection instruments. The first one is human instrument. Here, the researcher becomes the productive part of the research process which has an important role to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. The second one is documentation. The researcher got the documentation from writing teachers' documents on students writing skill on the fourth semester students. By using the documentation, the researcher followed the steps identified by Ellis (1997): identifying errors, classifying errors, calculating errors and explaining errors.

Findings and Discussion

The collected writing forms were identified. Next, the identified data were classified according to the error category. After that, the frequency of each error category was counted. The next step was explaining the errors. The calculation of the grammatical errors can be seen in Table 1.

The total number of the errors found in the students' writing tests is 623 errors and divided into nine category of errors, namely: errors in tenses, errors in to-infinitive, errors in gerund, errors in preposition, errors in active and passive voice, errors in agreement, errors in word order, errors in article, and errors in modal.

Table 1. The Percentage of Students' Errors

No.	Errors based on Keshavarz (2012) Classification	Occurrences (times)	Percentage (%)
1.	Errors in the use of article	162	26.08%
2.	Errors in the use of tense	161	25.92 %
3.	Errors in the use of gerunds	60	9.6%
4.	Errors in the use of preposition	60	9.6%
5.	Errors in the use of word order	52	8.37%
6.	Errors in the use of agreement	49	7.89%
7.	Errors in the use of modal	36	5%
8.	Errors in the use of to-infinitive	25	4.02%

9.	Errors in the use of active and passive voice	18	2.8%
Total Errors		623	100%

From the table 1 above it showed that the students still made errors in their writing. Errors that were investigated were (1) tenses, (2) to-infinitive, (3) gerund, (4) preposition, (5) active & passive, (6) agreement, (7) word order, (8) article and (9) modal.

First, the errors in using tenses, it happened since the students are not are not aware of the rules. As in English grammar, tenses become the aspect of time, while there is no tenses to express the aspect of time in Indonesia. The students were confused when they met many kinds of verbs forms and they associated them with time. They had the idea that verb tenses were always associated with particular times. Many forms of verb tense are sometimes not related to the time as the learners understand. The present simple is not always about the past and present continuous is not always the progressive action. For example, *“This proves that the beggars’ life could be much more luxurious than the one who gave them money”*. The students are fail to understand the tense which is used, the students should use *“gives”* instead of *“gave”*.

The second, the errors in using to-infinitive. the students are failed to understand the basic function of to-infinitive. For example, *“The government also provides facilities for homeless obey the rules”*. The student should use *“to obey”*, he should add to- before the verb *“obey”*.

The third, the errors in using gerund. The students are failed to understand the basic function of gerund as in Indonesia grammar, there is no gerund to express some verb. As the researcher knows that sometimes the students often rarely use gerunds or verbs ending in -ing, because ordinary students are encouraged in the present tense. For example, *“they ask from house to the other house to get the money for buy the food”*. The students should use *“for buying”*, as after using preposition, it must be followed by gerund (verb+ing).

The fourth, the errors in using preposition. The students were failed to conduct the correct usage of preposition. It was caused by in Indonesia structure, there was no preposition used to express where the things were. It made the students were hard in understanding preposition. For example, *“This is one V the way to reduce the number of beggars”* the sentence should be *“one of the way”*.

The fifth, the errors in using active and passive. The student confused between active voice and passive voice. This might be due to the lack of sufficient training and drills on this rule. It was also could be because the students misunderstood in interpreting passive voice as a marker of the past tense. For example, *“In every religion, it must teach that the one who places the position of the hand above is nobler than the one who places the hand below”*. The sentence should be *“must be taught”*.

The sixth, the errors in using agreement. The students still had a lack of basic understanding in subject-verb agreement. Most of the students confused between the third person singular (-s) and the plural (-s). They tend to add --s to the verb if the subject is plural and omit -s if the subject is singular. For example, “*Someone who **break** this law will be punished at least 20 days and at longest 90 days in jail.* Since someone is as third person singular, after the subject must be followed by singular verbs, therefore the students should use “***breaks***”.

The seventh, the errors in using word order. Most English sentence (clauses) conform to use the SVO word order. It means that the **S**ubject comes before the **V**erb, which comes before the **O**bject. The students were still confuse to conduct and rearrange the word into a cohesive sentence. The students were likely to use Indonesian grammar on their essay. Most of the students translated word by word from Indonesia structures becomes English structures. It made a very strange result in their written task. It happened since the students conducted the first language rule when they were writing in English language. For example, “*then **for what we are begging***”. The students should make it into “***what are we begging for?***”

The eighth, the errors in using article. It is the most highest errors which is found in this research. Here, the students were failed to determine the things was included whether in definite or indefinite article. Moreover, the function of definite and indefinite article is quite similar which made hard to differentiate which one to used. It was also possible that participants might have forgotten sometimes to use articles due to the influence of their first language. In addition, there is no articles used in Indonesia grammar which made hard for the students in learning it. For example, “*They beg **to V street user***”. The sentence should be “***to the street user***”.

The last, the errors in using modal. The students were not aware of the structure of the rules of modal. the students were failed to use the pattern of modal whether in no verb form or verb form. This condition happened since there was no verb to be in Indonesia structures. For example, “*It **will be broke** their mentality.* The sentence should be “***It will broke** their mentality*”.

According to the present study, the general findings indicate that the participants present similar problems with most of the types of errors. The results of the present study reveal that tenses and article were the most common error which could be found in the students’ written work, with the total of 623 errors. The analysis of occurrence of this type of error revealed that L1 influence plays great role in the process of using foreign language. These findings may suggest that poor tenses and article were a major learning difficulty for all participants. However, some article and tenses errors appear to be the result of carelessness in writing rather than a lack of knowledge.

Conclusion

Regarding the explanation above, it could be concluded that L1 influence played great role in the L2 writing for the students. Although the students had been taught about it before, they were still

confused which one to use when making a grammatical sentence and differentiating whether to use the *definite* or *indefinite articles*. It could be because in Indonesian language grammar there was no *article* used and time signaling for expressing ideas. Although the *tense* which was used in argumentative essay was simple present tense, the students couldn't conduct the correct rule in their essays. However, the researcher did not claim that the only reason of having errors because of L1 influence. According to Seitova (2016) errors can be caused of language mixing, proficiency levels in L2, literary skills in L1, social factors, individual variations – affect the process of second language learning but, most probably, to different degrees.

This research focused on the grammatical errors found, such as: errors in using *article* were the highest numbers of errors that were found in the students' writing argumentative essay, those were 162 items, with the percentage (26,08%). The second type errors in the use of *tense* 161 items with the percentage (25.92%). And the errors in using error in *active and passive* became the lowest number of error with 18 items or 2.8%.

By learning error sources and their frequencies, the lecture could meet their students' needs. Therefore, the lecture should have had more variety ways to teach writing in classroom. Moreover, the lecture was expected to provide corrective and effective feedback for their students in their writing tasks so that students could see their progress and decide what to focus on and what to ignore. Regular face to face discussions could guide students to enhance their writing. In addition, we can encourage pair work to look at deskmate's mistakes, discuss about them and create peer feedback among learners. If teachers help learners to notice the gap in their knowledge, learners could set more realistic goals to accomplish. Therefore, the lecture should have made enough time to give writing assignments regularly, assess them and give feedback so that students could see where they failed or where they were good at. It purposed to test the students' knowledge to make them more understood and motivated to go on writing.

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