



AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERROR IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

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Abstract.

This study is entitled “An Analysis of Students’ Grammatical Error in Argumentative Writing”. The objective of this study is to identify what types of grammatical errors mostly made by students in argumentative writing based on Dulays’s surface strategy taxonomy (1982). The students sometimes make errors on the use of grammar when they produce an English writing, also in argumentative writing. It is because Indonesian and English have their own grammatical system. In order to obtain valid findings, qualitative method was used in this study. Six (6) argumentative writing were collected from 6 students in the second semester. Based on the error analysis conducted, the researcher found that errors regarding auxiliary and wrong form of words were the most dominant errors in misformation which consisted of 22 errors. Then it is followed by omission errors consisted of 6 errors and the dominant grammatical error done by the students was omitting the auxiliary. Addition and misordering were only found 1 error from each of them. The findings indicate that the students have difficulties in using correct form, especially in misformation of suffix –s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing. This problem may occur due to their lack of knowledge of English grammatical rules.

Keywords: Grammatical Error, Dulay’s Surface Strategy Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

Writing as one of skills in English is quite important to be mastered by students. According to Brown (2001), writing skill is an ability to write naturally, coherently, grammatically, fluently, authentically and purposively. In this definition, Brown states that writing skill as an ability of writer to write fluently, as natural as possible with the accuracy of grammar, the coherent and authentic ideas and has clear purpose of writing and reader in mind. Writing is not only putting ideas into words on the paper or laptop, it is more concerned about what types of writing or essay that students want to make. One of types in writing is argumentative essay writing.

According to Spangler (1986), argumentative essay writing is to prove that the writer's opinions about a particular subject are correct or more truthful than other opinions on the subject. It means that in making argumentative writing, students as a writer should make a writing that can influence people opinion and make the reader considers the writing that the students make is a truth.

In the simple words, grammar is a set of rules in using language. Grammar and writing are closely related to each other. Grammar is a knowledge which guides a writer how to write correctly and ensure that it can be easily understood by the people who read it. In other words, if the writers misuse the grammatical rules in their writing, it can cause misunderstanding. It is therefore some students think that grammar is the hard part of rule in English skills especially in writing. Without applying grammar, a writing would be unorganized and causes some communicative problems, such as grammatical errors.

According to Dulay (1982), an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker. It means that learners make errors because they lack knowledge of the rules of the target language. They may make the same errors at other times. Error is often considered as students' mistake in learning a language because the comprehension of that rules related to the student's ability. People cannot learn language without systematically committing errors first. Errors which are made by learners contribute in understanding the process of foreign language acquisition. By seeing students' errors, the researcher tries to collect information about students' errors in writing. Further analysis is needed in order to know in which language aspects they make errors and their frequency.

METHODOLOGY

This research is more closely related to qualitative research. It is due the fact that this research has non numeric data rather than numbers. This study employs a case study as a research design. It is chosen because in collecting the data, this research relied on the data analysis on the document of students' argumentative writing. The participants of this study were six freshmen enrolled in argumentative writing course. They were selected on the basis of their willingness to take part in this research.

The researcher used document analysis as the only instrument used in this

study. According to Brown (2009), document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which document are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. The form of document analysis used by researcher is the result of students' argumentative writing given by their lecturer on July 19th, 2019 and it is in form of soft document. It consists of ten documents which has some certain topics to be discussed. Those topics are arranged marriages, adolescent is the unhappiest time in most people's lives, electronic books, capital punishment/ death penalty, credit card; a blessing or a curse, and genetically modified (GM) food. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed it by using error analysis proposed by Corder in Ellis (1994) includes collecting the data, identifying the students' errors, classifying errors, explaining errors, and the last is evaluating errors. Then, in classifying the errors, it is classified based on surface strategy taxonomy which is connected to four categories, such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering by using the table of Dulay's model taxonomy theory (1982).

The researcher analyzed the data in order to get the research question in this research. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the methods by Corder in Ellis and Barhuizen's theory (1994). Then, the errors found in the sentences will be classified and listed based on surface strategy taxonomy (1982).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher found that the students made some errors in their essay writing in types of surface taxonomy strategy such as omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Based on the result, there were 30 errors found in each sentence. The students made 6 errors in omission, addition consisted of 1 error, misformation were 22 errors, and misordering consisted of 1 error.

The finding data proved that misformation was the highest category of the errors made by the students, especially in misformation in the use of auxiliary: to be, have/has.

In assembling the data, the errors sentences were analyzed by using error analysis proposed by Corder in Ellis (1994) included identifying students' errors, classifying errors, explaining errors, and evaluating errors.

Frequency Types of Error

Students	Grammatical Error in Omission	Grammatical Error in Addition	Grammatical Error in Misformation	Grammatical Error in Misordering
A	3	-	5	1
B	2	1	3	-
C	1	-	2	-
D	-	-	4	-
E	-	-	4	-
F	-	-	4	-

Total	6	1	22	1
	30			

It can generally be claimed that less proficient learners of English have problems in the category of misformation. Errors of misformation were made when compulsory elements such as auxiliary exchanged and wrong form of words. Here are some examples of each errors made by students with correct sentence.

Omission

Students	No	Incorrect and correct sentences
A	1	^Researchs showed that romantic love is considered as one of the factors. Some researchs showed that romantic love is considered as one of the factors.
	2	There are no present standards, rules, ^laws on arranged marriages. There are no present standards, rules, and laws on arranged marriages.
	3	men^ more powerful. Men are more powerful.
B	1	...making people wait^ years. ...making people wait for years
	2	The punishment^ stoning to death. The punishment is stoning to death.
C	1	The price of electronic books that^ cheaper than printed book. The price of electronic books that are cheaper than printed book.
total	6	

In the table of incorrect and correct sentences above, the researcher described the sentences errors made by six students using Dulay's theory. There were three errors found in student A in omission. It consisted of determiner, conjunction and to be. Second student has two errors in the essay. Those are: preposition and to be. Student C made only one error in the sentence. That is omission of to be. And the other students didnt make any errors of omission in their writing. So, it can be summed up that the most dominant errors in argumentative writing made by student A.

Addition

Students	No	Incorrect sentence
B	1	Because it is can make other people reluctant to commit crimes Because it can make other people reluctant to commit crimes
total	1	

In the table of incorrect and correct sentence, it was shown that addition less found in the sentence. The error was only made by one student. Student B made an error in addition of to be or auxiliary. To make the sentences are correct, auxiliary **is** should be vanished.

Misformation

Students	No	Incorrect sentence
A	1	Some people do not agree with arrange marriages. Some people do not agree with arranged marriages.
	2	Couples are chosen based on a family status. Couples are chosen based on a family's status.
	3	Arranged marriages has some disadvantages. Arranged marriages have some disadvantages.
	4	They have some disadvantage [^] . They have some disadvantages .
	5	The practices of arranged marriages is strong. The practices of arranged marriages are strong.
B	1	The death penalty or the so-called Qishash have a Dzawajir function or deterrent. The death penalty or the so-called Qishash has a Dzawajir function or deterrent.
	2	There is also some detainees related to the death penalty. There are also some detainees related to the death penalty.
	3	...when the convict is sentence [^] to death. ...when the convict is sentenced to death.
C	1	Electronic Books is book with a digital. Electronic Books are book with a digital.
	2	There is also shortcomings of electronic books. There are also shortcomings of electronic books.
D	1	E-Book have some benefits. E-Book has some benefits.
	2	Most people opens their E-Books on their cellphones. Most people open their E-Books on their cellphones.

	3	The author do [^] not need to pay more. The author does not need to pay more.
	4	They should be a wise person in use [^] something. They should be a wise person in using something
E	1	The sentence is apply [^] in Indonesia which will be imposed on suspects. The sentence is applying in Indonesia which will be imposed on suspects
	2	The crime rate is low [^] than those who use the death penalty. he crime rate is lower than those who use the death penalty.
	3	One of the negative effects of the death penalty are the wrong doing of the innocent. One of the negative effects of the death penalty is the wrong doing of the innocent.
	4	...because a life sentence will be more pain [^] and aware of his actions. ...because a life sentence will be more painful and aware of his actions.
F	1	Electronic books is books publication made available in digital form. Electronic books are books publication made available in digital form.
	2	There is a lot of people contra about this topic. There are a lot of people contra about this topic.
	3	EBook become [^] one of the most important things. EBook becomes one of the most important things
	4	Electronic book make [^] our life will be easier Electronic book makes our life will be easier
Total	22	

Misformation becomes the dominant error found in students' argumentative writing. In the table of incorrect and correct sentence, it was shown that there were twenty two errors made by students. Most errors found were misformation in auxiliary and wrong form. Most of errors caused by less of awareness to the subject or noun. As in example:

'E-Book have some benefit'.

The student did not focus to singular noun came first in the sentence. The correct sentence should be *'E-Book has some benefit'*. It also occurred in other sentences. They did misformation error mostly in using auxiliary which exchanged.

Misordering

Students	No	Incorrect sentence
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A	1	A status of family in the society and capacity financial. A status of family in the society and financial capacity .
Total	1	

In the table of incorrect and correct sentence, it was proved that misordering is the lowest error found in the sentences. The error is misordering of adverb. The words **capacity financial** should be replaced to each other becomes **financial capacity**.

CONCLUSION

As it was stated in Chapter I, the objective of the study is to describe the grammatical errors in students' argumentative writing made by the freshman in one of private universities in Garut. The researcher analyzed the data based on the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen. Based on the previous chapter, there are four category of errors were found in the students' writing. The four categories are:

1. Omission

The omission errors are committed 6 times of the grammatical errors. The omission had the second frequency of occurrence.

2. Misformation

The occurrences of misformation in students' writing were found 22 times of the grammatical errors. The misformation errors had the highest frequency of occurrence used in the writing conducted by the English students in their learning process.

3. Addition

The addition errors was found 1 time of the grammatical errors.

4. Misordering

The occurrences of misordering error in writing is found 1 error.

Errors are found to be indicators of students' learning background. By knowing the errors, it can help teachers to provide suitable remedy in order to improve language acquisition and performance. This study is believed to be significant as not only it added to body of knowledge on errors in oral speech but also helped teachers or syllabus developer in designing suitable learning activities. As this study does not include longer period of recording, the findings however may be limited in its generalizability. Future intended studies should consider this in order to acquire more accurate findings.

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