

An Error Analysis of Grammatical Features in Report Text by The Eleventh Grade Students of Accounting Major at Smk N 1 Jorlang Hataran

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ABSTRACT

This study is purposed to describe the errors in grammatical features of report text. In addition, this study is also aimed to describe the possible causes of those errors. This study applied the descriptive qualitative approach in which the data was obtained from the report texts that were written by the eleventh grade students of accounting major in SMK N 1 Jorlang Hataran. The data were collected by using students' report texts and questionnaires. The data then were analyzed by identifying the errors first, then describing the errors, and the last explaining the errors. The errors that occurred in students' texts are errors in verbs, sentences, prepositions, articles, agreements, pronouns, modifiers, and tenses. The result of the study indicates that the students made 541 grammatical errors which were classified into: 37,15% errors in verbs, 18,85% errors in noun, 15,15% errors in sentence, 11,27% errors in preposition, 7,76% errors in article, 4,06% errors in pronoun, 3,51% errors in modifier, and 2,21% errors in tenses. The students' errors were caused by 31,23% ignorance of grammatical rules, 28,09% incomplete application of rules, 15,89% false concept hypothesized, 13,86% interference of interlingual transfer, 9,05% wrong communication strategy, 1,84% over-generalization

Key words : errors, grammatical features, causes of errors

1. Introduction

Over a billion people speak English as their second or foreign language (Leacock, 2010). Indonesian must learn English to be able to compete with other country. Owing to this, English is now one main subject in school. There are four skills of English language which are learned, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Harmer (2004) regarded writing as an important skill as he stated that being able to write is a vital skill for 'speaker' of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language.

Knapp and Watkins (2005: 17) mention that there are two codes of writing: genres and grammar. Without these codes the process of writing can be frustrating and unproductive process. However, for Indonesian students, these codes cause the students get more difficult to write instead. Every genres are different in rules and organizations that then curtail the students to share their ideas freely on their writing. Just the same as genres, grammar is also considered as one difficulty in producing English writing since English grammar is different with Indonesian rules.

During the teaching practice in SMA N 1 Medang Deras, Batubara, it was found that most of the students faced difficulties in writing. The students' accumulated score then become the preliminary data of this research as an evidence that Indonesian students' writing skill is still low. The data can be seen in the following table.

Table 1.1. The Percentage of the Eleventh Grade Students' Score in Writing

1 st semester	>75	<75
XI-IA 1	12 students (41,37 %)	17 students (58,62 %)
XI-IA 2	10 students (32,25%)	21 students (67,74 %)
XI-IA 3	11 students (36,67 %)	19 students (63,33 %)
XI-IA 4	11 students (37,93 %)	18 students (62,06 %)
XI-IS 1	13 students (38,23 %)	21 students (61,76 %)
XI-IS 2	7 students (20,58 %)	27 students (79,41 %)
XI-IS 3	8 students (24,24 %)	25 students (75,75 %)

Source: *The students' accumulated score of the eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Medang Deras academic year 2014/2015.*

It can be seen from the table that most of students' score percentage was under the KKM. The minimum criteria mastery was applied 75 meanwhile the students' writing score were still low. The low score was caused by the students failed to write grammatically. In assessing students' writing product, grammar becomes one aspect to be concerned. To produce a good writing, students need to pay attention to the grammatical features of the text. In report text, the grammatical features include the use of present tense, passive voice, action verbs, generalized pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

Nevertheless, there are still many grammatical errors in students' writing product. Language usages in Bahasa are different from English usages. Students have been accustomed to use Indonesian usages, then they tend to write English sentence in Indonesian style. Although this may be true, it does not mean that the students' errors in writing are acceptable. Their errors in writing must be corrected in order to make them realize their fault and know what are right. To master the English subject, it is important for the students to understand the correct form of grammar. Another purpose of this correction is to make them not to do the same errors henceforth.

The syllabus of the 2013 Curriculum determines that report text is one writing genre that is learned by the eleventh grade students of senior high school. Reports are written about living things and non-living things in general. As the accomplishment of English subject, students are assigned to build a report text on their own.

Hence, this study analyzes what types of grammatical errors the students made in writing report text. However, this study focuses on errors of the grammatical units on report text only. The word classes that are analyzed in this study are verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, articles, nouns, pronouns, and conjunctions. The main errors that are concerned is related to the missing words, wrong choice of words and the unclear use of those word classes. Additionally, this study also analyzes the errors in kinds of phrase such as verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase. Moreover, this study does not only discuss about the use of words and phrases, but also the relationship

among sentence elements. It includes the form of the sentence and the arrangement of the words order.

By analyzing the types of students' grammatical errors on their report text, the students' weaknesses in learning grammar will be discovered. The students' weaknesses are seen from the most frequent error of grammatical units they make. Moreover, this study is conducted to find out why students make errors in their writing product. In other words, this study analyzes the possible factors that can cause students' errors. It is expected that the result of this study will help teachers to see their students' development in learning English. Teachers will be able to find better ways to develop their learning in English subject.

Based on the rationale above, the problems of the study are formulated as follows:

- 1) What types of grammatical errors are mostly found in report text of the eleventh grade students of accounting major at SMK N 1 Jorlang Hataran?
- 2) What are the causes of grammatical errors in report text by the eleventh grade students of accounting major at SMK N 1 Jorlang Hataran?

Error Analysis

Error analysis is the methodology of analyzing possible error which may appear in spoken or written language product. According to Brown (2007), error analysis is the study of observing, analyzing, and classifying learners' error to reveal something of the system operating within the learner. In another words, the aim of error analysis is to quantify and record the errors associated with the inevitable spread in a set of measurements, and to identify how we may improve the experiment (Hughes, 2010: 1).

Grammar

Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning (Ur, 2006: 4). In essence, grammar is the analysis of language elements that convey meaning. Grammar is usually divided into two parts: accidence or also called morphology, the doctrine of all the forms (inflexions) of the language. The second part is syntax, the doctrine of sentence structure and the use of the forms (Jespersen, 2006: 4).

Writing

Writing is the process of putting ideas or thought into a written form. Coffin et al. (2003: 2) stated that the purpose of writing is for learning that can help students grapple with disciplinary knowledge as well as developing more general abilities to reason and critique.

Report Text

Report is a text that describes living and non-living things in the world. The function of Report text is to document, organize, and store information on a topic (Bruce,

2008: 93). In short, report text is used to describe things or phenomena from a technical point of view.

1) Generic Structure

The generic structure of Report text starts with the general statement of classification or a definition about the topic. The general statement is then followed by description of the topic. It is a sequence of facts of the topic that are grouped in a logical order.

2) Grammatical Features

According to Knapp and Watkins (2005), in report text, the present tense is predominantly used to indicate timeless information. Other than that, action verbs and linking verbs are used in report text. Sometimes, it uses past participle verbs to describe the topic in passive voice. Adjectives are the grammatical class that tends to carry much of the responsibility for describing. They add extra information to nouns (topic that are being described). They can be used on their own as a single adjective or as part of a noun group. Adverbs are also used to add extra information to verbs to provide description that is more detailed. Beside single adverbs, adverbial phrases are also used in Report text to add more information about the manner, place or time.

Error

Gass and Selinker (2008: 99) stated that if learner produced an error, this was a signal that the learner was having difficulty with a particular structure or sound. According to what Gass and Selinker stated above, it can be concluded that error takes a role as evidence that students still do not understand the material clearly. In other words, error is a proof that teachers need to pay attention to those errors and give more explanation about the vague materials.

Causes of Errors

Students' errors appear because of many reasons. Brown (2007) states that there are four sources of students' errors.

Interlingual Transfer

Students' errors may occur because of students' habits of their mother tongue language. This kind of cause is called negative inter-lingual transfer. Students tend to construct their own rules which are similar with the target language rules, but they are not the correct rules of the target language (Ellis, 2003).

Intralingual Transfer

The intralingual errors are involved in several terms.

a. Over-generalization

Over-generalization occurs when the students produce an erroneous usage based on other usage they know in English. The students usually use only the language forms they have already known. Therefore, when they are asked to create sentence in different form, they will produce it based on what they know.

b. Ignorance of rules restriction Intralingual errors may appear as the result of students' ignorance of language rules. The students fail to write the right sentence because they do not know the restrictions of the language rules.

c. Incomplete application of rules

Errors also may occur when the students do the incomplete application of rules. They possibly write a sentence by leaving out some necessary words or morpheme.

d. False concept hypothesized

The faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language can also be included into intralingual errors. This source of error deals with the use of inappropriate diction of words.

Context of Learning

Context of learning process is another thing that occasions the students' errors. The errors may appear because of the misleading explanation from the teachers, faulty presentation of structure or words in textbook, or even because of a pattern that was by rote memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are the students' strategies to avoid the possible problems that may occur in their language products. However, communication strategies can also cause errors if the students determine the inappropriate strategies.

1. Types of Grammatical Errors

There were eight types of grammatical errors that were analyzed in this study. They were error in sentence, error in using verb, error in using noun, error in using pronoun, error in using preposition, error in using modifier, error in using article, and error in using conjunction.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative research that the data collected were the students' experiences in learning grammar to see how far they have mastered grammar. The subject of this study was the eleventh grade students of accounting major in SMK N 1 Jorlang Hataran that consisted of 30 students.

The study used two instruments for collecting data. The first instrument of this research was the report text made by the students, which described the kinds of errors made by the students. As the second instrument, questionnaire was used to analyze the factors that caused students' grammatical errors.

3. Findings

The analysis revealed that errors in grammatical features existed in the report texts that were written by SMK N 1 Jorlang Hataran students. There are 541 errors of grammatical features in Report text. Error in verb occurs in 201 cases (37,15%). Then, the error in noun occurs in 102 cases (18,85%). Errors in sentences occurred in 82 cases (15,15%). Then, the errors in preposition are found in 61 cases (11,27%). There are also errors in article that occurs in 42 cases (7,76%). Students produced pronoun errors in 22

cases (4,06%). Then, error in modifier are found in 19 cases (3,51%) and the error in conjunction occurs in 12 cases (2,21%).

4. Error in Verb

Students produced six types of verb errors. The first type is the wrong form of verb. In the example below, the student wrote the verb in active voice whereas it is supposed to be passive voice. The verb must be changed into the form of past participle.

Error : Many money **save*** in the bank.

Correction : Much money **is saved** in bank.

The second type is the wrong choice of verb. It can be seen from the example that the students use the word '*govern*' which does not suit the noun. Error :

Accountant must **govern*** accounting.

Correction : Accountant must **master** accounting.

Error in verb also occur when the students omitted verb in a sentence. As it can be seen in the following sentence, the student did not put auxiliary verb between subject and adjective.

Error : The ink color []* usually blue.

Correction : The ink color **is** usually blue.

The fourth type of verb error is the disagreement between subject and verb. In the example below, the student use infinitive after singular subject. To correct the sentence, the verb '*use*' must be added with suffix -s.

Error : Calculator **use*** battery.

Correction : Calculator **uses** battery.

The fifth type of verb error is the use of unnecessary verb. In the following example, the student wrote two verbs in which one of them is not necessary so it must be omitted.

Error : Ledger book help accountant to **work counting*** money.

Correction : Ledger book helps accountant to **count** money.

Error in tenses is also one of verb error that students made. The sentence below is supposed to be in present tense but the student left out auxiliary verb before participle verb.

Error : Ledger book **used*** to noted financial transaction.

Correction : Ledger book **is used** to note financial transaction.

Errors in Noun

Error in noun occurred in four types. The first is wrong noun diction that mostly occurred. In the following example, the student literally translated the phrase 'money eye' from Indonesian language to refer to currency.

Error : Indonesia **money eye*** is rupiahs.
Correction : Indonesia **currency** is Rupiahs.

The second type of noun error is the wrong noun form. As can be seen in the sentence below, the student form noun incorrectly. The gerund must be changed into the word stem '*record*'.

Error : Ledger book is the **recording*** of transaction...
Correction : Ledger book is the **record** of transaction...

The third type of noun is the use of unnecessary noun. The student used the word '*commutation*' which means the process of making something lighter. The word is not suitable for the sentence and it must be omitted.

Error : Calendar is a thing for people to know **commutation*** month, date and year.
Correction : Calendar is a thing for people to know month, date and year.

The fourth type of noun error is the missing noun. In the example below, the verb '*note*' is a transitive verb that must be followed by an object or noun but the student left out the noun by putting an adjective. The adjective must be changed into noun phrase by adding noun '*statement*'.

Error : Ledger book is used to note financial []* in tables.
Correction : Ledger book is used to note financial **statement** in tables.

Errors in sentences

Error in sentence occurred in three types. The first type is the misordering words. The sentence below are written out of the right structure. The order of the words must be changed.

Error : Computer fast work than people.
Correction : Computer works faster than people do.

The second type of sentence error is the sentence fragment. The error occurred when the student wrote the dependant clause separately from the main clause. They should be joined because the dependent clause cannot stand alone. Error : Bank is very importing to many people. **Because them help**

many people*

Correction : Bank is very important to many people **because it helps many**

people.

The third type of sentence error is called run-on sentence. Run-on sentence occurred when two or more clauses are not properly joined or separated. As in the following example, the sentence must be joined by semicolon but the student separated them with an end mark.

Error : Stamp has many **shapes**. * **They** are circle shape, oval shape and triangle shape.

Correction : Stamp has many **shapes**; **they** are circle shape, oval shape and triangle shape.

Errors in preposition

The students produced error in preposition in three types. The first type is the missing preposition that mostly occurred. As can be seen in the following example, the student omitted the preposition before the word '*bank*'. There should be preposition '*of*' to show possession.

Error : There are many kinds []* bank.

Correction : There are many kinds **of** bank.

The second type of preposition error is the use of unnecessary preposition. In the sentence below, the student wrote two preposition in which one of them is not necessary. The preposition '*for*' must be deleted.

Error : Ledger book is a book **for*** to write number transaction.

Correction : Ledger book is a book **to** write transaction.

The third type of preposition error is the wrong choice of preposition. For example, the sentence talks about the source of something. Therefore, instead of using preposition '*by*', it is more grammatical to use preposition '*of*'.

Error : Coin money make **by*** metal.

Correction : Coin money is made **of** metal.

Errors in articles

There are three types of article error that occurred in students' texts. The first type is called zero article in which the unnecessary article is added into a sentence. In the example below, article '*the*' is used to accompany a certain noun specifically whereas the word '*money*' refers to money in general.

Error : The bank that can print **the*** money is BI or Bank Indonesia.

Correction : The bank that can print money is BI or Bank Indonesia.

The second type of article error is the missing article. In the example below, the student left out article '*the*' before the noun phrase.

Error : In Indonesia, []* center bank is BI.

Correction : In Indonesia, **the** center bank is BI.

The third type of article error is the use of wrong article. As can be seen in the example below, the syllable of the word '*instrument*' is started with vowel but the student applied article '*a*' instead of '*an*'.

- Error : Stamp is **a** instrument to ratification important document.
Correction : Stamp is **an** instrument to ratify important document.

Errors in pronoun

The error in pronoun occurred in four types. The first type is the wrong choice of pronoun. For example, in the sentence below, the student used subjective pronoun instead of possessive pronoun.

- Error : In bank, we can save **we*** money.
Correction : In bank, we can save **our** money.

The second type is the missing pronoun. As can be seen in the example below, the student left out pronoun '*they*' as the subject of the second clause.

- Error : People like money because []* cannot live without money.
Correction : People like money because **they** cannot live without money.

The third type is the disagreement between pronoun and its antecedent. It can be seen in the following example that the student used plural pronoun for singular antecedent.

- Error : Ledger book usually big and long. **They*** have many table.
Correction : Ledger book [is] usually big and long. **It** has many table[s].

The fourth type is the use of unnecessary pronoun. For example, in the following example, the student applied subjective pronoun which is not necessary in the dependant clause.

- Error : [] center bank is BI that **they*** print money.
Correction : The center bank is BI that prints money.

Errors in modifier

There were three types of modifier error that were made by the students. The first type is the wrong choice of modifier. The example of wrong modifier diction can be seen in this sentence. The phrase '*long price*' does not suit the word '*money*'. It must be changed into '*illimitable value*'.

- Error : Money has **long price***.
Correction : Money has **illimitable value**.

The second type is the wrong modifier form. In the following example, the student used quantifier '*many*' for uncountable noun. The correct quantifier for uncountable noun is '*much*'.

- Error : **Many*** money save in the bank.
Correction : **Much** money is saved in bank.

The third type of modifier error is the missing modifier. For example, in the following sentence, the student left out quantifier '*many*' to show the quantity of another banks.

- Error : There are many bank in Indonesia, BRI, BNI, Mandiri and []* others.

Correction : There are many banks in Indonesia; they are BRI, BNI, Mandiri and **many** others.

Errors in Conjunction

Error in conjunction occurred in two types. The first type is the missing conjunction. As can be seen in the example below, the student made error by leaving out conjunction '*and*' in the end of words in sequence list.

Error : Computer feature monitor, keyboard, []* mouse.

Correction : Computer feature[s] [are] monitor, keyboard, [**and**] mouse.

The second type of conjunction error is the use of unnecessary conjunction. In the example below, the student added coordinate conjunction to begin a sentence. The conjunction is not necessary so it must be deleted.

Error : Bank can we see in the city. **and*** in bank we also can save money.

Correction : We can see bank in the city. In bank we also can save money.

Causes of Errors

There are six sources of students' errors that had been analyzed. There are 166 errors that are caused by the ignorance of rule restriction, 152 errors that are caused by incomplete application of rule, 86 errors that are caused by false concept hypothesized, 76 errors that are caused by negative interlingual transfer, 49 errors that are caused by wrong communication strategy, and 10 errors that are caused by over-generalization. There are eight causes of errors based on the students' opinion, they are lack of knowledge, laziness, difficulty in dealing with grammar rules, lack of vocabularies, dislikeness of English subject, difficulty in building sentence, difficulty in translating, and lack of attention of teacher's explanation.

4. Conclusion

This study has discussed the analysis of errors in grammatical features of Report text. The data were taken from the eleventh grade students of accounting major. The errors of grammatical features in Report text are errors in verbs, nouns, sentences, prepositions, articles, pronouns, modifiers, and conjunctions.

The sources of students' errors are the ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete applications of rules, negative interlingual transfer, false concept hypothesized, wrong communication strategy, and over-generalization.

The causes of students' errors are the lack of knowledge, laziness, difficulty in dealing with grammar rules, lack of vocabularies, dislikeness of English subject, difficulty in building sentence, difficulty in translating, and lack of attention of teacher's explanation.

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