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GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN STUDENTS' TRANSLATING TEXT BY THE INFORMATICS DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN STEKOM SEMARANG

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Abstract: *Errors cannot be dissevered from students who learn English as their foreign language in writing skills. They often make errors, especially in grammar term. It is because of the difference between the Indonesian and English grammatical pattern. The purposes of this study are to find out the grammatical errors based on Dulay, Burt and Krashen's surface structure taxonomy that happen in students' writing text in translating text from Indonesian to English, especially, in using Simple Present Tense and to find the sources of errors. Mixed-method, qualitative and quantitative, is used in this study. The data was taken from 20 third-semester students in STEKOM Semarang. This study found that misformation is the highest errors, 96 errors or 54.8% of the whole errors. Other errors found were 40 errors or 22.8% for addition errors,* 29 errors or 16.5% for omission errors and 10 errors or 5.71% for *misordering errors from the whole errors. The study also found that intralingual factor is the most common sources of learner's errors. There are 75% of errors that are caused by intralingual factor and 25% errors are caused by interlanguage factors.*

Keywords: *error analysis; grammatical error; translating text; Simple Present Tense; STEKOM Semarang.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). Therefore, students only use English language in the classroom. Outside the classroom, they use their national language (Bahasa Indonesia) or their vernacular language as their means of communication. That is one of the factors underlying Indonesian students' difficulty in mastering English language well. Beside that, they have to comply with the aspects of English language such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, lexicons, and rhetoric (Muth'im, 2009).

EFL learners often make errors in learning their target language. It happens because of the different grammatical rules between native and target language. Batstone (1994) states that "Language without grammar would be chaotic and cause the same communication problem, such as grammatical errors in writing and speaking." Hence, rather than being only rules for ordering words, grammar is undeniably a resource for proper communication (Halliday & Hasan, 1989 in Hyland, 2002). So, understanding and applying grammar to the

target language is an important aspect of learning a new language in order not to make chaotic meaning.

Indonesian learners often make mistakes and errors while learning English, especially when they compose a text with proper tenses. Besides writing, they make a lot of errors in learning English. It happens because they do not master the English language well. Brown (1980) said, "Second language learning is a process that is clearly not unlike first language learning in its trial and errors nature." It means that in learning a second language, students' errors are inevitable (Gass & Slinker, 1994).

The third-semester students of Informatics Department, School of Electronics and Computer (STEKOM) Semarang also commit errors when they write a text with appropriate tenses. The errors made by the students can be at the level of grammar term, lexical term, orthography, lexical term, pronunciation, and discourse. Grammar, from the linguistics levels, often becomes the cause of their difficulty in learning English. In English, there are so many grammar rules that students should understand to make accurate sentences or utterances.

Based on the situation above, the writer wants to find out and analyze the grammatical errors the students produce based on the classification of surface taxonomy especially in using simple present tense form. Besides finding out the grammatical errors, the writer also wants to find out the causes the learners when committing the errors.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Difference between Errors and Mistakes

It is that we differentiate how errors and mistakes are defined before we come to the discussion of error analysis. Mistakes, in the context of EFL learning, are associated with failed attempt to use a known system accurately. Meanwhile, an error is a conspicuous inconsistency from the adult grammar of a target language or of a native speaker which reflects 'the interlanguage competence of the learners' (Brown, 2000). Compared to errors, mistakes, as stated by Bell (1981), are performance errors with varying degrees of austerity and neither systematic nor significant to the process of language learning.

Corder (1981), an applied linguist who first introduced the term error analysis (EA), has vividly made clear distinction between errors and mistakes that mistakes occur as "the product of such chance circumstances" and those errors as the reflection of the imperfection in the student's "underlying knowledge of language or his transitional competence". Further, he explained that errors are produced when students imperfectly apply the grammatical rules while mistakes are merely related to the students' performance or slip of tongue. Echoing

Corder's approach, Hubbard et al. (2000) states that error is an "imperfect production caused by genuine lack of knowledge about the language." On the other hand, a mistake is a "slip of tongue which the student can self- correct when challenged …."

Likewise, Ellis (1997) argues that errors are the reflection of gaps in learners' knowledge while mistakes, on the other hand, reflect loses in performance. Hence, self-correction is plausible to happen when students make mistakes. Meanwhile, when the learners make errors, they are unable to make a correction.

Based on the explanation from some experts about the distinction between errors and mistakes, it can be concluded that both of them have differences in meaning. A mistake can be corrected by the learners themselves because it only refers to the performance. On the other hand, the learners cannot correct an error that they produced by themselves because it relates to their knowledge of the language.

2.2 Error Analysis

Error analysis (EA) was first introduced by Stephen Pit Corder and his colleagues in the late 1970s and became a very popular approach for describing L2 errors. His article entitled "The Significance of Learner Errors" in 1967 mentioned that L2 errors can reflect some of the underlying linguistics rules. This article is about the criticism of some theory of Contrastive Approach (CA). In the opposite of CA, EA does not only provide a pedagogical orientation but it can also provide a good scientific orientation. Input, practice or inductive learning does not the main focus of EA. It focuses on linguistic and cognitive processes.

EA was conveyed as an alternative to CA. In EA, the second language learners' errors are caused by many factors that affect the learning process. One of the factors is the target language itself (Hasyim, 1999).

Corder (1973) stated that there are two main objectives of EA; theoretical and applied. In the theoretical objective, it helps in understanding how and what a foreign language learner learns while studying a foreign language. In another side, the applied objectives concern with pedagogical purposes. It means that this objective enables the L2 learners to learn their target language more efficiently and effectively by using the previous knowledge of their dialects for pedagogical purposes.

Studies on error analysis have been conducted by some researchers. Muhsin (2006) in his research entitled "Analyzing the Students Errors in Using Simple Present Tense (A Case Study at Junior High School in Makassar) portrays that there were some errors committed by the students in making sentences using Simple Present Tense. Those errors can be categorized

into omission (16.79%), addition (5.11%), misformation (75.18%) and improper ordering (2.92%).

A similar study was conducted by Astuti (2013) on English grammatical errors made by first-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Lasem academic year 2012/2013. The study aims at identifying the grammatical errors made by the students based on basic grammar terminology, describing the classification of errors based on surface structure taxonomy and explaining the cause of errors made by the students. This study found that the basic grammar errors made by the students were 46 errors or 13.04%, 14 data of verb errors, 3 data of sentence structure errors, 5 data of noun phrase errors, 6 data of adjective errors, 2 data of adverb errors, 2 data of personal pronoun errors, 9 data of preposition errors, and 8 data is verb of –be errors.

Corder states that learners' errors are significant input for teachers. The learner's errors are a sign to the teacher about how far the learner's errors progress in learning the language. For the researcher, it shows the evidence of how language is learned. It is about what procedures applied to the learner in language acquisition. For the learner itself, the making of errors is important for them to learn a new language.

2.3 Classification of Errors

Classifying errors is an important step to analyze learners' errors. There are some experts proposing the classification of errors. According to James (1998) and Tono (2003), errors can be classified into two types:

2.3.1 Linguistic Category Classification

This category specifies in terms of linguistics. It indicates the level of language errors that occur in phonology, grammar, lexis, text or discourse. The linguistic category includes the language levels of the errors, class, rank, and grammatical system.

2.3.2 The Surface Structure Taxonomy

This category refers to the ways surface structures are changed. There are four kinds of the category; omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

An omission is a type of surface structure taxonomy that means the absence of an element that must appear in a well-formed utterance. For example: "*Sometimes, I lunch in canteen*". The sentence should be "*Sometimes, I have lunch in canteen*". The learner does not put the "verb" form in this sentence.

An addition is a contrary from an omission. It means the presence of an element that must not appear in a well-formed utterance. For example, the learner produces the sentence "*I am complete the task*". This sentence should be "*I complete the task*". The learner adds "am" as the auxiliary verb in this sentence whereas this sentence does not need an auxiliary verb.

Misformation is the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. For example, L2 learner makes a sentence "*I cleaned my room and showered*". This sentence should be "*I clean my room and take a shower*".

Misordering is the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. "*What mommy is going?*" is the example of a sentence produced by the L2 learner. This sentence belongs to misordering because the incorrect of sentence structure. This sentence should be "*What is mommy going?*"

2.4 Causes of Errors

Errors are related to some causes. Several experts describe the cause of errors. Richards (1974) categorize the causes into two categorize: interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are caused by interference of the mother tongue. Intralingual errors occurring during the learning process of the second language. It means that the learners' lack of knowledge about their target language.

2.4.1 Interlingual Errors

Celce-Murcia (1977) said that "these errors caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on the production of the target language in presumably those areas where languages clearly differ". For example, the learner makes a sentence "She beautiful". This sentence should be "She is beautiful". The learner makes an error because of the interference of the mother tongue (*Wanita itu cantik*).

2.4.2 Intralingual Errors

Tamimi (2006) said that the intralingual errors are caused by the target language itself. So, these errors are not interfered by the mother tongue or the learners' native language. These errors have general characteristics; overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false hypothesized.

Overgeneralization is a kind of characteristics that refers to applying the inappropriate a certain rule in the language learning process in the inappropriate situation. There are two reasons for overgeneralization error based on Richard (1974). First is the learner's creation of "one deviant structure in place of two regular structures. For example: "*I buys food.*" This sentence should be "*I buy food*". There is an 'over form' of a structure verb buy becomes buys. The second reason is the result of the L2 learners' tries to diminish their linguistic problem.

Richards (1974) says that ignorance or rule restrictions are the inability to uphold the limits (borders) of present formations, specifically, administering rules to inappropriate

situations. Misordering can be a good example of such errors which are caused by ignorance of rule restrictions.

Incomplete application of rules is a cause of errors that closely related to over-generalization. The learner uses the sentence even though the sentence does not have complete language rule. For example: "*He goes to school*?" this sentence should be "*Does he go to school?*"

False concepts hypothesized is a kind of error that sometimes is a result of "poor gradation of teaching items". For example, the L2 learner cannot differentiate between nominal sentence and verbal sentence in simple present tense form. The learner produces "*I am buy*" instead of "*I buy*".

2.5 Grammatical Error

Grammar is an important thing to master and apply in learning a language. It is a set of language rules organizing the sounds, words, sentences, and other elements in a language. Based on Greenbaum and Nelson (2002), grammar refers to the set of rules that allow people to combine words in the language into larger units. Some combinations of words are possible and others are not.

In fact, every language has its own grammar rules. Learners who study foreign language must produce the sentence grammatically so that the sentences they produce can be easily understood by the readers.

As stated by Burt and Kiparsky (1974), a grammatical error is an error which is not suitable for the grammatical rules that may make writing become not good. The grammatical error is the error in combining words into a larger unit, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences. The grammatical error can be defined as the errors at morphological and syntactical levels. The morphological error is the error which involves a failure to comply with the norm in supplying any part of word classes; noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition. Syntactical errors are errors that affect texts larger than a word, namely phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraphs. Syntactical errors cover phrase structure, clause, and sentence error (James, 1998).

3   RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the data were taken from the third- semester students of Informatics Department, High School of Electronics and Computer (STEKOM) Semarang. In this semester, they take English class. The subjects of this research are 20 students.

At the beginning of the class, the students were asked to translate the text given by the lecturer. They had to translate the text about daily activities from Indonesian to the English language, their target language. This activity was conducted to know the students' ability in English because in STEKOM they will take three English classes, and at the end of the English classes based on the syllabus, the students have the ability to communicate in English well. So, it is important to know their ability before teaching and learning process begins.

In conducting the present study, the researcher used the steps as proposed by Ellis (1997), namely collecting the sample of learner language, identifying errors, describing errors, and explaining the errors.

3.1. **Collection of a Sample of Learner Language**

In this step, the researchers took the data from the students' work. They are given the material by the lecturer. The data is translation text from Indonesian to the English language. The topic is about daily activities. This research focused on the grammatical error especially in simple present tense and on the causes of errors made by the students.

3.2. **Identification of Errors**

After collecting the data from the learners, the next step was identifying the errors. In this step, the researcher identified the data whether they contain error or not. So, before identifying the errors, the researchers should know the difference between the errors and mistakes. If a learner sometimes uses the correct form of a certain structure or rule and later on uses the wrong one, it belongs to a mistake. The learners can correct the mistakes by themselves. If the learners make something wrong continuously and they cannot correct by themselves, then it belongs to an error.

3.3. **Description of Errors**

The next step following identifying errors is describing the errors. This step cannot be done before identifying the errors. It means that identification errors are the prerequisite of the description of errors. In this research, the researcher uses the Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's surface structure taxonomy (1982 in Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005, p.61) to describe the students' errors. Based on this theory, the errors are classified into four categories; addition, omission, misinformation, misordering.

3.4. **Explanation of Errors**

The next step is explaining errors. Explaining errors is an important step of errors analysis. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) declare that "explaining errors involves determining their sources in order to account for why they were made". Richards (1974) categorize the

sources of the errors into two; interlingual and intralingual errors. The theory from Richards is used in this research for explaining the errors.

4   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The Types of Students' Grammatical Errors

After collecting, identifying, describing and explaining the errors, there are some errors produced by students in translating text using simple present tense. The errors are shown in the table below.

Table 1.The Errors Produced by Students

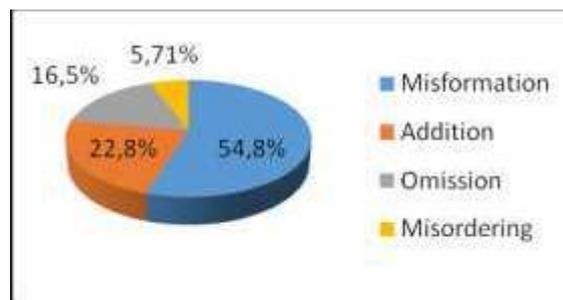| No	Surface Strategy Taxonomy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Misformation	96	54,8%
2	Addition	40	22,8%
3	Omission	29	16,5%
4	Misordering	10	5,71%
	TOTAL	**175**	**100%**

Figure 1: The Distribution of Students' Errors on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

Table 1 shows that the total number of errors is 175 errors. The 96 errors or 54.8% are misformation errors, 40 errors or 22.8% were found in addition errors, the omission is 29 errors or 16.5% and the last is misordering errors, 10 errors or 5.71%.

From the research data, it was found that the misformation was the highest percentage of errors made the students in translating text using simple present tense. They made 96 misformation errors or 54.8% of the whole errors they made. Misformation is the error that is characterized by the use of an incorrect form of morpheme or structure. Usually, the errors occurred because the students do not understand the rule. The misformation errors that the students committed such as:

1. I followed some of the student organization

2. I spend my spare time to do some ting

3. I complete my home works as soon as possible

4. I cleaned my bedroom and showered

5. I finish the homeworks more than fast for I can't sleep late night.

      The errors above should be corrected as follow:

1. I join some of the student organizations on campus

2. I usually spend my spare time to do something

3. I finish my homework as quickly as I can

4. I clean my bedroom and take a bath

5. I finish my homework as quickly as I can so that I can't sleep late at night.

The second highest percentage of the students' errors was addition errors, which is committed as 40 times of 22.8% out of the whole errors. Addition errors are characterized by the presence of one or more items that must appear in well-formed sentences, for example:

1. I am cleaning my bedroom and take a bath

2. I usually sleeps at 10 pm

3. I oftenly wait for the next class

4. I am usually wake up at 5am

      The errors above should be corrected as follow:

1. I clean my bedroom and take a bath

2. I usually sleep at 10 pm

3. I often wait for the next class

4. I usually wake up at 5 am

The third percentage of students' errors was the omission, which is committed as 29 times of 16.5% out of the whole errors. As stated before that omission errors are characterized by the absence of one or more items that must appear in a well-formed sentence. In errors of omission the item is not supplied at all, but in errors of misformation the students supply something, but its form is incorrect. For example of omission errors that were found in the research data:

1. I often wait next class on campus

2. If I a class in the morning, I go to campus

3. I lunch on campus

4. I usually spend my spare time to do some activity

      The errors above should be corrected as follow:

1. I often wait for the next class on campus

2. If I have a class in the morning, I go to campus

3. I have lunch on campus

4. I usually spend my spare time to do some activities

The lowest percentage of students' errors was the misordering error. These errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance or writing, for example:

1. I follow the organization students

2. So that I can sleep not late at night

3. I often wait for the class next

    The errors above should be corrected as follow:

1. I join the student organizations

2. So that I cannot sleep late at night

3. I often wait for the next class.

4.2 The Sources of Errors

The next step after description the errors is explanation of the errors. As stated before that this step is to find out the sources of the errors that the learner made. The researcher uses the theory from Richards (1974). He categorizes the sources of the errors into two; interlingual and intralingual errors. The sources of errors show in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that 25% students errors are caused by an interlingual factor. As stated before that these errors happen because of the learner's mother tongue. 75% students' errors are caused by an intralingual factor. These errors happen because of the learner's target language itself. It is divided into 4 that 25% errors caused by ignorance of rule restriction, **17.19% errors are caused by incomplete of application rules. False concept hypothesized** is produced 23.44% from the whole of students' errors. The last is overgeneralization that is produced about 9.37% from the whole of students' errors.
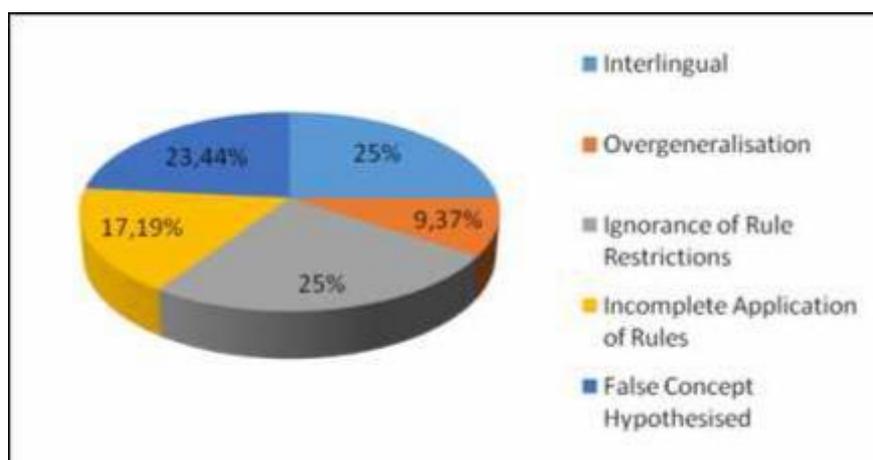

Figure 2: The Distribution of Sources of Errors

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion above, it can be concluded that the most frequent errors produced by the learners are misformation errors. The learners often commit errors in using appropriate tenses. They often use past tense instead of simple present tense. It can be concluded that grammar is the biggest difficulty for the students when they study English. It is because of the difference of language structure in making sentence between Indonesian language and English language. Besides misformation errors, the errors can be found in omission, addition, and misordering errors.

Besides analyzing the errors of the learners, the writer also found the cause of errors that the learner made. The learners' errors are mostly caused by intralingual factors. It is related to the rules of English language. Ignorance of rule restrictions is the type of learning strategy that is mostly applied by the learners. It means that they already know the rules but they did not use them appropriately. An interlingual factor was also found to be the cause of errors. It is related to their mother tongue. So, the learners need teachers to correct their grammatical errors.

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