

Analysis of Syntactical Errors and Mistakes in Students' Writing

Rizki Leli Romadani

English Language Teaching, Language and Art Faculty, State University of Surabaya

rizkiromadani@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Abstract

Written language is difficult for some people especially some learners who learn English as foreign language, because it somehow has a complicated syntactical form that is hard to be understood. Thus, it causes error and mistake. Commonly, error occurs because learners do not realize that they made error and it is the gaps in learners knowledge of the target language especially English. In particular, the purpose of this research is to describe kinds of syntactical error and mistake found in students' writing composition, namely in paragraph writing class of university students in second semester. Dealing with the research questions and objectives of the study in the first chapter, the data gained are going to be analyzed qualitatively. The data of the study were obtained from students' errors and mistakes. In this study, the data were obtained from the form of words, phrases, and sentences found in the students' writing composition. The source data were collected through the students' writing composition. Based on the result, it can be seen that there are five types of syntactical errors and mistakes that made by students, those are: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragments. In this result, most of the students made an error since they did not know to answer the correct one.

Keywords: *Analysis Error and Mistake, Syntactical Deviation, Student Writing Composition.*

Abstrak

Bahasa tulisan sulit bagi sebagian orang terutama bagi para pelajar yang belajar bahasa inggris sebagai bahasa asing, karena terkadang memiliki bentuk sintaktis yang sulit untuk dipahami. Demikian, ini menyebabkan kesalahan dan keliruan. Pada umumnya, kesalahan terjadi karena para pelajar tidak menyadari bahwa mereka melakukan kesalahan and ini adalah celah untuk pengetahuan para pelajar pada bahasa asing khususnya Bahasa Inggris. Khususnya, tujuan pada penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan macam-macam "*syntactical error and mistake*" yang ditemukan di tulisan-tulisan para pelajar, yaitu di kelas Pargarph Writing pada Mahasiswa di Semester Kedua. Berhubungan dengan rumusan masalah dan tujuan penelitian pada bab pertama. Data yang telah diperoleh akan dianalisis melalui penelitian kualitatif. Data pada penelitian ini diperoleh dari para kesalaha and kekeliruan Mahasiswa dan data itu diperoleh dari kata-kata, tutur kata, dan kalimat-kalimat yang telah ditemukan pada tulisan Mahasiswa. Sumber data didapatkan melalui tulisan Mahasiswa. Berdasarkan dari penelitian, daat terlihat bahwa terdapat lima macam "*syntactical errors and mistakes*" yang dibuat oleh para pelajar, diantaranya: "*word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragments.*" Pada penelitian ini para pelajar melakukan kesalahan dikarenakan mereka tidak memahami untuk menjawab yang benar.

Kata kunci: *Menganalisis Kesalahan dan Kekeliruan, Penyimpangan Sintaktis, Komposisi Tulisan Mahasiswa.*

INTRODUCTION

In the learning process, especially language learning learners regularly face errors and mistakes in mastering lesson. According to Ruspita (2011), the errors cannot be separated from the learners because it is evidence that the learners are learning. In the other words, error is one of the evidence and it can be one of the important things in teaching-learning process,

because it shows that learners are learning something. This argument is supported by Ellis (1997), the error is a flaw in the learners' knowledge. Normally, error and mistake made by learners, because some of them do not mastered yet in facing those problem. Commonly, error occurs because learners do not realize that they made error and it is the gaps in learners knowledge of the target language especially English. Besides, according to McKeating (1981:212) as cited by Maszunatin (2006),

attitude toward errors made by the language learner are very enormous. It means that the occurrence of error in learning language, especially in target language or second language is again and again. In addition, according to Utami (2016), in this condition, learners do not know what the correct form is like, while mistake occurs when they cannot produce the correct form because of some factors such as slip of the tongue, get stress, etc.

Meanwhile, Ellis (1997) defined mistake as reflects occasional lapses in performance; it occurs because, in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. The learners who commit mistakes have already known the rule yet they cannot perform it. They are failed to express their understanding. Thus mistake appear when the learners cannot use the rules of a language that they have already known correctly. Most of learners do not know and they do not realize that they made a mistake; actually they know whether the correct and incorrect answer. According to Utami (2016), a mistake occurs when the learners cannot produce the correct form because of some factors such as slip of the tongue, get stress, sleepy in the class, and so on. In other word, mistakes can be self-corrected for the learners have gotten or comprehended the language rules before. Therefore, they will correct the mistakes as soon as they realize it.

Since error and mistake can only be analyzed through productive skill, writing is one of the productive skills in English which learners are required to be mastered. On the other hand, some learners are often facing error and mistake in being the important thing in writing. Additionally, syntactical error is incapability to perform syntax rules which are consisted of phrase, clause, and sentence (Choiriyah, 2007). Additionally, Syntax is one of the linguistic components that related to the rules or patterned relation. It is controlling the way words combine to form phrases, or phrases combine to form sentences. In addition, according to Dewi (2009:6) syntax related to phrases and sentence is built. Choiriyah (2007:24) stated that the study of syntax consists of three components, those are: phrase, clause, and sentence. Besides, O'Grady (1995) determined syntax into some parts which is named syntactical categories. He stated that there are some parts became the most observed, those are: noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj), and prepositions (P). In Ferris analysis model (2005), the deviation in syntax consists of three parts, those are: sentence structure, run-on, and fragments. In other words, syntactical error and mistake consists of several components such as, word order deviation, omitted words or phrases, unnecessary word or phrases, preposition, or phrase, run-on sentence, fragments.

To support this research, the researcher presents some related studies that have been conducted. First, Utami, (2014) analyzed error and mistake analysis of linguistic components in writing composition. In her study, the students got difficulties in linguistic components, those are: morphological deviation (verb tense, verb form, subject-verb agreement, articles or

determiner, and noun ending.) syntactical deviation (word order deviation, omitted words or phrases, unnecessary word or phrases, preposition, or phrase, run-on sentence, fragments.) lexical deviation (word choice, word form, informal usage, idiom, relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, reflexive pronoun usage, intensive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, indefinite pronouns, prepositions, spelling.) As a result, she concluded that most of the students committed errors found in students' writing composition because the students do not know the correct form of the sentences due to lack of grammar knowledge.

Thus, the researcher conducts this study in order to find out not only errors but also mistakes on the learners' writing composition in Paragraph Writing Class. Based on the research, here are following the research questions that need to be answered:

1. What Syntactical errors and mistakes are found in the learners' writing composition?
2. What are causes of errors and mistakes?

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of Error

In the process of learning language cannot be separated from error, while the learner gains the knowledge. Error is a deviation assigned by learners when they do not know the correct answer. According to Ellis (1997:17), error is systematic or consistent since the learners make error rapidly. Additionally, they cannot be self-corrected since they have not gotten any knowledge yet about the rules of language. Hence, they do not have any idea how to make the correct one, while the error occurs. Errors belong to learner's competence. If the learners have a good competence, they must be able to avoid the error. According to Sirait (2005:8), we cannot decide that the learners destroy the norm of a language, they need a help to correct the errors. Therefore, we cannot blame them for what they do not know or master yet.

According to Ellis (1997:20) there are two types of errors, those are: global errors and local errors. Global errors are more than important than local errors since errors assigned change the message of the whole sentence, temporarily local errors do not influence the overall sentence. They only influence one of the single parts of the sentence, such as as verb.

Moreover, according to Touchie (1987:76), there are two categories of errors, those are: performance and competence errors. Firstly, competence errors related to the learners' comprehension and them more important than performance errors. There errors describe the quality in obtaining a knowledge and cause misconception. Performance errors occur when learners perform their knowledge so the teacher knows the deviation made by students. Errors are not difficult to

find in writing. Learners frequently assign deviation the rules of language in this skill. According to James (1998), errors commonly found in writing, those are: preposition, tenses, and vocabularies.

Definition of Mistake

Mistakes are failure of advantaging rules that a learner has already known or gotten. According to Norish (1983), mistakes are conflicting deviation occurred to the learners. On the other hand, using of the language rules are sometimes correct and incorrect. The using of incorrect language rule is called a mistake. People commonly classify mistake and error interchangeably. Although mistake and error are focusing on the faults or deviation in learning language, they are different. According to Ellis (1997:17), the learners who make a mistake have already known the rule, but they cannot to perform it. They are unsuccessful to express their understanding. Thus, mistakes appear when the learners cannot use the rules of a language that they have already known correctly. In contrast, mistakes can be self-corrected for the learners have gotten or comprehended the language rules before. Hence, they will correct the mistakes when they realize that already made a mistake.

Syntactical Deviation

Syntax is one of the linguistic components that related to the rules or patterned relation. It is controlling the way words combine to form phrases, or phrases combine to form sentences. In addition, according to Dewi (2009:6) syntax related to phrases and sentence is built. Choiriyah (2007:24) stated that the study of syntax consists of three components, those are: phrase, clause, and sentence. Besides, O'Grady (1995) determined syntax into some parts which is named syntactical categories. He stated that there are some parts became the most observed, those are: noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj), and prepositions (P). In Ferris analysis model (2005), the deviation in syntax consists of three parts, those are: sentence structure, run-on, and fragments.

Word order deviation

Word order deviation is a deviation occurs when the learners could not put the words in order to follow the rules.: Here is an example of word order made by learner.

Examples:

Incorrect: When we talked we always played bekel in the afternoon.

Correct: We always played bekel while we talked in the afternoon.

Omitted word deviation

Omitted word deviation occurs when the learners omit a word or phrase in their sentences. Moreover, omitted words are deleting a word or some words in the sentence. In this study, it occurs could be caused by the interference of the mother tongue or first language. Here is an example of omitted word made by learner.

Example:

Incorrect: I bought flowers.

Correct: I bought some flowers.

Unnecessary words deviation

Unnecessary word deviation or phrases are adding an unimportant word, preposition, or phrases in the sentence and it needs to be removed in order to make the perfect sentence. Here is an example of unnecessary word or phrases made by learner.

Example:

Incorrect: I am is a student.

Correct: I am a student.

Run-on sentence

Run-on sentence occurs when the learner tries to put more than two independent clauses in one sentence. Hence, the sentence needs punctuation or conjunction to make the sentence is correct. Here is an example of run-on sentence made by learner.

Example:

Incorrect: We just cannot stop played it so we did not realize that it was already at 9 p.m.

Correct: We just cannot stop played it, so we did not realize that it was already at 9 p.m.

Fragments

According to Anggraini (2014:22), fragment is imperfect sentence. In this study, the sentence sometimes does not have subject, predicate, or object. Here is an example of fragment made by learner. Here is an example of fragment made by learner.

Example:

Incorrect: Because I am thirsty.

Correct: I drink two glasses of water because I am thirsty.

In addition, the researcher added one deviation that related to one sentence. That is choppy sentence. In this case, choppy sentence is short and simple sentence; commonly it is less than ten words in length. It consists of several short sentences that can be grouped into one sentence. Here is the example:

Example:

Incorrect: He was sorry. He lost my watch.

Correct: He was sorry after losing my watch.

The Procedure of Error and Mistake Analysis

Since errors are more popular than mistakes, errors analysis are accomplished more often than mistakes analysis. Hence, there is no source that mention about the procedure of analyzing mistake. Fortunately, those two terms are similar so the researcher accomplished error analysis procedure as same as produce for mistake analysis.

According to Ellis (1997:15-19), there four steps to analyze error, those are: indentifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating errors.

Identifying

To identify either the phrases or sentences, it needs to understand what kind of writing that the learners made, for example narrative text. the purpose of narrative text is to interest the reader with the story. It has four components of generic structures of narrative text, those are: orientation, complication, resoluton, and the re-orientation.

Describing

In this part, the errors and mistakes are described into five components, those are: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragment.

Explaining

The errors and mistakes gave are collected and the researcher tries to find out the reason why those deviation, such as word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragment can arise.

Evaluating

In this part, Ellis stated there are two types of errors, those are: global and local error. The researcher decides whether the error are serious are not. Hence, the deviations control the meaning and ambiguities. In addition, for mistakes, they can be determined into two parts, whether serious and less serious deviation.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

Dealing with the research questions and objectives of the study in the first chapter, the data gained are going to be analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables. The goal is a holistic picture and depth of understanding rather than a numeric analysis of data. On the other hand, the researcher will be focused on content analysis as the research design.

Content analysis is “a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material”. The materials analyzed can be textbooks, newspapers, web pages, speeches, television programs, advertisements, musical compositions, or any of a host of other types of documents. Content analysis is widely used in education”. Ary (2010:548). There several purposes of content analysis. There are: to identify bias, prejudice, or propaganda in textbooks, to analyze types of errors in students’ writings, to describe prevailing practices, to discover the level of difficulty of material in textbooks or other publications, and to discover the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics.

In particular, the purpose of this research is to describe kinds of syntactical error and mistake found in students’ composition, namely in paragraph writing class of university students in second semester.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this research are collage students at State University of Surabaya. The research chose one of the paragraphs writing class as the subjects of the research. The researcher chose at paragraph writing class since the subjective of the study was exploring the syntactical errors and mistakes found in students’ composition. Those are: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragment. The researcher took the data based on the midterm-test from Paragraph Writing Class. The purpose of this study is to describe and determine the errors and mistake of five components of syntactical error and mistake.

Settings of the Study

Setting of the study is the place and the situation of the research where the data were obtained. The place of this study was in one of Paragraph Writing Classes at State University of Surabaya. The researcher took the data based on midterm-test from students’ writing composition of paragraph writing. The researcher was choosing the data based on midterm-test since there was no revised from the lecturer.

Data and Source of Data

Referring to the research questions in Chapter one, the data of the study were obtained from students’ errors and mistakes from five components of syntactical deviation such as: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragment that found on students’ writing composition. In this study, the data were obtained from the form of words, phrases, and sentences found in the students’ writing composition.

The source data were collected through the students' writing composition.

Data Collection Technique

Since the thesis was analyzing the students' task that has been collected, the researcher was collecting the data from copied the students' task as the document from the lecturer. The task was about paragraph writing. Then, she analyzed the data.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data in this research consists of words, phrases, and sentences found in the students' writing composition. These data were taken from the students' writing composition. In addition, these data were analyzed through several steps that are classifying data, reducing data, analyzing, and reporting data (Ary et al, 2010). The following are the details of the data analysis procedures:

Classifying Data

In this section, the researcher will classify the students' writing composition. Students writing composition will be classified into some categories of faults. In this study analyzing the data, followed the stages of Ellis (1997:15-19) as cited in Utami (2016). To ease the process, she decided the text into sentences and put each on a table. There are two stages, two of there are;

- a) Firstly, the researcher was identifying the deviation by reading the learners' work to determine the deviation.
- b) Secondly, the researcher described the faults into five components of syntactical deviation:

Reducing Data

In this section, the data of subcomponents of the syntactical deviation will be divided into error and mistake.

Analyzing Data

In this section, the researcher was classifying the data into error and mistake; after classifying and reducing the data into five components of syntactical: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragment, the researcher conducted a test to the subjects of the study. The aim was to gain information whether the deviations are errors and mistakes. This test was designed from the learners writing task. The texts that they made by sentence. They were determining whether the sentences were correct or not. If correct, they did not make any change. On the other hand, if they thought the sentence was incorrect yet

they did not make any change, the fault commit was error.

Here is instruction:

Read the following sentences. Some sentences are correct and some sentences are incorrect. If the sentence is correct give a checklist in the correct column. If the sentence is incorrect give a checklist in the incorrect column and write the correct sentence in the correction column.

No.	Sentences	C	I	Correct Senteces
1.	Here is the example of word order: "Actually she have problem with her mental health."		V	"Actually she has problem with her mental health."
2.	Here is the example of omitted word: "She is about 45 years old, have short hair than she is thin."	V		

In addition, in this study after doing the test, the researcher prepared some conclusions to determine whether the deviation were error or mistake. Those are:

- a) If the learner gave a checklist on the correct column yet it was incorrect, it means that the deviation was an error.
- b) If the learner gave a checklist on the incorrect column and the write the correction correctly, it means that the deviation was a mistake.
- c) If the learner gave a checklist on the incorrect column and the write the correction incorrectly, it means that the deviation is an error since he does not the correct answer.

Reporting Data

After conducting the test, the researcher classifies and evaluates the deviations. After conducting the test the research classifies and evaluates the deviations. Here are the examples:

Sentence 1 : Error.

Errors found in students' writing composition because the students do not know the correct form of the sentences due to lack of grammar knowledge.

Sentence 2 : Mistake

Mistakes found in students' writing composition because the students do not realize the correct form of the sentences due to lack of grammar knowledge, actually they know whether the correct and incorrect answer.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

In the result, the researcher answers the two research questions. Those research questions are answered by the data taken from students' writing tasks in Paragraph Writing Class at State University of Surabaya. Furthermore, the researcher explains the result of the data in this chapter.

Word Order Deviation

In this part, the researcher presents the sentence contain word order deviation found in students' writing composition. There were found on student 1, and here is the sentence;

"When we talked we always played bekel, dakon, or engkle in the afternoon."

In the sentence above is grammatically correct, but the student could not put the words "**When we talked we always**" in order following the rules. The sentence should be corrected into "**We always** played bekel, dakon or engkle **while we talked** in the afternoon." The student assumed that the sentence was a correct sentence because he/she put a check mark on the correct column and did not make any change in the column of the table that given by the researcher. As a result, this deviation made by student 1 belongs to an error since he/she thought that the sentence above was a correct sentence with no deviation.

Omitted Word Deviation

In this part, the researcher presents the sentences contain omitted word deviation found in students' writing composition. There were found on student 5, and here is the sentence;

"She is about 45 years old, have short hair than she is thin."

In the sentence above is grammatically incorrect, because the student omits a subject. In the words "...**have short hair**" should be corrected into "**she has short hair**" he/she omits a subject. This deviation occurs could be caused by the inference of the mother tongue of the first language. The student

assumed that the sentence was incorrect sentence because he/she put a check mark on the incorrect column and changed in the correct sentence that given by the researcher. As a result, this deviation made by student 5 belongs to a mistake since he/she realized the sentence above was an incorrect sentence with a deviation.

Unnecessary Word Deviation

In this part, the researcher presents the sentence contains unnecessary word deviation found in students' writing composition. There were found on student 8, and here is the sentence;

"Last semester, when I was in the first semester at the State University of Surabaya."

In the sentence above is grammatically incorrect, the student was adding an unimportant word in the sentence. The words of "**Last semester,...**". These words need to be removed in order to make the perfect sentence and should be corrected into "When I was in the first semester at the State University of Surabaya." In addition, the student assumed the sentence was a correct sentence because he/she put a check mark on the correct column and did not make any changed in the column of the table that given by the researcher. As the result, this deviation made by student belongs to an error since he/she thought that the sentence above was a correct sentence with no deviation.

Run-on Sentence

In this part, the researcher presents the sentence contains run-on sentence found in students' writing composition. There were found on student 1, and here is the sentence;

"We also tried to sell toys fortunately, all my friends in my neighborhood always bought it so it always sold out."

In the sentence above the student put more than two independent clauses in one sentence. Hence, the sentence needs punctuation or conjunction to make the sentence is correct. In the sentence "all my friends in my neighborhood always bought **it** so **it** always sold out." The sentence should be corrected into "all my friends in my neighborhood always bought **it**, so **it** always sold out." In addition, the student assumed that the sentence was a correct sentence because he/she put a check mark on the correct column and did not make any change in the column of the table that given by the researcher. As a result, this deviation made by student 1 belongs to an error since he/she thought that the sentence above was a correct sentence with no deviation.

Fragment

In this part, the researcher presents the sentence contains fragment found in students' writing composition. There were found on student 2, and here is the sentence;

"Nothing, yeah because it's my fault, like right now I have important exam but I overslept because last night I can't sleep at all."

In the sentence above is grammatically incorrect because in beginning of sentence has no a subject. In the sentence "**Nothing**, yeah because it's my fault" is a fragment sentence or incomplete sentence since it does not have a subject. Thus, this sentence should be corrected into "I would do nothing..." The student assumed that the sentence was a correct sentence because he/she put a check mark on the correct column and did not make any change in the column of the table that given by the researcher. As a result, this deviation made by student 1 belongs to an error since he/she thought that the sentence above was a correct sentence with no deviation.

DISCUSSION

Causes of Errors

Choiriyah (2007:21) mentions three causes of errors; carelessness, first language, and translation. Those causes give big troubles in learning a new language. Carelessness is first caused by the lack of learners' attention. They do not have passion in the learning activity. She describes that learners' responses are not caused by themselves yet the material or the way the teacher present the material is not attractive. The first language does influence the learners in learning a new language. It relates to how they translate what they want to talk into the new language. The interference still exists in committing the wrong way of utilizing the rules.

Cause of Mistakes

Generally, the cause of mistake is similar to errors yet mistakes have a special condition that causes the learners to commit mistakes. Those condition are like slip of the tongue, get stressed, under the pressure, nervous, have a limited duration, and lack of idea or inspiration. Slip of the tongue only occurs in oral communication or speaking skill. Getting stressed and being under pressure are similar. Some learners will be confused if someone pushes them. Therefore, they may not think well and clearly and unconsciously commit mistakes. Being nervous can occur both in oral and written communication. In written skill, learners usually feel it when they are facing a test. What they have prepared such as memorization or rehearsal they did can fade out. Therefore, they commit mistakes. Having a limited time while writing make them unable to correct the grammar, vocabularies, etc. Thus, the deviations

committed are not systematic. Lack of idea or inspiration is the problem that learners face most. If they only have limited time to submit the task yet they still cannot find any good idea, they may write it at random or badly. The mood also takes a role in this cause.

Suggestion

Based on the result, it can be seen that there are five types of syntactical errors and mistakes that made by students, those are: word order, omitted word, unnecessary word, run-on sentence, and fragments. In this result, most of the students made an error since they did not know to answer the correct one. For the learners this research hopefully helps the learners to know and understand the differences between error and mistake and it can be gainful for learner to acquire information about their faults in learning language. For the future researchers, this research hopefully helps for future researchers will focus on the analysis of syntactical error and mistake analysis on students' writing composition for one of their references.

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