

A STUDY OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION OF UNISMA

Amalia Ikfi Billah¹, Yahya Alaydrus², Henny Rahmawati³

*English Education Departement, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
University of Islam Malang, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the grammatical errors found in narrative texts written by English Education students at the University of Islam Malang (UNISMA). Writing is among the most demanding skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, and the persistent occurrence of grammatical errors remains a key challenge. This research aims to identify, classify, and analyze the grammatical errors in students' narrative writing and to determine the most prevalent error type. Adopting a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected from 35 narrative texts about students' personal experiences. The errors were classified using Ho's (2005) Grammatical Errors Taxonomy. The findings show 232 grammatical errors, dominated by verb-related mistakes (26.7%), followed by sentence structure (22.8%), preposition (18.5%), and noun-related errors (12.5%), with additional miscellaneous errors (19.5%). These results highlight the continuing difficulties EFL students face in applying grammatical rules, especially tense usage in narrative contexts. The study suggests that targeted grammar instruction and consistent feedback are needed to improve students' writing accuracy.

Key words: Grammatical Errors, Narrative Texts, Writing

INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as an essential global language, playing a pivotal role in education, technology, business, and international communication (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002). In Indonesia, English is a compulsory foreign language subject from secondary school to university level. Among the four primary language skills — listening, speaking, reading, and writing — writing is considered the most complex (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Mastering writing requires learners to organize their thoughts clearly and apply grammatical rules accurately. However, for EFL learners whose first language (L1) structures differ significantly from English, producing grammatically correct writing remains challenging (Azar, 2000; Kecskes & Papp,

2000). Indonesian, for instance, does not employ verb tenses in the same way English does, which often results in tense-related errors when students write narratives.

Error analysis helps educators understand learners' interlanguage development and provides valuable insight for improving teaching strategies (Corder, 1967; Ellis, 1994). This study focuses on analyzing grammatical errors in narrative texts written by EFL students at UNISMA, applying Ho's (2005) taxonomy to identify and classify error types.

Considering the clarification over, the author planned the issue that will be centered around are as per the following:

1. What are the types of grammatical errors found in the narrative texts made by the EFL students of UNISMA?
2. What is the most dominant type of grammatical error found in the narrative texts made by the EFL students of UNISMA?

This research aims to find out what types of grammatical errors appear in students' narrative writing and to identify which type is most common. The researcher used Ho's (2005) theory, which groups grammatical errors into four categories: errors in noun groups, verb groups, prepositions, and sentence structure. The researcher checked and analyzed the students' texts independently.

The study was conducted with students from the English Education Department at UNISMA, covering different semester levels. Although students from various levels were involved, the researcher did not compare the results between levels — this is one limitation of the study. Another limitation is that the data analysis was done only by the researcher without help from other experts. The researcher hopes that future studies will address these limitations to strengthen and expand these findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Grammar and Grammatical Errors

Grammar is the system of rules governing how words are combined to convey meaning (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002). Errors occur when learners deviate from these norms, typically due to incomplete mastery of the target language's grammatical structures (Brown, 2007; James, 1998).

2. Error Analysis

Error analysis, as proposed by Corder (1967), involves systematically collecting, identifying, classifying, explaining, and evaluating language errors. This approach reveals learners' linguistic development and highlights problematic areas needing instructional focus.

3. Ho's Grammatical Error Taxonomy

Ho (2005) categorizes grammatical errors into four main types:

1. Noun and noun group errors
2. Verb and verb group errors
3. Preposition errors
4. Sentence structure errors

This taxonomy enables detailed analysis of learners' writing and has been proven effective in identifying recurrent EFL writing issues.

4. Narrative Text

Narrative writing recounts events in chronological order, typically using past tense forms (Rebecca, 2003; Anderson, 2003). For Indonesian EFL learners, narratives are especially challenging because the correct use of past tense verbs is often unfamiliar (Azar, 2000).

5. Related Studies

Previous studies (Asfiyati, 2021; Lestari, 2021; Andryanti, 2024) have confirmed that EFL students commonly commit grammatical errors in narrative and descriptive texts. However, most used Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This study contributes by applying Ho's taxonomy to examine error categories more comprehensively.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze and classify grammatical errors. It focuses on written narratives collected from students enrolled in the English Education Department at UNISMA.

2. Participants and Data Collection

The sample comprises 35 narrative texts written by EFL students from different semesters. Students were asked to write about their personal experiences during Eid al-Fitr. The texts were submitted via an online form and then printed for analysis.

3. Data Analysis

Following Corder (1967) and Ellis (1994), errors were identified, classified using Ho's taxonomy, and quantified to determine the frequency of each error type. Percentages were calculated to show the distribution of errors using a specific formula.

$$P = n / \sum N \times 100 \%$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Grammatical Errors

The analysis revealed a total of 232 grammatical errors across the 35 narrative texts. These errors fell into five categories:

- Verb and Verb Groups: 62 errors (26.7%)
- Sentence Structure: 53 errors (22.8%)
- Prepositions: 43 errors (18.5%)
- Nouns and Noun Groups: 29 errors (12.5%)
- Miscellaneous (punctuation, capitalization): 45 errors (19.5%)

This supports previous findings such as those conducted by Asfiyati (2021), Lestari (2021), and Andryanti (2024) which state that students still make many mistakes in writing, and they also fulfill all types of errors in the surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay (1982).

2. Dominant Errors

Errors related to verbs and verb groups were the most common, reflecting students' difficulties with tense, agreement, and verb forms. For instance, students

often omitted –ed endings or used incorrect verb tenses (e.g., *drink* instead of *drank*).

Sentence structure errors were also prevalent, including fragmented sentences, run-ons, and incorrect conjunctions, demonstrating interference from L1 structures.

Prepositional errors arose from omissions or incorrect preposition choices, likely due to differences in how prepositions function in Indonesian.

The lowest frequency was noun group errors, such as incorrect plural markers or article usage.

3. Discussion

These findings align with previous research (Asfiyati, 2021; Andryanti, 2024) highlighting EFL students' struggles with verb tenses and sentence complexity. Indonesian learners face added challenges due to structural differences between Indonesian and English grammar (Lado, 1957).

The results emphasize the need for targeted grammar instruction focusing on verb usage, sentence construction, and prepositional phrases in narrative writing.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study demonstrates that grammatical errors persist in EFL students' narrative writing, with verb-related mistakes being the most frequent. These errors can hinder meaning and clarity, underscoring the importance of systematic grammar instruction and feedback.

Implications: Teachers should provide explicit instruction on tense usage and sentence structure. Writing activities should be supplemented with peer and teacher feedback to reinforce grammatical accuracy.

Suggestions for Further Research: Future studies could compare grammatical errors across semester levels or integrate inter-rater reliability to strengthen findings.

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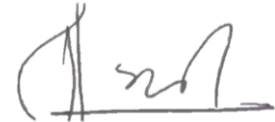
Advisor 1,



Dr. Yahya Alaydrus, M. Pd.

NPP. 1930200034

Advisor 2,



Henny Rahmawati, S. Pd., S.S., M. Pd.

NPP. 14908198832225