

A Study of Grammatical Errors in *Skripsi* Abstract on Undergraduate EFL Students

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to know common grammatical errors made by EFL students in their *skripsi* abstract. This present study analysed the grammatical errors in abstract of *skripsi* by consideration that the students were English Department of Unisma. It indicates that they have been taught English grammar for four semester. This study was designed to be an exploratory sequential mixed method approach. The data were taken from *skripsi* abstracts and analysed into identification, classification, and description of errors by using tabulation. To collect the data, the researcher used the simple random sampling method from the latest three years (2016, 2017, 2018) . To achieve an available data, the researcher classified the errors according to the Dulay's surface strategy taxonomy theory (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). The finding of this study showed that there were 114 errors to which divided into 66 errors of omission (57.89%), 8 errors of addition (7.02), 34 errors of misformation (29.82%), and 6 errors of misordering (5.26%).

Keywords: Grammatical error, *skripsi* abstract, omission, addition, misformation, misordering.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia considers English as a foreign language, therefore we learn to master the language for some purposes. Skills and components are the terms in language itself. There are four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing while language components consist of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Grammar is one of the component to be mastered effectively because

correct grammar will keep students from being misunderstood when delivering their thoughts. Sukasame, Kantho, & Narrot (2013) stated that the most crucial and uneasy part in English grammar which have to be paid attention more by the EFL learners is tense.

It is undeniable that learners need grammar mastery to be good at having English language whether in writing, speaking, reading, or listening; moreover for those who consider English as foreign language. In attempting to get English as a target language, some experts believe that errors can serve as evidences of creativity of learners' process. In learning the target language, learners often make countless errors. Learners consistently encounter various problems that resulted from underlying differences between the target language and first language.

However, it is not an easy thing for EFL students to learn grammar in English. Sometimes, people feel difficult to speak or write confidently when they do not have enough understanding in grammar structure. Although grammar component such as a hard thing, but understanding grammar well will help learners to get target language in many terms; speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Fengjie, Jia, & Hongyi (2016:20) argued that "if students can solve their problems of grammar, students' writing in English can achieve the level that is the same as the native language".

From the above mentioned, this present study concerned with study on grammatical errors in the *skripsi* abstracts written by students of English department of UNISMA, by the consideration that students have been taught English grammar for several years, when they were in junior high school, senior high school, and university. So it can be said that they have already known some rules in English before. *Skripsi* abstract is the description and the representation of the whole content such as background of the study, research problems, research method, research findings, and conclusion. Here, The researcher checked some errors to be analysed in *skripsi* abstract made by undergraduate EFL students such as sentences, tenses, article, auxiliary, preposition, infinitive, singular and plural, active and passive voice.

Looking at the fact that grammatical error gains improvement more to the following result, the previous study conducted by Safrida & Kasim (2016) found that the analysis of grammatical errors in speaking showed that the most dominant errors produced were in omission and the students mostly neglected the past forms of both regular and irregular verbs. Undeniable that every part of writing for being understood by readers would have some features of acceptable grammar of it is unavoidable (Ghabanchi, 2011). Therefore, the good writing is understandable to read and to understand the grammatical structure as well.

This study is conducted to find out the common grammatical errors made by EFL students in their *skripsi* abstract. Based on the background above, the research problem of this study can be formulated as follow:

1. What are the types of errors made by the English students of UNISMA in their *skripsi* abstracts?
2. How many percentages of occurrence in each type of grammatical error are made by EFL students?
3. What is the highest and the lowest frequency of grammatical errors made by EFL students?

METHOD

The present study implemented mixed method. This study was intended to identify, classify, and describe the types of errors in using grammar of the *skripsi* abstracts written by the students of Unisma. The types of errors on grammatical in writing were classified with regard to the Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

The researcher used an exploratory sequential mixed method approach. This method is two phase design. The qualitative data is collected first followed by collection and analysis of quantitative data. The data were categorized according to the analysis of surface strategy taxonomy theory so the suitable approach was a qualitative. Latief (2017:77-80))a qualitative approach is a study in which the data

are done by analysing words than numbers. In addition, for getting the object of the study, the researcher used quantitative calculation to determine the frequency of each type of errors made by students. A quantitative approach is study in which the data collected are represented numerically Latief (2017: 77-80). Creswell, John, & Plano Clark (2011) outline its core characteristics: in a single research study, both qualitative and quantitative strands of data are collected and analysed separately, and integrated – either concurrently or sequentially – to address the research question.

In this study, the data target was *skripsi* abstracts written by the students of English department of UNISMA from tree years 2016, 2017, 2018. Furthermore, in determining the sample, the researcher used simple random sampling method with the assumption that all of the *skripsi* abstracts have an equal chance to be selected as the sample. To get the representative data, the researcher took 30 *skripsi* abstracts from 10 *skripsi* in each year.

In this study, the researcher became an instrument (human instrument) because the researcher collected and analysed the data by herself.

In analysing the data, the researcher also used ‘underlining’ as research instrument. In this case, the researcher would underline word phrases which were inclusive of each classification of grammatical errors.

The researcher obtained the data from the *skripsi* abstracts which were provided in the library of FKIP UNISMA.

In collecting the data, the researcher applied four steps. First, the researcher looked for the abstract made by the EFL students which provided in FKIP library. The second, the researcher chose the *skripsi* abstracts written by students of English Department of UNISMA at the last three years (2016, 2017, and 2018) randomly which the *skripsi* abstracts were not less than 300 words. Thirdly, the researcher collected the *skripsi* as the samples consisted of ten *skripsi* in each year. Finally, the researcher took photo of all the abstracts collected then scanned and printed them out.

To analyse the data, the researcher used 5 steps to analyse the errors they are: collection of the sample, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors Vasquez (2008:136).

Based on the objective of the study, the researcher did not deal with the whole of those steps. The steps used by the researcher just to find the types of errors in the *skripsi* abstracts, such as: (1) Identifying the Sample of *Skripsi* Abstract. This stage was directed to identify the failures refer to grammatical errors found in thesis abstracts. Here, the researcher used bolding and coding to determine the errors. It was done by comparing the reconstructed sentences with the original one the basic of sentences based on the rules of English standard grammar mentioned by Azar (2003). (2) Classification of Errors. After identifying the data, the researcher classified errors based on Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory in which categorized the errors into omission, addition, misformation, misordering. In this step, the researcher classified what kinds of errors are found in the *skripsi* abstracts based on the surface strategy taxonomy (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). In addition, the researcher also could arise the correct one to show the appropriate form of the sentence or words. (3) Description of Errors. In this study, the researcher wanted to ease in describing each type of errors, the data were presented quantitatively. The errors accounted in percentage of errors frequency for each type of grammatical errors. The percentage was computed as follows:

P = Percentage of the frequency of errors on each type of grammatical errors.

Fe = Frequency of errors in each type

Tf = Total frequency of grammatical errors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following steps present the result of the analysis based on Corder's suggestions: (1) Identification the Sample *Skripsi* Abstracts. The data was evaluated in terms of grammar usage which was focused on the students' performance and problem in using grammar. The identification was conducted by mentioning the all

items where the list of grammatical errors found in the 30 *skripsi* abstracts written by the students. It was identified that there were 114 errors. (2) Classification of Errors. The classification of errors was depend on the Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory. The researcher found 114 errors which spread into 66 of omission, 8 errors of addition, 34 errors of misformation, and 6 errors of misordering. The clear explanation was shown in the table below.

Table 1: The number of error classification per each item of error sentences

No	Error Type	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Omission	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,15,16,18,20,24,29, 30,31,32,33,34,36,38,40,41,42,43, 45,46,47,50,51,54,55,56,57,59,60, 61,62,64,67,69,70,72,75,76,80,82, 83,84,87,88,90,93,94,99,101,102, 103,104,105,107,108,109, 113,114.	66	57.89%
2.	Addition	10,14,23,53,58,66,77,85.	8	7.02%
3.	Misformation	7,11,12,13,17,19,21,22,25,26,27,2 8,39,44,48,49,52,63,65,68,71,79,8 9,91,92,97,106,110,111,112.	34	29.82%
4.	Misordering	35,74,78,81,86,100	6	5.26%
Total			114	100%

In attempting to find the students' difficulties in using grammar, the researcher used frequency of errors in terms of percentage. Based on the results of the study, the total number of errors discovered in the abstracts of *skripsi* were 114. It was revealed that the errors of omission (57.89%) were the highest followed by errors of misformation (29.82%), addition (7.02%), and misordering (5.26%).

The students' deviations in using English grammar were caused by an undesirable thing. In another word, the errors happened because of some logic. It was proven that the highest errors were categorized into omission (57.89%), see the table 4.1. Errors of omission happened when the students omit the item that must appear in the word or sentence. For instance, the student omitted '-s/-es' in noun of plural form or they did not use the V₂ in the simple past form. It could happen because Indonesia grammar does not differentiate between singular and plural, present and past etc. So it means that the students made interlingual errors which occurred due to their L1 structure. This present studies deal with the previous study from Abbasi & Karimnia (2011) showed that the finding was 98% of the students had problems grammatically, and most errors that the students produced were interlingual errors, indicating the influence of mother tongue. Olana, Zeleke, & Jiregna (2015) stated that it is commonly believed L1 affects foreign language.

The explanation above was supported by other researchers in the previous studies. The researcher compared the result of the present study to previous studies and concluded that most of the students found errors in using grammar in the errors of omission and misformation. Susilowati (2006) in her study, she found that there were 168 errors made by the first year student of SMK Al Ma'arif Singosari Malang which spread into 64 errors of omission (38.09%), 38 errors of addition (22.62%), 63 errors of misformation (37.50%), and 3 errors of misordering (1.79%). It showed that the most common errors were omission and misformation and the lowest percentage was misordering errors. The finding of Safrida & Kasim (2016) also supported this present study. The result of the study in speaking committed by the third semester students of Syiah Kuala University showed that the most dominant errors produced were in omission and the smallest occurrence of errors were in misordering.

So, it was clear that the errors were not the result of laziness. The errors indicated that the students were learning English as target language (TL). From this present and some previous studies it can be concluded that the most common errors made by EFL learners were omission and misformation. For instance, this findings

addressed the teacher and lecturer to focus on teaching the common errors made by EFL learners in grammar.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of conducting this study was to analyse the grammatical errors in *skripsi* abstracts written by EFL students. This study applied the error analysis as a way to identify the students' difficulties in learning English especially grammar. The result of this study mentioned in chapter IV was the answer of the research problem related to grammatical error.

As stated in the previous chapter, the data which was taken from *skripsi* abstracts written by 30 students had 114 errors and classified based on Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory. More specially, the researcher found 66 errors of omission, 8 errors of addition, 34 errors of misformation, and 6 errors of misordering.

From the tabulation, it can be inferred that misordering was the lowest frequency of errors items. The result of this study indicated that although the students have learned English grammar in elementary school, senior high school, even in university level, they still had the difficulties in mastering English grammar. They still produced a number of grammatical errors in their abstract writings.

According to the conclusion above, the researcher gives some suggestions: (1) The students of English Department. It is expected to the student that they have to pay more attention in using English grammar. The errors made will give meaningful feedback for their further understanding about grammar rules including the elements of language such as tenses, articles, etc. Those elements can influence the students in producing grammatical utterance correctly. (2). The lecturers of English Department. It is known that the students still have the problem in producing English grammar. Thus, it is important for the lecturers to focus on teaching of grammar. They have to emphasize the aspect of determining the proper explanations and exercises in teaching and learning process, especially for the student in earlier semester. In avoiding the difficulties in learning English, it can be done by giving more

grammatical exercises both of spoken and written. So they will not face problems in their study. Teaching grammar by text-based teaching can be a good idea to do, since grammar is not a set of rules, but it is a complex mixture between context, sentences, paragraph, and purpose of the text (Widodo 2019). Related to a good and understandable *skripsi* abstract, the meticulous of second advisor also plays an important role. (3) The future researchers. The future researchers are also expected to conduct the research using other data such as newspaper, or English guided text books.

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