

AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN STUDENTS' WRITING: A CASE STUDY OF ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT STUDENTS BATCH 2022 CLASS E

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Abstract

Writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to acquire because, according to Harmer (2004:31) cited in Wati & Nursyaebah (2017), learners frequently have more time to reflect when writing than they do during spoken activities. In order to help them, students can use dictionaries, grammar books, and other reference materials to help them activate their brains. He advised consulting grammar books to ensure that the work was grammatically correct because he thought grammar was crucial in writing. As a result, the main goal of this research is to examine students' writing, particularly their grammatical errors. The six categories of grammatical errors are verb agreement (Leech, 1985), capitalization (Oshima, 1988), use, sentence structure (Ross, 1975), pronoun and spelling (Brooks, 1964), according to Wati and Nursyaebah (2017). Based on student writing mistake analyses, the data were examined. According to the research findings, students usually made mistakes with verb agreement (34.8%), which they accomplished by employing the wrong form of the simple present. They also frequently made mistakes with capitalization (17.4%), spelling (17.4%), usage (13%), sentence structure (8.7%), and pronoun errors (8.7%). As a result of the findings, it is recommended that teachers revisit their lessons on verb agreement, capitalization, and spelling, which are the three areas where pupils consistently fail when writing.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors, Writing, Students.

Introduction

In recent years, writing has become a crucial aspect of academic and professional communication. Writing is viewed as a complex and challenging activity for many students; teachers should focus on the grammatical concepts essential for clear communication of meaning (Chin, 2000). In the context of higher education, students are expected to produce

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written assignments that demonstrate their understanding of course material and showcase their critical thinking skills. However, despite the importance placed on writing in academia, many students struggle with producing grammatically correct sentences. This is particularly true for non-native speakers of English who may face challenges due to differences between their native language and English grammar rules.

Writing is a genuine challenge faced by teachers in ESL classrooms (Zerin, 2007). Writing and grammar cannot be separated each other because grammatical rules are one of aspects that the learners should consider before they write something. Grammar mastery is very important in writing skill, it can help the students to produce good sentences. According to Swan (1998: 19) cited in (Khairunisa, A., Nadrun, 2018), "grammar is the rule that says how words are changed to show different meaning, and they combine into sentences". It means grammar is a way in forming a different meaning of words which use to construct a sentence in writing. Grammar is viewed as the most essential aspect of language learning for second language learners (Singh et al, 2017). Through detailed studies of student writing, Shaughnessy (1977) concludes that the best grammar instruction is that which gives the greatest return for the least investment of time.

Grammatical errors can occur at any level of proficiency and may be caused by various factors such as lack of familiarity with the rules or structural differences between languages. Errors can range from minor mistakes like punctuation errors to more complex issues such as subject-verb agreement or tense inconsistencies.

One of the most popular theories of second language acquisition is error analysis. By comparing the learners' acquired norms with the norms of the target language and explaining the discovered faults, it is concerned with the examination of the errors made by L2 learners (James, 1988). Error analysis, according to Crystal (1999, p. 108), is the study of the inappropriate forms that someone learning a language, particularly a foreign language, produces. EA refers to "the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance," according to James (2001, p. 62).

There are six elements typical errors, such as: verb agreement it is about matching in number and person of subject, capitalization is the first letter of a word, usage is about articles, plural-singular form, and proposition, sentence pattern is the basic sentence pattern of English is **subject + verb + object/complement**, pronoun is about a pronoun represents a person, place, thing, or idea without naming it and the last is spelling it is about relatively minor importance as far as reading is concerned (Brooks, 1964:168; Leech and Svartvik, 1984:153; Oshima and Hogue, 1988:7; Ross and Doty, 1975:5) in Sadiyah, S., & Royani, S. A. (2019).

Research Method

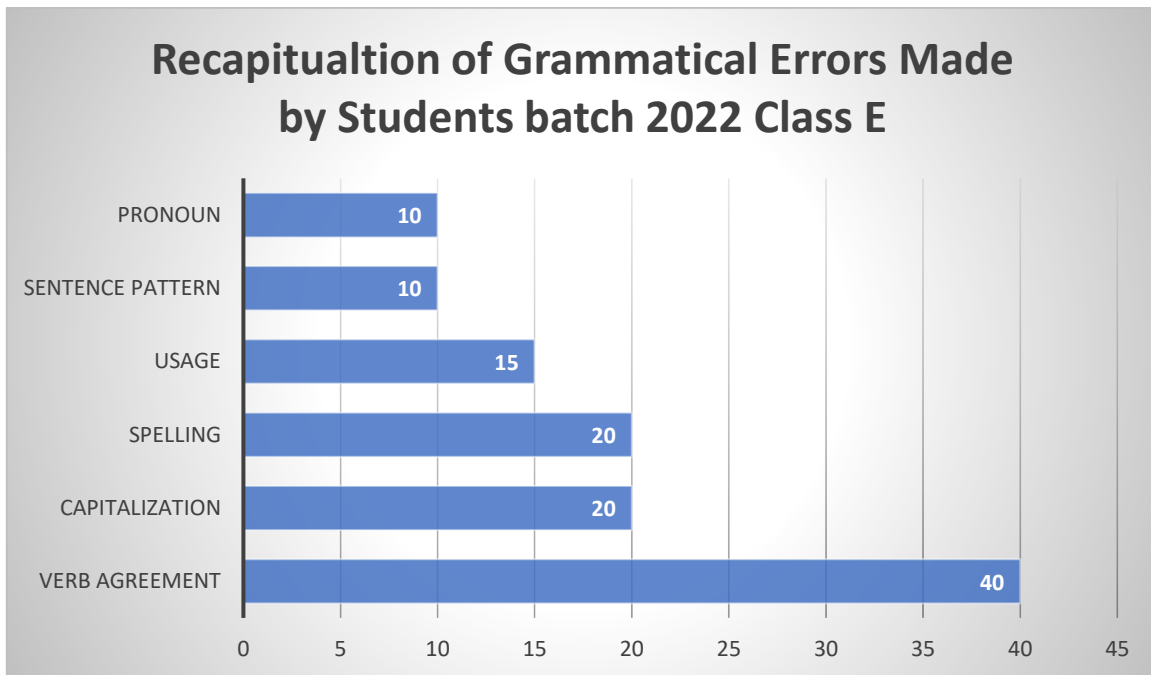
Sugiyono (2010) stated that descriptive research is research to determine the value of independent variables without making comparisons or connecting with other variables. The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics, this research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened. Therefore, observation and survey tools are often used to gather data (Gall & Borg, 2007, cited in Nassaji, 2015).

The entire research was conducted using a qualitative methodology. A case study enables a thorough inquiry that focuses on a complete understanding of the specific phenomenon of a study and various characteristics of the population in question (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004). An extensive investigation of the intervention's classroom context was made possible by using a case study research approach, which also made it easier to describe the intervention itself (Ganapathy & Kaur, 2013). This case study examined the grammatical errors that ESL students made.

In collecting data, the writer only used writing assignment in the form of paragraph writing test of Economics department students batch 2022 Class E. The total number of students are 25 students. The data are analyzed by using grammatical error or to the process of determining incidence, nature, cause and consequences of unsuccessful language (James, 1998:1; Brooks, 1964:168; Leech and Svartvik, 1984:153; Oshima and Hogue, 1988:7; Ross and Doty, 1975:5) in Sadiyah, S., & Royani, S. A. (2019).

Result And Discussion

The recapitulation of students' errors are displayed into chart. The chart covers the highest to the lowest rank as follows:



Using the following formula, then the description of above data can be seen in the following paragraphs.

$$\sum\% = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note:

\sum = Symbol of percentage

F = Frequency of the occurrences of each request strategy

N = Total number of request strategy

The chart explains the kinds of errors that students made. The writer would like to elaborate the result of the chart above from the highest error number until the lowest rank. Most of students made error in verb agreement, there are 43 or 41%. The writers assume that the students did errors in correlation between subject and verb. The errors in pronoun are 19 or 18%, usages are 16 or 15%, sentence pattern are 13 or 12%, spelling error are 9 or 9%, and capitalization error are 5 or 5%. The data from the students collected, then analyzed the errors by using classify the error, and quantify the error. These steps are proposed by Gass and Selinker (1994:66).

Moreover, to know the result of students' grammatical errors, the writer made the table of students' grammatical errors as follows:

Table 1

The Recapitulation of Students' Grammatical Error Types of Grammatical Errors							
Student	Vb. Agreement	Capitalization	Usage	Sentence Pattern	Pronoun	Spelling	Total
1	0	2	1	0	0	2	5
2	0	0	2	0	2	1	5
3	4	0	0	3	0	0	7
4	5	1	2	0	0	2	10
5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
6	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
8	1	4	0	0	0	1	6
9	0	0	2	3	0	0	5
10	2	1	0	0	2	2	7
11	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
12	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
13	5	0	0	1	0	1	7
14	0	3	0	0	2	0	5
15	5	0	0	0	0	2	7
16	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
17	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
18	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
19	0	2	0	0	2	2	6
20	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
21	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
22	0	0	2	1	0	1	4
23	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
24	0	0	0	0	2	2	4
25	2	1	2	0	0	1	6
Total	40	20	15	10	10	20	115
Percentage of Error	34.8%	17.4%	13%	8.7%	8.7%	17.4%	100%

1. Verb Agreement

Based on the results here are the errors 34.8% in verb agreement that made by students. They are students number 3-4-6-8-10-11-13-18-20-23-25. Examples:

Table 2
Verb Agreement Errors

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. The economic condition in Indonesia have changed to a better condition than a couple years ago.	1. The economic condition in Indonesia has changed to a better condition than a couple years ago.
2. The recession may brings global impacts.	2. The recession may bring global impacts.
3. A lot of customers was disappointed with the new policies.	3. A lot of customers were disappointed with the new policies.

In these sentences, the students still confused about plural or singular subject related with the verb. In No.1 sentence, the subjects he/she/it should use *has*, not *have*. In No.2, subjects she/he/it, the modal *may* should be followed with base form verb, *bring*. Whereas in No.3, since the subject is plural, the *to be* used in the sentence should be *were*, not *was*.

2. Capitalization

Some students made errors in capitalizing some letters as many as 17.4%. They are students number 1, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, and 25. Examples:

Table 3
Capitalization Errors

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. The Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, nadiem Makarim, stated that the youth should have experiences in entrepreneurship.	1. The Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, stated that the youth should have experiences in entrepreneurship.
2. the Central Bank of the Indonesia is called Bank Indonesia.	2. The Central Bank of the Indonesia is called Bank Indonesia.

In sentence No.1, student should use a capital letter for a person's name. In No.2, a new sentence should be started using a capital letter, too.

3. Usage

Usage areas are article and preposition. The writer found 13% that students number 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 16, 20, 22, and 25 used inappropriate preposition and article in the sentences. Below are some examples from the data:

Table 4
Usage Errors

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. Indonesia unemployment rate for 2019 was 3.62%, <u>an</u> 0.78% decline from 2018.	1. Indonesia unemployment rate for 2019 was 3.62%, <u>a</u> 0.78% decline from 2018.
2. The international economics summit will be conducted 17 July 2023.	2. The international economics summit will be conducted <u>on</u> 17 July 2023.

The students made errors in the way using article *an*. It is supposed to *a*. In sentence No.2, before mentioning date, it is supposed to use *on*.

4. Sentence Pattern

And the fourth error 8.7% that writer found in students' number 3, 9, 13, 17, and 22 sentences was sentence pattern, example:

Table 5
Sentence Pattern

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. Many students <u>are like</u> Economics.	1. Many students <u>like</u> Economics.
2. Adam Smith is <u>economist famous</u> in <u>world</u> .	2. Adam Smith is <u>famous</u> <u>economist</u> in <u>the world</u> .

The errors made by the students in the above sentences are the pattern of the sentences. In sentence No.1, with the subject *Many students*, the predicate should be *like*, not *are like*. Whereas in sentence No.2, the *economist famous* is incorrect. The correct form is *famous economist*. Furthermore, in the word *world*, it should use article *the* before it.

5. Pronoun

The fifth error was pronoun, the writer found 8.7% that many students number 2, 10, 14, 19, and 24 did not use appropriate pronoun, examples:

Table 6
Pronoun

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. Adam Smith is my favourite economist. <u>She</u> is very famous all over the world.	1. Adam Smith is my favourite economist. <u>He</u> is very famous all over the world.
2. Sri Mulyani said that the supplies of rice will be enough until next month. <u>He</u> added that people no need to be worried.	2. Sri Mulyani said that the supplies of rice will be enough until next month. <u>She</u> added that people no need to be worried.

Some students still make errors in the using of pronoun in their sentences as listed in the above table.

6. Spelling

The last but not least error was spelling, as Brooks (1964:168, cited in Wati & Nursyaebah, 2017) noted that “Spelling is of relatively minor importance as far as reading is concerned; it becomes a major factor in the productive skill writing”. Therefore, it is important to spell the words correctly. Errors 17.4% made by students number 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 25. Examples:

Table 7
Spelling

Incorrect Sentence	Correct Sentence
1. The <u>supplay</u> and demand are equal.	1. The <u>supply</u> and demand are equal.
2. Unemployment may <u>effect</u> poverty in a country.	2. Unemployment may <u>affect</u> poverty in a country.

It can be concluded that the students cannot write the words correctly. Therefore, it can be found many spelling errors. The writer believes it is caused by the limited of vocabularies mastery.

Conclusion

According to the data described above, it can be inferred that, out of the six categories of grammatical errors—verb agreement, capitalization, usage, sentence pattern, pronoun, and spelling—the writer discovered that students made the most verb agreement errors, accounting for 40 or 34.8% of all errors. As a result, teachers should focus more on subject

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and verb agreement in order to reduce the number of grammar mistakes that pupils make in their writing.

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