

An Error Analysis of Using Plural Nouns in English Sentences” A Case Study of the Second Year Students of MA Al-Manar Tenganan in the Academic Year 2003/2004

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Abstract

By doing this research, the writer hopes that the results will be helpful to the English learner in order to be more careful in using plural nouns in English sentences. The subject of research is the second year students of MA Al- Manar Tenganan in the academic year 2003/2004. The writer uses random sampling by lottery method to get the sample of research. The writer analyses the data by making the observation of all collected data, Categorizing the data by giving codes for cash data, categorizing the data by giving codes for cash data, and interpreting data info substantive theory. The result of the study shows that there are dominant errors which are made by students of second years of MA Al- Manar to use plural nouns in English.

Keywords: *Plural, Random Sampling, Categorizing, Dominant, Error*

Abstrak

Melalui penelitian ini, peneliti berharap hasil dari studi tersebut dapat bermanfaat bagi pembelajar bahasa Inggris agar lebih berhati-hati dalam menggunakan kata benda plural dalam kalimat-kalimat bahasa Inggris. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa tahun ke dua, MA Al Manar Tenganan tahun akademik 2003/2004. Penulis menggunakan metode *random sampling* untuk menentukan jumlah sampel. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti melakukan pengamatan pada data yang dikumpulkan, mengkategorikan data melalui pemberian kode, dan menginterpretasikan data dengan menggunakan teori substantive. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan

adanya kesalahan yang dominan yang dilakukan oleh siswa-siswa tahun ke dua MA Al Manar dalam penggunaan kata benda plural dalam bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: *Plural, Sampel Random, Pengkategorian, Dominan, Kesalahan*

Introduction

Language is the system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates (Bloch and George, 1942: 5). Every normal human being is a member of a social group, sometimes of more than one, and every human being depends, in all his social activities, on the use of language. Without language, human society is unthinkable; language is the link between otherwise unconnected nervous systems, and thus the means by which the stimulus acting on one man may produce an effective response in another, or in all the members of the group. By using language, human beings can express their ideas and wishes in written or oral form to other people. Nowadays, English is one of thousand languages in the world that it is considered as an important language and English must be learned since the students are studying in Elementary School.

Indonesia as a developing country was appointing English is taught as compulsory subject from the first grade of Junior High School up to third grade of Junior High school, and even in semesters of Tertiary Educational institution. So, the student feel difficult to learn English when they study in the Junior High School, because they do not know it before.

In the curriculum of English teaching, it includes skills of practical language, like listening, speaking, and writing. For expanding the student's skill, the curriculum of English teaching also

include the language components, like vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation (in speech) or spelling (in writing).

Beside for students, a teacher must have teaching ability for making them understand and effort to apply both language skills and language components in class. So, this makes condition alive, or this is not shared in monotone situation in teaching and learning process.

English as a second language for foreign learner, as Corder observes the learners' errors are indicative both of the state of the learners' knowledge and of the ways in which a second language is learned. Sentences contained errors would be characterized by systematic deviancy. While the learners, correct sentences do not necessarily give evidence of the rules the learner is using or of the hypothesis he is testing, his errors suggest the strategies he employs to work out the rules of the new language and the rule he has developed at given stages of his language development (Richards, 1974 : 1).

Errors can be described as errors of addition, omission, substitution, and ordering following standard mathematical categories. Inflectional errors is overgeneralization of constructed rule clearly revealed when children treat irregular verbs and nouns as if they were regular. We have probably all heard children say *bringed*, *goed*, *doed*, or *foots*, *mouses*, *sheeps*, *childs*. These mistakes tell us more about how children learn language than the correct forms they use (Fromkin and Blair, 1965).

As a majority of noun occurrence for number in the surface structure of English are regularly governed by this 'count-uncount' generalization. Count nouns refer to things that can be counted, such as *tree*, *book*, *bird* and therefore have a plural forms. Uncountable nouns refer to

substances and qualities which we do not perceive in terms of countable units and which consequently have no plural form, such as rice, water, sugar, etc.

Most countable nouns can change their form from singular to plural by adding –(e) s (tree-trees, city-cities, book-books) and so on. Although this-s plural is the most common form, there are other so-called irregular plurals (Nichols, 1965). Sometimes, the students have many difficulties of using plural nouns in English sentences because the inflectional plural forms.

Based on description above, the writer would like to conduct a research under the title “AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF USING PLURAL NOUNS IN ENGLISH SENTENCES” A case study of the second year students of MA Al-Manar Tenganan in the Academic year 2003/2004.

Research Methodology

The writer has tried to narrange the research methodology systematically in order to capable of analyzing the collected data easily. The research methodology will be organized as follows:

1. Population

Suharsimi Arikunto, in the book *Prosedur penelitian, suatu pendekatan praktek*, states the population is all members of the research subject (Arikunto, 2002: 108). Population is all individuals from whom the data are collected. In this research, population is the all of students of MA Al-Manar Tenganan in academic year 2003/2004.

2. Sample

A sample is part of populations, which is researched by researcher. In this research, the writer takes the second year students of MA Al-Manar Tenganan as the sample.

3. Sampling

Sampling is the way of taking sample. For getting the sample of research, the writer uses random sampling by lottery method. In this case, the writer takes all of the second year students.

4. The procedure of collecting data

a. Library research

Library research is used to get the appropriate and relevant books with this study.

b. Test

The instrument is the research is used to know the students' error in using plural nouns and application in the English sentences.

c. Format of data analysis

- 1) To find out the proportion of frequency error in each type as well as the dominant errors by using descriptive analysis as follows:

$$X = \frac{\sum E}{\sum T} \times 100\%$$

Where,

X = the percentage of error

E = the various kinds of error

T = test item

\sum = the sum of

2). The proportion of frequency of error was calculated by using the pre-selected category approach formula as follow :

Formula 1

$$pi = \frac{fi}{n} \times 100\%$$

Pi : the proportion of frequency of occurred

fi : absolute frequency of whole type of error

N : the total number of possible error observe

Discussion

The Method of Data Analysis

According to Suharsimi Arikunto, there are four steps in analyzing and interpreting the data, namely:

1. Making the observation of all collected data
2. Arranging all collected data by unifying data
3. Categorizing the data by giving codes for cash data
4. Interpreting data info substantive theory.

Based on those steps, the writer analyzed the data using the following steps:

1. Identify the students' dominant errors based on the result of the test as the primary data.
2. Count the students' dominant error in percentage

$$X = \frac{\sum E}{\sum T} \times 100\%$$

Where,

X = the percentage of error

E = the various kinds of error

T = test item

\sum = the sum of

3. To find out the students' dominant errors as a whole in percentage

$$PI = \frac{FI}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where,

PI = the proportion of frequency of occurrence of errors as a whole

FI = absolute frequency of error types all the levels

N = the total number of possible errors of all the levels

4. Interpreting all data collected to find out the sources or causes of the students' dominant errors in using plural nouns forms.

The writer analyzed the data beginning the first step, namely :

- a. Identification the students' dominant errors based on the result of the test.

There are 40 test item for the 52 students.

Based on the classification of possible error, there are types of error that made by the students.

- 1). The types of error about form changing by adding –s

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 13 | Belief | Believes | 32 |
| 15 | Piano | Pianos | 20 |

- 2). The type of error about form changing by adding –es

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | Dish | Dishs | 14 |
| 2 | Lady | Ladys | 38 |
| 3 | Dress | Dressing | 11 |
| 4 | Tomato | Tomatos | 25 |
| 7 | Wish | Wishs | 22 |
| 8 | Leaf | Leafs | 34 |
| 10 | Copy | Copies, copys | 34 |
| 11 | Knife | Knifes | 32 |
| 14 | Calf | Calfs | 34 |

3). The type of error about form changing in the vocal

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 6 | Toots | Tooths | 25 |
| 9 | Foot | Footes | 38 |
| 12 | Goose | Gooses | 32 |

4). The type of error irregular form

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 5 | Ox | Oxes | 34 |

5). The type of error differentiate between plural and singular word

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 16 | Information | Plural | 12 |
| 17 | Job | Plural | 14 |
| 18 | Problem | Plural | 10 |
| 19 | Them | Singular | 22 |
| 20 | Patients | Singular | 12 |
| 21 | Athletes | Singular | 3 |
| 22 | Costume | Plural | - |
| 23 | Gases | Singular | - |
| 24 | Economics | Plural | 32 |
| 25 | Scissors | Singular | 11 |

6).

| No | Item Test | Wrong Answer | Error Number |
|----|---|--|--------------|
| 26 | A <i>deer</i> is a wild animal | Deer is a wild animal | 12 |
| 27 | The mouse ran into a hole | The mouse ran into a hole | 25 |
| 28 | A <i>crunch</i> is a place of worship | Chrunches is a place of worship | 29 |
| 29 | A <i>box</i> is usually square on rectangular in form | Boxs is usually square on rectangular in form | 28 |
| 30 | A <i>child</i> needs much sympathy and understanding | Children needs much sympathy and understanding | 23 |
| 31 | The <i>bus</i> was very crowded | Buses was very crowded | 24 |
| 32 | An easily gained <i>victory</i> is seldom appreciated | An easily gained victoryes seldom appreciated | 22 |
| 33 | A <i>potato</i> is a vegetable | Potatoes is a vegetable | 14 |
| 34 | An <i>apple</i> grows on a tree | Apples grows on a tree | 22 |
| 35 | A <i>fish</i> can swim | A fishes can swim | 12 |
| 36 | A <i>chair</i> is made of wood | Chairs made of wood | 14 |
| 37 | An <i>exercise</i> is not always easy for beginners | An excersise are not always easy for beginers | 12 |
| 38 | A <i>handkerchief</i> is made of piece of cloth | A handkerchief are made of piece of cloth | 20 |
| 39 | The <i>fly</i> spreads disease | The flys spreads disease | 22 |
| 40 | A <i>watch</i> is simply small clocks | A watches are simply simply small clocks | 18 |

- b. In processing the data obtained from result of the respondents test, she used the following formula :

$$X = \frac{\sum E}{\sum T} \times 100\%$$

Where,

X = the precentage of error

E = the various kinds of error

T = test item

\sum = the sum of

- a. Table I precentage of Error

| Subject | Sum of Error | Sum of test item | Percentage of errors |
|---------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| 1 | 12 | 40 | 30 % |
| 2 | 19 | 40 | 47.5 % |
| 3 | 10 | 40 | 25 % |
| 4 | 24 | 40 | 60 % |
| 5 | 15 | 40 | 37.5 % |
| 6 | 6 | 40 | 15 % |
| 7 | 21 | 40 | 52.5 % |
| 8 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 9 | 13 | 40 | 32.5 % |
| 10 | 18 | 40 | 45% |
| 11 | 22 | 40 | 55% |

| | | | |
|----|----|----|-------|
| 12 | 16 | 40 | 40% |
| 13 | 12 | 40 | 30% |
| 14 | 16 | 40 | 40% |
| 15 | 20 | 40 | 50% |
| 16 | 20 | 40 | 50% |
| 17 | 6 | 40 | 15% |
| 18 | 25 | 40 | 62.5% |
| 19 | 19 | 40 | 47.5% |
| 20 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 21 | 12 | 40 | 30% |
| 22 | 19 | 40 | 47.5% |
| 23 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 24 | 24 | 40 | 60% |
| 25 | 15 | 40 | 37.5% |
| 26 | 6 | 40 | 15% |
| 27 | 21 | 40 | 52.5% |
| 28 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 29 | 13 | 40 | 32.5% |
| 30 | 18 | 40 | 45% |
| 31 | 22 | 40 | 55% |
| 32 | 16 | 40 | 40% |
| 33 | 12 | 40 | 30% |
| 34 | 16 | 40 | 40% |
| 35 | 20 | 40 | 50% |
| 36 | 20 | 40 | 50% |
| 37 | 6 | 40 | 15% |
| 38 | 25 | 40 | 62.5% |
| 39 | 19 | 40 | 47.5% |
| 40 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 41 | 12 | 40 | 30% |
| 42 | 19 | 40 | 47.5% |
| 43 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 44 | 24 | 40 | 60% |
| 45 | 15 | 40 | 37.5% |
| 46 | 6 | 40 | 15% |

| | | | |
|----|-----|------|-------|
| 47 | 21 | 40 | 52.5% |
| 48 | 10 | 40 | 25% |
| 49 | 13 | 40 | 32.5% |
| 50 | 18 | 40 | 45% |
| 51 | 22 | 40 | 55% |
| 52 | 16 | 40 | 40% |
| | 824 | 2080 | |

The next steps was to carry out an error analysis in order to find out the dominant errors that often occurred. In this analysis, she used the pre-selected category approach favored by Etherton as adopted by Norish (Norish, 1983). In which the statistical computation is based on Gulos formula:

$$pi = \frac{fi}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where,

pi = the proportion of frequency of occurrence of error

fi = absolute of partial type of error

n = the total number of possible errors of the level

after the writer had the computation on the proportion of occurrence partially, she then computed the proportion of frequency of occurrence of error as whole, using the following formula :

$$PI = \frac{FI}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$pi = \frac{824}{2080} \times 100\%$$

$$= 39.62\%$$

a. Table II The Proportion of Error

| Number of Subject | Σ items | Σ n | Errors | | PI-pi % |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | Fi | pi (%) | |
| <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> |
| 1 | 2 | 628 | 52 | 6.3 | 33.32 |
| 2 | 9 | 50 | 242 | 29.3 | 10.32 |
| 3 | 3 | 104 | 95 | 11.5 | 28.12 |
| 4 | 1 | 34 | 34 | 4.12 | 35.5 |
| 5 | 10 | 1160 | 116 | 14.07 | 25.55 |
| 6 | 15 | 104 | 285 | 34.7 | 4.92 |
| Total | 40 | 2080 | 824 | 95.87 | 137.73 |

Interpreting all data to find out the sources of dominant errors

In this analysis, the writer made a classification and categorization of errors based on the text-reference. The main purpose on doing this analysis was to trace the source of the dominant errors observed, namely the resl error made by the students. Then, the writer classified those errors into two categories of errors based on intralingual only.

1. Ignorance of rule restriction

Ignorance of rule restriction took the proportion of 65,42% (539 errors). 210 errors due to ignorance of rule restriction occurred at the form changing, as follow :

a. The form changing by adding -s

(52 errors = 6.3%)

- b. The form changing by adding -es
(242 errors = 29.3%)
- c. The form changing by in vocal
(95 errors = 11.5%)
- d. The irregular form
(34 errors = 4.12%)
- e. The difference between plural and singular
(116 errors = 14.07%)

2. Incomplete application of the rules

There were 285 error (34.59%) due to incomplete application of the rules occurred in the use of plural nouns form in English sentence. This mean that they had no good comprehension or interpretation of the target language.

The possible ways out of preventing those errors

1. Before teaching the material, the teachers can emphasize the difference the plural nouns between Indonesian and English form, so the students understand them and apply the correct pattern in English.
2. The teacher provides a lot of examples of plural form and ask students to compare English and Indonesian form, so that they really find differences between them.

3. The teachers also give some exercises to students, so they are able to make correct plural form in English and able to apply it in the sentence.
4. The students can be asked to apply their knowledge about the material. When they get the difficulties, the teacher re-explains the material clearly.

Conclusion

From the analysis result of this research, the writer can conclude that the dominant errors which are made by the students to use plural noun in English are: error in form changing by adding *-s* (33.32%), error in form changing by adding *-es* (10.32%), error in form changing by vowel (28.12%), error in irregular form (35.5%), error in difference between plural and singular (25.55%), error in using plural nouns in sentence (4.92%).

The possible sources or causes of those errors are ignorance of rule restriction (65.42% = 539 errors) and Incomplete application of the rules (34.59% = 285 errors). The possible ways out of preventing those errors. Before teaching the material, the teachers can emphasize the difference of plural nouns between Indonesian and English form, so the students understand them and apply the correct pattern in English. The teacher provides a lot of examples of plural form and asks students to compare English and Indonesian form, so that they really find differences between them. The teachers also give some exercises to students, so they are able to make correct plural form in English and able to apply it in the sentence. The students can be asked

to apply their knowledge about the material. When they get the difficulties, the teacher re-explains the material clearly.

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