

ANALYSIS OF UNGRAMMATICAL FORMS OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN TEXTS

An Article

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ANALYSIS OF UNGRAMMATICAL FORMS OF STUDENTS' WRITTEN TEXTS

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Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat struktur sintaktis yang secara gramatika tidak sesuai dengan tata bahasa Inggris. Data Penelitian diklasifikasikan dalam struktur yang tidak sesuai secara gramatika, persentasi dari tiap kategori, dan kategori yang paling dominan. Data penelitian adalah frasa, klausa, dan kalimat yang mengandung ketidak sesuaian gramatika yang terdapat dalam 10 buah latar belakang proposal penelitian mahasiswa Program Studi Bahasa Inggris antara tahun 2011 sampai 2013. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada 14 kategori struktur yang tidak sesuai secara gramatika pada tingkat frasa, 2 kategori pada tingkat klausa, dan 1 kategori pada tingkat kalimat. Kategori struktur yang tidak sesuai secara gramatika yang paling dominan adalah ketidaksesuaian bentuk subjek dan verba (27,5%).

Kata kunci: ketidaksesuaian gramatika, stuktur sintaktis

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to find out ungrammatical sentences. The data were classified into ungrammatical forms, percentage of each category, and the most dominant category. The data of this research were ungrammatical phrases, clauses, and sentences encountered in the research backgrounds of 10 research proposals written by students of English Language Study Program from 2011 until 2013. The research findings show that there are 14 ungrammatical forms in phrase level, 2 ungrammatical forms in clause level, and 1 ungrammatical form in sentence level. The most dominant ungrammatical form concerns subject-verb agreement (27.5%).

Key words: ungrammatical, syntactic forms

One of the constraints for EFL students in learning English is the ability to express their thought in English with such acceptable, appropriate, and natural ways in any kind of environment. The students need to have the ability to express ideas in acceptable and understandable to native English speakers. Dalton-Puffer (2007) states that the most difficult task for second and foreign language learners is achieving a level of competence in the target language which makes it function appropriately in different environments where the language is used either natively or non-natively. That challenge emerges because of the different system of the first and the target language. It can cause a problem in the process of language acquisition. Such problem happens to many EFL students.

Students of Indonesian schools study English as a foreign language. As one of foreign languages, English is needed in international setting of speech. Students may have difficulties in learning English because English system is different from the system of Indonesia. In term of language production, challenging problem for students in writing is to use appropriate grammatical form. The difficulties possibly happen to EFL students in certain conditions, such as inadequate ability in expressing ideas in grammatical English.

The problem of speaking and writing for students is the grammaticality of expression. In this case, English needs to be acceptable and understandable to native speakers in order to keep the grammaticality of good communication. The difficulties possibly happen to EFL students when they are expressing in English, typing, and having slip of tongue that may lead to the use of ungrammatical construction.

Since English is a foreign language for the students of English Language Education Study Program, the students may express their idea in ungrammatical sentences. Then, it is important to study how English is used in writings by the students of English Language Education Study Program.

Thus, EFL students need to learn grammar which can be applied on written or spoken language. Whether or not the students write the English grammar, it can be seen from their thesis writing. Therefore, this research will investigate the students' grammar writing through the written text. The used corpus will be the background of thesis writing.

Considering that English Study Program of Tanjungpura University as an educational institution that accommodates English language teaching learning for university students, the researcher regards that it is very important to conduct a research to report recent condition of EFL students related to grammar application in learning. It is expected that the report can represent the real condition of EFL students in English study program of Tanjungpura University dealing with students' problems in English language learning.

After learning basic grammar and writing lesson, students are prepared to produce scientific writing on the incoming semesters. Then they are going to attend several subject related to scientific writing such as Research Paper, RELT, and Seminar on ELT. Then all they have gotten from learning the subjects mentioned come to the important point where all they have to do is producing writing, not merely for exercise and learning achievement, but also as a part of conducting a real investigation in form of research at the end of their academic stages. Therefore, the researcher conducts the research of grammatical analysis of student written text to investigate ungrammatical forms in syntactic level in written texts produced by students of Tanjungpura University.

Because this research will investigate the written texts as the evidence of students' language production, the researcher conducts the research through the written texts produced by English students who have written and submitted research proposal to fulfill one of the requirement for writing a thesis at English Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University.

For this reason, the writer expects that this research will contribute important information for both the participants and English department in

Tanjungpura University. The writer expects that the findings of this research will show the tendencies, form of ungrammatical constructions, or any information about grammar application in students' writings, that finally can be a significant source for other researches or education practitioners in creating new teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching approaches, effective lesson plan, or any other tools for English teaching learning related to the problem.

This research may contribute important information for both the participants and English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University. The writer expects that the findings of this research will show the tendency and form of ungrammatical constructions applied in students' writings. It can be a useful source for other researchers or education practitioners in applying teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching approaches, effective lesson plan, or any other tools for English teaching learning related to the problem.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive research. According to Lodico (2010:142), "qualitative researchers focus on study of social phenomena and giving voice to the feelings and perceptions of the participants under study". The purpose of this research is to investigate the ungrammatical constructions in students' written texts.

Population is all the research objects that have particular characteristic and a more restricted part of a group. As Best (1977:267) states: "a population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to researcher. The population may be all the individual of a particular type or more restricted part of that group." The population of this research is writing texts written by English students who have written and submitted research proposal to fulfill one of the requirements for writing a thesis at English Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University.

As a part of population, the sample of this research must be taken from the population, which is used as the source of the data of the research. Best (1977) defines a sample as a small proportion of population selected for analysis. The samples were taken based on the criteria established on the scope of research. The samples were the corpus collections consisting Research Backgrounds of Research Design submitted to fulfill one of the requirements for writing a Thesis at English Language Education Study Program in Tanjungpura University. These research backgrounds were designed between 2011 and 2013. There are ten (10) research background involved in this research. These research backgrounds were fulfilling the criteria of research scope: the source of data are designed or written between 2011 and 2013.

The data were collected from the corpus of research backgrounds written by the students of English Language Education Study Program. The data were classified into type of grammatical mistake. Then, they are computed with their frequency of occurrence.

The procedure of data collection takes some steps. The first is collecting samples of learners' language. As the data in this research were the phrases,

clauses, or sentences in ten research backgrounds of students' research designs which are grammatically deviated or incorrect, then the first step is collecting samples of learners' language. In this case, the samples are Research Backgrounds written by students.

The researcher collected ten (10) Research Proposals from English Education Study Program. Therefore, a legal permission from faculty is needed in order to get the access to collect the samples. The researcher asked for permission from faculty to collect the samples of learners' language in form of a letter from the faculty. The next was handing the letter to the Head of English Education Study Program to get some Research Proposals which belongs to English Education Study Program.

The next step is identifying incorrect constructions. As mentioned before that the data in this research were the phrases, clauses, or sentences in ten research backgrounds of students' research designs which are grammatically deviated or incorrect, therefore the researcher needed to separates any constructions which considered as data and other constructions considered as non data. The researcher gathered all ungrammatical or deviated constructions on the text. The deviances will be presented into the table of incorrect constructions.

Once the data were separated from non data, the researcher came to the phases of data analysis. There are some procedures. The first is classifying deviations. Here the researcher gave the classification of any ungrammatical constructions on the text. Any ungrammatical constructions were sorted by the similarity of the deviations case. The description will be presented in the Table of Classification.

The second is reconstructing the deviation. After the writer put each incorrect instruction into classification, the writer reconstructed the possible correct forms of the original one. Because the previous phase covers any ungrammatical constructions without intention to separates ungrammatical syntactical forms and other ungrammatical forms, then the writer only reconstructed incorrect or deviated constructions of phrases, clauses and sentences. Then it will be presented into the Table of Reconstructed Forms.

The third is collecting ungrammatical forms. After analyzing all samples, then researcher collected all forms of ungrammatical constructions and the number of each of them. It is presented on the table 4 which also presents the percentage of each form.

To find out the percentage of each type, the research used the formula as below.

$$\text{Percentage of each ungrammatical form} = \frac{\text{Total Ungrammatical construction of a form}}{\text{Total Ungrammatical construction}} \times 100\%$$

FINDINGS AND DISSCUSSION

Findings

There are three levels of ungrammatical forms encountered in this research. They are phrasal, clausal, and sentential. The ungrammatical phrasal form is the ungrammatical form that relate with phrasal constructions. The ungrammatical clausal construction concerns the ungrammaticality that happens to the agreement between subject and verb. And then, the ungrammatical sentential form is the ungrammaticality of sentences.

Based on the analysis of the sample, the researcher found seventeen (17) forms of ungrammatical syntactical constructions. The distribution of all ungrammatical constructions is on the phrase, clause, and sentence. Besides, there are ten (10) unidentified types of ungrammatical forms that are considered as Residues. From ten (10) students' written texts, there are eighty (80) ungrammatical constructions in various forms.

Sort of ungrammatical syntactic forms cover three main levels: Phrase level, clause level, and sentences level.

1. Phrase Level

The connection of every word that constructs a phrase in a sentence is sometimes constructed ungrammatically. This ungrammaticality then emerges ungrammatical phrase constructions in sentence. There are fourteen (14) ungrammatical constructions of phrase:

- Incorrect form of Determiner-head agreement, Example:
 - (1) So that the researcher want to try solve these problem by applying bottom-up process as strategy in listening. (Sample 4).
- Incorrect non-finite verb. Example:
 - (2) Teacher as a guide, facilitator, director, and resource in teaching learning process should create an effective teaching and motivating students in learning. (Sample 6).
- Incorrect word class. Example:
 - (3) Moreover, they also have difficult to decide the kind and purpose of the text. (Sample 6).
- Incorrect preposition-non phrase agreement, Example:
 - (4) Reading is fundamental for students to achieve their success need to gain byread a lot of books. (Sample 2)
- Misorder conjunction. Example:
 - (5) The technical students not onlyneed to acquire knowledge and theories from English reading material, but also need to read..... (Sample 2).
- Parallelism. Example:
 - (6) They help each other in understanding, share the idea and knowledge, and solve the problem they face. (sample 6).

- Incorrect “to infinitive”. Example:
 - (7) ...a reader is required to be ableidentify the main passage...(sample 1).
- Pronoun shift. Example:
 - (8) Brown (1995), which concern about the ultimate objective of the textbook is to permit the students to proceed on his/her own, by providing the basic facts, concept, and generalization required for the further study. (Sample 3).
- Double Preposition. Example:
 - (9) The choice of this subject is because the researcher found that in syllabus and RancanganPerangkatdanPembelajaran (RPP) arranged the listening activity in class then followed the researcher finding that students are lackofincomprehend the listening especially in KTSP book used by the students at ten grade students of SMA Muhamadiyah 1 Pontianak. (Sample 4).
- Double verb. Example:
 - (10) Each group is given several amounts of cards and they have to discussmatch them into the correct card. (Sample 8).
- Omission of conjunction. Example:
 - (11) each group is given several amounts of cards and they have to discussmatch them into the correct card. (Sample 8).
- Omission of preposition. Example:
 - (12) It will lead to the lack understanding of the reader about what the writer want to convey.
- Incorrect Verb form. Example:
 - (13) In contrast, one of the basic problems faceby the students in learning English is understand the text. (Sample 6)
- Incorrect form of head. Example:
 - (14) Only some of who are able to understand English. (Sample 1).

2. Clause Level

Ungrammatical in clause level is related to the connection among the items that forms the clause, such as subject, verb, etc. There are two problems in clause level: Incorrect Subject-verb agreement and fragment.

- Incorrect subject-verb agreement. Example:
 - (15) To find out the extent to which the successful application of learning strategy PQRST (Preview, Question, Read, Self Recite, Test) in assisting learners in improving reading comprehension, the writerreview and examine the issue with the title of thesis. "Improving Students' Conclusion Making... (Sample 1).
- Fragment. Example:
 - (16) One way to improve students' conclusion making skill in reading comprehension by PQRST strategy. (Sample 1).

3. Sentence Level

Ungrammatical in sentence level is related to the connection between the clauses in a sentence. There is one ungrammatical form.

- Tense shift. Example:

(17) This is reinforced by the evidence when they do exercise to answer the question, they could not answer the questions correctly/getting good score or standard score. (Sample 1).

4. Residues

Some ungrammatical constructions are difficult to identify by the researcher in term of classification and reconstruction. Therefore, these unidentified constructions are considered as residue. Residues in ten samples cover ungrammatical constructions of phrase, clause, and sentence as mentioned below.

- Unidentified ungrammatical phrasal form

A group of words are constructed and forming a phrase. But sometimes we cannot identify the meaning and the connection of that phrase related to the whole meaning of sentences because of its ungrammaticality. There are four unidentified ungrammatical phrasal forms as follow:

- (18) In the other to, in making a conclusion we are required to obtain the main information and analyze the facts exist in the text. (Sample 1).
- (19) It is also essential to note that listening, as an efficient channel to provide comprehensible input for learners, its teachers should be paid due attention to from the very beginning. (Sample 4).
- (20) In the process of learning English, there are four skills that students need to be mastered, listening, speaking, writing and reading. (Sample 7).
- (21) They did not have to respond to the reading, notgetting a grade for reading. (Sample 10)

- Unidentified Ungrammatical Clause forms

A clause in a sentence is sometimes constructed incorrectly even though it has subject and verb. There are three unidentified ungrammatical clause form:

- (22) Every student has their strategies in reading in order to adapt with their level in gain the information from the materials that they are read. (Sample 2).
- (23) Reading is the skill should be mastered in English needs energy and concentration while to do it. (Sample 6).
- (24) In this research, to avoid students from getting bored and to help the students easy to understand a text, the writer interest in applying Think Pair Share technique in improving reading comprehension, especially in narrative text. (Sample 10).

- Unidentified ungrammatical Sentences form

The connections among clauses in a sentence sometimes are problematic. There are three unidentified ungrammatical sentence forms.

- (25) The purpose of this text is to explain why should or should notdoneor happen,the writer persuade the reader by giving the arguments and also the solutions. (Sample 6).
- (26) In Indonesia, even the English language has been taught starting from the lowest level of the education is kindergarten. (Sample 7).
- (27) In the world of education in Indonesia, based on the policy of the Ministry of Education in Indonesia is that as a guide teaching English at the school every teacher has a syllabus compulsory education. (Sample 7).

All of the ungrammatical forms encountered in the data are as follows:

	Percentage
1). Phrase level	
a. Determiner-head modifier	(6.25%)
b. Non-finite	(3.75%)
c. Word class	(5%)
d. Preposition-Noun Phrase Agreement	(6.25%)
e. Misordering of conjunction	(1.25%)
f. Parallelism	(2.5%)
g. "To infinitive"	(1.25%)
h. Pronoun shift	(1.25%)
i. Double preposition	(1.25%)
j. Double verb	(2.5%)
k. Omission of conjunction	(2.5%)
l. Omission of preposition	(2.5%)
m. Verb form	(1.25%)
n. Head	(1.25%)
o. Unidentified ungrammatical phrasal level (Residue)	(5%)
2). Clause level	
a. Subject-verb agreement	(27.5%)
a. Fragment	(16.25%)
b. Unidentified ungrammatical clause level (Residue)	(3.75%)
3). Sentence level	
a. Tense shift	(6.25%)
b. Unidentified ungrammatical sentence level (Residue)	(3.75%)

Based on the above table, the most dominant ungrammatical form deals with Subject-Verb agreement (27.5%). And the least dominant forms are

misordering of conjunction, “To infinitive”, Pronoun shift, Double preposition, and verb form (each percentage is 1.25%).

Discussion

The entire process shows that no matter how the writers of written texts have prepared their writings, or how long they have designed the research backgrounds, the incorrect constructions in writing are still encountered. Then, in order to create writing product in the form of grammatical research background for a research design in Tanjungpura University, it takes circumspection and awareness of using correct grammar itself and carefulness.

Since an EFL student learns English, ungrammatical constructions in language production tend to happen in learning process because of an oversight or a lack of knowledge of the language. Consequently, there are many things related to these causes of ungrammatical production such as student’s condition in learning, teaching learning process, etc. Therefore, the study of grammar dealing with language production can be related to many things about foreign language learning.

Research findings show that some of ungrammatical forms take significant portions of the whole deviations. For examples, incorrect form of Subject-Verb Agreement takes 27.5%. It means that more than ¼ syntactical deviations made by students are incorrect form of subject-verb agreement. In many cases, writers failed to construct appropriate subject-verb agreement. It happens commonly to the combination of verbs and subjects or noun phrases which are not represented in pronouns (such as writer, researcher, teachers, Brown, Most people, Writer’s experiences in teaching, organization pattern, etc).

Commonly, combinations of pronoun subject and verb are correct as can be seen in (1)-(10).

- (1) It is understandable if...(sample 1)
- (2) Without any strategies,it is difficult to get the information and comprehends the meaning of the text. (Sample 2)
- (3) He or She is expected to have...(sample 3)
- (4) He confirms the importance of ...(Sample 4)
- (5) They have to focus on the topic...(Sample 5)
- (6) They help each other to...(sample 6)
- (7) They remain passive,...(sample 7)
- (8) It is crucial for teacher....(sample 8)
- (9) It gives the hearer more tasks...(sample 9)
- (10) It needs comprehension (sample 10)

Another dominant ungrammatical syntactical form is Fragment and it takes 16.25% of all ungrammatical syntactical forms. A fragment occurs when a group of words is punctuated as if it were a phrase or sentence, but it is not because it does not have a subject, it does not have a verb, it does not have a subject and a verb, or it is a dependent clause.

Many clauses or sentences from the data are not containing subjects, verbs, or both subject and verb. There are twelve problematic fragment forms:

- (1) In the other to, in making a conclusion we are required to obtain the main information and analyze the fact exist in the text. (sample 1)
- (2) Therefore, the role of educators not only provides a good teaching technique, but also creates a good atmosphere. (sample 1)
- (3) One way no improve students' conclusion making skill in reading comprehension by PQIRST strategy. (sample 1)
- (4) Strategies that used by students are varying. (sample 2)
- (5) Third, not knowing the vocabulary pronounce so that they difficult to differentiate between one to another such as final ending of words whether it is ending with ed, d, etc.(sample 4)
- (6) They still confused about changing infinitive into past form. (sample 5)
- (7) Some of them are not interested in reading text and others have confused what the main idea of the text and making the conclusion about the text. (sample 6)
- (8) The researcher believes, this problem is related to the difficulties in interpreting vocabulary contextually and less concentration in reading because the writer has same difficulties when junior and senior high school. (sample 6)
- (9) Students who study in junior high school level including beginner student category. (sample 7)
- (10) Index Card Match is an active teaching technique that using cards consist of questions and answers about the text. (sample 8)
- (11) But, speakersnot always follow those maxims (sample 9)
- (12) To make the right interpretation in a real conversation, they have to pay attention not only to the literal meaning but also to the intended meaning that the speakertrying to convey. (sample 9)

Almost all of constructions above omit verbs. There is only one construction which provides verb without subject pronoun, and another one omits both subject and verb. Omission of verb from ten samples takes place in passive or active noun clause and adjective clause, simple present tense sentences, and present continuous tense.

The fact that there are still many ungrammatical constructions made in students' writing should be paid more attentions to grammar application in research or thesis writing for students of English Language Education Study Program. The enforcement of communicative and collaborative in speaking second or foreign language needs to be balanced with awareness of using grammar properly in communicating and creating good writings.

Like incorrect form of subject-verb agreement, the occurrences of Fragment also have similarity for each sample, especially for the case of omission of Verb. There is a tendency of all these incorrect form where the omitted verb is likely the form of Auxiliary verb. All of omitted verb on the sentences above can

be substituted by Auxiliary verb. For example, in (6), “They still confused about changing infinitive into past form” can be reconstructed as “They are still confused about changing infinitive into past form”. The omitted verb can be substituted by auxiliary verb “are”. Or in (11), “But, speakers not always follow those maxims”, can be reconstructed into complete one “But, speakers do not always follow those maxims”. The omitted verb can be substituted by auxiliary “do”.

CONCLUSION

The brief description of analysis toward 10 samples is that there are 80 ungrammatical syntactic constructions which cover 14 ungrammatical forms in phrase level, 2 ungrammatical forms in clause level, and 1 ungrammatical form in sentence level. From the calculation, the most dominant ungrammatical form is the incorrect form of subject-verb agreement (27.5%). Then other major types are Fragment (16.25%), incorrect form of determiner-head agreement (6.25%), Tense shift (6.25%), and Incorrect preposition-noun phrase agreement (6.25%). And then, the least dominant forms are misordering of conjunction, “To infinitive”, Pronoun shift, Double preposition, and verb form (each percentage is 1.25%).

Based on the analysis we can conclude that there are still many ungrammatical constructions in research backgrounds written by the students of English Education Study Program.

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