

# GRAMMATICAL OVERGENERALIZATION MADE BY LEVEL 1 LEARNERS OF FIRDAUS ENGLISH COURSE (FEC) PATIANROWO, NGANJUK

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## Abstract

Besides the influence of first language (L1), learners' poor knowledge of second language (L2) often leads to mistakes (errors). The phenomenon of second language acquisition errors (L2) caused by the second language (L2) is called overgeneralization (negative intralingual transfer). This study describes grammatical overgeneralization often made by Level 1 students' of Paradise English Course (FEC) Patianrowo, Nganjuk and the factors causing them. The errors at least can be categorized into twelve kinds of errors: tense-related errors, modal-related errors, infinitive-related errors, gerund-related errors, present participle-related errors, noun clause-related errors, pronoun-related errors, article-related errors, preposition-related errors, singular and plural-related errors, and word order-related errors. Those errors are caused by two aspects, they are inductive and deductive reasoning.

**Keywords:** transfer, intralingual transfer (overgeneralization), level 1 students

## Abstrak

Selain bahasa pertama (L1), pengetahuan pembelajar yang buruk tentang bahasa kedua (L2) sering menyebabkan *mistakes (errors)*. Fenomena kesalahan akuisisi bahasa kedua (L2) yang disebabkan oleh bahasa kedua (L2) disebut *overgeneralization* (transfer intralingual negatif). Studi ini menggambarkan tata bahasa *overgeneralization* yang sering dilakukan oleh para siswa tingkat 1 di Firdaus English Course (FEC) Patianrowo, Nganjuk dan faktor-faktor penyebabnya. *Errors* setidaknya dapat dikategorikan menjadi dua belas jenis: *tense-related errors, modal-related errors, infinitive-related errors, gerund-related errors, present participle-related errors, noun clause-related errors, pronoun-related errors, article-related errors, preposition-related errors, singular and plural-related errors, and word order-related errors*. Kesalahan-kesalahan disebabkan oleh dua aspek, yaitu penalaran induktif dan deduktif.

**Kata kunci:** transfer, intralingual transfer (overgeneralization), level 1 students

## **A. BACKGROUND**

Each language has its own special rules and constraints of grammar needed to form and interpret sentences. Basically, the grammars of all Languages are the same in a case of complexity. According to O'Grady and Dobrovolsky (1989: 4 – 5), all languages have a grammar. The grammars of all languages are essentially equal in terms of overall complexity. This also occurs in the English language; for instance, the use of be verb “was/were” in the nominal sentence of past tense like “I was happy yesterday” or “She was in the restaurant last week”. However, we can not apply this to some verbal sentences like “I felt happy” or “he slept soundly”. There is an exception to form the sentences in the English language.

This kind of phenomenon frequently becomes a problem and results in errors for the English language learners, especially the young learners. They often fall into an assumption that to indicate past events, for example, it needs be verb “was/were”. They apply the previous knowledge and subsumers to subsequent learning within the target language (negative intralingual transfer). Therefore, it is not unfamiliar to hear or read expressions like “I was felt happy”/ tired/ hungry”. They are prone to generalize that to show the past events use the verb be” was/were. These sentences are obviously incorrect. Here, the be verb “was or were” is unnecessary. So, the sentences above should be “I felt happy/ tired/ hungry”.

Such case can be referred to as overgeneralization. Brown (2000: 95) states that to generalize means to infer or derive a law, rule, or conclusion, usually from the observation of particular instances. The process of this

overgeneralization occurs as the second language learner acts within the target language, generalizing a particular rule or item in the second language.

Thus, a research on overgeneralization is exceedingly important to do. Brown (2000: 97) says that overgeneralization is the incorrect application – negative transfer – of previously learned second language material to a present second language context. Therefore, English teachers are expected to make use the results of this study to identify the common grammatical errors made by the young learners in constructing English sentences due to overgeneralization. In addition, they can formulate the appropriate formula to overcome the errors.

This study will focus on the grammatical overgeneralization commonly made by the young learners and how such errors occur. For this purpose, written tasks are going to be administered to the level 1 students of Firdaus English Course (FEC), Patianrowo Nganjuk to see which parts of English grammar they often make errors. The students of this level like to talk about themselves, and their lives as main topics in the classroom and they frequently make errors. Besides, an in-depth interview is also being conducted to have general description of how they make errors as a result of overgeneralization. The test and interview will be done in March and April 2011

## **B. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study is designed as a descriptive qualitative research and is a case study conducted to six students taking an English course at Firdaus

English Course (FEC), Patianrowo Nganjuk. This Study will describe kinds of the grammatical overgeneralization produced by the students and the grammatical aspects of English that cause errors. In addition, the data collected are not in the form of numbers, instead of text or words. As stated by Miles and Huberman (1994: 9) that qualitative data, usually in the form of words rather than numbers. Similarly, Creswell (2003: 181) explains that qualitative research, the data collected involve texts (or word) data and images (or pictures) data.

### **C. SOURCES OF THE DATA**

The data in this study are taken from the respondents' written tasks (the results of the writing tasks done by the respondents) and the results of the interview with the respondents. The respondents come from FEC Patianrowo Nganjuk, one of the leading English courses in Nganjuk.

### **D. LOCATION**

Firdaus English Course (FEC) is located in Patianrowo Nganjuk. It was established in July 2003. The students of FEC are from the Elementary, the Junior High School, the Senior High School, the University and the public. The level 1 learners at FEC are those who start learning English at FEC or they usually learn English at FEC for one to twelve months. In the classroom, the learners of this level are fond of talking about themselves, and discussing their own lives as main topics.

### **E. RESPONDENTS**

There are six respondents in the study. They are Iza Mazida (14 years old), Nilna Arja Rakhmatika (16 years old), Ikrima Ulul Azmi (16 years old),

Vita Sari Gilang (15 years old), Gadis Malina Assyabana (15 years old), and Nailia Maghfiroh (14 years old). They are Junior High School Students. The respondents in this study are selected using criterion-based selection technique, which means that the respondents selected must meet criterion of young learners (the level 1 students of FEC Patianrowo Nganjuk).

### **F. INSTRUMENTS**

The instruments used to gather the data are the forms of the written tasks (the writing tasks), namely: a task to tell about an unforgettable experience, my mother's/ father's daily activities, if I have a lot of money, my parts of body and my favorite pet and the results of the interview with the participants: face -to-face/ one on one/ in- person interview.

### **G. FINDINGS**

#### **1. Tense-related errors**

Using tenses in English seems to be difficult for the young learners as there are many tenses in English. Each tense has its own special rules which are different from the others'. In using tenses in English, the students may fall into these kinds of errors :

##### **a. Simple present tense-related errors**

The simple present tense in English often becomes a great difficulty for the young learners, especially in the case of adding the final -es or -s for singular third person. As a result, when they are not sure which verbs that should be added by the final -es or -s, they tend to generalize the rule that whenever there is a verb preceded by singular third person, they immediately add the final -es or -s to any present verbs. In using the final -es or -s for singular third person, the students may fall into four kinds of

errors : the use of the final -es instead of -s, the use of a final -s instead of -es, unnecessary final-s, and omission of -s or -es.

The final -es is used when the student constructs the English sentence for third person singular in the simple present, for example, in the sentence 'My mother *escortes* me', this error is related to alternating forms because the student uses free alternation of various members of a class with each other. The error occurs when the student adds the final -es to the verb ending in '-rt'. In this case, the correct inflectional ending should be -s the verb ends in such consonants (e.g. My mother *escorts* me). Therefore, the construction of the sentence 'My mother *escortes* me' is definitely incorrect because the verb 'escort' is inflected by the final '-es' instead of '-s'.

Another error is related to the use of the final -s. In the sentences 'She *watchs* on TV' and 'She always *teachs* my little brother', such error is related to regularization since the regular mark is used in place of the irregular one. The student is clearly prone to over generalize the final -s to form the present verbs. In this matter, the verbs that end in '-ch' must be added by the final '-es' (e.g. 'She *watches* on TV' and 'She always *teaches* my little brother'). According to Thomson and Martinet (1986: 159), verbs ending in *ss*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, and *o* must be added by -es, instead of -s alone, to form the third person singular. Thus, the sentences 'She *watchs* on TV' and 'She always *teachs* my little brother' are clearly incorrect since the verbs 'watch' and 'teach' are added by the final '-s' instead of '-es'.

Besides, the final -s error occurs when the student constructs the negative English sentence for third

person singular in the simple present, for instance, 'my mother *doesn't buys* rice'. This error may be called double marking as a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once. The error occurs when the student adds the final -s to the verb 'buy' followed by the negative construction 'doesn't'. It seems that the student follows the subject of singular third person 'my mother' and the simple present regardless the existence of the helping verb 'does'. In this case, the final -s is unnecessary as the sentence contains a helping verb 'doesn't'. In English grammar, the construction of the negative sentence for singular third person in the simple present tense is : subject (He, She, it) + does + not + V<sub>1</sub> (Azar, 1993: 3). Thus, the sentence 'my mother *doesn't buys* nice' is obviously incorrect. It should be 'my mother *doesn't buy* rice'.

In addition, the students often omit the final -s. The expression 'It *like* play balls' is definitely incorrect. This error can be categorized as 'misformation' because the item is not supplied at all. The error occurs when the student does not supply the final -s to the verb 'like' which should be 'like' as the subject is singular 'it' and the tense is the simple present. Thomson and Martinet (1986: 159) state that in the affirmative the simple present has the same form as the infinitive but adds an *s* for the third person singular (e.g. 'he/she/it works').

Lastly, the omission -es error occurs when the student produces the English sentence in the simple present, for example, 'it *go* to my neighbor's house'. This kind of error is included misformation as the item is not supplied at all. The error occurs when the student does not add the final -es to the verb 'go'

which should be 'goes' since the subject is singular 'it' and the tense is the simple present. According to Azar (1993: 8), final -es is added to *do* and *go* (e.g. 'do → does', 'go → goes').

### **b. Past tense-related errors**

The rules concerning verb-forming that indicates the past event in English can be problematic for the young learners. It is due to the fact that there are two forms of verb-forming : regular verb-forming and irregular verb-forming. these frequently lead the students into errors when forming English verbs to show past activities.

The rules of verb-forming that indicate past tense in English are various. Some verbs require the suffix '-t' (e.g. *sleep* becomes *slept*, *leave* become *left*, etc.), and this rule often results in errors. The error occurs when the student adds the suffix '-ed' to the verbs (e.g. 'I *sleeped*' and 'I *leaved*'). such error is related to regularization since the regular mark is used in place of the irregular one. In this case, the student is over generalizing the verbs to the regular ones, such as opened, closed, etc. Therefore, the sentences they create come to errors.

Some verbs in English require the change of vowel to form past verb (e.g. *strive* → *strove*). This irregularity often causes the students come into error. The student often generalizes the verb 'strive' to the regular one by adding the suffix '-ed' (e.g. 'I *strived*'....) instead of changing the 'i' into 'o'. This error is related to misformation because the student gives the wrong form of the morpheme.

The next error which is in line with verb-forming to indicate the past occurrence occurs. In the sentence 'the ghost was *laught*', the student is apt to

over generalize the verb 'laugh' to the irregular verb by adding the suffix '-t'. This kind of error is concerned with misformation as the student supplies the wrong morpheme. It seems that the student is influenced by the previous experience (e.g 'bought'). In this case, the verb 'laugh' is included the regular verb. Therefore, it should be added by the suffix -ed 'laughed'.

### **2. be verb-related errors**

English has different rules in constructing non-verbal sentences and verbal sentences. To construct non-verbal sentences, we need be verb (e.g. is, am, are, was, were, etc.) that functions as predicate. On the contrary, to construct verbal sentences, we do not need any be verb. However, not all verbal sentences do not need any be verb. Some verbal sentences need it. One of the examples is past progressive. These rules often make the beginner learners fall into errors.

Firstly, unnecessary be verb occurs when the student produces the verbal sentence in present tense, for example, 'The people of Jawa *are have* brown skin'. This error may be called 'simple addition' since the student uses the item which should not appear in a well formed utterance. The error occurs when the student uses be verb 'are'. Here, the student follows the plural subject 'the people'. Besides, the student seems to categorize it as a non-verbal sentence. In this, the sentence above is categorized as a verbal sentence because the word 'have' is included a verb. Thus, the be verb 'are' in the sentence 'The people of Jawa *are have* brown skin' is unnecessary. It should be omitted (e.g., The people of Jawa have brown skin).

Secondly, unnecessary be verb occurs when the students construct

verbal sentences in past tense (e.g. *I was felt* happy/ tired/ hungry). This error may be called double marking as a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once. The error occurs when the students use be verb 'was'. The students regard that to express past events, it needs be verb 'was/ were'. In this matter, the sentences above are categorized as verbal sentences since there is a word 'felt' which is a verb category before the adjective. Therefore, the be verb 'was' in the sentences 'I was felt happy/ tired/ hungry' is unnecessary. It should be omitted (e.g. 'I felt happy/ tired/ hungry').

Thirdly, the error concerning the construction of the verbal sentences in past tense also occurs when the student uses be verb 'was' to mark the past event and the present form of a verb 'get on' (e.g. *we was get on* in the bus). This error can be categorized as misformation because the student uses the wrong form of the structure. This sentence is clearly incorrect. It is categorized as a verbal sentence because the word 'get on' is in a verb category. Thus, to construct this sentence the be verb 'was' should be omitted and the form of present verb 'get on' should be changed into the past form 'got on' (e.g., *we got on* the bus).

Next, the use of be verb in English leads the beginner learners into errors. The errors can be seen in sentences (e.g. '*we was* disappointed' and '*we was* tired'). This error is concerned with alternating forms since the student gives free alternation of various members of a class with each other. The student seems to over generalize be verb 'was' to the subject 'we' followed by adjectives that means to indicate nominal past tense. The error occurs as not all nominal past tense in

English use be verb 'was'. For the plural subject 'we' we should use be verb 'were'. Therefore, the sentences above should be 'we were disappointed' and 'we were tired'.

Then, be verb choice error occurs when the student produces the English sentence (e.g. '*There are* steep *slope* river bank'). This kind of error may be called 'alternating forms' because the student uses free alternation of various members of a class with each other. Here, the student seems to overgeneralization 'there are'. This sentence is definitely incorrect. The error occurs when the student uses the be verb 'are' (plural) while the noun is singular '*slope*'. In English, to show that the noun is singular, we have to use the be verb 'is'. Thus, the expression '*there are*' in the sentence above should be '*there is*'.

Besides, the student is prone to use the singular be verb 'is' instead of the plural be verb 'are'. For instance, 'the name of my 2 best friends is Ariska and Ngubud'. This error can be categorized as 'alternating forms' as the student gives free alternation of various members of a class with each other. The error occurs when the student uses the be verb 'is' while the noun is plural '*2 best friends*'. The student tends to over generalize the be verb 'is' which means 'adalah'. This is due to the fact that sometimes to say '*adalah*' in English we need the be verb 'is'. In this case, we must use the plural be verb 'are' since the noun is plural. Therefore, the expression above should be 'The names of my 2 best friends *are* Ariska and Ngubud'.

In addition, the error related to the use of be verb in English occurs when the students are apt to use the present be verb instead of the past be

verb while the expression is for the past event, for example, '*There are many tourists* from different countrys'. This error is related to alternating forms since the student uses free alternation of various members of a class with each other. In English, to indicate that the noun is plural in the simple past we need the be verb '*were*'. Thus, the construction '*There are, many tourists....*' Should be '*There were many tourists .....*'.

The last error concerning the use of be verb occurs when the student constructs the past progressive expression (e.g. '*when we was still walking .....*'). This error is included alternating forms as the student gives free alternation of various members of a class with each other. The error occurs when the student uses be verb '*was*'. Obviously, the be verb '*was*' used is incorrect as the subject is plural '*we*' which should be '*were*'. Accordingly, the expression above should be '*when we were still walking .....*'.

### 3. Modal-related errors

Using modals in English seems troublesome for the students. When they construct English sentences using modals they are apt to form the verbs depend on the subjects or the tenses following them. In using modals, the students may fall into three kinds of errors : the present tense form of a verb'-s' following a modal, past tense form of a verb following a modal, and present modal used instead of past modal.

To form a verb following a modal we do not need any final-s even though when the subject is singular third person '*She*'. Azar (1989: 68) states that modals do not take a final -s, even when the subject is *he, she* or *it* (e.g. '*He can do it*'). The error concerning the use of

modals occurs when the student generalizes to construct the sentence in present tense by adding a final -s on a verb '*has*' after a modal preceded by singular third person '*She*' (e.g. '*she must has a sunset prayer*'). This kind of error may be called '*simple addition*' since the student uses the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. In this case, this sentence is incorrect. The construction of the verb '*has*' should be the simple form of a verb '*have*' since it is preceded by a modal '*must*' (e.g. '*She must have a sunset prayer*').

Another error related to the use of modals occurs when the student generalizes to construct the past form on a verb '*went*' following a past modal '*had to*' (e.g. '*we had to went to fruit market*'). This error may be called double marking as a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once. This error occurs because the student follows the simple past. In this case, we do not need to construct the verb '*go*' to be the past form '*went*' as it is preceded by a modal '*had to*'. According to Azar (1989: 68), '*have to*' is immediately followed by the simple form of a verb. Thus, the expression above should be '*we had to go to fruit market*'.

The next errors concerning the use of modals occur when the students tell about past events. The students are prone to form the past form on a verb following a present modal, instead of changing the present modal to the past modal then following it with the simple present of a verb (e.g. '*we still must walked*' and '*I won't ever forgot him*'). These errors are related to misformation as the student uses the wrong form of the structure. In English, to construct past occurrences followed by a modal, we

must change the present modal form to the past modal form and follow it with the simple form of a verb. Accordingly, the sentences above should be 'we still had to walk' and 'I wouldn't ever/ would never forget him'.

#### 4. Infinitive-related errors

Some rules related to infinitive may be difficult for the students. In English, infinitive follows some verbs and adjectives and has some rules. This often leads the students into errors. Instead of using infinitive, the students are frequently prone to form the verbs depend on the subjects or the tenses following the sentence. In using infinitive, the students many fall into four kinds of errors : the use of a final - (the simple present form for singular third person) instead of an infinitive, the use of a final -s (the simple present form for singular third person) following an adjective instead of an infinitive, the use of past form of a verb following a purpose, and the use of past form of a verb following a transitive verb and nouns instead of an infinitive.

Constructing English sentences is frequently problematic for the learners. They often fall into errors due to the fact that in English, there are some verbs that must be followed by infinitives. One of the examples is the verb 'wait' that must be immediately followed by an infinitive. As stated by Azar (1989: 169) that the verb 'wait' is followed immediately by an infinitive (to + V<sub>1</sub>). (e.g. 'I will *wait to hear* from you'). The error concerning the use of an infinitive occurs when the student constructs the English sentence in present tense by adding the final '-s' on a verb 'prays' preceded by the verb 'wait' (e.g. 'she always waits to *prays*'). This error is included simple addition since the

student gives the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. The student seems to follow singular third person 'she' and the tense 'the simple present'. Certainly, this sentence is incorrect. Here, the simple present form of a verb -s 'prays' should be in the form of an infinitive 'to pray'. Thus, the sentence 'she always waits to prays' should be 'she always waits to pray'.

Sometimes, to form a verb in English preceded by an adjective we need an infinitive. As explained by Azar (1989: 175) that the adjective 'ready' is followed by an infinitive (to + V<sub>1</sub>). Generally, the students follow the subject and the tense to form a verb when producing English sentences. But, this is not always true, for instance, 'My mother takes a bath and *ready to goes* to school'). This error may be called 'simple addition' because the student uses the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. Here, the student is apt to over generalize the final -es when constructing the simple present followed by singular third person. In this case, the verb 'go' does not need a final -es 'goes' because it is preceded by an adjective 'ready'. Therefore, the correct construction should be '*ready to go* to school'.

Another error related to the use of infinitive occurs when the student constructs the English sentence in the simple past. The student tends to over generalize the past form on verbs in a sentence (e.g. 'last year I went to the Yogyakarta *to followed* the program study tour'). This sentence is definitely incorrect. This error can be categorized as double marking as a concept is expressed twice when the language requires its expression only once. In this matter, we need an infinitive to construct that sentence since there is a purpose.



Thomson and Martinet (1986: 294) say that purpose is normally expressed by the infinitive (e.g. 'He went to France *to learn* French'). Accordingly, the sentence constructed by the student should be 'Last year I went to Yogyakarta to follow ..'.

Besides, the errors related to the use of infinitive occur. When the students tell about past events that contain a purpose, they often make misformation on the verbs. The students are inclined to form the purpose in the past form of a verb, while the main verb is formed in the simple present, for instance, 'I drop in the mosque *to prayed* Isya'. This sentence is obviously incorrect. This error is related to misformation since the student uses the wrong form of the structure. In English to tell about past activities containing a purpose we should form the main verb into the past form, while the purpose should be the infinitive (to + V<sub>1</sub>). Therefore, the sentence 'I drop in the mosque *to prayed* Isya' should be 'I dropped in the mosque *to pray* Isya'.

The construction concerning infinitive is also prone to an error when the learner over generalizes the past form on verb in a sentence, for example, '*He invited we to went to TMII*'. This error is included 'simple addition' because the learner gives the mark that should not be needed. The learner seems to follow the simple past. This sentence is clearly incorrect as the verb 'go' is constructed in the form of past 'went' instead of an infinitive 'to go'. In this case, the verb 'go' is followed by a transitive verb 'invited' and two nouns (the subject *He* and the object *us*) which should be an infinitive 'to go'. Wishon and Burks (1980: 277) state that some verbs are followed by infinitive phrases containing a subject and an object. These

verbs are transitive. The sentence pattern is noun + verb + noun (e.g. 'The chairperson invited the committee members to vote'). Thus, the sentence 'He invited we to went to TMII' should be '*He invited us to go to TMII*'.

## 5. Gerund-related errors

Using gerund in English seems to be problematic for the student. The error occurs as the student over generalizes the past form of a verb to express the past occurrence after a preposition, for example, '*After arrived* in my home .....'. This expression is obviously incorrect. This kind of error may be called 'misformation' as the student uses the wrong form of the morpheme. In this case, we must use -ing form (gerund) because there is a preposition 'after' before the verb 'arrive'. According to Thomson and Martinet (1986: 96), after (preposition) must be followed by a noun, pronoun, or gerund. Thus, the expression '*After arrived* in my home ....' should be '*After arriving* in my home....'.

## 6. Present participle-related errors

The use of present participle in English can be problematical for the students. To tell about the past event the student is prone to over generalize the verb into the past form (e.g. 'when arrived there.....'). This expression is clearly incorrect since the verb 'arrive' is constructed to be the past form 'arrived' instead of present participle 'arriving'. This error can be categorized as 'misformation' since the student supplies the wrong form of the morpheme. This kind of error occurs because to express past events in English, we need to use V<sub>2</sub>. But, in this case, there is an exception. We must use -ing form

(present participle) as there is a conjunction 'when' before the verb 'arrive'. Mas'ud (2005: 201) states that participle is usually used after the following words : After, Before, Since, When, As, While, Whenever, Once, Until, and On (e.g. 'After having annoyed everybody, he went home'). Thus, the construction 'when arrived there' should be 'when arriving there'.

### 7. Noun clause-related errors

Sometimes, to make questions in English we need to place the verb *be* in front of the subject, for example, 'who *is she* ?'. However, we must put the verb 'is' after the subject 'she' when that expression becomes an object, for instance, 'I don't know who she is'. In this case, 'who she is' becomes a noun clause since it is the object of the verb 'know'. Azar (1989: 264) suggests that we do not use question word order in a noun clause. In a noun clause, the subject precedes the verb'. These rules often makes the students fall into errors.

The error occurs when the student constructs question word order instead of a noun clause. For example, in 'my father asked who is this ?'. This error is related to misformation as the student uses the incorrect form of the structure. The error occurs as the student does not construct the expression 'who is this' to be a noun clause which should be 'who this is', while the position of this expression is the object of the verb 'asked'. Here, it seems that the student over generalizes the question rule.

### 8. Pronoun-related errors

Some rules regarding how pronouns are used in English can be problematical for the students owing to the fact that in English there are many kinds of pronouns. One of them can be

categorized as personal pronoun. In using personal pronoun, the students may fall into two kinds of errors: the use of a subject pronoun instead of an object pronoun and the use of an object pronoun instead of a subject pronoun.

The error concerning object pronouns occurs when the students construct English sentences, for example, 'He invited *we* to went to TMII'. This kind of error is included archi-forms because the student selects one member of the class of personal pronouns to function for several others in the class. The error occurs when the student uses the subject pronoun 'we' while its position is as the object of the verb 'invited'. Here, the student seems to over generalize the subject pronoun in constructing English sentences. In English, the object pronoun of we is 'us'. Thus, the sentence above should be 'He invited *us* to go to TMII'.

Besides, the students often use subject pronouns instead of object pronouns in constructing English sentences, for instance, 'And father agree, then *me* and my family went to Jakarta'. This kind of error may be called 'archi-forms' since the student selects one member of the class of personal pronouns to function for several others in the class. The error occurs when the student uses the object pronoun 'me' while its position is as the subject of the verb 'went'. In English, the subject pronoun of me is 'I'. Therefore, the pronoun 'me' in the sentence above should be 'I'.

### 9. Article-related errors

Some rules related to the use of articles in English Frequently lead the students into errors. It is due to the fact that there are three articles : *the* (the definite article), *a* and *an* (the indefinite

article) in English that have different usage. Here are some errors made by the students concerned with the use of articles :

**a. Article *the* (the definite article)-related errors**

Using article *the* (the definite article) in English seems very hard for the students since it has various usages. As a result, when students are not sure whether to use an article for a certain thing, they often overgeneralize it or omit it. In using article *the* in English, the students may fall into five kinds of errors : unnecessary *the* before famous cities or countries (places), unnecessary *the* before indefinite numeral adjective, unnecessary *the* before possessive adjective, omission of *the* before famous books, and omission of *the* before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase.

Unnecessary ‘the’ error occurs when the students use it in constructing English sentences, for examples, ‘I went to *the Surabaya*’ or ‘I want invite my parents in *the America*’. This error can be categorized as ‘simple addition’ as the student use the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterances. The error occurs when the students use an article ‘the’ before the name of a city ‘the Surabaya’ or a country ‘the America’ while it is unnecessary to use one. It seems that the students overgeneralize an article ‘the’ to show a place. According to Mas’ud (2005: 307), no article is used before names of cities and countries with a few exceptions: the Hague, the Soviet Union, the United States, the Congo, and the Sudan. In addition, Thomson and Martinet (1986: 21) state that the definite article (the) is not used before names of places except names of seas, rivers, group of islands,

chains of mountains, plural names of countries, deserts and regions. Therefore, the article ‘the’ in the expressions ‘I went to *the Surabaya*’ and ‘I want invite my parents in *the America*’ should be omitted.

Another error is related to an unnecessary article ‘the’ which occurs when the students use it before an indefinite numeral adjective, for example, ‘I went home. Because we were tired, *the all students* were slept’. This error is related to simple addition because the student gives the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. The error occurs when the student uses an article ‘the’ before noun ‘students’ preceded by an indefinite numeral adjective ‘all’. Here the student seems to overgeneralize an article ‘the’ to show nouns. In this case, we do not need the article ‘the’ since the noun ‘students’ is preceded by an indefinite numeral adjective, ‘all’. Thus, the article ‘the’ in the expression ‘*the all students*’ above should be ‘all students’.

The other errors concerned with an unnecessary article ‘the’ occur as the student uses it before a possessive adjective, for instance, ‘*The my face*’ or ‘*The my hand*’. This error can be said as simple addition since the student adds the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterances. The error occurs when the student uses an article ‘the’ before the nouns ‘face’ and ‘hand’ preceded by a possessive adjective ‘my’. It seems that the student overgeneralizes an article ‘the’ to show nouns. This is due to the fact that in English, to indicate nouns we usually need an article ‘the’ (e.g. ‘the book’). In this case, we do not need any article because the nouns ‘face’ and ‘hand’ are preceded by a possessive adjective ‘my’. Therefore, the expressions ‘*The my face*’ and ‘*the my*

hand' should be 'My face' and 'My hand'.

Article missing error occurs when the students do not use an article 'the' in constructing English sentences while it is necessary to use one, for example, 'she recites Al-qur'an'. This error may be called 'misformation' as the item is not supplied at all. The error occurs when the student does not use the article 'the' before a famous book 'Al-qur'an' which should be 'the Al-qur'an'. Lou (2005: 137) says that *the* is used before famous books, for examples: the Bible, the Koran, the Odyssey, the Ramayana.

Besides, the error related to omission of 'the' occurs when the student does not use it before a noun 'scenery' made definite by the addition of a phrase 'in Lamongan', for example, '*Scenery in Lamongan* was very good and amazing'. This sentence is obviously incorrect. This error can be categorized as 'misformation' because the item is not supplied at all. In this case, we need an article *the* before the noun 'scenery' which should be 'The scenery' since it becomes definite after being followed by a prepositional phrase 'in Lamongan'. According to Thomson and Martinet (1986: 19), *the* (the definite article) is used before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause.

#### **b. Article *a/an* (the indefinite article)-related errors**

Some rules regarding how the indefinite article *a/an* are used in English can be problematical for the learners. It is due to the fact that both articles are used to indicate a singular noun. However, they have different rules. This often leads the students into errors. In using the indefinite article *a/ an* in English, the students may fall into four

kinds of errors: *a* used instead of *an*, omission of *a* before a singular countable noun, unnecessary *a* before plural nouns, and unnecessary *a* before the name of a country.

The indefinite article choice error occurs when an indefinite article is used to construct English sentences, for example, 'she must have *a* afternoon prayer'. This kind of error may be called 'archi-forms' since the student selects one member of a class of forms to represent others in the class. The error occurs when the student uses the indefinite article '*a*' before the word beginning with a vowel '*afternoon*' instead of '*an*' which should be '*an afternoon prayer*'. Here, the student seems to overgeneralize the indefinite article '*a*' to show a singular noun. In this case, we need the indefinite article '*an*' as it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel. Thomson and Martinet (1986: 15) state that the form of *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel (a,e,i,o,u) or words beginning with a mute *h*.

Next, the students often omit the indefinite article '*a*' while it is necessary to use one, for instance, 'Rabbit is *beautiful animal*'. This kind of error can be categorized as 'misformation' as the item is not supplied at all. This sentence is definitely incorrect. The error occurs when the student does not use the indefinite article '*a*' before a singular countable noun '*beautiful animal*'. In this matter, we need the indefinite article '*a*' since the noun is singular 'animal'. Thomson and Martinet (1986: 15) say that *a/ an* is used before a singular noun which is countable. In addition, the word '*anima*' is proceeded by an adjective beginning with a consonant '*beautiful*'. Thomson and Martinet (1986: 15) also

explain that the form of 'a' is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel with a consonant sound. Thus, the expression above should be 'Rabbit is *a beautiful animal*'.

Unnecessary 'a' error occurs when the student constructs English sentences, for example, 'I will buy a souvenir and I will buy *a some clothes*'. This kind of error is related to simple addition because the student uses the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. This expression is of course incorrect. The error occurs when the student uses the indefinite article 'a' before plural nouns '*some clothes*'. In this case, we do not need the indefinite article 'a' since the noun is plural. As stated by Thomson and Martinet (1986: 16) that *a/an* is omitted before plural nouns. Therefore, the correct sentence should be 'I will buy a souvenir and I will buy some clothes'.

In addition, the student is inclined to overgeneralize the indefinite article 'a' before the name of a country, for instance, 'I will visit in *a Singapore*'. This construction is obviously incorrect. This kind of error is included simple addition since the student adds the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. The error occurs when the student uses the indefinite article 'a' before the name of a country '*Singapore*' instead of omitting it. In this case, we do not need any article. According to Mas'ud (2005: 307), no article is used before names of cities and countries. Thus, the expression 'a Singapore' in the sentence above should be 'Singapore'.

#### 10. Preposition-related errors

Sometimes, the use of preposition in English leads the students into errors. The error can be seen in the

expression 'I will *visit in a Singapore*'. This error may be called 'simple addition' as the student supplies the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. The error occurs when the student uses the preposition 'in' after the word 'visit'. The student seems to overgeneralize the preposition 'in' following a place as in '*in Jakarta*'. In this case, we do not need the preposition 'in' since it is preceded by the verb 'visit'. In English, the verb visit is immediately followed by a person or a place. Thus, the expression above should be 'I will *visit Singapore*'.

#### 11. Singular and plural-related errors

Some rules regarding how a noun is made plural in English may be difficult for beginner learners. It is due to the fact that, English has many rules in making the plural of a noun. Usually the plural of a noun is made by adding *s* to the singular. But, there are many nouns that can not be made plural so. They are called 'irregular plural nouns'. These rules often lead the students into errors. Students are frequently prone to use a final *-s* in any situation when making plural of a noun.

The rule concerning a final *-s* or *-es* to make a noun plural in English often makes the students confused. For most countable nouns, a final *-s* added is to make them plural (e.g. 'book → books'). However, there is an exception for words that end in *-y*. Azar (1989: 198) states that if *-y* is preceded by a consonant, the *-y* is changed to *-i* and *-es* is added (e.g. 'cry → cries'). In the data collected the plural form error can be seen in the expression 'different *country's*'. This kind of error can be categorized as 'archi-forms' because the

student selects one member of the class of forms to represent others in the class. Here, the word 'countrys' is definitely incorrect because it is added by the final -s only while the -y is preceded by a consonant *r*. In this case, we must change the -y to -i and then add -es, which should be 'countries'.

Some rules related to irregular plural nouns in English can be problematical for students. It is because there are various forms of irregular plural nouns (e.g. 'foot → feet', or 'tooth → teeth'). It can be clearly seen that the plural form of nouns is a vowel change. The error occurs when the students use a final -s to the words categorized as irregular nouns to indicate plural nouns (e.g. 'two foots' or 'thirty two tooths') which should be (e.g. 'two feet' or 'thirty two teeth'). Such error is related to regularization since the regular market is used in place of the irregular one.

Additionally, the students often use an unnecessary final -s when making plural of English nouns, for example, 'three childrens'. This error can be said as simple addition as the student uses the item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance. Here, the student overgeneralizes the final -s to the word that has been plural 'childrens'. In this case, we do not need to add the final -s since the word 'children' is plural. The singular form of the word 'children' is 'child'. Thus, the expression 'there childrens' should be 'three children'.

## 12. Word order-related errors

English has some rules related to a singular noun and possessiveness. In English, to show a singular noun beginning with a consonant, we need an article *a*. The article *a* is put before the noun as in 'a special food'. Then, to indicate possessiveness, we may use the

preposition *of*. But, the *of* does not need to be translated as in 'a special food of the Indonesian people' (makanan istimewa orang Indonesia). Djuharie (2004: 216) says that a *noun phrase* with *of* that indicates words before the *of* refers to possession after the *of*, the word *of* does not need translating.

The error occurs when the student does not use the article *a* and the preposition *of* in expressing English phrase, for example, 'steep slope river bank' which means '*sebuah lereng tepi sungai yang curam*'. This kind of error can be categorized as 'misformation' because the items are not supplied at all. The error occurs in the form of 'steep slope' which should be '*a steep slope*' because the noun is singular '*slope*' and it is preceded by the modifier (adjective) '*steep*' which begins with a consonant *s*. Besides, the error occurs when the student does not use the preposition *of* which should be 'a steep slope *of* the river bank' to show possession.

## H. GENERAL DISCUSSION

### 1. Inductive and deductive reasoning that leads to overgeneralization

There are two polar aspects that lead to over generalization: inductive and deductive reasoning. In the case of inductive reasoning, one store a number of specific instances and induces a general law or rule or conclusion that governs or subsumes the specific instances (Brown, 2000: 97). Besides, induction is a method of logical reasoning that obtains or discovers general laws from particular facts or examples (Crowther, 1995: 607). For example, to indicate past events it needs the past verb. The error occurs when the

students take some specific instances (e.g. 'open → *opened*' or 'close → *closed*') categorized as regular verbs and then induce to a general conclusion that to show past activities, the verbs are added by the final *-ed*. They apply it to irregular ones (e.g. 'sleep → *sleaped*', 'strive → *strived*', and 'leave → *leaved*').

In addition, deductive reasoning leads to overgeneralization. According to Brown (2000: 97) deductive reasoning is a movement from a generalization to specific instances: specific subsumed facts are inferred or deduced from a general principle. Next, deduction is the process of reasoning from general principles to a particular case (Crowther, 1995: 303). This process of reasoning can be seen in the expression 'my' father asked *who is this?*'. Here, the student seems to over generalize a question construction to any situation after obtaining a general rule that to construct an English question, the auxiliary/ be verb should be put before the subject. The student does not know that this construction is a noun clause that the be verb should be placed after the subject. Another process of this reasoning can be read in the expressions 'three chindrens' or 'two foots'. In this case, the students tend to over generalize the final-s to any situation after gaining a general rule that to from the plural nouns in English the final-s is added after the noun.

## **2. Implication on teaching processes**

This study provides a view and indication of grammatical overgeneralization produced by level 1 learners of FEC Patianrowo Nganjuk in their writing tasks. It can be clearly seen that when learners move forward in the second language, their previous experience and existing subsumes start

to include structures within the target language itself. Errors in overgeneralization can help teachers find correct ways to improve students' learning. Particular errors such as in the case of incorrect choice of -s/-es noun clause errors, article errors, and singular-plural errors require well-designed problem solving methods. Such errors must be anticipated by teachers in teaching English to young learners.

## **I. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis in chapter IV, it can be concluded that over generalization do occur in the production of written tasks made by the level 1 learners of FEC, Patianrowo Nganjuk. The errors at least can be categorized into twelve kinds of errors: tense-related errors (e.g., 'my mother doesn't buys rice. '), be verb-related errors (e.g., 'I was felt happy. '), modal-related errors (e.g., 'I won't ever forgot him. '), infinitive-related errors (e.g., 'I went to Yogyakarta to followed ..... '), gerund-related errors (e.g., 'After arrived in my home..... '), present participle-related errors (e.g., 'when arrived there ..... '), noun clause-related errors (e.g., '.....my father asked who is this? '), pronoun-related errors (e.g., 'He invited we to went to TMII. '), article-related errors (e.g., 'I went to the Surabaya'), preposition-related errors (e.g., 'I will visit in a Singapore. '), singular and plural-related errors (e.g., 'two foots'), and word order-related errors (e.g., 'steep slope river bank').

Those errors are caused by two aspects, they are inductive and deductive reasoning. In the process of inductive reasoning, the learners take some specific instances and then induce to a general conclusion as in the case of past

tense markers. While, in the process of deductive reasoning, the students infer a general principle to specific instances as in the case of noun clause.

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