

THE GAIN OF INFLECTIONAL MORPHEMES IN STUDENTS' ESSAY AT THE THIRD SEMESTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF MUHAMMADIYAH SORONG

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Abstract: *The objective of this research was to find out what types of inflectional morphemes the students had used. The data was analyzed through the following steps: (1) calculating the inflectional morphemes found in the students' essay (2) making the percentage of the presence of inflectional morphemes taken from the three types of writing task (3) compare the more dominant presence of the morphemes among the three types of writing task. This research is conducted for 4 (four) writing meeting at the third semester of English Education Program. The students are found apply in different writing strategy for each meeting. They use different number of inflections with different writing strategy. The finding about the best writing strategy and the strategy of acquiring inflection are expected to improve the students' skill in writing. The result of meeting one (-s1=5, -s2=57, -s3=15, -ing1=33, -ed=6, -en=23, -est=2, -er=6) with total inflection is 146 with a percentage of 19.3; The result of meeting two (s1=3, -s2=115, -s3=5, -ing1=47, -ed=7, -en=13, -est=4, -er= 7) with total inflection is 201 with a percentage of 26.5; The result of meeting three (-s1=5, -s2=104, -s3=11, -ing1=42, -ed=5, -en=28, -est=3, -er=5) with total inflection is 203 with a percentage of 26.8; The result of meeting four (-s1=1, -s2=103, -s3=8, -ing1=41, -ed=22, -en=23, -est=6, -er=4) with total inflection is 208 with a percentage of 27.4. The conclusion is the appearance of the dominant inflection is the Plural inflection. From the result, the students can learn how to apply the morphemes in appropriate contexts and use of inflectional morphemes based on the contexts.*

Keyword: *gain, inflection, morphological strategy.*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis morfem infektif yang digunakan siswa. Data dianalisis melalui langkah-langkah berikut: (1) menghitung morfem infleksional yang ditemukan dalam karangan siswa (2) membuat persentase kehadiran morfem inflektif yang diambil dari tiga jenis tugas menulis (3) membandingkan kemunculan morfem yang lebih dominan di antara tiga jenis tugas penulisan. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk 4 (empat) sesi penulisan pada semester ketiga Program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Para siswa menerapkan strategi penulisan yang berbeda untuk setiap pertemuan. Mereka menggunakan jumlah infleksi yang berbeda dengan strategi penulisan yang berbeda. Temuan tentang strategi menulis terbaik dan strategi memperoleh infleksi diharapkan dapat meningkatkan keterampilan siswa dalam menulis. Hasil pertemuan satu (-s1 = 5, -s2 = 57, -s3 = 15, -ing1 = 33, -ed = 6, -en = 23, -est = 2, -er = 6) dengan total infleksi adalah 146 dengan persentase 19,3; Hasil pertemuan dua (s1 = 3, -s2 = 115, -s3 = 5, -ing1 = 47, -ed = 7, -en = 13, -est = 4, -er = 7) dengan total infleksi adalah 201 dengan persentase 26,5; Hasil pertemuan tiga (-s1 = 5, -s2 = 104, -s3 = 11, -ing1 = 42, -ed = 5, -en = 28, -est = 3, -er = 5) dengan total infleksi adalah 203 dengan persentase 26,8; Hasil pertemuan empat (-s1 = 1, -s2 = 103, -s3 = 8, -ing1 = 41, -ed = 22, -en = 23, -est = 6, -er = 4) dengan total infleksi adalah 208 dengan persentase 27,4. Kesimpulannya adalah infleksi yang sering muncul adalah infleksi jamak. Dari hasil penelitian, siswa dapat belajar bagaimana menerapkan morfem dalam konteks yang sesuai dan penggunaan morfem inflektif berdasarkan pada konteks.

Kata kunci: gain, infleksi, strategi morfologi.

1. Introduction

English has been taught as a foreign language in Indonesia for years. Currently, it is taught from elementary to college level in any educational institution. The students, particularly in the college level, who are taking English as the major of study are required to be competence enough in the English language skill. It would be great if they could reach level close to those living in english

speaking countries. Up to now, the students' writing skill has not reach desirable level of competence. Therefore this particularly skill still needs to be improved since the uses of some particular grammatical rules have not yet been mastered well. They tend to ignore or be unconscious of the mistakes they make in their writing in terms of grammatical features even the simple ones. Hence, the meanings of the sentences sometimes are not easily grasped by the readers because of inappropriate grammatical application. Probably, there should be an appropriate method or strategy to teach the students writing in order that they are able to generate a work of writing much better.

When producing academic writing, both students and teachers should consider four main elements of academic writing (Taylor, 2009). These are writer, subject matter, reader, and the forms of language. The four elements must be precisely reflected in four main characteristics of a particular written language itself. Hinkel believes that non-native English speakers' competence in writing is substantially different from those of native speakers. Teachers at this point need to think about how to help students develop their writing skill to be good enough as a sign educated person. From this point of view, it can be said that the students' products in writing skill will be regarded as their development in language gain process.

In creating particular writing or essay, the students need to pay a very close attention to the linguistic elements which are quite influential in producing meaning of the sentences and the context involved. One of the elements is morphological features such as inflection. The students, especially in English Program must understand about the concept of this sort of affixation since it will influence the structure of the sentence. Nevertheless, the students have various writing to be selected in which the implementation of their understanding of inflection would be possibly seen.

Students' essay is taken to be the object of the analysis of inflection in this study since the students may consider that this type of essay enables them to come up with various types of word category. They simply need to list or classify several classes or elements of a particular object before they describe them into writing text as the main idea in paragraphs. The description of any object of discussion as the main idea will enable the students to make different forms of words, that is, between the main idea in every paragraph and the description or elaboration of the main idea in terms of word categories used in their writing. The use of different word categories in descriptive writing can be a major source of analysis to seek for the students' gain of the grammatical items in their essays, especially the items that are categorized as inflectional morphemes.

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Design

The purpose of this study was to analyze the students' language gain particularly on inflectional morphemes through a particular type of essay. The researcher was going to describe the process of the study conducted qualitatively. The researcher took the students' work on writing in essay to be investigated. Therefore, he needed to analyze the students' writing, then transform the result of the analysis into a textual form since the qualitative data analysis is done with words. The researcher had a 4-week observation and one meeting in each week during the teaching and learning process in writing class. The researcher simply used one class as the subject of the research.

To support the qualitative description of the findings of this research, it was also planned that quantitative information would be referred to. For instance, the results of the calculation of the numbers of inflectional morphemes in students' writing which were in the form of numbers were elaborated descriptively. As a result, the readers would understand the meaning of the calculation through reading the elaboration given by the researcher. To wrap both qualitative and quantitative data up to the description of the maximum result of data analysis, during the observation, the researcher firstly came up with an explanation or elaboration about the fact or phenomena and his point of view of the teaching and learning process in writing class.

2.2 Subjects of the Research

This research involved at the Third Semester of English Education Program of Education University of Muhammadiyah In Academic Year 2018/2019.

2.3 Technique of Collecting the Data

The data were collected through classroom meetings. The first step in collecting the data was the researcher brainstormed the students about what inflectional morphemes are. The next step was the researcher collects all the students' works that had been completed that were in the forms of completed profiles that reflected their guided task and free or independent writing task. The last step, after collecting the students' essay, the researcher categorized the inflectional morphemes obtained from the students' essays. At last, the researcher found out the types of inflectional morphemes that the students most and least used of in their essays.

2.2 Technique of Analyzing the Data

The researcher attempted to find out the students' gain of inflectional morphemes in descriptive essays. The next method was making the percentages of the presence of the inflectional morphemes taken from the three types of writing task. The last method is examining the contribution of the gain strategy towards the development of students' writing skill.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The Results of the First Observation

In the first meeting, Student 1 uses 250 words in his writing. Of the 250 words, 3 (15.8%) possessive, 9 (47.4%) present participle, and 1 (5%) comparative degree morphemes appear. Of 250 words, he uses 19 morphemes which make up 7.6% of the whole number of inflectional morphemes. The distinction of the present participle (4.7%) of the whole number of inflectional morphemes indicates that student 1 acquires the present participle much better than the others.

Of the total 380 words, student 2 uses 18 (4.7%) inflectional morphemes. The plural morphemes make up the highest number of inflectional morphemes, that is, 7 (38.9%), and then come the present participle and past tense that use 4 (22.2%) inflectional morpheme for each type, and later come the third person singular and superlative degree in which each of them uses 2 (2.2%) of the inflectional morphemes.

Student 3 uses 6 (2.01%) inflectional morphemes which are then distributed into 4 (66.7%) plural, 1 (16.7%) possessive and 1 (16.7%) third person singular. While student 4 uses 12 (6.6%) inflectional morphemes out of 193 words of his essay. These inflectional morphemes are then used as plural morphemes of 8 (66.7%) plural, 2 (16.7%) third person singular, and 2 (16.7%) past participle.

The last student uses 254 words. As the other students, of the 9 (3.5%) inflectional morphemes appears in his writing, 5 (55.6%) morphemes categorized as plural dominate the occurrence of morphemes.

Based on the analysis of the eight students who apply inflectional morphemes which are categorized into eight types of inflectional morphemes, seven students dominate their writings with plural morphemes. It indicates that most of the students acquire the plural morphemes much better than the other inflectional morphemes.

3.2 The Results of the Second Observation

In the second meeting, student 1 creates 21 (6.3%) inflectional morphemes of the total 334 words. 10 (47.6%) plural morphemes dominates the morphemes occurrence of the whole number of inflectional morphemes. Of the 21 (6.3%) inflectional morphemes, she created 3 (14.3%) possessive, 10 (47.6%) plural, 4 (19%) present participle, 2 (9.5%) past participle, and 1 (4.8%) of either comparative or superlative degree. This means that plural morphemes dominate the use of inflectional morphemes in this writing.

Of the 246 words used by student 2, 9 (64.3%) present participle morphemes dominate the morphemes occurrence, and followed by 3 (21.4%) plural and 2 (14.3%) past participle morphemes. 9 (64.3%) morphemes which are categorized as present participle dominate the acquisition of

inflectional morpheme better than the other morphemes. It is also different from her previous writing in which she creates the plural morphemes more than the other morphemes.

Student 3 simply composes two types of inflectional morphemes; they are 5 (71.4%) plural and 2 (28.6%) past participle morphemes. As his previous writing, the dominant occurrence of plural morphemes indicate that he acquires the plural morphemes much better than the other kinds of morphemes. Of the 292 words, only 7 (2.4%) inflectional morphemes make up the whole number of the morphemes.

Of the 226 words created by student 4, 15 (6.6%) inflectional morphemes make up the writing with 8 (53.3%) plural as the dominant morphemes of the whole number of morphemes. The preceding morphemes are 3 (20%) present participle, 2 (13.3%) past tense and 2 (13.3%) past participle morphemes. Student 4 creates the same number of morphemes as the previous meeting and it indicates that she acquires the plural morphemes better than the others.

The dominance occurrence of inflectional morphemes that appears in the student 5's writings belong to plural morphemes. Of the 255 words, he uses 35 (13.7%) inflectional morphemes which make up the writing. Of the 35 (13.7%) inflectional morphemes, he creates 24 (65.8%) plural, 2 (5.7%) third person singular, 5 (14.3%) present participle, 3 (8.6%) past participle and 1 (2.9%) superlative degree. The plural morphemes still dominate her morphemes as the first meeting. It indicates that she acquires the plural morphemes much better than the other morphemes.

As in the previous writing, the plural morphemes dominate the student 6's essay. Of 361 words, 41 (11.4%) are identified as inflectional morphemes. The dominant occurrence of morphemes belongs to plural which make up 20 (48.8%) of the total number of inflectional morphemes.

Student 7 uses 23 (8.8%) inflectional morphemes of the total 261 words in her essay. The dominant morphemes which occurs in her writing belongs to plural morphemes of the 23 (8.8%) morphemes, 15 (65.2%) are categorized as plural, 1 (4.3%) present participle, 2 (8.7%) past participle.

The plural morphemes also dominate student 8's essay as many as 30 (66.7%) morphemes of the total 45 (11.8%) inflectional morphemes of the total 381 words. It makes up 30 (66.7%) of the total morphemes, followed by 3 (6.7%) third person, 10 (22.2%) present participle, 1 (2.2%) past tense, and 1 (2.2%) superlative degree.

Based on the analysis of students' writing in the second meeting, it indicates that the plural morpheme still dominates the students' preference of inflectional morphemes. Of the eight students, seven students apply the plural morphemes as the most dominant morphemes in their essays. It indicates that the students acquire the plural morpheme much better than the other morphemes.

3.3 The Results of the Third Observation

In the third meeting, Of the 219 words and 15 inflectional morphemes used by student 1, 6 (40%) are categorized as present participle. It dominates the whole number of morphemes. It is followed by 5 (33.3%) plural, and 4 (26.7%) past participle morphemes. The dominant occurrence of present participle morphemes indicates that he applies the present participle morphemes more than the other morphemes.

Student 2's essay is dominated by the plural morphemes. Of the 222 words, 19 (8.6%) inflectional morphemes make up the essay. 7 (36.8%) which are categorized as plural morphemes dominate the morphemes. They precede 6 (31.6%) present participle, 2 (10.5%) past tense, 3 (15.6%) past participle, and 1 (5.3%) comparative degree morphemes. In the third meeting, the plural morphemes still dominate his essay. It indicates that he acquires the plural morphemes more than the other types of inflectional morphemes.

The plural morphemes also still dominate the student 3's essay. 10 (76.9%) plural, 1 (7.7%) present participle, 2 (15.4%) past participle morphemes makes up the essay. The same dominant occurrence of plural morphemes also happens in his previous essay. It indicates that he acquires the plural morphemes much better than the other kinds of inflectional morphemes.

Of the 193 words, 19 (9.8%) inflectional morphemes make up student 4's essay. He uses 12 (63.1%) plural, 2 (10.5%) third person singular, 1 (5.3%) present participle, and 4 (21.1%) past participle morphemes. As his previous writing, the plural morphemes make up his essay dominantly rather than the other morphemes. It is likely that he acquires the plural morphemes better than the other morphemes.

Student 5 has various inflectional morphemes that emerge in her essay. Of the total 342 words, 44 (12.9%) are identified as inflectional morphemes. 5 (11.4%) are categorized as possessive, 23 (52.3%) are plural, 4 (9.1%) are third person singular, 6 (13.6%) are present participle, 5 (11.4%) are past participle, and 1 (2.3%) is categorized as comparative degree morphemes. The domination of plural also occurs in her previous essay. It indicates that she acquires the plural morphemes better than the other types of inflectional morphemes.

Student 6 also applies various inflectional morphemes. Of the 443 words, 47 (10.6%) are categorized as inflectional morphemes. 15 (31.9%) are identified as plural, 4 (8.5%) are third person singular, 22 (46.8%) are present participle, 1 (2.1%) is past tense, 4 (8.5%) are past participle, 1 (2.1%) is categorized as comparative degree morphemes. In her essay, the present participle dominates the whole number of inflectional morphemes.

Student 7 uses 15 (4.9%) inflectional morphemes of the total 308 words. As the previous essay, the plural morphemes dominate as many as 10 (66.7%) morphemes. 1 (6.7%) is categorized in the third person singular, 2 (13.3%) are past tense, 1 (6.7%) is superlative degree, and 1 (6.7%) is comparative degree morphemes which make up student 7's essay.

The last student uses 31 (8.8%) inflectional morphemes of the total 353 words. 22 (71%) plural, 6 (19.3%) past participle, 2 (6.4%) superlative degree, and 1 (3.2%) comparative degree morphemes make up his essay. The plural morphemes dominate the morphemes occurrence in this essay. It means that this student acquires the plural morphemes much better than the other categories of inflectional morphemes.

Based on the calculation of the occurrence of inflectional morphemes in the students' essays, the result of the third meeting in the classroom shows the same type of inflectional morphemes that are mostly used by the students in the sense that plural morphemes are the majority morphemes in most of the students' essays.

3.4 The Results of the Fourth Observation

In the last meeting, Of the 240 words used by the student 1, 12 (5%) are categorized as inflectional morphemes. They are made up of 5 (41.7%) plural, which are the dominant occurrence, 1 (8.3%) are present participle, 4 (33.3%) past participle, and 2 (16.7%) comparative degree morphemes. The plural morpheme is still applied dominantly by this student in his essay.

Student 2 simply created 3 types of inflectional morphemes which make up 6 (2.4%) inflectional morphemes of the total 245 words. 2 (33.3%) are categorized as plural, 1 (16.7%) is past tense, and 3 (50%) are past participle. In the last essay, student 2 dominates her essay with past participle. She applies the past participle morphemes better than the other morphemes.

Student 3 uses 21 (7.3%) inflectional morphemes of the total 289 words. 5 (23.8%) plural, 1 (4.8%) third person singular, 8 (38.1%) present participle, 7 (33.3%) past tense morphemes make up the essay. Present participle morphemes dominate student 3's essay.

Student 4 uses 413 words which are built from 36 (8.7%) inflectional morphemes. They consist of 26 (72.2%) plural, 1 (2.8%) third person singular, 4 (11.1%) present participle, and 5 (13.9%) past participle morphemes. The plural morphemes are still dominant in this essay.

Student 5 has the highest number of inflectional morphemes used in his essay of the fourth meeting. She uses 49 (16.9%) inflectional morphemes of the total 290 words. She applies almost all types of the inflectional morphemes in her essay. These consist of 1 (2.04%) possessive, 20 (40.8%) plural, 3 (6.1%) third person singular, 15 (30.6%) present participle, 5 (10.2%) past tense, 1 (2.04%) past participle, and 4 (8.2%) superlative degree morphemes. The occurrence of these inflectional morphemes is dominated by the plural one.

Of the 441 words used by student 6 in his essay, 43 of them are inflectional morphemes. These morphemes are distributed into 23 (53.5%) plural, which is the dominant morphemes, 2 (4.7%) third person singular, 12 (28%) present participle, 1 (2.3%) past tense, 3 (7%) past participle, and 2 (4.7%) comparative degree morphemes. It is likely that student 6 still applies the plural morphemes much better than the other morphemes.

Student 7 uses 319 words that are built from 18 (5.6%) inflectional morphemes. They consists of 7 (38.9%) plural, 1 (5.6%) present participle, 4 (22.2%) past tense, 4 (22.2%) past participle, and 2 (11.1%) are superlative degree morphemes. The dominant occurrence on student 7's essay belongs to the plural morphemes.

The last student creates 15 (65.2%) plural, 1 (4.3%) third person singular, 4 (17.4%) past tense, and 3 (13.04%) past participle morphemes which built up the total 23 (8.015) inflectional morphemes in his essay. As the other students, the plural morphemes dominate the occurrence the inflectional morphemes.

Based on the results of the students' works in the fourth meeting, which is the last meeting, it is found that the students create the different number of inflectional morphemes in their essays in each meeting. It is also identified that most of the student dominate their essays with plural category of inflectional morphemes. Of the eight students who apply different types of inflectional morphemes, six of them dominate the morphemes with the plural form of inflectional morphemes. This indicates that the students acquire the plural category of inflectional morphemes much better than the other types of inflectional morphemes.

From four meeting above, It makes up 27.4% of the total morphemes used by the students. It is also identified that the types of morphemes mostly applied by the students are (1) plural morphemes (379 items); (2) present participle morpheme (163 items); (3) past participle morphemes (87 items); (4) past tense morphemes (40 items); (5) third person singular morphemes (38 items); (6) comparative degree morphemes (22 items); (7) superlative degree morphemes (15 items); and (8) possessive morphemes (14 items).

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

After analysis of the use of inflectional morphemes in the students' essays during the four meetings has come up in the dominance occurrence of inflectional morphemes. There are eight categories of inflectional morphemes into which the students' inflectional morphemes are also classified including possessive, plural, third person singular, present participle, past tense, past participle, comparative and superlative degrees. Based on the calculation of the occurrence of the inflectional morphemes in the students' essay in every meeting, this comes to the finding of the dominant inflectional morphemes mostly applied by the students. The first rank of the dominant occurrence is plural. The second is present participle, then it is followed by past participle, past tense, third person singular, comparative, superlative, and the last is possessive morphemes.

The processes of teaching and learning writing in the classroom can help the students improve their writing skill. In addition, the writing strategy that can be applied by the students in composing a work of writing can improve their writing achievement. During the four meeting conducted in the classroom, it is found that the free/independent writing task has enabled the students to create much more appropriately used inflectional morphemes than the other writing strategies. The writing strategy gives more chance for the students to explore more forms of inflectional morphemes to be expressed in their writing and can give more freedom to complete their essays.

4.2 Suggestions

Following the findings of this study, teachers have already an alternative in teaching grammar and writing. They can combine the strategy in teaching grammatical features particularly morphemes and writing. It is found that the free/independent writing task can help the students create more appropriately used inflectional morphemes. Therefore, the teacher can apply the method to measure students' improvement in writing skill.

Since writing essays is a complex process and need many aspects that must be attended in terms of grammar, the acquisition of the inflectional morphemes of the students can be a prominent factor for them to be attended as well. The students can apply the free/independent writing task to help them acquire inflectional morphemes. They can learn how to apply the morphemes in appropriate contexts and certainly they will be able to produce appropriately used inflectional morphemes based on the contexts.

The works of researchers in educational field will constantly support the improvement of teaching and learning strategy. The findings of this study are probably insufficient to satisfy the teachers as well as the students to improve their quality in teaching and learning process particularly in academic writing. As a result, this study is expected to encourage the other researchers to conduct a much better study of grammatical aspect or students' writing development for academic purposes.

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