

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN WRITING INTRODUCTION OF
THESIS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS OF IAIN RADEN INTAN
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the grammatical errors in writing introduction (Chapter 1) of thesis of English Department Students of IAIN Raden Intan Lampung . The writer selected in the study because most of English Department students still made mistakes or errors in English. The type of the study used in this case is descriptive qualitative research. This study is done by classifying and analyzing the graduating paper as the objects based on the types of grammatical errors proposed by Azar (1989: A29), they are Singular/Plural error, Verb-Tense Error, Subject-Verb Agreement Error, Verb-Form Error, and Word-Form Error. Based on the data analyzed, it was found that the frequent and dominant errors done by the theses writer are as follow: Singular/Plural Noun Form (19.11%), Verb-Tense Error (23.53%), Verb-Form Error (16.17%), Subject-Verb Agreement (30.88%) and Word-Form Error (10.29%).

Key Word: grammar, error analysis, introduction, graduating paper.

Introduction

In order to convey meaning in communication, both in written and oral communication, one needs to be fully equipped with sufficient grammar mastery. Grammar is the silver lining of language, the harmony of language, as it is the one that makes language meaningful. Imagine if sentences are uttered without grammar, it will be as messy as an orchestra without a conductor. The role of grammar is vital in communication, as Goussier (1921:122) states that language is a function and grammar is the analysis of this function, it is as useless to know grammar in order to speak one's native tongue, as to know physiology in order to breathe with one's lungs, or to walk with one's legs.

As stated previously that grammar holds an important role in a language. It is an inseparable component of language. Nunan (1999:97) states that grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. Basically, grammar is the glue that holds several parts of the language together so that it can produce meaning in communication.

Someone is considered successful in learning a language when they are able to communicate with ease in both oral and written. Well-structured and understandable sentences are the clear sign of a good grammatical competence. Richards (2006:3) states that grammatical competence refers to the knowledge we have of language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language.

There are two terms that are commonly used to describe the inaccuracy in applying grammar into writing, namely error and mistake. The misperception of the uses of those two terms is often occurred. Though they seem similar, in fact they are quite different. Ellis (2005:263) differentiates the error and mistake as follows:

“There are two ways suggested to distinguish between an error and mistake. The first one is to check the consistency of learner's performance. If he sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he always uses it incorrectly, it is then an error. The second way is to ask learner to try to correct his own utterance. Where he is unable to, the deviations are errors; where he is successful, they are mistakes”

From the theory, it can be inferred that error is an inaccuracy in using the grammatical rules caused by one's lack of understanding of the said rules, while mistake is simply performance failure in using the said rules.

Although grammar lessons have been taught to the students of English Education Study Program since the very beginning of their education there, still, grammatical errors can be found in most of their language activities, in this case writing. Basically, the grammatical errors that the students usually make are related to their negligence of basic writing mechanic and grammatical rules. The errors might seem small and insignificant, but they may have big influences on the quality of writing.

Introduction is the first chapter in the arrangement of a thesis. It consists of three basic parts, namely: introduction and identification of problems of the study, discussion of previously conducted and related research and discussion of the data gained during the pre-research. The students write the introduction part by integrating their own thought with the pre-liminary data gained and supporting theories. The errors are prone to happen in this part since they have to compose it by writing down their own thought and arguments.

This study focused on the errors that the students make in writing the introduction or chapter 1 of thesis. The errors mentioned here refer to the inaccuracy in writing caused by having false knowledge, as Breslin (2011:221) defines error as the condition of having incorrect or false knowledge.

Further, the errors are categorized into five (Schramper, 1989: A29) categories, they are:

1. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Occur when the subject does not agree with the verb in person or number.

Example: He *walk* every morning.

Correction: He *walks* every morning.

2. Verb Tense Errors

Occur when an incorrect time marker is used.

Example: I *was* working on my paper since 6:00 am.

Correction: I *have been* working on my paper since 6:00 am.

3. Verb Form Errors

Occur when a verb is incorrectly formed.

Example: I will *driven* to the airport next week.

Correction: I will *drive* to the airport next week.

4. Singular/Plural Noun Ending Errors

Often occur when there is confusion about which nouns are countable and which aren't.

Example: I have turned in all my *homeworks* this week.

Correction: I have turned in all my *homework* this week.

5. Word Form Errors

Occur when the wrong part of speech is chosen.

Example: I'm happy to live in a *democracy* country.
Correction: I'm happy to live in a *democratic* country.

To analyze what kind of error that is frequently occurred in the student's introduction part of thesis, the writer used the theory of types of error mentioned previously as the basis of data analysis.

Method

The type of the study used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. "Qualitative refers to the meaning, the definition or analogy or model or metaphor characterizing something" (Maanen, 1983:32). Further, Maanen (1983:37) states that qualitative research related with the time, space and the other elements that can be distributed analytically. The processed of qualitative research will form a pattern can be used for long time. The place and things dimension can be summarized. (Maanen, 1983: 37)

The source of analyzed data in this study through documentation was taken from the theses that were written by the students of English Study Program of IAIN Raden Intan Lampung who have graduated. To be exact, the writer took sixteen theses written in the academic year of 2013/2014.

In analyzing the data, the researcher did a non-statistical analysis based on the shown data. The steps in analyzing data used in this study are

1. Analyzing the error sentences that present in the theses
2. Counting each kind of error to find the frequent error. In counting the frequent errors the writer use the following formula :

$$\text{Error percentage } R = \frac{\text{The number of error (X)}}{\text{The total number of error (Y)}} \times 100\%$$

3. Finding the dominant error
4. Give recommendation on how to minimize the errors.

Finding

In analyzing the errors, the researcher examined the structure of of the English sentence and paragraph. The errors in the sentences and the paragraphs were classified into errors categories based on English grammar error categories (, 1989: A29).

1. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Table 1
Subject-Verb Agreement Errors Found in the Theses

No.	Error Sentences	Correct Sentences
1	Game play an important role in teaching and learning activity	Game plays an important role in teaching and learning activity
2	As a consequence, people tend to master English, especially for Indonesian students who learns English as a foreign language	As a consequence, people tend to master English, especially for Indonesian students who learn English as a foreign language
3	Tarigan say that the students who are rich in vocabulary are better in mastering a language than the poor ones	Tarigan says that the students who are rich in vocabulary are better in mastering a language than the poor ones
4	Many people around the world uses English	Many people around the world use English
5	When the student learn English, they must learn the vocabulary	When the students learn English, they must learn the vocabulary
6	So, the quality of students' language depend on the quality of their knowledge of vocabulary	So, the quality of students' language depends on the quality of their knowledge of vocabulary
7	For some students, writing skill are the most difficult skill.	For some students, writing skill is the most difficult skill.
8	Grammar help you learn a language more quickly and more efficiently	Grammar helps you learn a language more quickly and more efficiently
9	The English teacher find many basic grammatical errors in the students' writing, especially in the school area	The English teacher finds many basic grammatical errors in the students' writing, especially in the school area
10	Writing use a grammar-based approach integrated with communicative methodologies to promote the development of all language skills in a variety of ways.	Writing uses a grammar-based approach integrated with communicative methodologies to promote the development of all language skills in a variety of ways.

11	When human wants to communicate with others they need language, so language is very important in human life	When human want to communicate with others they need language, so language is very important in human life
12	From the verse above, the writer conclude that writing has an important role in human life	From the verse above, the writer can concludes that writing has an important role in human life
13	Writing and speaking as a process to get product is influenced by some elements	Writing and speaking as a process to get product are influenced by some elements
14	It indicate that most of students still difficulties in writing narrative text	It indicates that most of students still difficulties in writing narrative text
15	Hamalik in Arsyad state that the use of instructional media in teaching and learning can generate new desires and interests	Hamalik in Arsyad states that the use of instructional media in teaching and learning can generate new desires and interests
16	According to guidelines of KTSP of English subject, the aims of teaching English in Indonesia is to give chance to understand and to use the language	According to guidelines of KTSP of English subject, the aims of teaching English in Indonesia are to give chance to understand and to use the language
17	The English teacher should considers the ways or techniques in presenting the available subject to the class	The English teacher should consider the ways or techniques in presenting the available subject to the class
18	The teachers is suggested to create any suitable technique in teaching and learning process, and it must involve student interest in order to avoid their boredom	The teachers are suggested to create any suitable technique in teaching and learning process, and it must involve student interest in order to avoid their boredom
19	Thus, the writer assume that small group work would be appropriate to be applied in classroom activity	Thus, the writer assumes that small group work would be appropriate to be applied in classroom activity
20	The teacher have to use appropriate, fun, and effective media in teaching and learning writing	the teacher has to use appropriate, fun, and effective media in teaching and learning writing
21	That is why, the government of	That is why, the government of

	Indonesia stress that English must be taught from junior high school to university	Indonesia stresses that English must be taught from junior high school to university
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2. Verb Form Errors

Table 2
Verb Form Errors Found in the Theses

No.		
1	Whereas the result of questionnaire test is 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been gave picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade	Whereas the result of questionnaire test was 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been given picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade
2	Grammar has been teach at the school using many technique	Grammar has been taught at the school using many technique
3	The English teacher has been taught using lecturing technique since the first day of school	The English teacher has been teaching using lecturing technique since the first day of school
4	The researcher was collect the data by interviewing the English teacher	The researcher collected the data by interviewing the English teacher
5	The next step, the teacher will asking the students to make circle	The next step, the teacher will ask the students to make circle
6	Although speaking has been teaching there for a long time, the students still found difficulty	Although speaking has been taught there for a long time, the students still found difficulty
7	The students are usually give some vocabulary to memorize by the English teacher	The students are usually given some vocabulary to memorize by the English teacher
9	The teacher usually gave a text to the students and then students must answer the questions below	The teacher usually gives a text to the students and then students must answer the questions below
10	The writer did not gave any tests to	The writer did not give any tests to

	students but the writer just asked for the data and information about the students“ English ability from the English teacher at the school	students but the writer just asked for the data and information about the students“ English ability from the English teacher at the school
11	This technique used previously by the teacher there but the result was not satisfied	This technique has been used previously by the teacher there but the result was not satisfied

3. Verb Tense Error

Table 3
Verb Tense Errors Found in the Theses

No.	Error Sentences	Correct Sentences
1	Therefore, in line with the explanations above and the strong desire of finding solution of the problems, the writer is motivated to do the research	Therefore, in line with the explanations above and the strong desire of finding solution of the problems, the writer was motivated to do the research
2	The writer gave topic my father and my mother and the result of the test is 21 from 35 students could not make a descriptive paragraph	The writer gave topic my father and my mother and the result of the test was 21 from 35 students could not make a descriptive paragraph
4	They did many mistakes in making descriptive paragraph; they are grammar, mechanic, organization they also made in general classification	They did many mistakes in making descriptive paragraph; they were grammar, mechanic, organization they also made in general classification
5	Whereas the result of questionnaire test is 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been gave picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade	Whereas the result of questionnaire test was 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been given picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade
6	At that school, the students who learned English find some difficulties	At that school, the, students who learned English found some difficulties
7	From the table above, the writer assumed that most of the students are still confused	From the table above, the writer assumed that most of the students were still

	to memorize the meaning English words	confused to memorize the meaning English words.
8	Whereas the result of questionnaire test is 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been gave picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade	Whereas the result of questionnaire test was 22 students from 30 students answered that they have never been given picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade
9	The material of writing at the school was various, it is constructed to make the writing process more interesting	The material of writing at school is various. it was constructed to make the writing process more interesting
10	As we know vocabulary have a very important role in understanding a language. Someone cannot communicate well if they have not enough vocabulary	As we know vocabulary has a very important role in understanding a language. Someone cannot communicate well if they have not enough vocabulary
11	For this reason the writer uses game to motivate the students in increasing their vocabulary during the treatment of the research	For this reason the writer used game to motivate the students in increasing their vocabulary during the treatment of the research
12	The writer assumes that hot seat game was raise students' motivation and their interest to use English in their daily life.	The writer assumed that hot seat game was raise students' motivation and their interest to use English in their daily life.
13	The writer chooses MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong, because based on the writer's preliminary research on January 16 th 2012, the writer found that the students of MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong of the eighth class had not adequate vocabulary	The writer chose MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong, because based on the writer's preliminary research on January 16 th 2012, the writer found that the students of MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong of the eighth class had not adequate vocabulary
14	According the background above, the writer conducts a research entitled The Influence of using hot seat game towards students' vocabulary mastery at the first semester of the Eighth class at MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong Pesawaran in 2012/2013	According the background above, the writer conducted a research entitled The Influence of using hot seat game towards students' vocabulary mastery at the first semester of the Eighth class at MTs Mathlaul Anwar Kedondong Pesawaran in

	Academic Year	2012/2013 Academic Year
15	This technique used previously by the teacher there but the result was not satisfied	This technique used previously by the teacher there but the result was not satisfying
16	It seems that there were more problems face by the teacher and the students on the use of disappearing dialogue that seem to influence the success of the teaching learning process of speaking	It seems that there were more problems faced by the teacher and the students on the use of disappearing dialogue that seem to influence the success of the teaching learning process of speaking

4. Singular/Plural Noun Ending Error

Table 4
Singular/plural noun Ending Errors Found in the Theses

No.	Error Sentences	Correct Sentences
1	The next step, the teacher will asking the students to make circle	The next step, the teacher will asking the students to make circles
2	Grammar have been taught at the school using many technique	Grammar have been taught at the school using many techniques
3	There were some factor that need to be learned	There were some factors that need to be learned
4	Initially this sections may simply be individual words, but then whole line can be removed	Initially this section may simply be individual words, but then whole line can be removed
5	When two or more language come into contact, it brings great effect for those language which are not realized by the speech community	When two or more languages come into contact, it brings great effect for those language which are not realized by the speech community
6	For example when someone learn English, the way they pronounce word is almost the same when they pronounce word in their own language	For example when someone learn English, the way they pronounce words is almost the same when they pronounce words in their own language
7	there are some aspects that interfere with	there are some aspects that interfere with

	students' ability in using language	students' ability in using a language
8	All the picture used in this media was selected to fit student's interest	All the pictures used in this media were selected to fit student's interest
9	Unfortunately there are school still use conventional technique to teach vocabulary	Unfortunately there are schools still use conventional technique to teach vocabulary
10	There are hundred of language used by all people in the world	There are hundred of languages used by all people in the world
11	They often make mistake in their grammar	They often make mistakes in their grammar
12	The teacher said that good writing should have correct grammar and use the appropriate word	The teacher said that good writing should have correct grammar and use the appropriate words
13	Based on the background of the problem above, the writer could conclude that there were problem as follows	Based on the background of the problem above, the writer could conclude that there were problems as follows

5. Word Form Error

Table 5
Word Form Errors Found in the Theses

No.	Error Sentences	Correct Sentences
1	It means that language is very important in human live	It means that language is very important in human life
2	It is hoped that the students will be interesting using this technique	It is hoped that the students will be interested using this technique
3	The students feel boring when the teacher use lecturing technique	The students feel boring when the teacher use lecturing technique
4	English is very important to be learned because it	
5	The students will be able to use English in real life situation in both orally and written	The students will be able to use English in real life situation in both oral and written
6	Logically, mastering language skills is necessary for Indonesia students who learn English as the foreign language	Logically, mastering language skills is necessary for Indonesia students who learn English as the foreign language
7	Learners who just learn grammar will	Learners who just learn grammar will get

	difficult to convey what they wants	difficulties to convey what they wants
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Based on the errors found in the students' theses, it can be classified as follow

Table 6
The Total Number of Errors and Their Classification

No.	Kinds of Errors	Number of Errors
1	Subject-Verb Agreement Errors	21
2	Verb-form errors	11
3	Verb-tense errors	16
4	Singular/Plural Noun ending errors	13
5	Word form errors	7
	Total	68

Discussion

Having analyzed the errors done by the students in writing their first chapter of the thesis, the writer classified the types of errors as follows:

1. Subject-verb agreement errors

In this type of errors, the writers tend to add suffix-s after verbs and sometimes they omit the suffix-s while it actually needed in the sentence. For example the sentence number 1, 4, and 7 in table 1.

- a. Many people around the world **uses** English
- b. Game **play** an important role in teaching and learning activity
- c. For some students, writing skill **are** the most difficult skill.

In the first sentence, the word “uses” actually doesn’t need suffix-s since the subject of the sentence is in the form of plural noun (people). In the contrary, in the second sentence the writer omit the suffix-s while it is actually needed since the subject of the sentence is singular (Game). In the last sentence, the writer misuses the verb to be “are”. The verb to be needed in the sentence should be Is, since the subject of the sentence is singular (writing skill)

2. Verb Form Error

Here, the writers tend to write the wrong form of verbs to complete certain tenses structure. For example the sentence number 1, 2, and 5 in table 2.

- a. Whereas the result of questionnaire test is 22 students from 30 students answered that they **have never been gave** picture technique by a teacher when they studied descriptive paragraph in the seventh grade
- b. Grammar **has been teach** at the school using many technique
- c. The next step, the teacher **will asking** the students to make circle

In the first and second sentence, the writer used present perfect tense. The errors are in the use of the verb “gave” and “teach”. Since they are present perfect tense sentences, the appropriate verbs to be used are “given” and “taught”. In the last sentence, the writer use simple future tense. The error present in the sentence is the use of verb “asking”. The correct verb that should be used is “ask” since the verb after preposition “will” should be infinitive.

3. Verb Tense Error

The errors made by the writer in this type of Errors is the inappropriate use of verbs related to their type of tenses. For example sentence number 1, 4, and 11 in table 3.

- a. Therefore, in line with the explanations above and the strong desire of finding solution of the problems, the writer **is** motivated to do the research
- b. They did many mistakes in making descriptive paragraph; they **are** grammar, mechanic, organization they also made in general classification
- c. For this reason the writer **uses** game to motivate the students in increasing their vocabulary during the treatment of the research

The errors in those sentences are the use of verbs “is, are, and uses”. From the context it can be seen that all activity and phenomena happened in the sentences are already in the past, while the verbs used in the sentence are in the present. the correct form should be “was, were, and used”

4. Singular/Plural Noun Form

The major error made by the writers in this type of errors is the absence of the suffix -*es/s* in countable plural noun. For examples, the sentences number 1, 2, and 3 in table 4.

- a. The next step, the teacher will ask the students to make **circle**
- b. Grammar have been taught at the school using many **technique**
- c. There were some **factor** that need to be learned

In those sentence, the bold words need the suffix -s. The context of the sentences showed that they should be in the form of plural noun, but it has been omitted by student.

5. Word Form Errors

The errors made by the writers are wrong choice of words. For example sentence number 1, 2, and 3 in table 5.

- a. It means that language is very important in human **live**
- b. It is hoped that the students will be **interesting** using this technique
- c. The students feel **boring** when the teacher use lecturing technique

In the example, the writers write “live, interesting, and boring”, while the correct one should be “life, interested, and bored”.

Frequent and Dominant Errors

In the following table, the writer presents the number of errors made by the theses writers taken from 16 analyzed theses. The following table shows the results of error analysis based on types of errors, numbers of errors and percentage of errors made by the theses writers.

Table 7
Error's Percentage

No.	Kinds of Errors	Number of Errors (x)	Percentage (R)
1	Subject-Verb Agreement Errors	21	30.88
2	Verb-form errors	11	16.17
3	Verb-tense errors	16	23.53
4	Singular/Plural Noun ending errors	13	19.11
5	Word form errors	7	10.29
	Total	68	100%

Based on the data, it can be concluded that the dominant error is Subject/Verb Agreement Error which consist of 21 errors out of 68 (30.88%)

Recommendation on How to Minimize the Errors

1. The thesis writer and the advisor should give more attention on the writing, especially grammar during the consultation and revision session
2. Be familiar with formal English and be equipped with practical strategies for checking the writing
3. The types of errors described in this research can be used as a guideline to minimize the errors in writing the thesis
4. The advisor should give motivation to the thesis writers that grammatical errors can be easily fixed if the have willingness to learn grammar.

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