

FACTORS AFFECTING THE GRAMMATICAL ERRORS MADE BY THE STUDENTS IN WRITING NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to know the factors that affecting the grammatical errors made by the students in writing narrative paragraph. This research was designed in qualitative research. This research was conducted at English Language Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan. The data was collected by interviewing 15 students of fourth semester students. The students' papers of writing narrative paragraph were the main source to determine the respondents of interview. Based on the data analysis, there were two factors that affecting the grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph: first language interference and developmental errors. The research findings are expected becoming good information for the students and English lecturer to solve the students' problems in writing narrative paragraph.

Key words: factors of grammatical errors; narrative paragraph

1. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages in the world nowadays that is used in many aspects. One of them is in educational aspect. In educational aspect English is one of compulsory subjects that learnt by students, even it is taken as a major in college for those students who are interested within it. In learning English there are many components that must be learnt and mastered by the students such as grammar, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc.

There are four skills of English in general that must be learnt and mastered by the students, namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In those subjects students are expected mastering them all due to its existence in every academic atmosphere especially in English teaching and learning process.

Writing is an activity of conveying ideas in terms of symbols that needs skill of how to organize those symbols into structural order and meaningful sentence. Writing skill is not acquired naturally, but it is acquired by learning writing itself and every component related to it, such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, mechanics, and punctuation. A good writing depends on realization of those components in writing itself, included in writing narrative paragraph.

Narration is story writing (Oshima et al 2007: 24). In writing narrative paragraph about a story or event, there are some rules to produce a good narrative paragraph, such as generic structure and language features. One of language features of this narrative paragraph is past tense.

Greenbaum & Nelson (2002: 1) states that grammar refers to the set of rules to combine words into larger units. Brown (2000: 262) also states that "grammar is the system of rules governing the

conventional agreement and relationship of words in a sentence. It means that grammar is a set of rules that cannot be separated from writing a sentence or writing a paragraph. A good grammar produces good writing of sentence or paragraph.

As one of important elements of writing, grammar has been considered as a difficult one. In reality, there are still many grammatical errors made by the students in writing narrative paragraph. Laia (2020) researched common grammatical errors made by students of English Language Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan in writing narrative paragraph, and found that students commonly made grammatical errors in terms of morphology and syntax. In morphological grammatical errors, the students made the errors on omission of attachment of inflectional *-ed*, substitution of simple not past, misuse of *'s*, adding unnecessary *'s*. Furthermore, in syntactic grammatical error, the students made the errors on misuse of pronoun, adding unnecessary *-be*, omission of preposition, misuse of determiner, and adding unnecessary *-to*.

Based on those findings above, it was necessary to conduct further research to know the factors that affect those grammatical errors made by the fourth semester students of English Language Study Program in terms of morphology and syntax in writing narrative paragraph. The purpose of this study was to know the factors that affect grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph made by the fourth semester students of English Language Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was designed in qualitative research. Creswell (2009: 4) states "Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding

the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”.

The objective of this research was to know the factors that affecting the grammatical errors made by the students of English Language Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan in writing narrative paragraph. In collecting the data, interview was used to collect the data needed in this research. The researcher used unstructured interview to collect data about factors that affecting the grammatical errors made by the students in writing narrative paragraph. The researcher selected 15 students from 23 students who mostly made the errors from their own writing of narrative paragraph.

After collecting the data needed, the researcher analyzed the data obtained from result of interview about factors that affected the grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph. Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 159) state that “analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them down into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns.” Therefore, there were some steps of data analysis done: (1) reading and selecting the data needed about factors that affected grammatical errors, (2) synthesizing the same responses and classifying the different responses, (3) displaying the responses as the factors that affected the grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result of the previous research that the grammatical errors that made by the students in writing narrative paragraph were morphological grammatical errors and syntactic grammatical errors. Based on those findings, the researcher interviewed 15 students of fourth semester. Then the result was there were three main factors that affected the grammatical errors made by the students in writing narrative paragraph, namely:

1. L1 interference

For Indonesian students English is learnt as a foreign language. Meanwhile mother tongue is regarded as first language (L1), and Indonesian language as official language is regarded as second language (L2). This first language or second language becomes interference in writing narrative paragraph. As a result the students made grammatical errors in morphological aspect and syntactic aspect.

The grammar of first language or second language that has been acquired or learnt by the students previously has become disturbance to the realization of English grammar in writing narrative paragraph. This first language or second language interference has influenced and caused the grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph that made by the students that found in morphological aspect and syntactic aspect. It means that the background knowledge of fourth semester

students of L1 or L2 adopted and applied in the target language use.

The grammatical error on omission found in the students' sentences '*my mirror smash*' and '*Tsunami also occur*'. The students omitted *-ed* in the end of verb as the marker of past form. In the first language or second language there is no changing or category of verb form such verb-1, verb-2, and verb-3 or regular verb and irregular verb. So, the students constructed the sentences without paying attention on these forms category. The grammatical error also found in the sentences '*I am afraid*' and '*Many people lose*'. The students substituted simple 'not past' in their sentences in writing narrative paragraph. Meanwhile simple past form is one of features of narrative as the marker of action in the past. Furthermore, the grammatical error found in the sentence '*Take care of them children*'. It was grammatical error on misuse of pronoun '*them*'. Actually, it should be '*their*'. In first language or second language there is no category of possessive pronoun as being found in English. As a result, the students were error in using this form in their sentence construction in writing narrative paragraph.

Researcher : Mengapa anda menghilangkan –
ed pada kata kerja 'occur'?
(Why did you omit –ed in the
verb 'occur?')

Student : Saya tidak tahu kalau –ed harus
ditambahkan di akhir kata kerja
'occur' dan saya gunakan kata
dasar saja.
(I did not know if –ed should be
added in the end of verb 'occur'
and I only used the base form of
that verb).

Based on the student's response from the result of interview, it was concluded that the student did not know this importance of this form and tended using base form of the verb.

Researcher : Mengapa anda mensubtitusikan
–am pada kalimat anda 'I am
afraid?' Padahal anda menulis
paragraph naratif?
(Why did you substitute –am in
your sentence 'I am afraid'?
Meanwhile you were writing
narrative paragraph)

Student : Saya tidak menyadari
pensubtitusian –am tersebut
pada kalimat saya. Yah, saya
tidak menyadari bahwa saya
sedang menulis paragraph
naratif.
(I did not realize the substitution
–am in my sentence. Yes, I did
not realize that I was writing
narrative paragraph).

Based on the student's response from the result of interview, it was concluded that the student did not

realize any substitution of any of present form in the sentence of writing narrative paragraph, especially in the middle of paragraph.

Researcher : Mengapa anda menggunakan 'them' pada kalimat anda 'Take care of them children'? (Why did you use 'them' in your sentence 'Take care of them children'?)

Student : Saya tidak tahu bentuk yang harus digunakan. Yah seperti di bahasa Indonesia kan 'Menjaga anak-anak mereka'. (I did not know the form that should be used. As being known in Indonesian language 'Menjaga anak-anak mereka').

Based on the student's response from the result of interview, it was concluded that the student did not know the correct form used due to interference of possessive form used in first or second language. So, they just tended used what was known.

2. Developmental errors

Developmental error was also causing the grammatical error in the students' writing of narrative paragraph. This cause is closely related to the overgeneralization. It was seen from the students' sentences 'What would be happen' and 'No one of us to know'. In the sentence 'What would be happen' the student added unnecessary *-be* and in the sentence 'No one of us to know' the student added unnecessary *-to*. It means that the student overgeneralized the use *-be* and the use *-to* in their sentence, whereas the presence of *-be* and *-to* was unnecessary.

Researcher : Mengapa anda menambahkan *-be* pada kalimat anda 'what would be happen'? (Why did you add *-be* in your sentence 'what would be happen'?)

Student : Karena yang saya tahu bahwa setelah 'would' diikuti oleh *-be* dan kemudian diikuti kata happen. (Because as I know that after auxiliary verb 'would' then followed by *-be* and the followed by word 'happen')

Based on the student's response from the result of interview, it was concluded that the student overgeneralized the use *-be* in any form of sentence constructed, and regarded that after *-be* it could be followed by verb, adjective, and/or noun.

Researcher : Mengapa anda menambahkan *-to* pada kalimat anda 'No one of us to know'? (Why did you add *-to* in your sentence 'No one of us to know'?)

Student : Saya menambahkan *-to* karena saya menggunakan verb

'know'.(I added *-to* because I used verb 'know').

Based on this student's response from the result of interview, it was concluded that the student overgeneralized the use *-to* in any position of verb after subject in the sentence constructed.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

a. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it is concluded that the main factors that affect the grammatical errors made by fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of STKIP Nias Selatan, namely: L1 interference, developmental errors, and students' doubt and misunderstanding of past tense form.

b. Suggestion

Hopefully the result of this research may give advantageous information to the lecturers and teachers who teach writing narrative paragraph by knowing the factors that affect the grammatical errors in writing narrative paragraph. It is also suggested to the students who learn English that not applying the grammar of first or second language to the writing of English text especially writing narrative paragraph due to they are different.

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