



## Grammatical Errors in Writing Essay Made by the Fifth Semester Students of English Department of Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang

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*This study aimed at investigating grammatical error made by the fifth semester students on their writing product by using error analysis theory suggested by Dulay (1982) focusing on surface strategy taxonomy. Descriptive qualitative design was used in this study. The data were taken from the fifth semester students of essay writing class at English Education Department of Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang. The researcher used one class consisting of 29 students as participants. In this study, the researcher became the main instrument. The researcher was involved in every activity in the research who collected, analyzed, classified, and summarized the data. Based on the finding, 132 grammatical errors were identified. Those errors were classified into four categories including error omission, error addition, misformation error, and misordering. Misformation error became the most common type of errors made by the students on their writing essay product (48%). Error omission became the second most dominant type of error (21%). The next error were error addition (20%) and misordering (11%). In conclusion, the findings indicated that the students seem to have problem in terms of grammatical structure since the frequency of errors they made was still relatively high. Therefore, the lecturers are expected to make correction and give further explanations toward students' errors during the teaching and learning process in students' writing, especially in term of grammatical errors. The lecturers are also encouraged to use various teaching methods which are suitable with the students' need.*

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Error Analysis;

Grammatical Error;

Writing.

**Kesalahan Grammar dalam Menulis Esai yang di Buat oleh Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Semester 5 Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa kesalahan grammar yg di tulis oleh mahasiswa semester 5 di kelas Writing dengan menggunakan teori error analysis oleh Dulay (1982) yang fokus pada surface strategy taxonomy. Penelitian ini menggunakan design penelitian kualitatif. Data di ambil dari tulisan mahasiswa semester 5 Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang. Peneliti menggunakan 1 kelas yang terdiri dari 29 mahasiswa sebagai partisipan penelitian. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menjadi instrumen utama. Peneliti terlibat dalam setiap kegiatan penelitian dalam mengumpulkan, menganalisa, mengklasifikasi, dan menyimpulkan data. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, 132 kesalahan grammar ditemukan. Kesalahan tersebut di klasifikasikan dalam empat kategori yaitu error omission, error addition, misformation error, dan misordering. Misformation error adalah jenis kesalahan yang paling umum dilakukan oleh mahasiswa di tulisan mereka (48%). Error omission menjadi peringkat kedua yang dominan (21%). Kesalahan selanjutnya adalah error addition (20%) dan misordering (11%). Kesimpulannya, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa masih memiliki kesulitan grammar dalam menulis karena frekuensi kesalahan mereka yang masih cukup tinggi. Oleh sebab itu, dosen diharapkan membuat koreksi dan memberikan penjelasan lebih lanjut tentang kesalahan grammar mahasiswa dalam proses belajar mengajar. Dosen juga di harapkan dapat menggunakan berbagai metode pengajaran sesuai kebutuhan siswa.

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## Introduction

Aspect of writing is difficult to learn because authors should utilize a process that includes planning, organizing, and revising to present meaning in words form (Palmer, 1994). In writing, there are a number of language aspects involved such as model texts, grammar, spell-check, punctuation, and prepositions. Harmer (2002) states that writing has a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from differences in grammar and vocabulary, there are issues of letter, word, and text formation, manifested by handwriting, spelling, and layout and punctuation. It means that writing offers opportunities to increase students' vocabulary, knowledge of grammar and develops their understanding of how things are expressed and how well students' message is understood in the written form. Writing is the most difficult skill to learn among the four basic skills in English. Choudhury (2013, p. 27) said that, "Of the four core language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, writing is obviously the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners to master." He explains that is the main reason for writing as very complex process involving both creating and organizing ideas and translating them into cohesive which can be readable. In other words, writing is a process that requires learners to generate their ideas, experiences, knowledge and information in written form.

According to Khan and Akter (2011, p. 11), "Writing skill is usually considered as a clear proof of whether learners learnt English well or not." Therefore, the achievement of students' writing can be a measurement of students' competence in English. Writing can be a tool to proof of English language learning result. The quality of students' writing can show well their abilities in English Grammar. By knowing students' writing quality, teachers are easy to evaluate the competence of students' generally. It can helps the teacher to find an appropriate method in teaching writing to their students. The ability of writing skills cannot come instantly, but it needs a lot of exercises in order to learner have experiences in formulating sentences. According to Yahya et al. (2012, p. 114), "The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill. It is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments." Writing skills it can be well if practiced and learned through experiences. From those experiences, students' can develop their awareness and understanding of previous errors.

Grammar is a set of language rules governing the sounds, words, sentences, and other elements. In addition, grammatical error is the error in combining words into larger unit, such as phrases, clauses, and sentences (Harmer, 2002). Grammatical error can also be defined as the errors at morphological and syntactical levels. "Morphological error is the error which involves a failure to comply with the norm in supplying any part of word classes, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition" (James, 1998: 154). To differentiate between error and mistake, Ellis (2003) suggests two ways. The first one is to check the consistency of learners' performances. If they sometimes use the correct form and sometimes use the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if they always use the incorrect form, it is then an error. There the second way is to ask the learners to correcting their own deviant utterances. But if they are unable to correct them, then the deviations are errors.

Erdogan (2005) infers Error Analysis (EA) deals with the learners' performances in terms of the cognitive process they make use of in recognizing or coding the input they receive from the target language. Therefore, a primary focus of (EA) is on evidence that learners' error provide with an understanding of the underline process of second language acquisition. Dulay (1982) mentions that Error Analysis (EA) movement can be characterized as an attempt to account for learner errors that could not be explained or predicted by Contrastive Analysis (CA) or behaviorist theory, and to bring the field of applied linguistics into step with the current climate of theoretical opinion. Ellis (2008:62), sums up that "EA is a tool which is used to investigate how the learners acquire a second language (SL)". This opinion is in line with other experts such as Corder (1982) who stated that the part of methodology of psycholinguistics investigation of language learning is EA. The purpose is about the psycholinguistics process in language learning.

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According to Dulay (1982), there are four descriptive taxonomies which are most useful and commonly used as the basis for error classification. First, linguistic category taxonomy that classifies errors according to either or both the language components and the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantic and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). Second, surface strategy taxonomy that highlights the ways surface structures are altered. This is classified into four categories including: error omission, error addition, misformation error, and misordering error. Third, Comparative taxonomy that classifies errors based on comparison between the structure of language learner errors and certain other types of construction. Fourth, communicative effect taxonomy that deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the listener or reader. It focuses on distinguishing between errors that seem to cause miscommunication.

This study focused on surface strategy taxonomy. First is misformation error which refers to The use of the wrong form of structure, and it mostly caused by the students' understanding in grammar. Those errors type mostly found in terms of the use of subject and verb agreement, tenses, singular and plural form, noun form, and article. For example, *These social problems is [are] the problem [problems] of early marriage* which happens as error in terms of subject and verb agreement. Next is error omission which means that the absence of some item which is must appear in the sentence. Errors omission could happen because the students' lack of form of grammar and it supposed to have in the sentences but the learners omit it like content morpheme. It happened when the students omit the subject pronoun of the sentence. For instance, *[it] no way reflects the true characteristics of the santri*. Next is error addition which means the presence of items which must not appear in well formed sentence. It mostly found in terms of the use of double marking and word formation. For example, double marking. It happened when the student adds on the sentence which actually should not appear in well-formed sentence. For instance, *I think it ~~is~~ does not matter if the students bring mobile phone to school*. The last is misordering error which happens when the students placed any content or grammatical morpheme in incorrect order. For instance, *The teachers have to update their strategy learning* to [the teachers have to update their learning strategy].

There are several researches related to an error analysis of grammar. The first study was conducted by Sandrawati and Jurianto (2021) entitled "investigating errors in writing mechanics in university students' essays". This study explained the types and the most frequent type of errors in writing mechanics found in essays written by the second semester students of English Department of Universitas Airlangga year 2018/2019. Error Analysis theory by Gass and Selinker (2008) and the classification of errors by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) were adopted in this study. The data were collected from 51 essays. The findings showed that there were 686 errors in three writing mechanics: punctuation (368), capitalization (291) and spelling (27). The errors belong to four types: addition (271), omission (269), misformation (139), and misordering (7). The two categories combined, the most frequent errors were in the addition of capitalization (211), followed by the omission of commas (160).

Next previous study was conducted by Limengka and Kuntjata (2013), entitled "types of grammatical errors in the essays written by fourth-semester students of English department". The researcher used descriptive qualitative design. 23 essays were analyzed in this study. The researcher divided participants into two groups based on the score of the essay including: group A and group B. The results indicated that there were five types of errors made by the participants identified: addition, omission, misformation, misordering, and blends. More various types of errors are made by the participants from B group.

Novita, (2014) conducted a study with a title "an analysis of grammatical errors in the first year students' writings of English department". The researcher used descriptive qualitative design. The data of this study were taken from students' essays in writing class. The results of this study indicated

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that verb and tense cause the biggest difficulty for the students when they study grammar. It may be caused by the existence of various kinds of verb in English, such as auxiliary verb, modal auxiliary, present participle, past form, past participle and infinitive, which make the students confused to choose the correct form.

The different types of grammatical errors in each previous study were made by students' writing with different theories used by the researcher. Moreover, each of them had different percentage of errors. The researcher intended to conduct further study in order to know what types of grammatical errors written by the students. The similarities of those previous studies and this study were both aimed at analyzing students' grammatical errors in writing and the research design used was descriptive qualitative. While the differences of those previous studies and this study were in the form of setting and the types of essay that should be written by the participants. More specifically, this study attempted to answer this question: What are the grammatical errors made by fourth semester the students of fourth semester in writing text at University of Kanjuruhan Malang? This study used error analysis theory suggested by Dulay (1982) which only focuses on surface strategy taxonomy.

### **Research Method**

This study used descriptive qualitative design. According to Ary et al. (2010), descriptive qualitative is a study designed to obtain information concerning the current status phenomena. In other words, the study presented the description of the things which already happened. This study focused on analyzing lexical error made fifth semester students at University of Kanjuruhan Malang. Maxwell (1996) asserted that qualitative study focused on specific situations or people and emphasized on words rather than numbers. The data were taken from students at fifth semester of essay writing class at English Education Department in University of Kanjuruhan Malang. The researcher used one class consisting of 26 students as participants. The researcher chose essay writing class because the students had known various types of essay and the rules in writing an essay. It meant that they already had background knowledge to write an essay.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used qualitative analysis and reported the result descriptively. There were several steps done by the researcher in analyzing the data. First is identification of errors. The researcher only focused on the grammatical errors. The identification of errors was done by highlighting the words or sentences which were indicated as grammatical errors based on grammatical errors classification provided by Dulay (1982). However, the same errors in a composition were only be counted once. Next is classification of error. In this step, the researcher classified the errors into a number of categories and put them into a grammatical errors sheet. The grammatical errors were classified based on grammatical errors taxonomy proposed by Dulay (1982). Third is tabulating the errors. Tabulating the errors was needed in order to figure out the frequency of errors of each category and to know the most frequent grammatical errors in the students' writings.

### **Research Findings and Discussions**

The findings showed that there were 1326 sentences produced by the students. The researcher found 132 grammatical errors found in students' writing consisting of 28 sentences in error omission, 27 sentences in error addition, 63 sentences in misformation errors, and 14 sentences in misordering. Table 1 below portrays in detail the frequency of grammatical errors in the students' written compositions.

Table 1: the frequency of grammatical errors

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No	Types of Grammatical Error	Frequency	Percentage
1	Error Omission	28	21%
2	Error Addition	27	20%
3	Misformation Error	63	48%
4	Misordering Error	14	11%
<b>Total</b>		<b>132</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Table 1, 132 grammatical errors were identified. Those errors were classified into four categories including; error omission, error addition, misformation error and misordering. Based on the data above, the most common type of errors made by students' essay writing text is misformation error which is 48%. Next dominant type of error is error omission which is 21%. Those were then followed by error addition and misordering error by 21% and 11% respectively. The data above indicated that all types of grammatical errors suggested by Dulay (1982) through surface strategy taxonomy were identified.

The first most dominant type of grammatical errors made by the students on their essay writing was misformation errors. It indicated that misformation errors were the most problematic for the students in writing. Misformation refers to the use of the wrong form of structure. It is mostly caused by the students' understanding in grammar. Misformation errors in this study were identified 63 times. Those errors mostly found in terms of the use of subject and verb agreement, tenses, singular and plural form, noun form, and article. The following is some samples of description of each error in terms of misformation error:

### **Subject and verb agreement**

The first error identified in terms of misformation was subject and verb agreement. The following is an example of error in terms of subject and verb agreement.

*These social problems is the problem of early marriage.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of subject and verb agreement. The subject of the sentence is plural, but the auxiliary verb (*is*) is singular. The students should choose the correct form of auxiliary verb. The students should use (*are*) as the auxiliary verb of the sentence. The revised version of the sentence above is "*These social problems are the problems of early marriage*".

### **Tenses**

The second error identified in terms of misformation was the use of tense. The following is the example of error in terms of tenses.

*Livi's previous movie is Bali which is released on August 2019.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of tenses. The students wanted to talk about something in the past, but they used present tense form. In this case, the students should choose past tense since they talk about something in the past. The revised version of the first example above is "*Livi's previous movie was Bali which was released on August 2019*".

### **Singular and plural form**

The next error identified in terms of misformation was singular and plural form like in the example below.

*There are some positive effect of using smartphone.*

The sentence above is considered as error in terms of singular and plural form. The students committed mistake in forming singular and plural form. The word “*some*” can be followed by either countable or uncountable noun. “*some*” on the sentence above has a function as adjective and it is followed by count noun. If “*some*” is followed by countable noun, the noun should be add “*s*”. The word “*effect*” should be added with “*s*”. The revised version of the sentence above is “*There are some positive effects of using smartphone*”.

### **Noun form**

The fourth error identified in terms of misformation was noun form like in the sample below.

*Humans cannot do something without help from others.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of noun form. The students chose a wrong noun form. If the word “*without*” is followed by verb, the verb should be changed into noun form by adding suffix “*ing*”. In the sentence above the students should change the verb “*help*” into noun form by adding suffix “*ing*” and it will be “*helping*”. The revised version of the sentence above is “*Humans cannot do something without helping from others*”.

### **Article**

The fifth error identified in terms of misformation was article. The following is an example of error in terms of article.

*The movie is a action drama genre.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of noun form. The students chose an inappropriate article “*a/an*”. If the noun is started by vowel sound, the article should use “*an*” and vice versa. The revised version of the sentence above is “*The movie is an action drama genre which tells about the life of a boarding school*”.

The second most dominant type of grammatical errors committed by the students on their essay writing product was error omission. Omission means the absence of some item which is must appear in the sentence. Errors of omission could happen because the learners were still lack of form or grammar that is supposed to have in the sentence but the learners omit it. The students omitted grammatical morphemes more frequently than content words. Error omission in this study was identified 30 times. Those are content morpheme and grammatical morpheme. The following is the detail description of each error in terms of error omission.

### **Content morpheme**

The first error identified in terms of error omission was content morpheme. Below is an example of error in terms of content morpheme.

*no way reflects the true characteristics of the santri.*

The sentence above is considered as error in terms of content morpheme. The students omit the subject pronoun of the sentence. The word “*it*” should appear in the sentence as the subject pronoun. The revised version of the sentence above is “*it no way reflects the true characteristics of the santri*”.

### **Grammatical morpheme**

The second error identified in terms of error omission was grammatical morpheme like in the sample below.

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*While KH. Said Agil Siradj, PBNU General Chairperson as Executive Producer.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of grammatical morpheme. The students omit verb of the sentence (grammatical morpheme). The sentence above cannot be said as complete sentence since the students omit the auxiliary verb “is”. The revised version of the sentence above is “*While KH. Said Agil Siradj, PBNU General Chairperson is as Executive Producer*”.

The third most dominant type of grammatical errors committed by the students on their essay writing product was error addition. It indicated that error addition was also problematic for the students in writing. Addition error is the presence of an item which must not appear in a well formed sentence. Error addition in this study was identified 27 times. Those errors mostly found in terms of the use of double marking and word formation. The following is the detail description of each error in terms of error addition:

### **Double marking**

The first error identified in terms of error addition was double marking. The following is the example of error in terms of double marking:

*I think it is does not matter if the students bring mobile phone to school.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of double marking. The students add auxiliary verb “is” on the sentence which actually should not appear in well-formed sentence. The revised version of the sentence above is “*I think it does not matter if the students bring mobile phone to school*”.

### **Word formation**

The next error identified in terms of error addition was word formation liek in the sample below.

*Many of young children starting to use smartphome.*

The example above is considered as error in terms of word formation. The students add suffix “ing” on the verb of the sentence. The suffix “ing” should not be added to the verb in well-formed sentence. The revised version of the sentence above is “*many of young children start to use smartphome*”.

The last type of grammatical errors found in students’ essay writing was misordering error. It indicated that misordering error was also problematic for the students in writing. It happened when the students placed any content or grammatical morpheme in incorrect order. Misordering error in this study was identified 14 times. The sample is below:

*The teachers have to update their strategy learning.*

The sentence above is considered as error in terms of misordering error. The students placed the word “learning” in incorrect order. The word “learning” on the sentence above should place before the word “strategy”. The revised version of the sentence above is “*The teachers have to update their strategy learning*”.

Based on the finding of this study, the most dominant type of error made by the students’ is misformation error. It indicated that misformation errors were the most problematic things for students’ in writing. Misformation refers to the use of the wrong form of structure (Dulay, 1982). Misformation errors in this study were identified 63 times. Those errors mostly found in terms of use subject and verb, agreement, tenses, singular, plural form, noun form and article. Theses most common errors had the main sources which include L1 transfer, inter-lingual and intra-lingual interference and the carelessness of student. The students tend to transfer the language rule based on their first language rule. In the terms of subject and verb agreement, it is due to the fact that Indonesian has no subject and verb agreement. It is different with the English language which has subject and verb agreement. It was found that when there were divergences in English structures from the point of view of Indonesian the inter-lingual errors occurred. The carelessness of the students, it did not consider any grammatical rule that they have

learner previously. Although they have learned certain grammatical rules such as; tenses, in fact, the students still committed errors. The statement above are in the line with the study conducted by Limengka and Kuntjata (2013), Novita (2014), and Sandrawati and Jurianto (2021). The researcher believed that L1 transfer, inter-lingual and intra-lingual interference and the carelessness of the students were still dominant sources of students' misformation errors in writing.

The second most dominant type of grammatical errors found in students' writing was error omission. It indicated that error omission was the second most problematic for the students in essay writing. Omission means that the absence of some item which is must appear in the sentence (Dulay, 1982). In this study, Error Omission was identified 28 times and can be classified in two form, those are; content morpheme and grammatical morpheme. The students still omit the grammatical morpheme more frequently than content words. It happened because the learners still lack of form or grammar that is supposed to be appeared in the sentence but the learners still omit it. grammatical morphemes refer to grammatical content that should appear in the sentences such as; noun, verbs, adjective, adverbs. The researchers believe that those errors were mostly influenced by the students' grammar mastery. But, in terms of content morphemes, the students tended to omit certain content word such as subject and verb. It usually happened at the first stage of learning English especially in essay writing subject. And it probably because the student did not really understand about the function of content grammar in the sentences, so they tended to express their ideas based on their understanding.

Error addition was also identified in students' writing. It indicated that errors addition was also problematic for students in writing. Error addition means that the presence of an item which must not appear in a well formed sentence. In this study there are 27 times of error addition happened. Those, mostly found in terms of the use of double marking and word formation. It because the students added unnecessary word that should not appear in a well formed sentence.

The last type of grammatical errors done by the students in their essay writing was misordering error. It also problematic for students in the way of learning English, it happened because the students placed any content grammatical morpheme in incorrect order. Misordering error in this study was identified 14 times. The students seem to be influenced by their first language, they arrange sentence based on their first language grammatical structure. The statement above therefore underpin the study conducted Limengka and Kuntjata (2013), Novita (2014), and Sandrawati and Jurianto (2021) The researchers believe that the influence of first language is really problematic for students. The students tended to arrange sentence based on their first language grammatical structure.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, 132 grammatical errors were identified. Those errors were classified into four categories including: error omission, error addition, misformation error, and misordering. Misformation error became the most common type of errors made by the students on their writing essay (48%). Error omission became the second most dominant type of error made by the students (21%). Those were then followed by error addition and misordering error by 21% and 11% respectively. The data indicated that all types of grammatical errors suggested by Dulay (1982) through surface strategy taxonomy were identified and the most dominant grammatical errors made by the students were misformation error. It means that the students have problem in terms of grammatical structure since the frequently of error they made is still relatively high. Those errors mostly found in terms of subject and verb agreement, tenses, singular and plural form, noun form, and article.

In addition, the findings on this study confirmed that the grammatical error contributed by the students of fifth semester is tend to transfer the language rule based on their first language, and it found that when there were divergences in English structures from the point of view of Indonesian the inter-lingual errors occurred. The intra lingual errors occurred due to lack of knowledge of the basic rule itself and the exceptional rules. The last is the carelessness of the students. The students did not consider



any grammatical rule that they have learned previously. Although they have learned certain grammatical rules such as: tenses, in fact, the students still committed errors.

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