ERRORS IN USING PREPOSITIONS MADE BY ENGLISH FRESHMEN MAJORING ON LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2019

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Abstract

The research was aimed at analyzing the English department students errors in using prepositions. The subject of this research was the the freshmen of English Department majoring on literature in academic year 2019. Out of 103 students, 31% of them were choosen to be a sample by using simple random technique. The data had been gathered by using gap-filling test. The results of the data analysis show that from 1240 answers in the test, there were 796 errors made by the students. The errors included 184 (59%) errors prepositions of time, 213 (69%) errors in prepositions of place, 236 (76%) errors prepositions of direction/movement and 163 (52%) errors other kinds of prepositions. In addition, related to the cause of errors, it was the target language that mostly causes the students commit errors (intralingual errors). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the freshmen of English students commit 64% total of errors in using prepositions and the errors itself mostly are due to the students' lack ability in grammatical.

Key words: Error analysis, preposition errors, English freshmen

A. INTRODUCTION

In learning of target language such English, it is common for the students to commit errors since the language is not belong to their native language. Dulay et al. (1982) states that people cannot learn a language without first systematically committing errors. The similar case may also occurs to Indonesian learners since English is considered to be foreign language in which they don't exposed that much to it because it tends to be used only formal education or particular field.

Mastering English language is not an easy matter. Firstly, the students need to know and comprehend the language competences such as grammar, pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary beforehand because it is considedered to be the main capital of a language (Handayani & Johan, 2018). Then, it willl be

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helpful for them when they acquire the language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, most of the students face problem about grammatical.

Mastering grammatical means mastering part of speech beforehand. Eastwood (as cited in Asti, 2019) mentions that that there are eight part of speech in English language. They are verb, noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, determiner, pronoun, and conjunction. Each of these has its own function in the sentence. The errors in using it will lead to misunderstanding. One of the major problem that commonly be found among the students are the problem in using preposition (Yates, 1999). Parrot (200) states the errors of using prepositions by the students may be derived from the case that there are many numbers of prepositions in English that the students have to choose. He also adds that because of there are so many choices; it makes the students getting hard to remember the function and the meaning of each prepositions. Meanwhile, understanding and using the correct prepositions are necessary for them since it can interfere the meaning. Warriner (1982) says that preposition is a useful little word. Even though it is only a small word, its presence is meaningful. Understanding the use and function of prepositions enables the students to understand the meaning of a sentence. It is because the presence of prepositions shows the relationships between other words in a sentence. For example "The party will be held on Wednesday". We can see that the use of preposition on in the sentence shows the day of the party.

In English language, preposition is categorized as a branch of part of speech. It has the function to connect one phrase to another phrase in a sentence. S. Folse et al. (2008) assumes that prepositions are words or group of words that help to connect phrases within a sentence. Preposition usually appears before a noun phrase. A preposition in a sentence can be functioned to indicate direction, location, or time (Alternberg & M. Vago, 2010). Similarly, Hornby (1987) views preposition as a word or group of words often placed before a noun and pronoun to indicate place, direction, source, method. Then, preposition can be defined as a word or group of words that show the relationship between things in time, space and direction that helps to connect a phrase with another to construct the whole meaning.

Actually, there are many numbers of prepositions in English. To make it easier, the expert has categorized it into several categories. Hooper (as cited in Suzanne, 2017) categorizes prepositions in English into prepositions of time; at, on, in, since, for, by, prepositions of place; in, inside, on, at, to, into, by, beside, next, between, near away, off, across, and out of and others; despite, throughout without etc. However, due to the reason that prepositions in English language is a development word that can be added every time it is needed, it cannot be decided the definite numbers of English prepositions (Essberger, 2012). Therefore, the errors tend to be occurred.

The errors in learning of target language may occur in the grammatical aspect such as preposition. Sudhakarna (2015) says that one major grammar errors observed in the student's productive skills is the errors of preposition. In addition, Yates (2002) states that comparing to any other part of speech,

prepositions is more susceptible to pose more problem for non-native learners. Due to this, there are some studies that have been conducted about analyzing the errors. The result of the studies underlines some important points about the errors committed by the students. First, the study done by Pindo (2016) in Indonesia and Saravanan (2018) in India found that the interference of the students' native language contributes a lot to the errors committed by the students. In contrast, in her study Foo (2007) on the same field of study found the fact that the interference of the students' first language didn't contribute a lot to the errors committed, it was originally derived from the English language itself. Similarly, Zurniati (2018) also found that it was intralingual which was low of grammatical ability that makes English Department students of IAIN Imam Bonjol Padang committing errors.

Based on the theories presented and the studies conducted by the researcher, the researcher was interested in conducting a research entitled "Errors in using prepositions: An Analysis on English Freshmen Majoring on Literature at Universitas Negeri Padang in Academic Year 2019"

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design was descriptive quantitative research. By using descriptive research design, the researcher tried to answer the phenomenon of preposition errors which are committed by the freshmen.

Th population of this study was the freshmen students of English Department majoring on literature in academic year 2019. 30% of them were taken as the sampling by using simple random technique. Therefore, there were 31 students who participated in this study. As the instrument of the study, a gap-filling test was used. In this case, the students were asked to fill in the blank with appropriate prepositions. After doing so, the errors answers were marked as the data presented in the findings. Then, those errors were classified into the four categories of prepositions; prepositions of time, prepositions of place, prepositions of direction/movement and others prepositions. After that, the incorrect use of preposition was counted in percentage and explained by showing the correct forms followed by the explanation of the correct preposition. The causes of error in using the English prepositions were obtained from the students' answer during the process of interview.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
1. Research Finding

The test consists of 40 items whereas the four kinds of prepositions took 10 items in the questions. Prepositions of time in the test were *after, at, before, during, for, in,* and *on.* Prepositions of place were *at, close to, in, near,* and *on.* Then, preposition of direction or movement were *into, to,* and *toward.* Lastly, other kinds of prepositions were *with, in* and *by.* Since the test were designed in gap-filling test, the students were enhanced to fill in with the appropriate prepositions mentioned whether it was prepositions of time, place, direction or even the other kinds of preposition.

The participants of this research were 31 students who had chosen randomly. So that, there were total 1240 responses from the entire samples of the research. The distribution frequency of the students errors then were counted and grouped based on the kinds of prepositions. After getting the distribution frequency of prepositions errors, the patterns of error distribution per individual and per kinds of prepositions were calculated. The following table shows the result of the pattern of error distribution.

Table 1
The Pattern of Error Distribution

NO.	Samples	Prep. of Time	Prep. Of Place	Prep. Of Direction	Others Prep.	Mean of Personal Error
1	Student 1	60%	90%	80%	70%	**75%**
2	Student 2	40%	40%	50%	20%	**38%**
3	Student 3	50%	40%	70%	70%	**58%**
4	Student 4	60%	90%	100%	90%	**85%**
5	Student 5	70%	80%	100%	90%	**85%**
6	Student 6	60%	50%	70%	30%	**53%**
7	Student 7	60%	80%	100%	100%	**85%**
8	Student 8	60%	60%	80%	60%	**65%**
9	Student 9	60%	80%	80%	60%	**70%**
10	Student 10	50%	80%	50%	10%	**48%**
11	Student 11	70%	90%	80%	80%	**80%**
12	Student 12	70%	50%	90%	70%	**70%**
13	Student 13	100%	70%	100%	90%	**90%**
14	Student 14	70%	60%	80%	40%	**63%**
15	Student 15	60%	60%	100%	30%	**63%**
16	Student 16	30%	60%	30%	20%	**35%**
17	Student 17	60%	80%	80%	90%	**78%**
18	Student 18	70%	80%	80%	70%	**75%**
19	Student 19	60%	60%	100%	30%	**63%**
20	Student 20	60%	70%	40%	20%	**48%**
21	Student 21	80%	70%	80%	60%	**73%**
22	Student 22	90%	90%	90%	70%	**85%**
23	Student 23	60%	60%	70%	50%	**60%**
24	Student 24	70%	70%	80%	70%	**73%**
25	Student 25	60%	60%	70%	10%	**50%**
26	Student 26	60%	70%	90%	50%	**68%**
27	Student 27	30%	90%	50%	20%	**48%**
28	Student 28	40%	80%	70%	20%	**53%**
29	Student 29	50%	60%	80%	50%	**60%**
30	Student 30	50%	50%	80%	70%	**63%**

31	Student 31	30%	60%	50%	10%	**38%**
Mean Preposition Error		**59%**	**69%**	**76%**	**52%**	
Std. Dev		0,16	0,15	0,19	0,28	
Max Σ		76%				
Min Σ		52%				

After getting the percentage of errors per student, the average value of each student's errors is presented in the following diagram in order to get a clear description of each individual error:
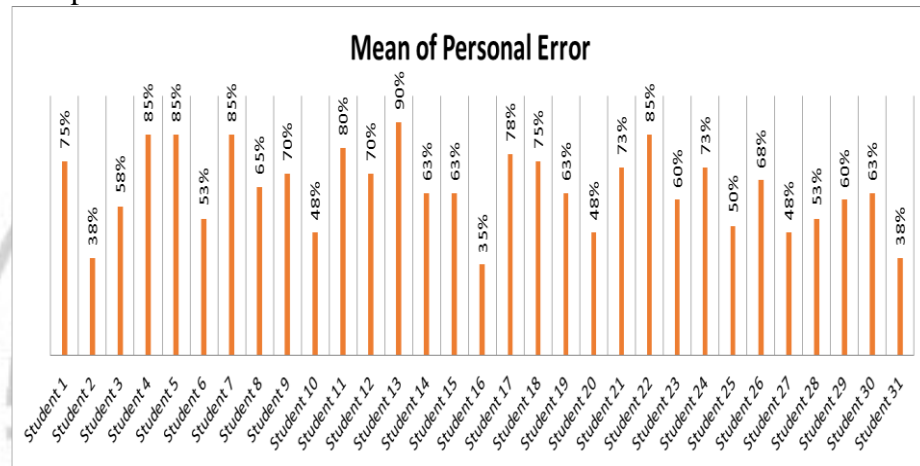

Chart 2
Mean Personal Errors

Based on the chart presented above, it can be seen clearly that the student 13 made the most errors with the average value of the errors is 90% comparing to the other 30 students who participated in the research. Meanwhile, the student 16 took the lowest level of errors with its 35% average value.

After that, the following chart is represented the average value of errors based on the kinds of preposition itself.
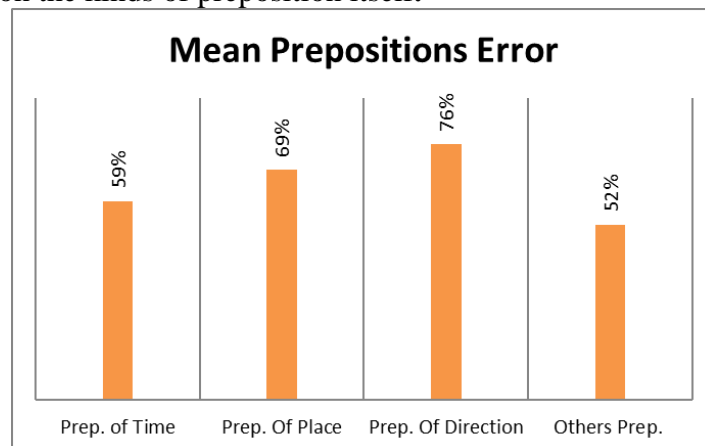

Chart 3

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Mean Prepositions Errors

The chart above shows that the number errors in total of 796. They were included 184 (59%) errors in preposition of time, 213 (69%) errors in prepositions of place, 236 (76%) errors in prepositions of direction/movement and 163 (52%) errors in other kinds of prepositions. Based on the finding it can be seen that the highest number of errors was prepositions of direction/movement with 236 errors based on all of the four kinds of prepositions in English. Then, the lowest number of errors was other kinds of prepositions with 163 errors based on all of the four kinds of prepositions.

From the data description and finding above it has been clearly answer the questions that the freshmen students of English Department majoring on literature at Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2019 were experienced errors in the use of preposition. Moreover, the errors mostly occurred in preposition of direction/movement. However, the ranges of the errors frequency for each kind of prepositions were not obviously substantial. As it could be seen in the pie chart (chart 4.3) the gap between the highest frequent errors (prepositions of direction/movement) and preposition of place was only 3%. Then, the same pattern also occur between prepositions of place (the second most frequent kinds of errors) and prepositions of time (the third most frequent kinds of errors). Then, between prepositions of time and other kinds prepositions also remained the same. In short, the errors percentage of each kinds of prepositions were increase 3% consistently from the lowest to highest frequency of errors; other kinds of prepositions, prepositions of time, prepositions of place and prepositions of direction/movement.

2. Discussion

This section presents the discussions of the findings. The findings above had already shown that the freshmen majoring on literature at Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2019 produced errors in the four kinds of prepositions. The errors made by the students were in prepositions of time such as *for, after, during, before, in, on* and *at*, in prepositions of place such as *on, in, at, near, close to* and *over*, in prepositions of direction/movement such as *into, to* and *toward*, and in others prepositions such as *with*, *in* and *by*. The highest percentage of errors was in prepositions of direction/movement with 236 (76%) errors, followed by prepositions of place with 213 (69%) errors, then followed by prepositions of time with 184 (59%) errors and lastly other kinds of prepositions with 163 (52%) errors.

Related to the previous research, the result of this study was different from the study conducted by Pindo (2016). He conducted the study to senior high school students and found that the most frequent kind of prepositions errors was prepositions of place with 78 errors out of 117 incorrect answers in the test. Nevertheless, Saravanan (2015) also conducted the similar research to English literature students in India; he found that those were prepositions of place and direction that contributed to the most frequent errors in the students answer. In sequence, each of them was weight 28% and 27%. Moreover, in another research Foo (2007) also conducted a research to secondary-school students in Malaysia, found that the highest percentage of

errors was prepositions of time (39, 5%), then followed by prepositions of direction (34, 6%) and prepositions of place (25, 9%). Similarly, Zurniati (2018) also did the research to English Department students at IAIN Iman Bonjol Padang whereas she also found there are some errors found in the students' writing.

As mentioned previously by Dulay et al. and Brown that errors are common to be happened in learning of a target language, it could be seen from the research findings of those researches as well as this research that the errors were occurred in one of grammatical aspect such as prepositions. Moreover, there are no differences between either senior high school students and university students, or English education and English Literature students about learning target language. As English language learners, both of them experienced errors as what Dulay et al. and Brown did mentioned previously.

Then, related to the causes of errors. The result of this study showed that it was intralingual transfer that causes the students making errors. The students tend to be confused about the rule of using prepositions. As a result, they made errors by using inappropriate prepositions to the sentences. It could show that the students were still having low grammar ability that cause them cannot specify each function of prepositions in English. This note also support by the students' response given during the interview. They mentioned that there were some prepositions that were confusing them because they cannot fully comprehend each of them. Moreover, there are also numerous numbers of prepositions in English and it is quite hard for them to pay attention at their specific function. In short, it is the students' lack of knowledge which turning to be the causes of errors. Due to the lack of their knowledge, they tend to ignore the specific rules in using it and often overgeneralize the information from target language in every structure of language they find.

Related to the previous research, the result of this study was different from the study conducted by Pindo (2016) and Saravanan (2015). They found that it was commonly interlingual errors that cause the students making errors. Moreover, the result of the studies conducted by Foo (2007) and Zurniati (2018) were similar to this study. The uncertainty of the students in choosing prepositions derived from the fact that they were lack of knowledge. In this case, they did overgeneralization, false concept hypothesis, omission and ignorance of rules restriction about the target language. In short, the fact that the students have low grammatical competence that then causes them to ignore of the rule restriction when writing the text using prepositions.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS
1. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion presented previously, it can be mentioned that the freshmen students of English Department majoring on Literature at *Universitas Negeri Padang* in academic year 2019

committed quite many errors in using preposition. The percentage of the students' errors ranging from the highest to the lowest were preposition of direction/movement (76%), in preposition of place (69%), in preposition of time (59%), and other kind of preposition (52%).

2. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conclusion above, it is suggested for the English language learner to learn more about prepositions by focusing on the specific function each of them; therefore, the errors itself can be decreased. Moreover, for English language instructor it is suggested to teach about prepositions by focusing more on their functions and its appropriate positions in the sentence. The learners also need to expose more to the exercise related to English prepositions in order to gain better understanding about prepositions.

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