



Common Grammatical Errors in Oral Communication Made by Indonesian EFL Learners

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Abstract

As EFL learners who learn English as their major at school, they still face difficulties to speak with appropriate and correct grammar. It causes some mistakes and errors with grammar when they speak. The purposes of this research are to identify and classify the type of errors in students' speaking performance based on the linguistic category in morphological and syntactical level, and to find out the causes of EFL learners make grammatical errors based on intralingual aspect. The research design was qualitative descriptive research. The sources of this research data is from students' voice recordings when the researcher interviewed them by phone one by one. The participant of this research was thirty second-year students majoring English in Universitas Negeri Padang which enrolled in 2019. The interview was used to collect the data, and the data were analyzed by using Linguistic Category Classification from Politzer and Ramirez. Based on the result of data analysis, 16 kinds of grammatical errors were found. The dominant kind of grammatical error which if found in EFL learners' speaking was simple past tense. Then, for the causes of EFL learners' error in intralingual transfer aspect based on James theory was incomplete rule application, overlooking co-occurrences restriction, overgeneralization, and exploiting redundancy.

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INTRODUCTION

As EFL learners who learn English as their major at school, they still face difficulties to speak with appropriate and correct grammar. Robinson and Ellis (2008) stated that speaking is still the most difficult skill among the four skills to be mastered by English learners, also they still do not have good competency in communicating the language. For Indonesian learners who do not accustom with English as the first language, they must be struggled in using English, especially when they speak because the lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Mukminin, et al, 2015). Astrid (2011) has another opinion on Indonesian's lack grammar knowledge that Indonesian learners

sometimes are able to mention the rule of English grammar, but they will face difficulties when applying the grammar in speaking. It causes some mistakes and errors with grammar when they speak. The explanation about mistakes stated by Brown (2006, p.257) that “a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a “slip” in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly”. However, if learners make some mistakes with grammar repeatedly without knowing how to correct it, it called as errors.

Sari (2018) defined grammatical error as the error from the result in combining words into phrases, clauses or sentences. Previous researchers who already researched the study of error analysis of the L2 acquisition process found that grammatical errors made by learners do not refer to their mother tongue, but are more like a child who is just learning the first language and creating their own rules that lead them to create more an error in the language (Dulay, 1982). For example in Ting, Mahadhir & Chang (2010) study of grammatical errors, they found the misinformation error was the most dominant error made by students, following with omission, addition, misordering and other severe errors. A similar study conducted by Tarawneh and Almomani (2013) which found student’s errors and mistakes in grammatical caused by overgeneralization, slip of the tongue, lack of competence, and etc. Another study in grammatical errors was conducted by Simbolon (2015) which found the student’s errors were overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, and false concept hypothesized.

In this study, the researcher focused on the grammatical error in student’s speaking. Grammatical error is the errors in phrases or sentences based on morphological and syntactical level (Sari, 2018). Opinion from Dulay (1982) which found grammatical errors in previous many researched study mentioned that the errors were likely omitting grammatical morphemes, double marking, regularizing, using archiforms, using two or more forms in random alternation, and misordering. Then, in James study (1998) has classified the grammatical errors into two major levels: morphological and syntactical. In morphological error level can be seen from word classes, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and preposition. In syntactical error level, the errors affect the text, such as phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraphs.

Grammar errors can be analyzed with error analysis. To support this opinion, Brown (2006, p.259) said that errors can be analyzed to classify which types of errors often occur when learners use that language, which is called error analysis. James (1998) claimed that the mother tongue cannot be compared with the target language, because of that Error Analysis become a consideration to find out learners’ errors with linguistic aspects. Sari (2018) also said that an Error Analysis can be a way to give feedback for learners to improve their awareness in grammar when they speak. According to Corder (1981) the aims of Error Analysis is to find out what students do not understand, as well as providing concrete data related to what errors are often faced by EFL learners when speaking, then the data can help teachers create new learning strategies in teaching language rules become more understood by students. There are two major purposes when analyzing learners’ error: (1) it provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made; and (2) it indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most

form a learner's ability to communicate effectively (Dulay et al, 1982, p.138). With the definition and aim of Error Analysis, then many researchers attempted to do their research in with the language to find out learners' error in grammar aspects, especially in learners' speaking skill.

In order to know the sources of errors made by learners, there are two major classifications of errors from comparing structure between L1 and L2 named comparative taxonomy (Dulay et al, 1982). These two errors are interlingual and intralingual transfers. The interlingual transfer is likely in the beginning of learning the target language; the learners' tend to speak the language like they speak in their first language (Brown, 2006). Interlingual errors are similar in structure to a semantically phrase or sentence in the learner's native language. For intralingual transfer, Brown (2006, p.264) stated "It is now clear that intralingual transfer (within the target language itself) is a major factor in second language learning". Other opinion is from James (1998) who defines intralingual transfer as a type of errors that caused by the target language, there are like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application (this is the opposite version of an overgeneralization, or can be called as undergeneralization because the learner use the incomplete rules), exploiting redundancy (this error can be shown with the form of unnecessary morphology and double signalling), overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (this error is caused by overlooking the rules), hypercorrection (this result from the learners' over consistent about the rules and feel cautious from getting false), and overgeneralization (this errors is caused by the misuse of grammatical rules or words).

Based on explanation above, the researcher focused on describing grammatical errors of EFL learners to find out the dominant error and the causes from intralingual transfer aspect that affects them when learners making errors. With error analysis method, it helped to find out the grammatical errors that are learners' made when they speak with English. There are several problems that can be investigated related to grammatical errors in speaking based on the linguistic category in morphological and syntactical level. From the result of grouping and classifying errors, then this study will find out the sources and causes which affect EFL learners in making errors. It will be based on the comparative taxonomy which has two categories: interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. This research focused on intralingual transfer to find the causes of EFL learners' errors in speaking.

METHOD

This study used qualitative descriptive research method to describe the kinds of grammatical errors which made by English Education study program students when speaking and the causes that affect student to make grammatical errors based on intralingual transfer theory. The sources of this research data is from students' voice recordings when the researcher interviewed them by phone one by one. The researcher will ask ten questions in total about student's current situation and experience. The interview will be hold as much three times. The data will be taken from three classes containing second-year students (the students enrolled in 2019), namely educational class, non-educational class and International class. Each class will be taken by ten students as a research sample with a total of thirty students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data which has already transcribed were analyzed by using Linguistic Category Classification by Politzer and Ramirez (as cited in Dulay et al., 1982, p148) to classify the errors and find the dominant error made by EFL learners. After that, the data was also analyzed with James (1998) theory about the intralingual transfer to find the major cause of errors in EFL learners' speaking. The results were presented in the following tables.

Grammatical Error Findings

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Errors in Speaking

No.	Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	<u>A. Morphology</u>		
1	Indefinite article incorrect	14	2.5
2	Possessive case incorrect	2	0.4
3	Third people singular verb incorrect	50	8.8
4	Simple past tense incorrect	228	40.4
5	Past participle incorrect	7	1.2
6	Comparative adjective/adverb incorrect	0	0
	<u>B. Syntax</u>		
7	Determiners	15	2.7
8	Nominalization	0	0
9	Number	32	5.7
10	Use of pronouns	40	7.1
11	Use of prepositions	8	1.4
12	Omission of verb	85	15
13	Use of progressive tense	45	8
14	Agreement of subject and verb	16	2.8
15	Verb-and-Verb Construction	15	2.7
16	Word Order	0	0
	Some Transformation		
	17. Negative transformation	4	0.7
	18. Question transformation	0	0
	19. <i>There</i> transformation	3	0.5
	20. Subordinate clause transformation	1	0.2
	TOTAL	565	100

In table 1, the total of errors which reached 565 errors in total from morphological and syntactical category. First, in the morphological error, it found that in the morphology category, Simple past tense incorrect is the dominant type of error with 228 errors with appearance frequency of 40.4% in all respondents' answers. In the error type, simple past tense incorrect is divided into two sub types, namely Regular past tense and irregular past tense. An example of the answer sentence '*...the rest of my high school, I join to another many competition...*' should be in the past tense because the question asked is about accomplishment which respondent ever got. However, the respondent's answer is in the simple present form, which means that the

verb is in the form of a present rather than a past form, so the respondent's answer has an omission of –ed. Then another sub type is the irregular past tense which has three kinds of errors. Example sentences such as *'My grandparents teached me...'* include the error sentence due to regularization verb by adding –ed. This example error sentence uses 'teached' as a verb which should change to 'taught', because 'teach' is an irregular verb which has a different verb pattern for the past form.

The next error is Third people singular verb incorrect error with results of 50 errors with an appearance percentage of 8.8%. In this type of error, failure to attach -s and wrong attachment of -s in the verb becomes two sub types of errors that are often found in this type of Third people singular verb incorrect error. The example sentence *'...a first family member that goes the college.'* has an error in the verb which should be pronounced 'goes' because the respondent calls himself 'a first family member' in which the respondent indirectly refers to himself as a third person.

Then the third type of error in the morphology category is the type of indefinite article incorrect error with a frequency of 14 errors with a percentage of 2.5%. Examples of sentences such as *'...a extrovert person...'* and *'...a easygoing person...'* has a used for an before vowels error where the use of a is used for a vowel noun, which should be used for consonant nouns such as the word 'holiday' or 'friendly person'.

The fourth type of error is the Past participle incorrect error, which has a frequency of 7 errors with an occurrence percentage of 1.2%. The example sentence *'...I have contribute...'* has an omission of –ed error where the verb after the past participle 'have' must be V3. So, the sentence should be 'I have contributed.'

The fifth type of error is the type of possessive case incorrect error which has a frequency of 2 errors with an error rate of 0.4%. The example sentence *'...brother bone.'* has an error of omission of –s which should be added to the word 'brother' to indicate ownership of 'bone'.

Furthermore, in the syntax category, Omission of verb error is the most dominant type of error with the number of errors reaching 85 errors with the percentage of 15%. This error is at the same time the second largest because it is mostly mentioned by students. This type of error often appears in the respondent's answer which reduces to be or removes the main verb in the sentence. Examples of a respondent's answer such as *'...I usually to the beaches...'* have an omission of main verb where there should be a verb 'go' in the sentence.

The second type of error in the syntax category is Use of progressive tense error which gets 45 errors with the percentage of occurrences in the respondent's answer sentence of 8%. Example sentence *'...I watching movies.'* including the error sentence because to be is omitting from this sentence.

The next type of error is the Use of pronouns error which found 40 errors with the percentage of occurrence 7.1% in the respondent's answer sentence. Examples of sentences from *'...where learn together at his rent house.'* include sentences that have an error in the form of omission of the subject pronoun because the subject does not appear in the sentence, namely the subject 'we'.

Then the next type of error is the Number type error, which was found as many as 32 errors with an occurrence percentage of 5.7%. One example of a sentence such as *'I think that is one of my proudest moment.'* has an error in the substitution of

singulars for plurals, because 'my proudest moment' is not stated in the plural form but is singular.

The next type of errors which has 16 errors with an occurrence percentage of 2.8% is the Agreement of subject and verb error. Example sentences such as '*...we be the singer...*' include the subtype error in disagreement of subject and verb person.

The next type of error is the Determiners type with an error of 15 errors and the percentage of occurrences in the respondent's answer sentence of 2.7%. This type of error has several subtypes of errors, and the researcher finds two types of subtypes that often appear in the respondent's answer. The first error subtype is the omission of the article, for example in the sentence '*...I can't do something in outside.*' his sentence should use the article 'the' after the preposition 'in' is used. Then another error subtype is the use of possessive with the article error with an example of the sentence '*And that's my the one of unforgettable moment ...*' This answer should not use the possessive 'my' followed by the article 'the' because it makes the sentence exploiting the redundant element in one sentence.

Then the next type which has the same number of errors is Verb-and-verb construction error, which gets 15 errors with an occurrence percentage of 2.7%. In the respondent's answer '*...we had learned scan, the lecturer said...*' has an error in the form of an omission of to in identical subject construction. This is because the verbs 'had learned' and 'scan' are identical subject constructions and can become independent clauses if split into two sentences.

Then the next type of error is Use of preposition which got 8 errors with an occurrence percentage of 1.4%. The example sentence '*...I like all the food that my mom made me...*' does not include the preposition 'to' after the word 'my mom' and causes ambiguity.

Then there is a type of error called Some transformation which has four types of errors, namely Negative transformation with 4 errors with an occurrence percentage of 0.7%; There transformation errors are 3 errors with an occurrence percentage of 0.5%; and Subordinate clause transformation error amounting to 1 error with a percentage of 0.2%; and the last one is Question transformation with 0 error. One example of an error sentence in Some transformation errors is '*... I don't post anything ...*' where multiple negations occur in the sentence and is included in the Negative transformation error type.

Intralingual Transfer Effects on EFL learners' Speaking

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Errors in Speaking

No.	Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	False Analogy	0	0
2	Misanalysis	0	0
3	Incomplete Rule Application	180	35.1
4	Exploiting Redundancy	63	12.3
5	Overlooking Co-occurrence Restriction	142	27.7
6	Hypercorrection	0	0
7	Overgeneralization	128	25
TOTAL		513	100

In table 2, the most dominant intralingual transfer type and the cause of the respondent's speaking error is incomplete rule application. In this type, 180 errors were found with an occurrence frequency of 35.1% in all sentences of the respondent's answer. The example sentence '*... he had some problems his homework.*' has an incomplete rule which should be pronounced with the conjunction 'with' after the noun 'some problems' because in this sentence there are two types of nouns that must be separated by conjunctions in between.

The next type that has 142 errors with an occurrence percentage of 27.7% is Overlooking Co-occurrence Restriction. The example sentences '*... I have to went...*' and '*I would bought...*' have a similar error, namely the inappropriate use of the verb after the auxiliary use 'have to' and 'would'.

The third type is Overgeneralization with 128 errors and an occurrence percentage of 25% in all sentences of the respondent's answer. Examples of sentences such as '*The thing bring me the most joy ...*', '*My family also give me happiness.*', and '*Then I am a person who dislike a liar.*' have the same thing, namely over generalizing the use of verbs without adding the suffix -s or -es for a third pronoun singular. This means that the respondent assumes that the subject does not affect the verb if it is in the simple present form, unless the sentence is in the past form. Respondents unconsciously create errors due to overgeneralization of the sentences they say.

The last type which has 63 errors with a percentage of 12.3% is exploiting Redundancy. Example sentences like '*Because, I think because maybe me and my best friend is different*' have excessive redundancy and repeated use of the word. This error causes an error even though the core sentence is pronounced according to grammar and logic. However, the excessive use of redundant elements and unnecessary repetition causes errors in the respondent's answer sentence.

Discussion

Based on the study data above, it shows that the respondents dominantly made errors in both morphology and syntax category of linguistic. When viewed from the overall type of error the dominant occurs in the respondent's answer sentence, the simple past tense incorrect error indicates that the respondent does not pay much attention to the questions asked and explains the answer with a tense form that does not match the time stamp of the question asked. Some respondents also answered past form questions with answer sentences that had two types of tenses. In addition, respondents often do not include 'to be' in their answers, even forgetting to play the verb in their answers. Phettongkam (2017) also found the omission of verb errors were having greatly number of frequency in EFL learners' speaking. Then, the suffix usage of -s and -es in verbs that use third people singular has been forgotten by respondents when pronouncing their answers. Third people singular errors were also found in a study conducted by Sari (2018). The three types of errors found in this study may sound trivial and simple, but in English grammar the use of the suffix -s and -es on verbs with a third singular pronoun as the subject becomes an absolute rule in simple English sentences. This shows that the oral ability of EFL learners in using English still needs improvement and more attention to every little detail in sentence construction and part of speech in sentences.

There must be an underlying cause for errors occurring. For EFL learners who don't learn English as their first language, of course making mistakes is a common thing. The difference in the rule of grammar between English and Indonesian makes it difficult for EFL learners to apply English in oral conversation, especially as an English student. Astrid (2011) argues that Indonesia's lack of grammar is not because they do not understand the rule of grammar, but they have difficulty applying the rule when they do speaking activity. That's why EFL learners tend to speak with incomplete grammar or even ignore rules. Therefore, researchers find out the source of errors' learner based on intralingual transfer. It is known that the dominant cause of error in the respondent's answer is due to the incomplete rule application. They also made errors because of overlooking co-occurrence restriction, overgeneralization of the rule and exploiting redundancy in a whole sentence. It leads them in making errors with the variation of errors with just in one sentence. This finding is also obtained by Tarawneh & Almomani (2013), Simbolon (2015) which overgeneralization were dominantly found in EFL learners' sentences; and then Rini (2014) also found the source of error was dominantly from the ignorance of rule restriction. The three research results above are actually not different because these two studies have findings in terms of overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, and ignorance of rule restriction as the source of student errors.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained from the total sentences of respondents' answers consisting of thirty second year students majoring in English, Universitas Negeri Padang, there found three dominant types of errors, namely, simple past tense wrong, third people singular verb wrong, and omission of verb. Then, the dominant aspect in intralingual transfer which became the causes of errors in speaking EFL students were the application of incomplete rules. Then it followed by intralingual transfer aspect in overlooking co-occurrences restriction, overgeneralization, and exploiting redundancy as the causes of EFL learners in making grammatical errors when speaking. With the results mentioned above, it can be concluded that grammar is still a problem when speaking orally. EFL learners often put aside the use of grammar as long as the message spoken can be conveyed properly to listeners. However, if the grammar used is incomplete, uses unnecessary repetition, and uses words that are not general, this can lead to multiple interpretations and misunderstandings. English teachers must pay attention to the grammar used by students so that the message they want to convey does not cause multiple meanings or misinterpretation. For the next researcher, this research may do the further research in speaking by using the surface strategy taxonomy theory with English students.

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