Grammatical Errors in Thesis Backgrounds Written by Students at the English Language Education Program of Universitas Negeri Padang

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Article History	Abstract
   Keywords: error analysis, thesis proposals' background, students' error	Errors are common occurrence made by students when they are learning which In this case, students' error in learning English. Error analysis is a methodology to find these errors. This study aimed to describe students' errors in writing thesis backgrounds who took Paper Thesis Writing class in Universitas Negeri Padang. Descriptive research was implemented to this study using quantitative method. The population and sample of this research was K1-K5 2019 students. By using cluster random sampling to decide the sample, K1 was the chosen sample of this research. This study was conducted by using the 23 students' final project in Paper Thesis Writing class which is thesis proposal backgrounds as the data. Students' errors were classified into four types which was omission, addition, misformation and misordering. After analyzing the data, three out of four types of error were found in students' thesis background. Among the total of 97 errors found, misformation had the highest occurrence of 62 errors, followed by addition with 18 errors, omission with 17 errors and no misordering error.

INTRODUCTION

When students attend a higher level of education such as university, specifically a bachelor's degree, they are obligated to write a thesis in order to graduate. This thesis is where all the skills and knowledge they have acquired over the past seven semesters of college are put to the test. They are required to write a thesis paper as part of their requirements to graduate. In preparation for writing a thesis, students must have the knowledge necessary to do so. Therefore, students

must take a paper-writing class in order to prepare themselves before writing the actual thesis paper.

Paper Thesis Writing is one of the subjects in English Department provides in Universitas Negeri Padang. In this subject some kinds of research paper, such as thesis, dissertation, journal, and article are introduced. The students are trained to think academically and critically, and summarize a certain topic. The ability of conveying ideas scientifically and systematically are very important during this process. In addition, the use of correct grammar, punctuation and spelling also cannot be ignored. The process of writing a research paper is not a simple process since errors could be either found in conveying the ideas.

Among the four aspects of language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing), writing has the highest difficulty to master. Writing skills require mastery of grammar along with the ability to establish ideas with proper and efficient words (Harmer, 2003).

Perpetrating errors in writing seems to be an unavoidable part of language learners' writing. Ellis (1997) stated that there is not enough documentation of learners' grammar in first language acquisition instead of its importance in second language acquisition. Corder (1981) described errors as attributes of the learner's utterances which differ from native speakers. Furthermore, error in language acquisition occurs in a repeated and systematic manner without being realized by the learners (Gass & Selinker, 2008). In addition, Corder (1981) considered errors as evidence of the learners' hereditary syllabus, which exposed how first- and second-language learners advance an independent system of language. In case of learning second- or foreign- language, it is natural for learners to make comparison between their native (source) language and second- or foreign (target)-language they are currently learning. This is what caused Norrish (1983) to argue that error is systematic deviation of the target language. Therefore, the analysis of error has turned into an imperative and a never out-dated area for linguistic studies. Making error is something inevitable when learning something new, this includes learning a language. It is impossible for people to learn a language without committing errors (Dulay et al., 1982).

Error analysis is used to identify learners' error. The analysis is implemented on learners' error that concentrates on the second or foreign language acquisition. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that concentrates on the errors which learners make (Gass, 2013). According to VanPatten and Benati (2015), error analysis is a type of research device which purpose concentrates on identifying, describing, and explaining errors of EFL students. These showcase how error analysis as a tool is important to reveal learners' error in second language acquisition and comprehension. It is also highlights how useful this study can be as a reflection for future improvement either by students to improve their mastery in grammar and

writing or by educators to revise their teaching methods to reduce these errors' in students writing.

Learning English as either second or foreign language acquisition makes some students unavoidably often commit errors. Dulay et al. (1982) divide error into four types, namely, omission, additions, misformation, and misordering:

- Omission error is any absence of one or more morpheme in a supposed to be a correct formed of sentences. Any morpheme missing in a sentence causes the sentence not able to convey a complete thought

- In contrast with omission, addition errors are defined as the existence of unnecessary items in the sentences. Addition is detected by the presence of unnecessary words or morphemes in sentences. The items is not suppose to be exist in a correct form of sentence.

- Misformation error is an error identified by the incorrect use of items, morphemes or structures. This incorrect use of morphemes can cause alteration or ambiguity in the meaning of the sentence which makes the sentence hard to comprehend.

- Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect position of a morpheme or group of morphemes in a sentence. The morphemes are wrongly ordered which can cause alteration and ambiguity in the meaning of a sentence.

Some studies of similar research have been conducted in the past. In study done by Millah (2016) identified grammatical errors in high school students' recount text specifically in the use of simple past tense. The results showed that the total errors were 147 errors with misformation detected to be the highest.

Another study by Aminah (2016) examined students' errors on the use of simple past tense in Engliah narrative text at SMKN 1 Tengaran. The findings revealed that there were 106 errors with the highest occurrence error was misformation.

A similar research in university level was also conducted by Octaberlina and Muslimin (2022). This study analysed students' grammatical error in writing thesis proposal. The study findings discovered that 197 errors in the proposals consisting of consisting of 71 (36%) addition errors, 63 (33%) misformation errors, 48 (25%) omission errors, and 12 (6%) misordering errors.

Based on previous research above, the researcher seeks to investigate errors of students' writing in paper thesis writing class, specifically the research background part. The researcher focused this study on the background part due to many different grammatical tenses used this part. This is caused by the nature of research background to explain the reason for a research to be conducted and how it connects previous studies to the current research topic.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive quantitative research. Specifically, since the data of the research is pre-available, this type of research is also called content analysis.

Stated by Eriyanto (2011), the usage of content analysis is implemented in order to describe aspects and characteristics of a text. The researcher described and analysed the data based on the need of research to find out the result.

The population of the research was students from K-1 to K-5 2019 who took paper thesis writing class. From that population of research, one class was taken as the sample. Cluster random sampling technique was chosen to decide the sample. Although Sugiyono (2012) explains that cluster random sampling is used when the object of research wide to the scale of a region or even a country, the writer continued to use this technique since the population is already grouped into classes of same level. Thus, using a roulette, K – 1 19 class who were 23 students meaning 23 proposals from the class at that time were chosen as the data of this research.

To gather the data of research, the researcher asked the corresponding lecturer responsible for handling the paper thesis writing class. Secondly, the researcher analysed the error through checklist. Lastly, the researcher interpreted the information from the document.

The data of this research are thesis proposals written for final project at the end of the course by students from paper thesis writing class of Universitas Negeri Padang. The final version of these proposals was taken as the data in this research. To ensure the validity of this research, the analysis results were reviewed by one of the lecturer of English Department, Nur Rosita, S.Pd., M.A.

After classifying the students' errors based on their types, the researcher groups the errors and find out what type of error the students commit the most, then after all errors were identified, the researcher calculated the percentage of students' error to see which errors have highest percentage by using formula by Bungin (2005):

$$N = \frac{f_x}{n} \times 100\%$$

N = percentage of errors

Fx = frequencies of students' errors

n = total of students' errors

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings in the form of research data are further discussed or critically interpreted with particular relevant theoretical approach. Data can also be supported with the presentation of tables, images, etc.

The data of the research were obtained from students' final project of writing thesis proposals specifically the research backgrounds from Paper Thesis Writing Class by 23 students of K1 2019.

Research Finding

Based on students' thesis proposals, out of four types of error, misformation error was the most error found. The percentage of errors was shown in the table below:

Table 1. Error Percentage of Students' Thesis Proposals

Types	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	17	18%
Addition	18	19%
Misformation	62	64 %
TOTAL	97	100%

According to the table above it can be seen that a total of 96 errors were found by the researcher. They are 17 errors of omission with 18 percent of total errors, 18 errors of addition with 19 percent of total errors, 61 errors of misformation with 64 percent of total errors, and no misordering error.

The researcher found various errors in analyzing the data. Here the researcher took some example of the data to explain further the details.
1. the program of bilingual classrooms **aim** to make
2. a value that **represent** teenage life
3. English also **become** the first foreign language
4. ever since human have [..]created, language is one of the most important apect for human life.
5. Vlog has [..] widely used as a means of entertainment

Those parts of sentences above were some of omission error examples found in students' thesis proposal. As it can be seen for example number one to three, the "–s" particle of the verb written in bold were missing where it should be **aims, represents,** and **becomes.** For example number four to five, the word "been" were missing in order to make the sentence or the phrase correct.

The second types of errors made by students were the error of addition which is a contrast of omission where there is a presence of an item that must not appear in a well written sentence.

1. English has become **the** international language
2. from **the** high school level to **the** university level
3. in order to have **the** real interaction with each other
4. As a result, students with **a** limited vocabulary
5. one of the benefits reading comprehension can be achieved **is** when students understand

As it can be seen from example one to four, article "the" was added where it is not supposed to be. Article "the" is used to show specific objects. For example number five, there were two verbs where "is" wasn't supposed to be there.

Finally, misformation was the last type the researcher found in analyzing the students' error. These were some of the following examples:

- Movies **has** been around

This phrase is grammatically incorrect since it use the wrong form perfect tense where it should be "Movies **have** been around"

- kids and teenagers **is** more interested
- there **are** a ton of connection required

These two sentences used a wrong form verb –to be where it should be "kids and teenagers **are** more interested" since the subject is third-person plural and "there **is** a ton of connection required" since the object is singular.

Thus, based on the percentage of error committed by the students in their thesis proposals, the highest score of error was error of misformation with 64 % of total errors. The second was error of addition with 19 % of total errors. The lowest score was error of omission with 18 % of total errors. The researcher concluded that misformation was the most occurred error the Paper Thesis Writing class Students made in their thesis proposals.

Discussion

There were 2 research questions in this study and the discussion only focuses on them. The researcher analysed and distinguished the errors found in the thesis proposals' background based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy which consists of: omission, addition, misformation and misordering error.

1. Types of error in paper writing class students made in their thesis proposal background

According to Dulay et al. (1982:150), errors were classified into 4 types of grammatical error within the surface strategy taxonomy, they were: Omission, was indicated by the absence of items or morphemes that should appear in a correct form of utterance. Addition error was the existence of items which must not appear in a correct form of sentence. This type of error usually happens when learner has already

acquired few target language principles but yet able to apply it properly. Misordering error was a placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a wrong position. And finally, Misformation error was identified by wrong application of morphemes or structures.

The researcher detected three out of four error types based on surface strategy taxonomy. The errors were 17 items (18%) of omisson errors, 18 items (19%) for additon error, and 61 items (64%) of misformation errors.

2. <u>The most occurred error committed by paper writing class students in their thesis proposal background</u>

In the findings the researcher calculated the percentage from each kind of errors which found in students' thesis proposals. Based on the percentage of kinds of errors above, the most occurred error in thesis proposals made by students was the error of misformation.

These findings were in line with Millah's (2016) study of high school students' error in writing recount text where the highest occurrence of error was misformation error. The findings were also similar with Aminah's study of vocational school students' error in writing narrative text where the results was students made errors in misformation the most. The results were different however in Octaberlina & Muslimin's research where the results of undergraduate students' thesis proposals had addition error as the highest committed error followed with misformation error and then omission error.

Based on the findings of this study along in comparison with the previous studies mentioned earlier, the researcher concluded that students still committed error whether they were in high school level or even in higher level which is university level. The results still vary regardless of the types of text since the students' competence and comprehension in learning second- or foreign language affected the results of the study.

CONCLUSION

According to the results and discussion of this research, there were few things that needed to be pointed out. However, before that let the researcher briefly explained the purpose of this research and the method used to conduct it. This research served the purpose of identifying any possible errors committed by Paper Thesis Writing class students made in their thesis proposal backgrounds. From those errors the highest types of error could be identified.

This research harnessed document analysis type in order for this research to continue. However, it still used population and sample to shrink down the data and source of data as the research was limited to students who took English language education program only.

After the data were collected from the corresponding lecturer who was in charge of the class, the researcher analyzed and classified the errors found in students' thesis proposals background based on the Surface Taxonomy Categories which includes omission, addition, misformation and misordering error. Omission was identified by the absence of items, morphemes which supposed to be exist in a

correct form of sentence. Some types of morphemes were omitted more than others in this research which is missing articles. Addition error was the existence of a linguistic item which must not exist in a correct form of sentence. This type of error usually happens when learner has already acquired few target language principles but still lacking in applying it. Misordering error was pinpointed by a morpheme or a group of morphemes that were in a wrong position. And finally, Misformation error was distinguished by wrong forms of morphemes or structures.

Based on error analysis before, the most occurred error in thesis proposal background made by students was the error of misformation with 62 errors. The second was error of addition with 19 errors. The lowest number was error of omission with 17 errors. This result was akin to previous studies where the highest of number of error detected was misformation error, but some previous studies had different result even though the data were taken from an equivalent level. This showed that regardless of institution level this type of research conducted, students were inevitable of committing grammatical error in writing which was normal since they were in the process of language acquisition. Nevertheless this can be a reflection to students who were learning a new language to never stop continue developing themselves and to educators to strategize a way to reduce these errors in student language comprehension.

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