**Grammatical Errors on the Students’ Descriptive Essay Writing at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar**

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**Abstract**

This research aimed to describe the students’ grammatical errors on descriptive essay writings of English Education Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar in academic year 2017/2018. The objectives of the research were 1). The kinds of grammatical errors are made by the students on descriptive essay writings 2). The most dominant grammatical error made by the students on descriptive essay writing 2) The least dominant grammatical error made by the students on descriptive essay writing. The writer used *a descriptive research*. The writer employed *note making* as an instrument to get accurate data. Total numbers of samples were 10 writings.

The kinds of grammatical errors made by the students are verb form errors, subject-verb agreement error, quantifier-noun agreement errors, and sentence pattern errors. The most dominant error made by the students is sentence pattern error and the least dominant error made by the students is subject verb agreement error.

Based on the finding and discussion, it could be concluded that total numbers of grammatical errors found were 269. Total numbers of Verb Form Error were 57 (21%). Total numbers of Subject-Verb Agreement Errors were 39 (15%). Total numbers of Quantifier-Noun Agreement Errors were 57 (21%). Total numbers of Sentence Pattern Errors were 116 (41%). The most dominant grammatical error made by the students was Sentence Pattern Errors. And the least dominant grammatical error made by the students was Subject-Verb Agreement Error.

**Key words**: *Writing, Grammar, errors, Analysis*

**Introduction**

There are four skills that should be mastered in studying English. They are, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Studying writing needs many attentions because writing skills can improve students’ ability to write either their feeling, intention, or their purpose.

There are many researchers on error analysis. This research has put 17 previous findings that study about the errors. They are starting from the research conducted by Haryanto (1985) entitled *Grammatical Errors in Writing Made by the S1 Students of English Department of FBS IKIP Ujung Pandang* to the newest research conducted by Okoro (2017) entitled *“Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Junior Secondary School Two Students in Owerri North”*. This means that the research on error analysis needs many attentions and learners usually make errors on their writing.

Learners need to know the grammatical systems of English in order that they can write a good grammatical structure in English to communicate each other and to transfer their messages properly. In order that they can use the grammatical rules well, the students should learn the rules of grammar to know how they work.

Grammar is the way in which words are put together to form proper sentences. It is one of the most important aspects that should be mastered in order to make well-structured descriptive essays, but writing in a different language is not always as easy as writing in our own language since there are many different rules in the writing systems and these differences sometimes make errors.

**Research Question**

Based on the statements above, the writer would like to formulate research questions as follows: **(a).** what kinds of grammatical errors are made by the students on descriptive essay writing? (b).what is the most dominant grammatical error made by the students on descriptive essay writing? (c). what is the least dominant grammatical error made by the students on descriptive essay writing?

**Literature reviews**

Okoro (2017) conducted a research entitled *“Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Junior Secondary School Two Students in Owerri North”*. She found that the errors committed by the subjects were due to mother tongue interference, intralingual transfer and the carelessness of the participants. Finally, the study sheds the light on the manner in which students internalize rules of the target language and the findings are vital in designing curricula for the better fulfillment of the objectives of Second Language teaching and learning while providing guiding light to create an effective teaching methodology.

Sawalmeh (2016) conducted a research entitled *“Error Analysis of Written English Essays by Jordanian Undergraduate Students”.* He found that the students of Ajloun National University have committed several errors such as: spelling, word order, and subject-verb agreement. The results also showed that the most frequent error committed by the students was the improper use of English articles. In light of the obtained results, several recommendations and pedagogical implications were suggested in order to help EFL teachers in their attempt to reduce the difficulties concerning writing English essays among English learners.

Herdiawan (2015) conducted a research entitled *“Error Analysis of Written English Essay”.* He found that the students made four most common errors in writing the essays. They were mechanics, tense, preposition, and subject verb agreement. The error in mechanics was the highest one with the mean value 3.11 among the other writing analyzing points. In writing their essay, they still had some difficulties in determining the correct tense, punctuation, and word spelling. In addition, they had a lack of understanding in English structure, and mechanics.

Haryanto (1985) conducted a research entitled *Grammatical Errors in Writing Made by the S1 Students of English Department of FBS IKIP Ujung Pandang.* He found four kinds of grammatical errors. They are grammatical errors caused by the interference of Indonesian language structure, overgeneralization of the English language rules, the strategy of target language communication, and grammatical errors caused by the strategy of foreign language learning*.* The interference of the target language structure isthe most dominant grammatical error causing factors.

**Error Analysis**

James (1998: 4) states that in the 1950s and 1960s, the favored paradigm for studying *foreign language or second language* and organizing its teaching is *contrastive analysis*. The procedure involved describing comparable features of *contrastive analysis* and *error analysis* (e.g. tenses, verbs, consonant clusters, the language of apologizing), and then comparing the forms and resultant meanings across the two languages in order to spot the mismatches that would *predictably* (with more than chance probabilities of being right) give right to interference and error.

Ubol (1988: 110) states that *contrastive analysis* is comparing between two linguistic systems, the learners L1 and the target L2 in a view of determining structural similarities and differences. Because of it, making error in learning language is often happened.

Lado (1977: 103) states that the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will better know what the real problems are and can provide the easiest way for the teaching and learning process.

As a learner, making errors in language process is very common. It involves the making of the mistakes and errors. Errors help the learners to establish the closer approximations to the system of the target language.

Brown (1994: 163) states that in the gradual process of trial and error and hypo-descriptive paragraph testing, the learner slowly and tediously succeeds in establishing closer and closer approximation to the system used by native speakers of the language.

**Research Method**

Research design is originally a strategy that sets space or research technique to get data and clear conclusions. This research is basically a form of qualitative descriptive which depicts problems, according to the real setback. The goal of this research is systematically to describe the existing phenomena. Characteristics of qualitative research are taken place in the world. It uses multiple interactive and humanistic methods. It is emergent rather than prefigured and fundamentally interpretative.

This research was designed according to descriptive method. It was a problem solving procedure which was investigated with describing or portraying situation of the object or fact depending on the circumstances.

Technique of taking sources in this research was *purposive sampling technique*. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will better enable the researcher to answer the research questions. To get empirical data of the research, the writer needed an instrument which was appropriate with the goal of the research. In this research, the instrument which was used to collect the data of the students’ descriptive essay writing was *note making.*

**Findings**

The findings of the research show that there are four kinds of *grammatical errors* made by the students of English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. They are *verb form errors, subject-verb agreement errors, quantifier-noun agreement errors, and sentence pattern errors.* The most dominant grammatical errors made by the students on descriptive essay writing are grammatical errors in terms of *sentence pattern* and the least dominant grammatical errors are grammatical errors in terms of *subject-verb agreement*

The figure 4.1 shows the findings of the research:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **The Error Category** | **The Kinds**  **of Errors** | **The Number of Errors** | **Percentages** |
| 1. | Over-generalization | a.VF  b. SVA  c. QNA | 57  39  57 | 21%  15%  21% |
| 2. | Incomplete Application of Rules | SP | 116 | 41% |
| The Total Number/Percentage Of The Students’ Errors | | | 269 | 100% |

Table 4.1. The distribution of the whole grammatical errors

The table 4.1. shows that there are four kinds of errors made by the students. They are verb form, subject-verb agreement, quantifier-noun agreement and sentence pattern. The total number of grammatical errors made by the students on descriptive essay writing is 269. From the table above, It can be seen that the total number of *verb form errors* is 57 (21%). The total number of *subject-verb agreement errors* is 39 (15%). The total number of *quantifier-noun agreement errors* is 57 (21%). The total number of *sentence pattern errors* is 116 (43%). The highest percentage of the grammatical errors made by the students is Incomplete Application of Rules in terms of *sentence pattern* with the percentage 43% and the lowest percentage of the grammatical errors made by the students is in terms of over-generalization in terms of *subject-verb agreement errors* with the percentage 15%.

By counting the total number of the *grammatical errors* and their percentages, the writer concludes that the most dominant *grammatical error* is *grammatical error in sentence pattern* and the least dominant *grammatical error* is *grammatical error* in *subject-verb agreement*.

The Figure 4.1 below shows the percentage of the whole errors

Figure 4. 1 percentage of the whole errors

The figure 1 shows that the most dominant grammatical errors made by the students of English Education Department on descriptive essay writing are grammatical errors on *sentence pattern* with the percentage 43%, followed by *quantifier-noun agreement* 21%, *verb form* 21% and the least dominant *grammatical errors* made by the students of English Education Department on their descriptive essay writing are *grammatical errors on subject-verb agreement* with the percentage 15%.

**Suggestion**

From the explanations above, the writer would like to offer suggestions which could be proposed as follows:

1. English lecturers particularly at Muhammadiyah University of Makassar ought to give more attentions to the students in descriptive essay writings in term of Grammar.
2. The English lecturers have to give more explanations to the students in terms of the well-structured English sentence.
3. The English lecturers should give the students a good explanation and guidance on descriptive essay writings.
4. The students are supposed to improve their competence of Grammar. The students should be aware of the importance of a good structure in learning English.

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