



SNAP TO READ

THE STUDENTS' FEELING-BASED GRAMMAR IN RESPONDING TO TOEFL ITEMS IN GENIUS APPLICATION

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Abstract:

Grammar is the basis for mastering English. It is administered as a part in TOEFL as one of the English achievement standards. Due to its importance, hence the researchers focused on studying the grammar/ structure and written expression section in TOEFL. This research was also initiated based on the preliminary research which discovered many students had claimed that they tended to give answers for items in the second section based on their feelings. For understanding this phenomenon, the researchers reviewed some related literature and started collecting the data using documentation and interview. The documents were the students' worksheets and supporting photos. While, the interview was done randomly with some purposive students. The researchers analyzed the data by listing the students' statements on the worksheet, filtering, coding, and examining the results with logical theories. This research produced the identification of the four types of feeling, the factors, and its empirical evidence during the process of responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. This research result could contribute to the teachers' or the lecturers' awareness of how to help the students recognize the standardized grammar/ structure and written expression of English, and hence they would be able to achieve a better score for the TOEFL test.

Keywords: *Feeling, Grammar, Genius, TOEFL.*

Dieterich and Andler (2002) state that grammar/ structure is the constituent unit in sentences. Effendi et al add that mastering grammar will affect to the mastery of the English language skills. Thus, the students need to be given adequate provision of grammar. The researchers believed that the students' adequate provision of grammar can be measured through TOEFL as the international standardized test. Roger (2011) claims that grammar is administered as a part in TOEFL and it is tested in the grammar/ structure and written expression section. Due to its importance, the researchers focused on studying the students' grammar mastery in dealing with this section of TOEFL. This research was also initiated based on a preliminary research by Mabaroh and Suryatiningsih (2019) which reported many students had claimed that they tended to give answers for items in the second section based on their feelings. Simply, this phenomenon would happen naturally in the learning of English as the Second Language (ESL) or English as the Foreign Language (EFL). But actually, studying this phenomenon could discover many contributions for a better learning achievements.

In the previous study, Mabaroh and Suryatiningsih (2019) had analyzed that the phenomenon of the students' feeling-based grammar for responding to the test items on the second section of TOEFL in Genius application showed linguistic interference and overgeneralization on the students' grammar conception. In more details, as explained by Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), the students' feeling-based grammar which produced errors was often assumed to be the result of transfer from their first language (Lightbown et al, 2013). But, Selinker as cited Lightbown et al (2013) stated that this phenomenon belongs to interlanguage in which learners have bursts of progress, then seem to reach a plateau for further progress. Although the interlanguage have been found dynamic, Selinker coined that some features in learners' language may stop changing. Therefore, learners need a help to recognize it to develop their progress of acquisition or, if not, they may be

coerced into fossilization which would make them unable to differ between their interlanguage and the target language.

Based on the theories mentioned, this research is urgent in order to avoid the students' fossilization in understanding English grammar/ structure and its written expression. Intentionally, this research has three objectives. The first is to identify the students' feeling in responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. By identifying the "feeling", the researchers would be able to formulate logical responses to this phenomenon. Secondly, the researchers intended to understand the factors behind this phenomenon. Thirdly, the researchers would like to discover empirical evidence at the students' feeling-based grammar for responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. It covered parts of grammar in which the students might get erroneous in understanding.

METHOD

Research Design

The present research was a descriptive research. According to Praštowo (2011), descriptive research is a method for finding facts, interpretations, problems, and habits carried out by a group of people which then reflect relationships, activities, attitudes, views, and influences. Therefore, this research focused on finding facts on identifying the term "feeling" in the context of responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. Furthermore, this research tried to make interpretation about factors which made the students use their "feeling" in responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. Parts of grammar as the empirical evidence at the students' feeling-based grammar for responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application also become the focus of discussion in this descriptive research.

This research was also focusing on content analysis design. According to Timmermans and Tavory (2012), content analysis means studying documents and communication artifacts to analyze social phenomena,

in contrast to stimulating social experience or collecting survey answers. The content would be analyzed in this research was the worksheet which was fulfilled by the students by stating false numbers, assumptions, and logical reasons. The worksheet was different from a survey document or a questionnaire because the lecturer had assigned the students to fulfill the worksheet for making them aware of the progress in joining Error Analysis (Grammar TOEFL) course. The list of false numbers in the worksheet was to help the students identify their unsatisfying result in responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. The statements for assumptions before choosing the wrong answers, and the logical reasons were to help the students measure their progress in acquiring the target language grammar.

Subject and Object of the Research

The subject of the research was the students of English Education Study program at STKIP PGRI Pasuruan which located in Ki Hajar Dewontoro Street 27-29 Pasuruan, East Java Indonesia. The subject of the research were the students who had taken Error Analysis (Grammar TOEFL) course in the even semester of academic year 2018/2019. The students were grouped into two classes, A and B. Class A consisted of 25 students and class B consisted of 15 students. From 25 students, there were only two male students in class A. In class B, there were five male students and ten female students.

Research Instruments

The researchers employed two instruments for this research. The first instrument was documentation. This instrument became the main source of data in this research. The document analyzed was the worksheet which was fulfilled by the students by stating false numbers, assumptions, and logical reasons. The worksheet was distributed in the seventh meeting of Error Analysis (Grammar TOEFL) course; after the students had done performing TOEFL test using Genius application. The worksheet was given to the students because the students showed no significant progression and sufficient score in performing TOEFL test on Genius application. The lecturer felt important to design the worksheet and distribute it to the students for helping

them to assess and measure their learning achievement by themselves. By the worksheet, they could identify their wrong answers, the causes, and the logics intended by the test items. The worksheet must be fulfilled by stating 1) the false numbers in order to list their wrong answers, 2) the statements for assumptions in order to know their cognitive background/ causes before choosing the wrong answers, and 3) the logical reasons in order to measure their progress in acquiring the target language grammar.

The second instrument was interview. The interview was supporting instrument in this research. According to Sugiyono (2008), an interview has functions; to dig information and to confirm the information. Therefore, the researchers decided two objectives and two kinds of targeted interviewees. First, the interview was to dig information. This was done with the students who had fulfilled the false numbers and the assumptions column, but they did not state any words in the logical reason column. Second, the interview was to confirm the information. This was done with the students who succeeded in fulfilling the whole columns in the worksheet, but the statements seemed unclear or not appropriate.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data using documentation and interview, the researchers started analyzing the data through some steps. First, the researchers analyzed the data by listing the students' statements on the false number column. The result would be calculated by the researcher, hence it can be drawn on which the students gave wrong answers for the test in Genius TOEFL application. Then, the researchers listed the key materials brought by those numbers. This was urgent to limit researching parts in grammar of which the students tended to claimed using "feeling" in giving answers for the test in Genius TOEFL application.

Next, the researchers observed the students' statement of assumptions and the logical reasons. The result was then filtered based on three criteria; 1) filled in the assumption column but blanked in the logical reason column, 2) filled in the assumption column and the logical reason column, but it

was less understandable, and 3) filled in the assumption column and the logical reason column, but it was understandable/ logical enough. The researcher also gave codes with 1 or 2 or 3 based on the criteria mentioned, at once while filtering process. Last, the researchers examined the results with logical theories.

The data gained from the interview would be used to support the result of examining the data. Hence, the researchers could give conclusion of what does “feeling” refer to. In addition, the researchers could understand the factors behind the phenomenon of using feeling in responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. Moreover, the researchers could discover empirical evidence at the students’ feeling-based grammar for responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing the *feeling* identification, the factors, and its empirical evidence, the researchers need to show the test items which had distracted the students to give correct answers. It is useful for helping the researchers to focus on which part of grammar materials that potentially raised the students’ interlanguage and hence enable the students to improve the target acquisition of English grammar.

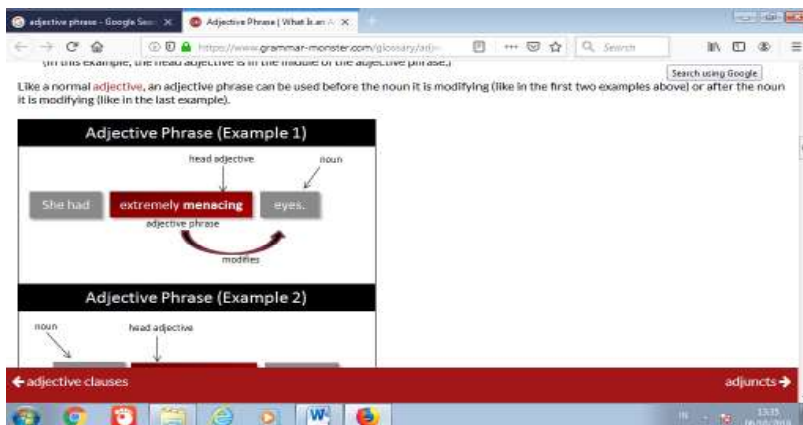
The Test Items with Wrong Answers and the Issues

Based on the data analysis, the researchers could describe top 10 of TOEFL test items in Genius application. These were the items on number 7, 10, 18, 26, 29, 31, 32, 37, 39, and 40.

The test item number seven and number thirty nine issued understanding of *subject and its verb agreement*. Actually, this part is the basis structure of English sentences that every English sentence requires the existence of subject and the verb. But, English is different with Bahasa Indonesia in terms of agreeing the verb based on the subject of the sentence. Simply, the students would state “*Dia sudah pernah makan di restoran itu dua kali*” in Bahasa Indonesia without any changing or addition to the verb

“makan”. But, in English, the students must be aware of how many subject participant included in certain actions, how frequent and in what tense the action occurred. These two essentials should be their notice before giving the answers. Equivalent with “*Dia sudah pernah makan di restoran itu dua kali*”, the students might face options a) He ate in the restaurant twice, b) He eats in the restaurant twice, c) He has eaten in the restaurant twice, and d) He had eaten in the restaurant twice. At glance, the researchers could understand that the students’ basic understanding of the subject and verb agreement needed to be improved.

The test item number ten showed an issue about *adjective phrases*. The researchers believed that the students could differentiate between adjective and adverb. But, in phrasing mode, the students tended to be distracted. It was because the *adjective* in an *adjective phrase* can appear at the start, end, or in the middle of the *phrase*. The *adjective phrase* can be placed before, or after, the noun or pronoun in the sentence. Therefore, this made the students failed to give the correct answer for the test item number ten.



Picture 1. An example of adjective phrase

Next, the test item number eighteen tested the students with the use of proper *articles*. In <https://www.grammarly.com>, articles are meant to be words that define a noun as specific or unspecific. The noun countability can also be identified by the use of proper articles. The students’ good

understanding about *active and passive voice* was tested in the test item number twenty six. In the interview, some students admitted that they were doubt in identifying the passive voice and the nominal sentence with a *past participle adjective*. In this case, the students should realize that *passive voice* can be built with any verb in past participle (V3) form. But, not all past participle (V3) verbs can be claimed as an *adjective*, yet rather some of them are sufficient to build a good passive sentence.

Furthermore, the researchers also found that possessive pronoun seemed similar in use, both with nouns and without nouns, for several students. But, clearly, the students must concern that both of them are different. *My* must be followed by a noun, but *mine* needn't. *His* must be followed by a noun, but the similar form of *his* must not. *Her* must be followed by a noun, but *hers* must not. *Your* is followed by a noun, but *yours* is not. A noun is needed after *our*, but not for *ours*. Then, the test item number thirty one issued about the use of proper preposition. In many cases, prepositions are used changeably based on the contexts. Thus, this issue made the students distracted to choose the correct answers.

The test item number thirty two tested about the word order. In normal pattern, the sentence should be formed in subject+predicate (NP and VP). But, for a certain case, an inverted word order is required such as when the adverb comes at the very beginning of a sentence. Parts of speech or the word class was issued in the test item number thirty seven. This is actually the basis for the students. Unless the students could classify the word class, they would be able to decide the answers correctly. It is not only to recognize differences on forms and functions of adjective and adverb, but also to notice the use of each word class (noun, verb, articles, prepositions, etc) appropriately. The issue of using proper conjunction was shown in the test item number fourty. Conjunction function differently not only based on the context of sentences but also the styles of sentencing. Sentences could be formed in simple, compound, complex, and compound and complex style. Using different style impacts to the use of proper conjunction, as it is a simple, coordinative, or

subordinative conjunction.

Feeling Identification, the Factors, and Its Empirical Evidence

Identifying “feeling” in this research was urgent to know the real meaning of *feeling* that the students’ referred to. Before going to further discussion, the researchers need to take a standard meaning of *feeling*. In <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>, *feeling* is defined as 1) sense, 2) emotion, 3) opinion, 4) experience, and 5) thought of awareness. But, the reserachers limited *feeling* as opinion. The reseachers must also show that *feeling* differs from thinking although both of them used a system of awareness. Awareness in *feeling* is based on **unstructured or bias logic**, while thinking requires the students to decide something based on **objective and definite logic**. The researchers understood that the unstructured or bias criteria on using feeling might be because of the students’ background of linguistic features in Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore, the researchers here stick on *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* (CAH) theory which explains that the students’ feeling could produce errors and it was often assumed to be the result of transfer from their first language. The researchers also believed that this phenomena should not stop the students reach a plateau for further progress of acquisition. Thus, identifying the intended feeling would help to measure the students’ interlanguage and solve it accurately.

Several students stated that they chose the answers incorrectly by feeling which closely related to their technical problems occurred during the test. The technical problems were the students’ personal state, the time or duration for the test, and errors in the application system. So, the students claimed that they had just read the (rest) test items at glance and then directly chose the answers without any logical consideration – or definite standards of grammar. Even, they just gave the answers without reading the test items and the options of answer. These students filled the assumption coloumn by subjective factor such as in figure 1. So, the researchers could exclude the students’ statement of using feeling at this condition.

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 CLASS/ STUDENT ID : English 2017 A / #188203016
 COURSE : ERROR ANALYSIS (GRAMMAR TOEFL)

| FALSE NUMBER | ASSUMPTION | LOGICAL REASON |
|--------------|--|---|
| 11 | I choose D, because I'm so nervous, so I don't know what I click | The answer B, there are negative expression only in the first clause (comparing) |
| 20 | I choose B, because I think after you use "was" you don't need "is" on sentences | (D) records (verb 1st) → recorded Parallel structure (tense): wrote (verb 2) past verb 1: present |
| 23 | Same as number 11, I choose A because I'm so nervous and I look at the time | (D) Because there are to be "was" so the thing of subject "Capital" it is so we must change "they" to be |
| 25a | I choose A, because I think it is singular and must add "s" in the end. | (C) Use verb 2 so "were" must change the "was" |
| 28a | I think it without "the" at the beginning | (B) The correct is "recent" superlative degree, after "most" must follow "the" |
| 30 | I'm so nervous, so, in this part my answer is blank, I should answer C because for subject | (C) Because we must use "them" for the subject |
| 31 | I think at the first paragraph you not use "for" at the beginning | (B) Before "present" we must add article "the" |
| 32 | I choose A, because I don't care and nervous, I should choose B because the answer is "are" | (B) We must change "is" to "are" because "wild horses" is plural |
| 33 | I choose D, in this question I still confused same like number 32 and I don't know | (A) because hypothesis (if) → hypothesis (singular) Subject verb agreement: verb (the sentences) is singular (was) so we need subject who is singular (hypothesis) |
| 34 | I think when you use like after many, it's so bad | (C) We must change Damaging → Damaged |
| 37 | I'm so difficult for understanding how to use has, have, had but not for now, I already understand | (B) "Evolution" is wrong: Complete change in the way people live we should use evolution: a slow change or development and gradual |
| 38 | I choose D, when I answer this I know (not careful), I should choose B because don't use "as" | (B) We should add "as" behind the such, because the text explain about many kinds (more than one) |
| 39 | A, I'm not careful again, I should choose D | (D) Change to "electronic" |

Figure 1. The exclusion of the students' feeling on the test

The intended meaning of *feeling* was revealed from the students' statement in the worksheet and confirmed through the interview. Ideally, the purposive data could be gained from the students' success for giving statements in the assumption column and the logical reason column objectively as seen in figure 2

| FALSE NUMBER | ASSUMPTION | LOGICAL REASON |
|--------------|--|---|
| 22 | I choose D because there is word more. It means comparative, so I choose D. (then) | This sentence is comparative degree, so the word the formulation: noun + verb + comparative adjective + (than) + noun (object). The word "then" have to change to be "than" according the formula tion of comparative degree. |
| 25 | I choose B because it was wrong. I just think that originally is adjective, so after adjective must be noun, not preposition | This is statement sentence, so pronoun for noun except for people is "it" not they. It follow the auxiliary "has" not were. |
| 29 | I choose C because living is noun and living could be lived | Humanity is plural so have to follow with "have", not follow with "has" |
| 34 | I choose B because the word of many didn't need to exist | many crustaceans are plural, so can call off the word "the" is prefer for plural. if article "a" is prefer singular, even though many crustaceans is plural, so it is not matching. |
| 37 | I choose D because after the word less must be follow by than | Preposition "of" follow by noun, because its part of ... so follow the article "the" before noun. |
| | | |
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| | | |

Figure 2. the Purposive statements in the worksheet

In figure 2, the student felt that this question issued about the comparative degree which needs to use “more”. But, actually the adjective had addressed “er” as its comparative cognition. Indeed, she did not focus on the spelling of “than” which appeared “then” in the test. So, she gave the wrong answer for the test item number twenty two. The other data showed that some students chose D. *Gooses* than B. *Geese* for the test item number six. They claimed that, in general, the plural noun is formed by adding s/es into a single noun, and they felt that *goose* is actually an regular noun. Based on these facts, the researchers could state the *feeling* referred to *overgeneralizing opinion* about grammar formula.

The researchers viewed the phenomenon of *overgeneralizing feeling* as the evidence of the interlanguage intaken in the students’ mind. This was supported by Choi (2003) as cited in in Chappell (2018) that he asserted *overgeneralization* may be influenced by both frequency and contextual

exposure to the students' home language. Choi (2003) added the patterns of overgeneralizing most likely occur in informal, spoken language. But, differently, this research proved that *overgeneralization* could occur in a formal written test, TOEFL in Genius application.

Feeling can also be referred to *misformatting opinion* of the English word forms. This feeling concerned with the correct forms of word should be used in the sentences. The researchers could analyze the data from the students' statement for 8 test items; 10, 18, 26, 29, 31, 37, 39, and 40. LK, for example, stated that she was confused to choose **sand** or **sandy**, but she claimed that she knew the intention of the test item number thirty seven. Indeed, this test item issued about the proper word class thus the students were to choose the correct form of English words based on the context. And from the interview, the researchers could see this as the evidence of *misformatting feeling*.

Several students assumed that *passes through* had been already the verb of a sentence displayed in the test item number seven. But, it was actually structured in a noun clause functioned as the subject not as the verb of the sentence. The researchers classified this phenomenon as *malfunctioning feeling*. In exact, *malfunctioning feeling* referred to the students' opinion to assert the function of every word in sentences incorrectly

In the other worksheet, *feeling* also referred to *misordering opinion* towards the English sentence structure. It was proven by the students' statement for the test item number thirty two. SF stated that the test item number thirty two issued about the inverted word order because of the existence of adverb in front of the sentence. The correct answer should be B. "*Never, have so many people been unemployed as today*". But SF failed to give the correct answer because she felt that the auxiliary should be followed by the verb directly; C. "*Never, have been so many people unemployed as today*". But, actually, the auxiliary must be followed by the subject and hence by the verb.

In relevance with this research finding, Dulay et al (1982) had found

a surface strategy taxonomy which concerns with identifying the cognitive process that underlie the student's reconstruction of the new language. Dulay also stated that the students' errors are not the result of laziness or sloppy thinking, but from the errors are based on some logic which was called here as the **unstructured or bias logic**. But, this research had different context with Dulay's research. Indeed, the present research focused only on the students' recognition of *feeling* for responding to TOEFL test items in Genius Application while Dulay's research concerned with the students' production of using language; i.e writing and utterances. As the result, Dulay's surface strategy taxonomy classified errors into four types: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Whereas, the present research produced the types of the students' *feeling*; *over-generalizing feeling*, *misformatting feeling*, *malfunctioning feeling*, and *misordering feeling*.

CONCLUSION

The researchers conclude that the students tended to use *feeling* for responding to TOEFL test items in Genius application. They used feeling in responding the test items which issued about *subject and verb agreement*, *adjective phrase*, *proper article*, *active/passive voice*, *possessive pronoun*, *preposition*, *word order*, *word class*, *verb form*, and *conjunction*. The researchers could discover that the students had four types of *feeling*. These were *over-generalizing feeling*, *misformatting feeling*, *malfunctioning feeling*, and *misordering feeling*. Each feeling had been caused by the students' unstructured or bias logic of interlanguage, not the result of laziness or sloppy thinking. Based on the result, the researchers suggest to the English teachers' or the lecturers' make the students aware about the effect of their unstructured or bias logic of interlanguage. So that, they would be able to recognize the standardized grammar/ structure and written expression of English appropriately, and afterward they would be able to achieve a better score for the TOEFL test.

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