REVEALING EFL STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERROR IN CAUSE-EFFECT ESSAY

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to investigate 1) the types of the error made by the fourth-semester students of PGRI Wiranegara University in writing a cause-effect essay, and 2) the most frequent error made by the students in making cause-effect essay. The research uses descriptive quantitative design. The subjects of the study were the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program in the academic year 2019/2020 in the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of PGRI Wiranegara, East Java, Indonesia. The instrument used in the study was mainly a documentation of the students' composition. The researchers used Hewing›s theory in 2002 to analyze the errors. The data was analyzed based on seven categories. They are: (1) Errors in using verb group, (2) Errors in the agreement between subject and verb, (3) Errors in the use of the article, (4) Errors in the use preposition, (5) Errors in pluralization, (6) Error in the use of pronoun and (7) Error in the use of a conjunction. The result of the study shows that In total, there were 406 errors made by the students in writing cause-effect essay.The most frequent error made by the students is the use of preposition. This error occur 149 times in the students' essay (36.70%). The second most frequent error is the use of article (28.57%) which occurs 116 times in the students' essay. And the third most frequent error is in the use of subject-verb agrrement (7.88%)

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Keywords: *cause-effect relation, essay, error, type*

Having writing ability is important, yet it is difficult to master. In fact, writing probably becomes the most difficult skill (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Setyowati, Sukmawan, Latief, 2017). It is a thinking process where decisions need to be made by the writer on selecting and using lexical choices, structural options, and possible organization of information and ideas (Sancyk, 2010). Touchie (1986), states two types of error, namely the interlangual error and the intralingual error. The interlanguage error is caused by the native language inlfuence. It usually refers to as the transfer or interferrence errors. Touchie (1986) believes that the native language plays a big role in the acquisition of the target language. The different elements found between the first language and the target language become the main issue of acquiring the skill. This leads students to tend to make grammatical errors in the process of writing because most students tend to translate their ideas from L1 to L2. The second type of error is the intralingual error (Touchie, 1986). It is a deveopmental factor within the learners. In other words, the learners are still in the process of internalizing the target language due to its difficulty.

Making error in writing in unavoidable, especially for foreign language learners (EFL). EFL students at all level still make errors in their composition (Putri & Dewanti, 2014; Indriani, 2016; Harys, 2018; Aisyah & Rahmawati, 2019). Golkova & Hubackova (2014) state that writing is generally considered to be one of the productive skills in which it contains the process of sending information in written form. It is different from speaking. If in speaking, students have limited time to think of ideas for oral activities, writing works in the opposite (Harmer, 2004). Even though in writing students can think of ideas and consult with dictionaries and book references, writers still need more time to think and produce a composition. Thus, producing a good piece of writing is still a challenge (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

One of the criteria for good writing is when it is comprehensible for the readers. And one of the most important elements of comprehensibility deals with the proper use of grammar. Greenbaum & Nelson (2002) state that grammar is the part of rules that combine words into a good sentence. Besides grammar, good writing is also supported by the use of punctuation, vocabulary (Langan, 2001). Thus, the students have to produce the sentences in proper grammar so that they are easily understood by the readers (Putri & Dewanti, 2014). Also, Saaristo (2015) states that grammar is the heart of language, its role is important and useful. He states that writing and grammar are unity in producing good writing. Luckily, mastering grammar is not an exercise that is limited in the classroom walls because students can learn English from the language exposure every day (Herring, 2016).

In Indonesia, English is not used as the first language. In daily life, Indonesian use the Bahasa Indonesia to interact and communicate with their family, friends, and others. Because of that, English becomes a foreign language. Richards (2010) states that a foreign language indicated a particular reason in the process of teaching and learning it. Due to its importance, it is taught in schools from elementary to university level, yet English is not used as basic communication in daily life. The fact that English has been categorized as a foreign language makes the English learning process far from a success Pudiyono (2012). He states that the first language becomes the hindrance in mastering foreign language like English. In tenses, English grammar is quite different from Indonesian grammar. So, it makes the Indonesian learners still use Indonesian pattern and rule when they use English. This difference may cause errors in the use of the target language.

Yet, in the process of learning the students can not be avoid making of error. Based on Brown (2007) the fact that the learners do make errors, and these errors can be observed, analyzed, classified, called error analysis. According to Yen (2010), error analysis is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language. Based on the statement above, making an error is an unavoidable part of learning.

The learners cannot learn of language without making mistakes first. Thus, it is a natural thing if there are errors that appear in the process of language learning. The errors should not be seen as an indication of the students' failure. But instead, they are the real proof that they learned it. So it is a process of deviation for the learners who are still developing knowledge of the language in their skill (Thresia, 2013). Hubbard (2002) defines that error is caused by the lack of knowledge about the target English language. Error and mistake are two different meanings. According to Jabeen (2015), errors are the result of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency of the learners and errors cannot be self-corrected. While mistakes are the result of the poor performance of language due to many factors like fatigue and carelessness on the part of learners etc.

Students at the university level have learned English for years. Those who take English as the major in the university are expected to show better performance in English mastery, especially in the productive form.The fourth-semester students in the English Education Study Program of the University of PGRI Wiranegara joined the essay writing course as a compulsory subject. Based on the basic course outline of the course, the students have to write a minimum of 400 words for each different type of essay. One of the essays taught in the program is an expository essay developed by cause-effect relationships. The class was learning the cause-effect essay during the pandemic of COVID 19, and the teaching and learning process was conducted by using remote learning. The lecturer brought the COVID 19 outbreak as the topic for the students' essay. There are two reasons why this study is worth doing. Firstly, the lecturer instructed the students to check their language by using Grammarly application provided for free online. The publication of the students' essay to the lecturer should be accompanied by the report of grammar check from Grammarly free online. Therefore, it was interesting to see whether the students still made a mistake in their writing even though the essays have been checked with the grammar application. Secondly, because of the minimal interaction between the lecturer and the

students, it was also interesting to find out how well the students wrote their essays. More specifically, the purposes of the study are to investigate 1) the types of the error made by the fourth-semester students of PGRI Wiranegara University in writing a cause-effect essay, and 2) the most frequent error made by the students in making cause-effect essay.

METHOD

The research uses descriptive quantitative design. The subjects of this research were the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program in the academic year 2019/2020. Thirty-nine (39) students divided into two classes. Classe A has 23 students, 6 male students, and 17 female students, while class B class consists of 16 students, 1 male student, and 15 female students. The instrument used in the study was mainly a documentation of the students' composition. The researchers used Hewing's theory (2002) to analyze the errors. The data was analyzed based on seven categories. They are: (1) Errors in using verb group, (2) Errors in the agreement between subject and verb, (3) Errors in the use of the article, (4) Errors in the use preposition, (5) Errors in pluralization, (6) Error in the use of pronoun and (7) Error in the use of a conjunction

The researchers used two types of codification, one for coding the type of errors, and the second one is for coding the students' names. The error codes from the initial of the errors' name, for example, **To-INF** is a code from error in the use of To-Infinitive, **LV** is a code from error in the use of Linking Verb, and **A & P** is a code from error in the use of Active and Passive form. The students'name was coded by using their name initials. For example, **E**milia **A**jeng **L**estari at A-class; will be like **EAL_A.**To analyze the data, the researchers used Ellis' (2005) steps of error analysis, namely 1) Identifying errors, 2) classifying error types, 3) calculating the errors, and 4) describing the errors.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Types of Errors

Based on the data analysis, there are 406 errors were made by 37 students in writing cause and effect essay. Each of them is presented in tables.

Verb Groups

The students made five diiferent types of errors, namely to infinitive (3,44%), linking-verb (0.50%), past form (3.94), gerund (2.95), active / passive form (0.50%). The distribution of the errors can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Verb Groups
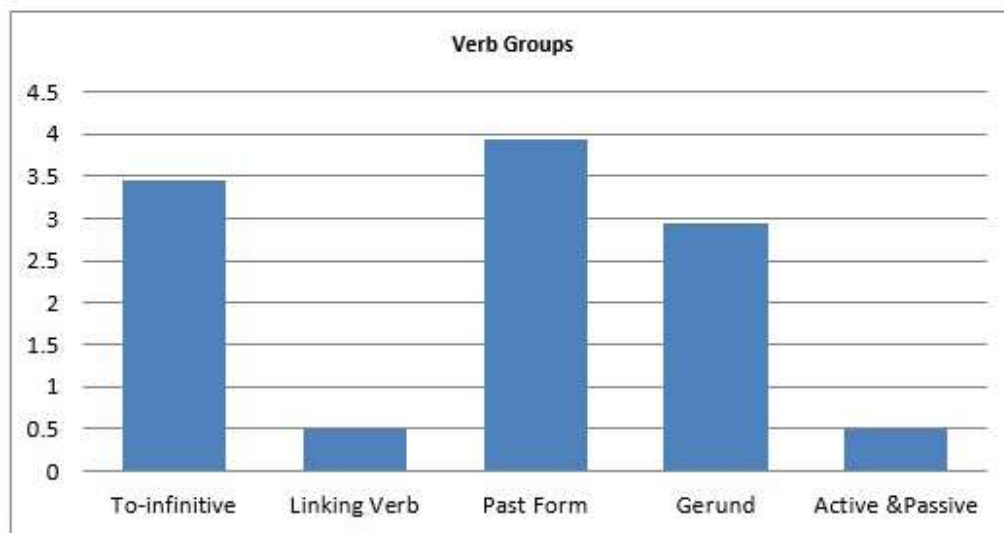
Related to verb groups, there is to-infinitive. To-infinitive is a verb that is always preceded by the word 'to'. In a sentence, an infinitive can act as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb (Harys, 2018). Therefore, there were 14 items of to-Infinitive errors made by 6 students.

> *"The first step is wash the hands with running water, then pour soap on the palms and then wipe...." (PIWS_A).*

The word "wash" appears in the form of a verb. It does not work with is in this sentence, consider adding To-infinitive. As the pattern of To-infinitive is "to+ Verb 1" or to wash. Moreover, the correct sentence must be "The first step is to wash the hands with running water, then pour soap

on the palms and then wipe...."

Another example of Verb group error occur in the following sentence.

"This pandemic makes a lot of workers are being laid off, many people have to struggling for their live in case to buy some food...." *(SS_A).*

Therefore,"struggling"as To-infinitive error since in to-infinitive use Verb 1 and it is not used Verb+ ing. As the pattern of To-infinitive is "to+ Verb 1" or to struggle. Moreover, the correct sentence must be "This pandemic makes a lot of workers are being laid off, many people have tostruggle for their life in case to buy some food....".

Agreement Between Subject and Verb

The second category of error based on Hewings, (2002) is an agreement between subject and verb. The student must be able to identify the subject whether it is singular or plural. So, to construct a correct sentence, the verb must agree with the subject. There were 32 items categorized as subject and verb agreement error (7.88%). It happens perhaps because the learners were still not aware that the particular sentence needs agreement.

"The covid-19 pandemic exist on earth caused several effects on the environment, both positive and negative effects." (FO_B) . The word, "exist" is included in the agreement error. The word "The covid-19" is a subject and it must be followed by the singular verb "exists". Thus, the correct sentence must be "The covid-19 pandemic exists on earth caused several effects on the environment, both of the positive and negative effects."

The Use of Article

The third category of error is the use of article. Writers use a/an with a singular noun when they describe someone or something or when to say what type of thing (Hewings, 2002). The articles are the, an, a. The form a is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel with a consonant form. While the form an is used before words beginning with a vowel (a, i, u, e, o).

One example of the error made by the student is found in the sentence

made by AF_B. "Coronavirus has an impacts on human life". An article 'an' for "an impacts" may not be required with the plural form of "impacts" in this sentence. It must be changed to the singular form "impact". Thus, the correct sentence must be "Coronavirus has an impact on human life".

Another example is made by NF_B . "Currently the world is shocked by V outbreak of a disease caused by a virus...". The phrase "by V outbreak" needs an article 'the'. The article "the"is used when there is only one particular thing in the sentence. Thus, the correct sentence must be "Currently the world is shocked by the outbreak of a disease caused by a virus...".

The Use of Preposition

In the fourth category, there is a preposition. Brown (2004) stated that preposition is a word used to express some relations of different things or thoughts to each other, and its position is usually before a noun or a pronoun. A preposition is always followed by nouns (or pronouns). They are connective words that show the connection between the nouns following them and one of the basic sentence elements: subject, verb, object, or complement (Hewings, 2002). There was 36.70% of error in preposition. The students made errors in preposition probably because they were still confused how to place the preposition and how to use them in the sentence.

One example of preposition error is as follow. "In March 15, 2020 the situation is getting worse, there were hundreds of confirmed cases of coronavirus" (AF_A). Preposition "in" is incorrect. The correct preposition for ' months' is "on". Thus, the correct sentence must be "On March 15 2020 the situation is getting worse, there were hundreds of confirmed cases of the coronavirus."

The Use of Pluralization

Pluralization is a process of adding morpheme (s or es) to pluralize nouns. Many exceptional nouns do not use adding –s or-es to construct their plural forms (Hewings, 2002). There were 32 items of pluralization errors found in 13 students' essay.

There wa 7.88% of errors in pluralization or it was about 32 items out of 406 items in the total percentage of students' errors. It was almost the same in number as subject-verb agreement error. The errors happened because the learners did not add '–s' when the subject is in a plural form.

One of the example of pluralization error is "We can learn anything by applying our gadget to search a lot of new knowledges." (SR_B). Pluralization is a process of adding morpheme (s or es) to pluralize nouns. The word "knowledges*" is included as a pluralization error. It appears that knowledge is an uncountable noun and should not be made in plural form. So, it must be changed into a singular form without adding –s "knowledge". Thus, the correct sentence must be "We can learn anything by applying our gadget to search a lot of new knowledge."

Another example of pluralization error is in the following sentence. "Minimizing outdoor activities in one of the most effective way ....." (HFH_A). The word "way" is included in the pluralization error. The singular form "way" follows the quantifier "one of", which requires a plural noun. So, it must be changed into a plural form by adding –s "ways". Thus, the correct sentence must be "Minimizing outdoor activities in one of the most effective....".

The Use of Pronoun

Pronouns are words used instead of noun phrases or nouns. Pronouns include personal pronouns (I, she, me), reflexive pronouns (myself, herself), and relative pronouns (who, which). Murphy & Smalzer (2002) state there are seven subject pronouns such as I, you, he, she, it (singular), and we, you, they (plural). There were 25 items of pronoun errors from 16 students' essay.

Error in the use of pronoun is 6.16% or it was about 25 items out of 406 items in the total percentage of students' error. The error happened because the learners are probably still confused when to use a personal or reflexive pronoun. It also shows that the students did not know the function of the pronoun in English grammar. For example: "Take care of our self and each other...". It should be "Take care of ourselves and each other...". Errors

in the use of pronoun is when the subject and object of the same sentence refer to the same person or thing (Hewings, 2002). In the example, there was a pronoun error in the reflexive pronoun.

The Use of Conjuction

Conjunctions are used to connect words. Some words and phrases (sentence connectors) are used to connect one sentence with a previous sentence or sentences. There are: although, even though, though, whereas, while, yet, as, because, for, in that, since, so, so that (Hewings, 2013). There were 6 items for error in conjuction (1,48%). One of the examples of error in conjunction is in the following sentence. "Because, their parents must teach their children to study at home" (FF_B). The problem with this sentence is the use of "because". The word 'because' is followed by a sentence, in which its function will change into a sub clause. Therefore, after a subclause 'because......', there should be a main clause.

The Most Frequent Error

In total, there were 406 errors made by the students in writing cause-effect essay.The most frequent error made by the students is the use of preposition. This error occur 149 times in the students' essay which is equal to 36.70%. The second most frequent error is the use of article (28.57%) which occurs 116 times in the students' essay. And the third most frequent error is in the use of subject-verb agrrement (7.88%) and pluralization (7.88%).

Table 4.2 The percentage of students' errors

No.	Grammatical errors based on 7 categories	Occurrences (times)	Percentage (%)
1.	Errors in the use of verb group forms: To-infinitive Linking Verb Past Form Gerund Active and Passive	(46) 14 2 16 12 2	(11.33) 3.44% 0.50% 3.94% 2.95% 0.50%
2.	Errors in the use of subject-verb agreement	32	7.88%
3.	Errors in the use of article	116	28.57%

4.	Errors in the use of preposition	149	36.70%
5.	Errors in pluralization	32	7.88%
6.	Errors in the use of pronoun	25	6.16%
7.	Errors in the use of conjunction	6	1.48%
	Total Errors	406	100%

The most frequent eror in this study does not support previous research. Other research in error analysis conducted in the same intitution found out that the most frequent error made by the students in writing essays is the past form error (Harys, 2018). In his research, there was 405 items eror in past form agreeement with the percentage of 67.4. This study also does not support Aisyah & Rahmawati (2019) research on error analysis in terms of the most frequent error. In their study, the use of articles becomes the highest number of eror (26.06 %) with 162 occurences. The second highest number of error in their study is the use of tenses (25.92%) with 162 occurences. In general, it can be concluded that the use of preposition becomes the main issue for the students in writing. They have problems how to use proper preposition for particular words of phrases. Therefore, to solve this problems, the students need to improve their knowledge and their vocabulary. One way to do this is to improve the receptive skills, by reading and listening to the target language.

The researchers suspect that the influence of the first language play a big role in the students' error. As stated by Touchie (1986) there two types of error in language acquisition, namely the interlanguage error and the intralanguage error. The linguistic error made by the students in this study is probaby caused by the interlanguage error, or the transfer from the L1 to the production of written L2. Many of the students' writing have the 'feel' or style of Bahasa Indonesia. The most dominant error found in the research is the preposition error. In Bahasa Indonesia there are also preposition, such as terdiri atas, bergantung kepada, di, pada,ke, berbicara tentang, berdasarkan atas, etc.Yet, its use is different in the sentence. EFL learners who are learning to write tend to transfer their knowledge from the first language

to their writing. Aisyah & Rahmawati (2019) also suspect the same thing. Based on their research, they think that the L1 transfer is the cause of the students' errors in writing. Take for example an example from one of the students' writing in this study. "Covid-19 also spoiled the education aspect in the Indonesian education program" (FF_B) . By feeling, the preposition used seems right, yet, it is not in English. The correct preposition should be 'of'. Thus, the correct sentence is Covid-19 also spoiled the education aspect of the Indonesian education program" . Another example of the transfer of the L1 to L2 in preposition is in the following sentence, "So, every teacher only asked to their student to do the task..." (FF_B). The preposition "to" is wrong in English grammar, but correct in Bahasa Indonesia. The preposition "to" should be ommitted. The right sentence will be "So, every teacher only asked their student to do the task...."

Eventhough the students' writing was checked by using Grammarly online application, it was found out that the students still made errors in their writing. This shows that the students cannot rely themselves on the grammar application. They have to improve their grammatical knowledge so that they can write better. To do this, the students need to have more exposure in the target language. One way to do this is to improve the receptive skills, by reading and listening to the target language. With the advacement of technology nowadays, the students can expose themselves to English in a fun way. The other solution to solve the problem is to make the students memorize the verb and preposition agreement. By doing so, the students can have better feeling and judgement about the appropriate use of particular words, phrases, and idiomatic expression.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study shows that the students still made errors in writing their essays. The three top errors frequently made by the students in writing a cause-effect essay are (1) the use of preposition (36.70%); (2) the use of the article (28.57%); and (3) the use of subject-verb agreement

(7.88%) and pluralization (7.88%). The researchers suspect that these errors occur because of the L1 transfer. However, to have a better understanding of the cause, more research needs to be conducted.

Thus, some suggestions are addressed to the following parties. Firstly, the writing lecturer should give more attention to the students' writing by focusing on the most frequent errors, namely the preposition, the articles, the subject-verb agreement, and the pluralization. The writing lecturer can give direct feedback to the students by doing a student-teacher conference. The writing lecturer can also suggest the students check and recheck their writing in Grammarly free only application to help improve the quality of their writing. The second suggestion is directed to future researchers. Other research can investigate the cause of the students› error by using qualitative design. The use of in-depth interviews might be able to find out the real cause of the students' errors. Having more information about the students' errors in writing and what caused them can help the writing lecturer to help EFL learners achieved their best potentials.

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