SYNTACTICAL ERRORS MADE BY THE STUDENTS
IN WRITING THESIS

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Abstract

The Analysis of Syntactical Errors Made by the Students in Writing Thesis aimed to find out the types of syntactical errors made by the students in writing thesis and to find out the most frequent type of errors made by the students in writing thesis. The writer used Politzer and Romirez's theory focusing on the Syntactical errors. This study found the errors made by students were in the term of noun phrase, verb, verb construction, and transformation. Then, the most frequent error found was in the noun phrase term with 48.7%. The researcher suggests the English teachers to give reinforcement for the students about the basic rules of constructing sentences.

Keywords: Analysis, Syntactical Errors, Writing, Thesis

Abstrak

Analisa Kesalahan Sintaksis oleh Mahasiswa dalam Penulisan Skripsi*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memperoleh jenis kesalahan sintaksis yang dilakukan oleh siswa dalam menulis skripsi dan kesalahan sintaksis yang paling sering dilakukan. Penulis menggunakan teori Politzer dan Romirez mengenai kesalahan sintaksis. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan bahwa kesalahan yang dilakukan mahasiswa adalah pada noun phrase, verb, verb construction, and transformation. Jenis kesalahan yang paling sering dilakukan adalah pada noun phrase (47.8%). Penulis menyarankan dosen bahasa Inggris untuk memberikan penguatan pada mahasiswa mengenai aturan dasar mengenai constructing sentences.*

Kata kunci: Analisa, kesalahan sintaksis, penulisan, skripsi

INTRODUCTION

A thesis is one of the duties that the students should do to fulfill the requirements for the degree of strata one. Since it is a duty, the thesis should be written well and correctly. However, the facts showed that there are still many students doing mistakes and errors when writing their theses.

Mistakes and errors in writing were caused by some factors. First, interlingual errors (Mother Tongue Interference), it is an error resulting from language transfer which is caused by the learner‟s native language. Second, intralingual errors, it is an error which derives from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than from language transfer (Brown, 2007:263). In addition, mistakes or errors were made because of less attention. The learners do not apply the rule that they actually know.

English learners made errors in many ways. In written form, some components of language are included such as syntax. Noam Chomsky (2002:1) defines syntax as the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. It is one of the branches of linguistics studying about the rules or patterned relation that govern the way words combine to form phrases, or phrases combine to form sentences.

From a preliminary study conducted, the researcher found some errors in some theses. The errors were made in many different ways. There was an error in subject verb agreement, where the verb was not suitable with the subject. For instance, in the sentence "This research show...," verb "show" was not suitable with the subject "this research". It must be "shows" because the subject was in singular form. In the other case, there was also an error in constructing a sentence. The thesis „writer wrote a long sentence without main verb in it. E.g.: "The writer deep gratitude due to the writers' consultants for their precious times, advise...". Moreover, the researcher found a sentence which did not have a subject. E.g.: "In this research, found that in the poems..." In this case, the thesis„ writer considered the preposition phrase (adverb) in the beginning of the sentence as the subject.

The data above proved that still there were some errors in students„ theses. Since thesis is a particular thing which determines whether someone passes the strata one, the errors should be minimalized. The researcher thought that it was very important to conduct a research about the syntactical errors in the students„ theses. This research found out the most frequent type of errors made by the students in writing thesis in order to avoid more errors.

Problem Statements as follows: 1. What types of syntactical errors are made by the students of English and Literature Department in writing thesis? 2. What type of syntactical errors is most frequently made by the students of English and Literature Department in writing thesis?

Scope of Research of this study focused on the syntactical errors, which occurred in the student's thesis, in conclusion in period 2012-2013. There are two kinds of thesis proposed by the students, namely linguistics and literature. In this study, the researcher chose both of them. This study was limited on the area of error, which were focused on syntactical errors based on the classification of linguistics category taxonomy proposed by Dulay based on Politzer and Romirez theory as guideline.

1. Syntax

Syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. (Chomsky, 2002:1) The term syntax has been defined by many linguists: Crystal (in Ba''dulu, 2004:45) defines syntax as the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. In this use, syntax is opposed to morphology, the study of word structure. Crane (1981: 102) defines syntax as the way words put together to form phrase and sentences. To study syntax is to study the patterns and relationship of words, phrases, and clauses. Francis (in Ba''dulu, 2004:45) states that syntax is a subdivision of grammar which deals with the structure of word groups. The study of syntax includes phrase, clause and sentence. They are explained as follow:

a. Phrase
   1) Prepositional phrase (PP) with a preposition as head. For example: in the school, on the table.
   2) Noun phrase (NP) with a noun as head. For example: a short man, my lovely mother.
   3) Verb phrase (VP) with a verb as head. For example: is writing, play beautifully
   4) Adjectival phrase with an adjective as head. For example: very interesting
   5) Adverbial phrase with adverb as head. For example: very carefully.

b. Clause
   According to Frank (1972:222) clause is a full predication that contains a subject and a predicate with a finite verb. Clause are typically classified into two types, dependent and independent clause.
   1) An independent clause
      An independent clause is complete sentence. It contains the main subject and verb of a sentence (Azar, 1999:239). Usually independent clause can stand alone as a complete simple sentence, for example: Uchy lives in Korea. In compound sentence, independent clauses may be joined coordinately by punctuation alone, by coordinate conjunctions, or by conjunctive adverbs (Frank, 1972: 223).
      For example:
      ➢ John was sick; he didn't come to school. (Independent clauses joined merely by punctuation)
      ➢ John was sick, so he didn't come to school. (Independent clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction)
      ➢ John was sick; therefore, he didn't come to school. (Independent clauses joined by a Conjunctive adverb)

   2) A dependent clause
      a) Adverbial clause
      b) Adjective clause
         (1) Nominal function,
         (2) Adjectival function,
         (3) Adverbial clause function
   3) Noun clause

c. Sentence
   1) The simple sentence

The most basic type of sentence is the simple sentence, which contains only one clause. A simple sentence can be as short as one word. Usually, however, the sentence has a subject as well as predicate and both the subject and the predicate may have modifier. All of the following are simple sentence, because each contains only one clause:

Melts!   Ice melts

2) The compound sentence

A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses (or simple sentences) joined by co-ordinate conjunctions like "and," "but," and "or":

Simple   : Canada is a rich country
Simple   : Still, it has many poor people.
Compound   : Canada is a rich country, but still it has many poor people

3) The complex sentence

A complex sentence contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Unlike a compound sentence, a complex sentence contains clause which are not equal. For example:

Simple   : My friend invited me to a party. I do not want to go.
Compound   : My friend invited me to a party, but I do not want to go.
Complex   : Although my friend invited me to a party, I do not want to go.

2. Error

There are many definitions of errors presented by experts. Those definitions contain the same meaning while the difference lies on how they formulate them. According to Norrish (in Tammase, 2011: 8), error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:138), errors are defined as the flawed side of learners" speech or writing, which deviates from come -selected norm of mature language performance.

a. The difference between Errors and Mistakes

To identify errors we have to compare the sentences learners produce with what seem to be the normal or correct sentences in the target language which correspond with them. Identifying the exact errors that learners make is often difficult. Sometimes it is difficult to reconstruct the correct sentence because we are not sure what the learner meant to say. So this is the further problem how we can be sure that when a learner produces a deviant form it is not just an accidental slip of the tongue. Learners often make slips when they are tired or under some kind pressure to communicate. So, it is necessary to differentiate between error and mistake. Errors reflect gaps in learners knowledge; they occur because the learner does know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. (Ellis, 1997:17)

A mistake is also a deviation of the norms of the language but is not systematic. It means that the use of the norms of the language in sentences is sometimes true and sometimes wrong. Norrish (in Hasyim, 2002: 45) also says that a mistake is an inconsistent deviation that sometimes the learners get it right but sometimes wrong. One way that can be used to distinguish errors and mistakes is checking the consistency of learners' performance. There is an example of mistake and error by using the past tense of the verb "contain".

For example: the big of them contained a snake the basket contain a snake

If they consistently substitute "contain" for "contained" this would indicate a lack of knowledge – an error. However, if they sometimes say "contain" and sometimes "contained", this would suggest that the possess knowledge of the correct form and are just slipping up- a mistake. Another way might be to ask learners to try to correct their own deviant utterances. Where they unable to, the deviations are errors; where they successful, they are mistakes.

b. Cause of Error

Norrish (in Hasyim, 2002:47) classifies the causes of error into three types that is carelessness, first language interference, and translation. Those are discussed below:
1) Carelessness
2) First language
3) Translation

c. Types of Error

Many researchers use the linguistic category taxonomy as a reporting tool which organizes the errors they have collected. Politzer and Romirez (1973) studied 126 mexican. American children learning English in the United State, taping their narrative of a short, silent animated cartoon. Errors were extracted for analysis from this body of natural speech.

Politzer and Ramirez introduce their types of errors based on linguistic category as follow:
1) Morphology
   a) Indifinite article incorrect
   b) possesive case incorrect
   c) Third person singular verb incorrect
   d) Simple past tense incorrect
2) Syntax
3) Noun Phrase
   a) Determiners
   b) Nominalization
   c) Number
   d) Use of pronouns
   e) Use of prepositions
4) Verb Phrase
   a) Omission of verb
   b) Use of progressive tense
   c) Agreement of subject and verb
5) Verb and verb construction
   a) Embedding
   b) Omission of to in identical subject construction
   c) Omission of to in the verb and verb construction
   d) Attachment of the past marker to the dependent verb
6) Word Order
   a) Repetition of the object
   b) Adjectival modifiers placed after noun

7) Some Transformations
   a) Negative transformation
   b) Question transformation
   c) There transformation
   d) Subordinate clause transformation

d. Surface Structure Taxonomy
   This type of taxonomy usually alters the surface structure of utterances. In this respect, Dulay et al. (1982:150) set four types of errors: omission, addition, Misformation, and misorder:
   1) Omission Errors
   2) Addition Errors
      a) Double Markings
      b) Regularization
      c) Simple addition
   3) Misformation Errors
      a. Regularization
      b. Archi-form
      c. Alternating Form
   4) Misordering Errors

e. Comparative taxonomy
   1) Developmental Errors
   2) Interlingual Errors
f. Communicative Effect Taxonomy
   1) Global Errors
   2) Local Errrors

3. Syntactical Errors
   a. Definition of Syntactical Errors
   Syntactical error is a confusion in part of speech. It is any deviation from the rule system due to insufficient competence of the target language, particularly in syntax which involves phrase, clause and sentence. Some of the errors are difficult to categorize unambiguously, however an error in word meaning may be caused by ignorance of just one word, but it effects are sometimes global: that is the entire sentence may be affected in unpredictable ways (Ruth Sanders, 1987: 75). Syntax errors are errors that affect text larger then the word namely phrase, clause, sentence, and ultimate paragraph. (Binti, 2007: 18)
   Syntactical errors include noun phrase which included, determiner, nominalization, number, use of pronouns, use of preposition, errors in verb phrase that include omission of verb, use of progressive tenses, agreement of subject and verb, error in verb and verb construction, word order, and some errors in transformations involve negative transformation, passive transformation. (Tammase, 2011: 33)

   b. Types of Syntactical Errors
   Based on Linguistic Category, errors are classified according to " both the Language component and the particular linguistic constituent the error affects" (Dulay,at all, 1982:146). In

this study, language components are limited to syntax, which follow Politzer and Romirez' model as guideline classified the errors into the following types:

1) Noun Phrase, including determiner, number, pronouns, and preposition
2) Verb, including omission of main verb, omission of be as an auxiliary, omission of be as main verb, addition of verb, misformation of verb after modal auxiliary, misformation of verb after preposition, and subject verb agreement.
3) Verb and verb construction, including Attachment of the past marker, and Misformation of verb in verb construction
4) Word order
5) Transformation, including Negative transformation, and Passive transformation

4. The Concept of Writing

Basically, writing means producing or reproducing oral message into written language. It involves an active process to organize, formulate, and develop the ideas on the paper so that the readers can follow the writer"s message as well as oral form, but we should know that the writing requires an accurate and precise grammar, word choice and spelling, punctuation and vocabulary. Oshima and Hague (1999: 2) states that writing is a progressive activity. This means that when you first write something down, you have already been thinking about what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. Kroma (in Tammase, 2011:9) argues that writing is kind of activity where the writer expresses all the ideas in the paper (print) from word to sentences, sentence to paragraph and from paragraph to essay. In relation to the organization of ideas on the paper, a writer should have an ability to balance the purpose, audience, and topics as well as a speaking activity.

We can understand the content of the text easily, if the use of part of speech is correct and the content of the writing is clear. There are some characteristics of good writing as pointed by Nunan (1989:37)) as follows:

a. Mastering the mechanic of letter formation
b. Mastering and obeying conventions of spelling and punctuations
c. Using the grammatical system to convey one"s intended meaning
d. Organizing content at the level of the paragraph and the complete text
e. Polishing and revising one"s initial efforts
f. Selecting an appropriate style for one"s audience.

Jacobs as cited in (Tammase, 2011:11) argues that there are five main components of writing; they are content, organization, grammar, word choice and mechanics.

a. Content

The component of writing should be clear to readers. So, those readers can understand the message conveyed and gains the information from it. In order to have good content of writing, its contents should be well unified and completed. Then, the term is usually known as unity and become completeness and become characteristics of good writing.

Besides writing has completeness, the main idea has to explained and developed fully. Completeness is the controlling ideas which are developed through particular information.

Unity means that every part of sentences contributes to one principle, unifying thought. Furthermore, unity is the first quality of effective sentence. When we say that sentence has unity, we mean that everything in it, has logical relation to the purpose of the sentences as a whole and nothing is omitted which necessary to that purpose.

b. Organization

In organization, the writing concerns in the ways of writer to arrange and organize the ideas or the message in writing. There are many ways that used by the writers to organize or arrange the writing. This organization is mainly recognized as order.

c. Grammar

It has great influence on the quality of writing. In order to have a good grammar in writing, the writer should pay attention to the use of grammatical rules concerning tenses, preposition, clause and article, etc. The lack of good grammar will make the content of writing vague and can create misunderstanding.

d. Word choice

The writer's cannot write anything if they have nothing to express. They have to express their ideas in the form of words or vocabulary. The lack of vocabulary makes them fail to compose what they are going to express because they feel difficult to choose words.

e. Mechanics

The use of favorable mechanics will make the readers easy to group on conveying ideas or message to write materials. The important things in mechanics of writing are punctuation and spelling.

METHODS

Method of research in conducting this research, the writer used descriptive method to analyze the data. It was used to describe the syntactical errors made by the students of English and Literature department of Adab and Humanities faculty in writing thesis. The data were analyzed and classified based on category linguistic taxonomy following Politzer and Romirez theory as guideline.

The population of this research were the theses of English and Literature Department students in conclusion that were published in 2012-2013. The total numbers of thesis were 108 theses. The sample was taken by the writer is 30% of 108 theses that were published in 2012-2013. There were 30 theses. The technique of sampling used in this research was random sampling.

The source of data of this research was the students" theses of English and Literature Department in academic year 2012-2013.

The instrument used in this research was note taking. It means that while reading the students' thesis, the writer made some notes to find and classify the errors.

In data analysis, the writer used concept about syntactical errors based on Politzer and Romirez' model. The data analyzed into three steps, which were identification of errors, classification of errors, and explanation. All deviations which fulfilled the criteria were termed as errors. Next, in classification of errors, it was classified according to their characteristics. In the last step; the researcher did correction and explanation of errors. The errors that had been identified and classified were explained in term of their characteristic. Then, the writer calculated the errors to know the most frequent types of errors made by the students of English and Literature Department in writing thesis. In calculating the most frequent type of error, the writer applied the following formula:

$f = \dfrac{dy}{dx} \times 100\%$

f= percentage of error

dy= total of the given error

dx=total of whole errors (Suprayogi :in Tammase 2011,23)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Types of Errors

No	Identification of the Errors	Type of Errors	Explanation and Correction of Errors
1	*There were found visual signs which have analyzed*	Transformation	*which have analyzed* is a passive form and one of its parts is left out. The part is an auxiliary. Therefore, an auxiliary been in inserted.
2	*Internal focalization of each character / internal focalizer exist in the autobiography "I'am Nujood, age 10 and Divorced"*	Verb	*Internal focalization* is a noun phrase that functions followed by a plural verb exist. So it should be replaced by *exists*. *Internal focalization* of each character/ internal focalizes *exists* in the autobiography I am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced"
3	*There are four kind contextual meaning the writer found in the novel Sashenka by Simon Montefiore such us contextual meaning.*	Noun phrase	*Four* is a number that showed more than one. It is always followed by a plural noun. Therefore, the noun kind requires a plural marker –s *Four kinds contextual meaning* is noun phrase and one of its parts is left out. The parts is its preposition. The head of this noun phrase is *kinds*. Therefore, it needs modifier from prepositional phrase. Inserting a preposition of is required and inserting a relative pronoun that in this sentence also is required. Because two simple sentences cannot stand together without

4	*Ego happen when their verb parents must neglect their children because their economic condition*	Noun phrase	*Ego* is a singular noun but its verb is plural verb *happen*. Therefore, it is required a singular marker –s *Because their economic condition* is a prepositional phrase which one of its parts is left out. The part is preposition *of* . *Ego happens* when their parents must neglect their children *because of their economic condition*
5	*The differences between the major characters and the minor characters in the novel were the major characters that took some important role in the story and the minor characters who did not take important role.*	Noun phrase	*Some* is always followed by a plural noun. Therefore, the noun phrase role requires a plural marker –s *The differences between the major characters and the minor characters in the novel were the major characters that took some important roles in the story and the minor characters who did not take important role.*
6	*Based on the research which was done about the audience of American pop culture in film Twilight among young women muslim audiences in Makassar which take six subject as samples*	Verb Noun phrase	*which take six subject as samples* is adjective clause but in this sentence the relative pronouns *which* should be omitted because this sentence did not have main verb. *six* is a number that showed more than one. It is always followed by a plural noun. Therefore, the noun *subject* requires a plural marker –s and the markes –s in the *samples* is omitted.

			Based on the research which was done about the audience of American pop culture in film Twilight among young women muslim audiences in Makassar take six subjects as sample.
7	*In the other words <u>that kiss, hug, sleep together with were</u> not taboo to be seen and talked about in daily conversation*	Verb	*that* is unnecessary word that occurs in the simple sentence. Therefore, it should be removed. <u>*In the other words, kiss, hug, and sleep together with were not taboo*</u> to be seen and talked about in daily conversation.
8.	*The relation racial injustice in the novel and the real condition in South America reflected in Jim Crow's law where every single part of the or and public services <u>must be separate</u> between White and black.*	Transformation	public services <u>*must be separate*</u> is passive sentence and one of its part is missed. The part is the past participle of *separate*. It should be *separated* because the word order of passive is be and directly followed by past participle *The relation racial injustice in the novel and the real condition in South America reflected in Jim Crow's law where every single part of the or and public services <u>must be separated</u> between White and Black.*
9	*The writer found <u>some kind of symbols</u> containing in the novel*	Noun phrase	*Some* is always followed by a plural noun. Therefore, the noun kind requires a plural Marker –s and the marker –s in *samples* is not required so it should be deleted. The writer found <u>*some kinds of symbol*</u> containing in the novel.
10	*<u>This done</u> because <u>founder father believe</u> America is <u>right place</u> to keep ancient mystery*	Verb Verb Noun phrase	*This done* is a passive sentence that one of its part is left. The part is an auxiliary.

Therefore, an auxiliary was is required

Founder father is a noun phrase that functions as the subject. It showed a singular form and it followed by a plural verb believe. Therefore, it is required a

plural marker –s *believes*

founder father and *right place* are singular noun and

they have been mentioned before. Therefore, they require a definite article the which shows specific noun. <u>*This was done because the founder father believes*</u>

America is <u>the right place</u> to keep ancient mystery.

2. The Calculation of Errors

No.	Types of Error	Numbers of Error	Persentage (%)
1.	Noun Phrase	19	48.7
2.	Verb	16	41.1
3	Verb and Verb Construction	1	2.5
4.	Transformation	3	7.7
	TOTAL	**39**	**100**

a. Noun phrase

Errors in noun phrase involve determiners, number, the use of pronouns, and the use of preposition. The other cases of error in number occur in determiner some and many. Some and many are used with a plurals noun.

Incorrect sentence: The writer found some kind of symbol containing in the novel.

Correct sentence: The writer found some kinds of symbol containing in the novel.

Some is always followed by a plural noun. Therefore, the noun kind requires a plural marker –s. the sentences above can be categorized as an errors because the writer made the same errors for many times and this error also can be called as universal errors because almost in students writing is found the same problem.

In using a preposition, one should be aware because there is no certain rule for this. One has to determine which preposition should be used based o n its context. Errors in preposition can be seen in the following sentence:

Incorrect sentence: *There are four kinds contextual meaning that the writer found in the novel Sashenka by Simon Montefiore such us contextual meaning*

Correct sentence : *There are four kinds of contextual meaning that the writer found in the novel Sashenka by Simon Montefiore such us contextual meaning*

In this case, there are 2 errors found because of ommision of preposition of in noun phrase. From the example above, a preposition of is inserted between noun phrase four kinds and contextual meaning. Those errors happen because the students do not apply the rule of head and modifier in the noun phrase.

b. Verb

Another classification of errors is verb phrase. The verb is the most complex part of speech. Its varying arrangements with noun determine the different kinds of sentences- statements, questions, commands, exclamations. Like the noun, the verb has the grammatical properties of person and number, properties which require agreement with the subject. But the verb also has several other grammatical properties that are shared with no other part of speech.(Marcella, 1972:47).

c. Ommision of be as an auxiliary

Two or more words may be joined together into a single verb phrase that functions as the full verb of the predicate. The first part of the verb phrase is the auxiliary (auxiliaries), and the second part is the lexical verb (will be, arriving). (Marcella, 1972: 50). Be is added to other verbs to make progressive and passive forms. (Michael, 2005: 86)

Incorrect sentence: This done because the founder father believes America is the right place to keep ancient mystery.

Correct sentence: This was done because the founder father believes America is the right place to keep ancient mystery.

This done is a passive sentence that one of its parts is left. The part is an auxiliary. Therefore, an auxiliary was is required. This sentence can be categorized as error because the student made the same problem in the same sentence. The student does not put auxiliary while it is needed. this is the fatal error because there is not a rule in English that past participle can stand without auxiliary before

d. Transformation

Two types of errors in transformation are negative transformation and passive transformation. Passive verb form requires the use of auxiliary be and past participle verb form. There are 3 errors found in passive transformation.

Incorrect sentence: There were found 28 of visual signs which have analyzed

Correct sentence: There were found 28 of visual signs which have been analyzed

Which have analyzed is passive form and one of its parts is left. The part is an auxiliary. A passive sentence consists of S+ Auxiliary (is/am/are) + past participle. It can be categorized as errors because it can be found in the some of student writings. Some of the students made the same problem. They did not know the rule of the passive sentence. They omitted be that should be put. Another problem of passive transformation found in the students writing is the students omitting a suffix –ed of past participle.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher puts forward conclusions as follows:

1. The errors made by students were in the term of noun phrase, verb, verb construction, and transformation. Types of errors made by the students in making a noun phrase are about the determiner, number, pronoun, and preposition. The errors in verb term were about the omission of main verb, the omission of be as an auxiliary, omission of be as main verb, misformation of verb after modal auxiliary, misformation of verb after preposition, and subject verb agreement. In verb construction term, the researcher also found some errors in misformation of verb in verb construction. Then, in the transformation term, passive transformation was the only one type of error found.
2. From many types of errors written before, most frequently type of error made by the students was in the term of noun phrase. So, the writers should pay more attention to the formation of noun phrase.

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