

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS ABSTRACTS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate the English grammatical error, in terms of subject-verb agreement, found in the undergraduate thesis abstracts written by the graduates of Management Studies of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Sukma, Medan. Subject-verb agreement error is classified into two main categories, namely: (1) the use of number agreement and (2) the use of the tense agreement. The objectives of this study are two folds; to find out the types of SVA errors occurring in the undergraduate thesis abstract, and to find out the factors causing the errors. In this qualitative descriptive study, ten English abstracts are taken purposely as the source of data. In analyzing the errors, six complete procedures called error analysis designed by Gass & Selinker are applied. The results of the analysis reveal that 51 SVA errors occur, with 1 error on the use of number agreement and 50 errors on the use of the tense agreement. All of these errors are caused by intralanguage errors (interference from incomplete L2 comprehension). Moreover, three factors caused intralanguage errors. They are called inconsistency, indeterminacy, and simplification. It is also found that with 36 occurrences, inconsistency exceeds the other factors. While simplification causes 10 errors and the rest is indeterminacy that causes 5 errors. In brief, these results reveal that the graduates are still making errors in writing their undergraduate thesis abstracts. By looking at this fact, the researcher has given several suggestions to escalate and improve the quality of the undergraduate thesis abstracts that are written in English.

Keywords: *Thesis Abstract, Error Analysis, Subject-Verb Agreement*

INTRODUCTION

Arranging an undergraduate thesis is a final required requirement for undergraduate students to finish their terms of study. As a kind of scientific writing object, the body of the undergraduate thesis must have contained several compulsory parts namely, abstract; introduction; review of literature; methodology; findings and discussion; and conclusion and suggestion. All of the processes and results of the research then will be briefly reported in the abstract. So forth, the abstract plays an important role either in an undergraduate thesis or in another kind of scientific writing. The basic principle of an abstract is to summarize the main ideas of writing (Porte, 2002). Nowadays, in Indonesia, writing an abstract is not only limited to the use of Bahasa Indonesia but also necessary to write it in the English language. An abstract written in English may open a wider opportunity for the reader from all over the world to reach and read one's scientific writing. Therefore, most colleges in Indonesia have obligated their students to write abstracts within a bilingual style, Bahasa Indonesia, and the English language.

However, abstract written in the English language may not be separated from containing a grammatical error, since for Indonesian students, English is a foreign language. Sutrisno (2018) had researched analyzing errors in students' English written text, and those errors might drive the readers confused to understand the students' ideas. A research conducted by Dinamika & Hanafiah (2019) found that students of the English Department of Universitas Sumatera Utara made major syntactical errors in terms of the use of the article, the use of relative pronouns, and the use of the subject-verb agreement, in their report text writing. Burhanuddin (2020) analyzed the English sentences written by English Department Students and found them committed making errors in eleven types of errors. These previous researches had proven that though the students who are qualified for writing the thesis abstract must have learned the English language for quite a long course, they still commit making errors in their writing. Besides, the error which occurs on the abstract might impact the readers' interest in trusting the content and results of the research. It also might decrease the value of the research publication itself.

Though grammatical errors are common to happen in the writing medium, it cannot be always taken for granted. There must be a way taken to avoid learners from making grammatical errors. So forth, in the early 70s, the linguists had initiated to create a method of analyzing error, and it had been known until now as Error Analysis (Corder, 1967). The modern linguists have currently modified the Error Analysis Method to the more various complex steps. Gass & Selinker were those who were also involved in arranging the modern Error Analysis Method. They designed it to have more complete procedures and more suitable to be applied in the second language learning classroom. By following the linguists' purpose that to avoid making grammatical errors in

abstract writing, the error analysis method can be applied, thus, the researcher intends to analyze the grammatical errors which occur in the undergraduate thesis abstract written by the graduates of Management Studies of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Sukma Medan. While the students of this college speak Bahasa Indonesia as the medium language.

Generally, in the Error Analysis method, there are two kinds of sources that cause the errors; they are interlanguage factor and intralanguage factor. Interlanguage error is an error caused by the interference (negative transfer) of the learners' mother tongue, while, intralanguage error to items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language (Richards:1972). Furthermore, the objective of this study appears to be into two folds; to find out the types of Subject-Verb Agreement error in the undergraduate thesis abstract, and to find out the factors causing the errors.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. In which to analyze the grammatical errors appearing in the English abstract of students' undergraduate thesis, the researcher uses the Error Analysis method which was arranged by Gass & Selinker. The Error Analysis method contains six procedures to be gone through, they are respectively named data collection, error identification, error classification, error quantification, error analysis, and remediation.

Ten participants whose undergraduate thesis abstracts were taken were the students of the Management Sciences Department of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Sukma Medan, who had graduated during the academic year of 2018-2019. So, by the time this research is conducted, those students had graduated from this college. The researcher doesn't limit the number of clauses to be analyzed and just analyze the thorough clauses that appear on the abstracts. Any errors in the use of subject-verb agreement are taken as the data of the research.

By following the Error Analysis method applied, the data is initially collected by the research at the STIM Sukma Library. The researcher randomly chooses 10 abstracts that are available at the library. Next, the data which had been collected identified its occurrence. The researcher marks each error occurrence by circling on the errors that occur. On the third procedure, the marked errors are classified into its type of error. The occurrence of marked errors is then counted based on its type. The errors need to be quantified to know how often it occurs in the English abstract and to know what kind of errors predominantly occur. The procedure of error analysis is important to find out the factor that causes the error, whether it is an interlanguage factor or an intralanguage factor. At the end of the Error Analysis method, remedial action will be given. It aims to give the solution to overcome the language learning error, so it will not happen anymore in the future undergraduate thesis abstract.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the Error Analysis Method is used to analyze the errors found in the English undergraduate thesis abstract, then it obtains findings that the types of SVA errors found in the undergraduate thesis abstract are the tense agreement error and the number agreement error. The result of the analysis is presented in the table as followings:

Table 1. The error of the Use of Subject Verb Agreement

Initial (1)	Type of Errors (2)	Error Form (3)	Amount (4)	Source & Cause (5)	Correct Form (6)
RWU	The Use of Number Agreement	-	-	-	-
	The Use of Tense Agreement	Where the investment <i>will gives¹</i> the contribution...	6	Intralanguage error Indeterminacy in using the present form as the unit of future form	Where the investment <i>will give¹</i> the contribution...

		the acceleration of economy growth, <i>is be</i> ² able to decrease...		Intralinguage error Indeterminacy in using double auxiliary (to be) in one phrase	the acceleration of economic growth, <i>is</i> ² able to decrease...
		Data analysis <i>is used</i> ³ liner multiple...		Intralinguage error Indeterminacy in using passive voice	Data analysis <i>used is</i> ³ liner multiple...
		hypothesis <i>testing</i> ⁴ <i>using</i> ⁵ the coefficient ...		Intralinguage error Indeterminacy in using passive voice ⁴ Simplification in using auxiliary verb ⁵	hypothesis <i>is tested</i> ⁴ <i>by using</i> ⁵ the coefficient ...
		the result showed ⁶ that...		Intralinguage error Inconsistency in using present form	the result <i>shows</i> ⁶ that...

The table above shows only a sample of the analysis process, while in fact, there are ten sets of analyses. The table contains six themes; (1) initial refers to the students' name initial; (2) type of errors refer to which sub-category the errors belong to; (3) error form refers to the projection of clauses that contain errors in it, next, the error which is found is italicized and given superscripted number as the marker; (4) Amount of occurrence refers to the frequency of error occurrences; (5) Source and Cause refers to factors that cause the error; and (6) correct form refers to the presentation of the corrected error.

From the results of entire sets of analysis, it is found that 51 subject-verb agreement errors occur, with 1 error on the use of number agreement and 50 errors on the use of the tense agreement. All of these errors are caused by the intralinguage source (interference from incomplete L2 comprehension). Moreover, three factors are causing intralinguage errors, called inconsistency, indeterminacy, and simplification.

The results of the analysis reveal that inconsistency exceeds the other factors, with 36 occurrences. While simplification causes 10 errors and the rest is indeterminacy that causes 5 errors. Therefore, the researcher finds that the graduates of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Sukma Medan still commit to making errors in their undergraduate thesis abstract. From the result of the analysis, it is also gained that intralinguage error has become the only source of error in these abstract collections. Furthermore, by seeing the results of the analysis, the researcher has given several suggestive remediations to escalate the quality of the undergraduate thesis abstract which is written in English.

Remediation

As the last procedure of Error Analysis arranged by Gass & Selinker (2008), the remediation stage must be taken out. It gives the problematic area a solution to undertake. In this research, the abstracts have four problematic areas within subject-verb agreement use; one source of error namely intralinguage error and three factors of causing errors namely inconsistency, indeterminacy, and simplification. Therefore, those four problematic areas require to be amended, either in the L2 grammatical knowledge or in the L2 teaching-learning process.

Intralinguage error relates to the incomplete or inadequate knowledge an L2 learner has, therefore it affects his ability in applying L2 into his writing or speaking. For intralinguage error causes the entire errors in this

research finding, thus remedial action is needed to be carried out. Related to the use of the tense agreement, the students should pay more attention to the use of tense in the text. They also must be able to comprehend that in the English language, a predicate/verb will change according to its time signal, not like in Bahasa Indonesia. Meanwhile, to avoid making an error in the use of the number agreement, the students are suggested to be aware of the subject of the clause and adjust it with the verb which will follow.

The three factors causing errors also needed to be anticipated for further use. The number of inconsistency factors exceeds another two factors, it may represent that the majority of students' undergraduate thesis abstracts of STIM Sukma Medan may have contained numbers of inconsistency as well. As remediation, the researcher suggests the future students to convince themselves to use what kind of tenses in their writing. They also need to understand the use of language features and the generic structure of a text, so they can be more consistent in writing any kind of text. The simplification factor also occurs in the abstracts, it may affect the harmony of a clause or a sentence. The students think that a verb is proper to be used in a sentence, but it's not, just like the example on the table above. It is suggested that the students be more aware of the use of an auxiliary verb that must be used within a certain kind of tenses. Indeterminacy factor has informed the researcher that the students have known the class of word that is needed to be used in a clause or a sentence, but they are not sure how and when to use the right and proper class of the word. Therefore, the researcher suggests the future students have confidence in using the English grammar but still with completely proper understanding. Those sources and factors of errors can be avoided by undergoing regular practices. Because the researcher has known that the students only concern with their undergraduate thesis abstracts when they are forced to submit their thesis on the time appointed by the college boards. The college boards also have a very important role in improving students' ability in using the English language. They need to add an English abstract supervision activity a few weeks or months before the students submit their full thesis to the college. So forth, if there is an English grammatical error found in their abstract, it could be immediately fixed, and then this activity needs to be held consistently and regularly.

CONCLUSION

Analysing errors by using the Error Analysis Method arranged by Gass & Selinker (2008) has been proven successful to be applied, for it can be seen from a lot of previous related studies. The analysis of grammatical errors in ten undergraduate thesis abstracts of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Manajemen Sukma Medan which is categorized into the subject-verb agreement and sub-categorized into the use of number and tense agreement has revealed several findings. It is found that 51 SVA errors occur, with 1 error on the use of number agreement and 50 errors on the use of tense agreement. All of these errors are caused by intralanguage source (interference from incomplete L2 comprehension). Moreover, there are three factors causing the intralanguage errors, called inconsistency, indeterminacy and simplification. It is also found that inconsistency exceeds the other factors, with 36 occurrences. While, simplification causes 10 errors and the rest is indeterminacy that causes 5 errors. Moreover, the researcher has suggested several remedial actions according to the types of errors which occur.

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