

Indonesian EFL Advanced Learners' Grammatical Errors

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Abstract

This paper is based on an error analysis of the written work of the English Department students who have finished the seventh semester of a four-year undergraduate English Program. The source of the data consists of seventeen proposals for linguistics researches, as the final projects upon the completion of the undergraduate study year 2001 in Petra Christian University. The purpose of the study is to reveal the grammatical errors and to find out the types of errors and their frequency of occurrence in the students' written work. The errors collected are identified and classified using Linguistic Category Taxonomy as a guideline. To describe the errors, Surface Strategy Taxonomy is employed to explain the ways surface structures are altered. The findings present the types of morphological and syntactic errors, their detailed description, and the frequency of occurrence of each error type. It is hoped that this study will give a new perspective in the advanced learners' grammatical errors, and provide data for teachers and syllabus designers dealing with English Grammar.

Keywords: *grammatical errors, types, frequency of occurrence, Linguistic Category Taxonomy, Surface Strategy Taxonomy.*

Like any human learning, foreign language learning is inseparable from making errors. In learning a foreign language, learners are involved in the process of "approximations to the system used by the native speakers of the language" (Brown, 2000, p. 215). This implies that there are two different kinds of system: the language learner system and the target language system. Ellis suggested that learners are engaged in comparing the linguistic features noticed in the input with their own grammar, which is their representation of the target language. This is emphasized by Cook (1993) that it has been an axiom that L2 learners have grammars of their own, which Selinker labeled as inter-language (1972). Many learners, noted by Selinker as quoted by Ellis, "fail to reach the target language competence" (1994, p. 48), as they stop learning when their inter-language contains at least some rules different from those of the target language system. This, however, does not change the goals of foreign language teaching to help the learners to achieve the acquisition of the target language, that the inter-language is made as close to the target language as it possibly can be.

It is not uncommon to listen to Indonesian EFL teachers complain that their students' written work still shows basic language problems. This is the kind of complaint which Milroy and Milroy, quoted by Carl James (1998, p. 28), called "Type I complaint" showing the teachers' "concern with upholding standards of correctness and with discouraging students' misuse of specific system of English". In an EFL setting as it is found in Indonesia, the norm of standard English is preferred to other varieties.



The learners are taught the standard English and are expected to apply it in their formal communication especially in writing a formal writing, such as a research paper.

What is an error? There have been several definitions related to errors. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) defined errors as “the flawed side of learner speech or writing”, which “deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance”. They further discussed that errors may be distinguished based on the causes: errors caused by factors such as fatigue and inattention are “performance errors”, and those caused by lack of knowledge of the rules of the language are called “competence errors” (1982, p.130). Brown also made a distinction between mistakes and errors based on the sources. A mistake indicates “a failure to utilize a known system correctly” whereas an error “rEFlects the competence of the learner” (2000, p. 257). It was also admitted, however, that one may not be able to “tell the difference between an error and a mistake” in all occasions (2000, p. 217). It was emphasized that the important thing is that learners “do make errors, which can be observed, analyzed and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learners” (p. 218).

As this study is related to the students' performance focusing on the forms which deviates from the standard English, the term error used in this context is adapted from Dulay, Burt and Krashen's and Carl James' concepts about errors. Thus, an error in this context is defined as an instance of language that deviates from standard English grammar.

To help the learners acquire the target language, it is essential to provide the learners the proper input, as it was suggested by Ellis, quoted by Carl James, that learners are engaged in what Ellis labeled as “cognitive comparison” comparing “the linguistic features noticed in the input” with the learners' own “mental grammar” (James, 1998, p. 8). This process can be fostered by “drawing learners' attention to the kind of errors learners typically made”. Learners need to be made aware of the common errors followed by their correction. Through this process learners may be helped to correct their errors and improve the mastery of the target language. This, accordingly, points to the importance of error analysis to find out errors made by the learners.

Background & Statement of the Problem

English, as a foreign language in Indonesia, is taught formally, and quite a number of elementary schools, private as well as public, include English in the curriculum starting from the third year. Thus, by the time the learners reach university level, they have learned English at least six years or more. Nevertheless, teachers of English often point out the fact that university learners still make basic grammatical errors. Related to my teaching experience, I am particularly concerned about the grammatical errors made by the students of the English Department – Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University. Often have I encountered grammatical errors in the students' written final project as one of the requirements for the completion of their undergraduate study. Although there have been studies on grammatical errors, they are mostly related to errors made by the students at their earlier stages of learning. This has encouraged me to examine the language used by students approaching their final stage of study in the English Department to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What types of grammatical errors are made by the students of the English Department?
2. What is the frequency of occurrence of each error type?

The purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the types of the grammatical errors made by the students of the English Department approaching the final stage of their study and to find out the frequency of occurrence of each type of the errors.

Scope & Limitation

This study focuses on the grammatical errors, both morphological and syntactic errors, which occur in the students' proposals for their final project on linguistics research in the year of 2001, consisting of seventeen proposals. It is limited to the grammatical errors which can be identified from the seventeen proposals while excluding errors related to choice of words and spellings.

The findings are expected to give a clear description on the types of grammatical errors which occur in the students' grammatical performance and their frequency of occurrence. Hopefully these will assist the teachers to pinpoint the students' grammatical problems and to give relevant inputs to help the students see the common grammatical errors and better improve their grammatical performance.

Methods of the Study

This is a descriptive study whose source of data consists of seventeen proposals written by the English Department students approaching their final stage of study, as a requirement for the completion of their undergraduate study in the year 2001.

The errors in each proposal are identified and numbered. Every instance of deviation from the standard English grammar, by reference to Quirk' and Maclin's handbooks, is considered an error. The errors collected are then analyzed to determine the type of each and classified using Linguistic Category Taxonomy following Politzer and Romirez's classification as a guideline (quoted by Dulay , Burt & Krashen, 1982, p. 146), in the sense that modification is made to accommodate and adjust to the field data.

The data are described by following Surface Strategy Taxonomy to explain the way surface structures are altered (Bulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982, p.150); whether necessary elements are omitted, unnecessary elements are added; whether elements are misformed or misordered. The explanation is limited to the product aspect of error analysis, which focuses on the surface characteristics of errors ,while disregarding analysis on the causes of errors. The analysis on error types will be presented in tables showing the distribution of each error type in the seventeen proposals, the type of surface change and the frequency of occurrence of each error type based on linguistic categories and surface strategies



Related Sources

To support the data analysis, particularly on data classification and data description, three sources on grammatical errors are reviewed and presented as follows.

Types of Grammatical Errors

Based on Linguistic Category Taxonomy, errors are classified according to “both the language component and the particular linguistic constituent the error affects” (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982, p.146). In this study language components are limited to morphology and syntax, which follow Politzer and Romirez’ model as a guideline.

Politzer and Romirez, who studied 120 Mexican-American children learning English in the United States, classified the errors into the following types:

A. Morphology

1. Indefinite article incorrect
2. Possessive case incorrect
3. Third person singular verb incorrect
4. Simple past tense incorrect
 - a. regular past tense
 - b. irregular past tense
5. Past participle incorrect
6. Comparative incorrect

B. Syntax

1. Noun Phrase
 - a. Determiners
 - b. Nominalization
 - c. Number
 - d. Use of pronouns
 - e. Use of prepositions
2. Verb Phrase
 - a. Omission of verb
 - b. Use of progressive tense
 - c. Agreement of subject and verb
3. Verb and verb construction
4. Word order
5. Some transformations
 - a. Negative transformation
 - b. Question transformation
 - c. There transformation
 - d. Subordinate clause transformation

To describe the errors, Surface Strategy Taxonomy is used to show the ways surface structures are altered. There are five categories proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen, namely, omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (1982, p. 50), defined in the following:

1. Omission : the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance
2. Addition : the presence of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance

3. Misformation : the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure
4. Misordering : the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morpheme in an utterance

Similarly, Brown suggested that errors can be “described as errors of addition, omission, substitution and ordering.” (Brown, 2000, p. 222).

Related to the Linguistic Category Taxonomy and the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, James proposed to combine the two taxonomies into a bidimensional one, which can be further, he suggested, developed into a “three-dimensional” taxonomy by providing “some quantitative information”. (1998, p. 114).

In the classification of the errors in this study, Politzer and Romirez' Linguistic Category Taxonomy is used as a guideline, that it is not followed strictly as it is, but rather, modification is made to adjust to the field data. Likewise, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy complemented by Brown's error description is used to explain the error types concerning the surface changes. Brown's type of substitution is used to refer to errors which involve the use of a wrong free morpheme or word for the intended one, while the type of misformation refers to the use of wrong form of the morpheme or structure.

To give a clear presentation of the findings, both taxonomies are used, combined with the quantitative information to show the frequency of occurrence of each error type. In line with James' three-dimensional taxonomies, the whole findings will be summarized in a table showing the linguistic categories, the surface changes and the frequency of occurrences of the error types.

Findings and Discussion

In the seventeen proposals there are two hundred and forty-nine sentences which are not well-formed, each containing at least one error. Some have two, some have three, and others have four or more errors. Totally there are three hundred and sixty-eight errors found in the seventeen proposals.

The total numbers of errors in each proposal range from four to fifty-six errors. The following table shows the number of ill-formed sentences together with the number of errors in each proposal.

Table 1. Number of ill-formed sentences and errors

Proposal	Number of ill-formed sentences	Number of errors
1	13	17
2	26	33
3	3	6
4	14	22
5	36	49
6	17	22
7	7	10
8	24	37
9	18	35
10	7	10



11	11	13
12	5	5
13	4	4
14	12	18
15	28	56
16	8	8
17	16	23
Total	249	368

1. Types of Errors

Based on linguistic categories, generally, there are two types of errors found in the seventeen proposals: morphological and syntactic errors. Morphological errors involve the use of possessive case, basic verb, past participle, present participle, infinitive, adverb, adjective, verb and noun. Syntactic errors fall into the categories of Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase, Transformations. Errors in Noun Phrase are related to Determiners, Number, Pronoun, Preposition; errors in Verb Phrase involve the verb *be*, tenses - present progressive, simple present, present perfect, simple past-; verb and verb construction; and some transformations consisting of negative transformation, and passive transformation. In addition, there are some syntactic errors, few in numbers, which are included under the category of Miscellaneous, namely, Word Order, Fragment, Addition of Subject, and Conjunction. Besides, to show what surface changes made, the errors are classified based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. All these error types are summarized in the appendix presented in the Linguistic Category Taxonomy (table 1) and Linguistic Category and Surface Strategy Taxonomy (table 2), which are subdivided into five sub-tables: Table 2a: Morphology, Table 2b: Syntax – Noun Phrase, Table 2c: Syntax –Verb Phrase, Table 2d: Syntax - Transformations and Table 2e Syntax – Miscellaneous.

Morphological Errors

a. Basic Verb

There are 18 cases occurring in the proposals. Instead of using the basic verb form, the students add the third singular inflection {-s} and the past tense inflection {-ed1} as seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested correction
... may represents ...	may <i>represent</i>
... will identifies ...	will <i>identify</i>
...will analyzes ...	will <i>analyze</i>
...may also happens ...	may also <i>happen</i>
... will he analyzed ...	will he <i>analyze</i>

Similarly, the present participle inflection {-ing1} is added to the basic verb form after the infinitive *to*:

Error	Suggested correction
...to following...	<i>to follow</i>
... to supporting...	<i>to support</i>

b. Possessive Case

There are nine errors found in the proposals, in all of which cases the students omit the possessive inflection {-s}:

Error	Suggested correction
...the writer language	the <i>writer's</i> language
...the speaker right	the <i>speaker's</i> right
...his friend door	his <i>friend's</i> door

c. Past Participle

Past participle errors involve the omission of past participle inflection {-ed} in the context which requires a past participle verb form seen in the following:

Error	Suggested correction
...all the article use in the conversation...	... the article <i>used</i> ...
...contains related studies use in...	... studies <i>used</i> ...

In both cases, the pattern requires the past participle verb form *used* instead of the basic verb *use*, so errors occur as the past participle inflection {-ed} is omitted. Besides, similar cases occur as the past participle verb is misformed as found in the following examples:

Error	Suggested correction
... the movie ... bring out by ...	... the movie ... <i>brought out</i> by ...
... the dialog did among ...	... the dialog <i>done</i> among ...

d. Present Participle

Errors in Present Participle fall into two subtypes: omission and misformation of present participle as found in the following examples. In the first case the present participle inflection {-ing} is absent after the auxiliary *are*, which should be followed by a present participle verb form. In the second case misformation occurs in the context after the verb *be*.

Error	Suggested correction
...are avoid...	... are avoiding ...
... is classified the cohesive devices...	... is classifying the cohesive devices

e. Infinitive

There is one occurrence of incorrect use of infinitive where the infinitive *to* is omitted: ...*to practice their English become fluent*... . In this context the infinitive *to* should be present to show purpose; thus, the suggested correction would be ...*to practice their English to become fluent*.

f. Adverb

There are two errors involving omission of adverb inflection {-ly}:

Error	Suggested correction
...general different...	... <i>generally</i> different ...
...relative long...	... <i>relatively</i> long ...



Adjectives are commonly modified by adverbs that the adjectives *general* and *relative* have to be changed into adverbs by applying the adverb forming inflection suffix {-ly}.

g. Adjective

The incorrect use of adjective occurs in four sentences in the proposals, which involves misformation of adjective forming suffix as seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested correction
...are absolutely importance...	... are absolutely <i>important</i> ...
...are less proficiency...	... are less <i>proficient</i> ...

h. Verb

Three errors involve the incorrect use of verb forming suffix, when the noun forming suffix is used as seen in the following two cases:

Error	Suggested correction
...to analysis the data	... to <i>analyze</i> the data ...
...the organ which category	... the organ which <i>categorize</i> ...
... wills transcript ...	... (will) <i>transcribe</i> ...

Another case occurs when an adjective forming suffix is used instead of the intended verb form, as it is seen in “... to speak well and understandable ...”, which can be improved into “... to speak well and *understand* ... “

i. Noun

There are ten errors related to the noun forming derivational suffix. One error occurs as the adjective forming derivational suffix is used instead of the noun forming suffix as seen in the case in: “... avoid problematic ... “, which should be “... avoid *problems* ... “. While the other nine errors are due to the omission or misformation of noun forming derivational suffix {-ing2} as seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested correction
... before do ...	... before doing ...
... before limits ...	... before limiting ...

j. Modal Auxiliary

The incorrect use of modal auxiliary occurs as the third singular inflection {-s} is added to the modal auxiliary will, as it is found in the data “... the researcher wills ...”, which should be “... the researcher *will* ... “

The morphological problems, summarized in table 2a in the appendix and the discussion of each type and subtype of the errors show that the morphological errors made by the students are related to the incorrect use of suffixes, namely, possessive inflection {-’s}, past participle inflection {-ed2}, present participle {-ing1}, third singular inflection {-s}, past tense inflection {-ed1}, and some derivational suffixes that form noun, verb, adverb and adjective. The changes involve the absence of a suffix that must occur in a well-formed sentence, the presence of a suffix that must not appear in the context, and the use of the wrong form of the suffix. In addition, there is one case which involves the absence of infinitive *to*.

Syntactic Errors

The syntactic errors, based on linguistic categories, are classified into four main categories: Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase, Transformations and Miscellaneous. Each category is further classified into several types and subtypes

1. Noun Phrase

Errors in Noun Phrase involve the use of determiners, number – singular and plural noun forms - , pronouns and prepositions, each of which may undergo the surface changes of omission, addition, misformation and substitution as summarized in Appendix Table 2b: Syntax – Noun Phrase.

1.1 Determiner

Errors in noun determiners are mostly the omission of indefinite article before a singular countable noun:

Error	Suggested Correction
... using Chinese film ...	... using <i>a</i> Chinese film ...
... in personal way ...	... in <i>a</i> personal way ...

The other cases are the omission of the definite article in the context where definiteness is required as seen in the following:

Error	Suggested Correction
... related to language used ...	... related to <i>the</i> language used
... most of differences ...	... most of <i>the</i> differences ...

While cases of addition occurs when the definite article *the* is used in the context where it should not appear:

Error	Suggested Correction
... in the chapter five	... in chapter five ...
... the Littlewood's opinion ...	... Littlewood's opinion ...

Misformation occurs in the use of *others* and *another*. In one case *another* is used before a plural noun as it is seen in the construction “ ... another birds ...”, which can be improved by using *other* instead of *another*: “ ... other birds ...”. In another case *others* is used before a noun phrase, which has to be preceded by *other*, as it is found in “...any others foreign language programs”. The correction would be “ ...any *other* foreign language programs ...”

There is another type of errors in determiners, i.e. substitution, which relates to the use of *every*, *less* and *few* as seen in the following:

Error	Suggested Correction
Every children whether they can speak or not...	All children whether they can speak or not ...
... less people ...	... fewer people ...
... only few characters ...	... only a few characters ...

The noun determiner *every* agrees with a singular noun, however, as the context requires a plural noun, *all* is used instead of *every*. In the data “... less people ...”, *less* is



used for uncountable noun, so it should be replaced by *fewer*, which is used before a plural countable noun. Likewise, *only* is followed by *a few* not *few*, thus, the construction "... only few people" is improved into "...only *a few* people ..."

1.2 Number

Errors in number mostly occur in the use of plural noun, the omission of the plural inflectional suffix {-es}

Error	Suggested Correction
... one of the cigarette	... one of the <i>cigarettes</i> ...
... two or more language ...	... two or more <i>languages</i> ...
... these scene are ...	... these <i>scenes</i> are ...

Another type of errors is related to the use of singular noun, i.e. the addition of the plural inflectional suffix in the context where a singular noun is required:

Error	Suggested Correction
...a speech acts ...	... a speech act ...
... another tables ...	... another table ...
The pedagogical process which is normally acquired by every children are different...	The pedagogical process which is normally acquired by every <i>child</i> (is) different ...

This type of errors occurs as a plural noun is used after the determiners such as, *a*, *another*, *every* and *each*, which have to be followed by a singular noun.

1.3 Pronouns

Errors in pronouns fall into three subtypes: the omission of relatives pronoun, substitution of relative pronouns and addition of pronoun subjects. In the first subtype, the relative pronoun functioning as subject in a relative clause is omitted as can be seen in the following:

Error	Suggested Correction
...to find out the types of cohesive devices are used ...	... to find out the type of cohesive devices <i>which</i> are used ...
It is a group of words consists of ...	It is a group of words which consists of...

The second type involves the substitution of relative pronoun where an incorrect relative pronoun is used instead of the intended one:

Errors	Suggested Correction
... among people, which involve formal relationships ...	among people, <i>who</i> (are involved in) formal relationships ...
... a large group which members ...	... a large group <i>whose</i> members ...

The use of *which* in the construction "... among people, *which* involve formal relationships ..." is incorrect as it refers to a human referent, which requires the relative pronoun *who*. In "... a large group *which* members...", *which* is used before a noun. In this context *whose* should be used instead of *which*. The third subtype of error occurs as an unnecessary pronoun has been used in a relative clause shown in the following:

Errors	Suggested correction
... bilingual community, which they use...	... bilingual community, which use
... is an optional part of sentences	... is an optional part of sentences
which they follows	which (follow) ...

Looking at the three subtypes of pronoun errors, it can be pointed out that all the errors are mostly related to the use of relative clauses, particularly in the use of relative pronouns, being deleted, added or substituted.

1.4 Prepositions

Errors in prepositions consist of three subtypes: Omission of prepositions, Addition of prepositions and Substitution. In the first subtype the preposition required in the context is not present:

Error	Suggested Correction
... respond the compliments ...	...respond <i>to</i> the compliments ...
... wait the man last words ...	... wait <i>for</i> the (man's) last words ...

In the second subtype, the unnecessary preposition is added to the context which does not require a preposition:

Error	Suggested Correction
... influence to the compliment responses ...	.... influence the compliment responses ...
... not all of people ...	... not all people

The third subtype involves the use of incorrect prepositions, where an incorrect preposition is used to substitute for the intended one as shown in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
... focuses to the conversation ...	... focuses <i>on</i> the conversation
... the same with ...	... the same as ...

2. Verb Phrase

There are two subcategories of errors in Verb Phrase. The first subcategory is Verbs and the second one is Verb and Verb Construction (see Table 2c: Syntax – Verb Phrase in Appendix)

2.1 Verbs

Errors related to Verbs are classified into four types based on different tenses: Progressive Tense, Simple Present Tense, Present Perfect and Simple Past Tense.

2.1.1 Progressive Tense

There are only three errors related to the use of progressive tense. The first one is the omission of *be* in the formation of progressive tense, which consists of *be + V-ing*, in "After getting the script from the internet, the writer will check it *while he watching* the film". To improve the construction *is* should be present before *watching*: "..... while he is *watching* the film". The second case is found in . "... is breaking ... and



make”, where there is the omission of the {-ing1} inflection. Thus the improved construction should be: “... is breaking ... and making”. In the third case in “... the advertisements is selling...”, there is the misformation of be, which is actually a matter of subject verb agreement. As the subject is plural, *are* is required instead of *is*: “the advertisements *are* selling ...”

2.1.2 Simple Present Tense

Simple present tense constitutes the major type of errors in Verbs, which can be classified into three subtypes: the omission of be as main verb, subject and verb agreement, and misformation of verb. The first subtype occurs as the main verb *be* is omitted as seen in the following examples:

Error	Suggested Correction
... China also a rich country ...	... China <i>is</i> also a rich country ...
... it necessary ...	... it <i>is</i> necessary ...
... since there only few researchers ...	... since there <i>are</i> only (a few) researchers ...

The second subtype is related to problems of agreement between subject and verb. In one case, the third singular inflection is omitted or misformed as presented in the following example:

Error	Suggested Correction
... the writer discuss ...	... the writer <i>discusses</i> ...
... to minimize the understanding, which often occur ...	... to minimize misunderstanding, which often <i>occurs</i> ...
...the type of code switching, which are	...the type of code switching, which <i>is</i> ...
... someone who have ...	... someone who <i>has</i> ...

In another case the errors in agreement involves the use of basic verb which is replaced by the third singular verb, resulting in the addition of third singular inflection or misformation of the verb :

Error	Suggested Correction
... speech acts occurs ...	... speech acts <i>occur</i> ...
... the social factors that influences ...	... the social factors that <i>influence</i> ...
... how the stylistic forms is ...	... how the stylistic forms <i>are</i> ...
... these items is ...	... these items <i>are</i> ...

The third subtype of errors in simple present tense occurs due to the misformation of the verb, in which present participle and past participle verb forms are used as the main verb in the predicate:

Errors	Suggested Correction
... how someone feeling ...	... how someone <i>feels</i> ...
... people who known ...	... people who <i>know</i> ...

2.13 Present Perfect Tense

Most of the errors in present perfect tense are the misformation of *have*, which is replaced by *had* resulting in past perfect used in the context showing relation to the present time as seen in " ... there are still ... they had successfully translated." Another

problem involves the addition of *be* in the clause "... that she has been transcribed" is supposed to be in the active voice, thus *been* should be omitted:

Error	Suggested Correction
...there are still ... they had successfully translated	... there are still ... they have successfully translated
... that she has been transcribed ...	... that she has transcribed ...

2.1.4 Simple Past Tense

There are five errors in simple past tense, which are due to the omission of past tense inflection {-ed1}, misformation of past tense verb form, or subject verb agreement as shown in the following examples.

Error	Suggested Correction
... she observe ... and got	... she observed ... and got
... the previous studies using ...	... the previous studies used
... perlocution were not ...	... perlocution was not ...

2.2 Verb and Verb Construction

Some verbs follows certain verb pattern, which is followed by to+V, or V. The errors that occur in the students' proposals involve the use of the verb *want*, which should be followed by to+V, and *make*, which should be followed by V:

Error	Suggested Correction
... want every know ...	... want everybody <i>to</i> know ...
... makes the interviewee enjoys ...	... makes the interviewee enjoy ...

3. Transformations

Two types of errors in Transformations that occur are Negative Transformation and Passive Transformation (see Appendix Table 2d).

3.1 Negative Transformation

The formation of negative transformation involves the use of auxiliaries *do/does* and auxiliary *be*, which give rise to the errors found in the following:

Error	Suggested Correction
... people in Chine still not know ...	... people in China still <i>do</i> not know ...
... imperative sentence not always an ordering	... imperative sentence <i>is</i> not always an ordering
... the scheme... is not always work ...	... the scheme... does not always work

The errors in the first two examples are errors of omission of the auxiliary *do* and *is* respectively, while the third example is the substitution of the auxiliary *does* by the auxiliary *is*.

3.2 Passive Transformation

Passive verb form requires the use of auxiliary *be* and past participle verb form. The errors found in the students' proposals can thus be divided into four subtypes: past participle incorrect, either the omission of past participle inflection {-ed2} or the misformation of the past participle verb form ; omission of the auxiliary *be*; both past



participle incorrect and omission of the auxiliary *be*, and misformation of *be*, as seen in the following examples

Error	Suggested Correction
... which are promote ...	... which are <i>promoted</i> ...
... conversation that has been recording ...	... conversation that has been recorded ...
... notices usually put ...	... notices <i>are</i> usually put ...
... types and function that use ...	... types and function that <i>are used</i>
... people ... usually be considered...	... people ... usually are considered

4. Miscellaneous

There are fourteen errors included in Miscellaneous category. Although few in number of occurrence, they can be classified into four types: word order, fragment, addition of subject, and conjunction (see Appendix Table 2e):

4.1 Word Order

Error	Suggested Correction
... how will he approaches ...	... how <i>he will</i> (approach) ...
... how will he analyzed ...	... how <i>he will</i> (analyze) ...
<i>exam</i> ...	... final exam writing final <i>writing</i>

In the first two errors above, there is the misuse of subject verb inversion in the clause, while in the third example, there is a problem of the position of noun modifiers *final* and *writing*, which has to precede the noun head *exam*.

4.2. Fragment

The second type of errors are problems of incomplete sentence/fragment, presented in the following examples; the omission of both the subject and the verb in the first two examples, and the omission of verb in the third example:

- *In order to apply the writer knowledge on the cohesion and also having known the meaning and the frequency of the occurrence of the cohesive devices in the paragraph of the World Wide Web Text.*
- *In order to know whether there are differences in producing sounds between deaf and normal child.*
- *What kinds of conversational maxims that are accepted in SCTV program Ngobras?*

The first two examples, having no subject and verb, are basically adverb phrases. The constructions can be improved by being combined to the following or preceding sentence in the paragraph:

- In order to apply the writer's knowledge on the cohesion, the writer wishes to conduct a study on the cohesion on the text.
- In order to know whether there are differences in producing sounds..., the writer uses some theories.

The construction "What kind of conversational maxims that are accepted in SCTV?" is basically a noun phrase. To improve it, the word *that* is to be deleted that the sentence will be: What kinds of conversational maxims are accepted in SCTV?

4.3 Addition of Subject

The only one occurrence of this type of error is found in the construction "Therefore he observes the classroom activities which the classroom activities is an example of daily activities". There is a redundant use of subject in the relative clause "... the classroom activities which the classroom activities is an example ...", which should be omitted to be "... the classroom activities which (are) an example ...".

4.4 Conjunction

There are three errors in conjunction, two errors are related to the use of the conjunction *although/ even though* together with the conjunction *but* in the same sentence. The two ill-formed sentences can be improved by omitting the conjunction *but*.

Error	Suggested Conjunction
... even though the sentence type is declarative, but the speech act form is a request ...	... even though the sentence type is declarative, the speech act form is a request ...
Although the use of register ..., but it not ...	Although the use of register ... , does it does not ...

The other error is related to the use of *because of* preceding a clause. To improve the sentence the preposition *of* should be deleted:

Error	Suggested Correction
Another reason is because of she assumed that there are many violations of conversational maxims ...	Another reason is because she assumed that there are many violations of conversational maxims ...

Error Distribution and Frequency of Occurrence

The distribution of all the error types, their frequency of occurrences in each proposal, and the total number of occurrences of each type of errors, presented in Appendix Table 1 Linguistic Category Taxonomy, indicates that each proposal contains errors, ranging from four errors to fifty-six errors. It is shown, in addition, that the error types that occur in the students' proposals are not evenly distributed. Some types occur only once in one proposal, some occur in two until eight proposals, others occur in eleven until thirteen proposals.

Those which occur in only one proposal consist of morphological errors in modal auxiliary; syntactic errors in Verb Phrase: Negative Transformation – omission of auxiliary *do*, auxiliary *be* – and one type of Miscellaneous group: addition of subject. This means that only one student makes one mistake in those area respectively, while the other sixteen students do not have problem in those grammatical aspects

The most frequent occurring type is of the agreement type; there are 57 errors distributed in fifteen proposals. This means only two out of seventeen cases are free from this type of errors. The next is the type of passive transformation – the omission of *be -*; there are 30 cases distributed in 13 proposals.



Another interesting fact to be noted is that one type of errors may occur only once in one proposal, but it may appear two until ten times in the same paper, for examples, the error in Possessive Case appears only once in proposal VI and XV, but there are seven occurrences found in proposal VIII. Similarly, there is one occurrence of error in the use of plural nouns in proposal IV, VI, X, XI and XIV, but in proposal XV there are fourteen occurrences.

Totally, there are much more occurrences of syntactic errors compared to morphological ones, morphological errors comprising 21.19%, whereas syntactic ones comprising 78.81% of all the errors occurring in the seventeen proposals (see Appendix Table 1). The predominant morphological errors are the basic verb or the unmarked verb used after infinitive *to*, and modal auxiliaries, which are made by the addition of third singular inflection, past tense, past participle, and present participle inflections (Appendix Table 2a: Morphology)

Syntactically, the most predominant type is the Noun Phrase category, which has 120 occurrences, or 32.61% of all the errors occurring in all the proposals. Within the Noun Phrase category, Number comprises the predominant type, having 41 occurrences, 34 cases of which are the omission of plural inflection (see Appendix Table 2b: Syntax – Noun Phrase)

Within the Verb Phrase category, the formation of simple present tense constitutes the most predominant type of errors (see Table 2c: Syntax – Verb Phrase), particularly related to subject verb agreement, the omission of the third singular verb inflection, comprising 45 % of the Verb Phrase errors. Within the Transformation category, Passive Transformations with the omission of the auxiliary *be* is the most predominant type, having 53.57% of occurrences (see Appendix table 2d)

Viewed from the surface strategies, the most predominant type, both morphological and syntactic categories is omission (see Appendix Table 3). Totally, there are 212 errors of omission or 57.60% of the whole error occurrences. What is omitted is mostly the inflectional suffixes: possessive case {-s}, plural inflection {-es}, and noun forming derivational suffix {-ing2}, third singular inflection {-s}, past tense inflection {-ed1}, past participle inflection {-ed2}. Another omission of bound morpheme is one instance of the omission of adverb forming derivational suffix {-ly}. In addition, there are several omissions of free morphemes: indefinite article, definite article, relative pronoun subject, prepositions, *be* as auxiliary and main verb, omission of subject, verb, subject and verb in fragments.

The Surface Strategy Taxonomy reveals that, besides the omission types discussed above, the changes made to the other two surface strategies are of the bound morphemes, specifically inflectional suffixes:

Those that occur in the Addition type: third singular inflection {-s}, past tense inflection {-ed1}, present participle inflection {-ing1}, past participle inflection {-ed2}, and plural inflection {-es}.

Those that occur in the Misformation type: present participle inflection {-ing1}, past participle {-ed2}, third singular {-s}, and past tense inflection {-ed1}

In addition there are some derivational suffixes involved in the surface changes, namely, adverb, verb, noun and adjective forming derivational suffixes.

The findings of this study show that some proposals have few errors, which implies a considerably good mastery of the English Grammar. On the other hand, some

proposals show relatively more frequent occurrence of errors, which are mostly related to changes made to the English inflections, by being omitted, added, or misformed.

Conclusion

Intrigued by the English Department students' grammatical performance, the error analysis has been carried out to examine the errors occurring in seventeen proposals for linguistics research as the students' final projects.

The data collected are classified based on linguistic categories and surface strategies on the changes made to the surface structure, while providing the frequency of occurrence of each error type. This study, thus, results in a three-dimensional taxonomy showing the types of errors linguistically and the surface changes made to each type of the errors. The frequency count of the errors reveals the distribution of each error type in each proposal, which further shows the predominant types of errors made in the seventeen proposals.

Politzer and Romirez's classification of errors based on Linguistic categories has proved to be useful as a guideline to reveal the error types. Some error types found in Politzer and Romirez's, however, do not exist in this study, such as, Comparative incorrect, Nominalization, and There Transformation. On the other hand, some error types found in this study do not occur in the guideline classification, such as errors in present perfect, basic or common verb, modal auxiliary and passive transformation.

This study, hopefully, gives some insight into the students' grammatical problems as a clue for the teachers, that they know not only the students' error types in general but also what to focus in their attempt to help their students "see" and avoid making the same types of errors in their grammatical performance.

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TABLE 1: LINGUISTIC CATEGORY TAXONOMY

OCCURRENCE OF ERRORS	ERROR DISTRIBUTION IN EACH PROPOSAL																TOTAL			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	N	%	
TYPES OF ERRORS																				
A MORPHOLOGY																				
1. Possessive case						1									1				78	21.19
2. Basic verb	3			1	8	3			2						4			9		
3. Past participle		1							1	2				2	5		1	15		
4. Present participle						1			1	2				1	1			7		
5. Infinitive										1				1				2		
6. Adverb	1																1	2		
7. Adjective								2									1	4		
8. Verb		1					1											4		
9. Noun		1			1			1	4	1				1	1			10		
10. Modal auxiliary					1													1		
B SYNTAX																				
1. Noun Phrase																				
1.1. Determiners																				
1.1.1. Omission of the article	1	3	3	2		1			2	2			1	4	2			24		
1.1.2. Addition of the article		1				1			2									4		
1.1.3. Other determiners									1	1		1			3			7		
1.2. Number																				
1.2.1. Subs. of singular for plural	2	3	2	1		1	3	2		1	1			1	14		3	34		
1.2.2. Subs. of plurals for singular	1	1			1			1							3			7		
1.3. Pronouns																				
1.3.1. Omission of rel. pron subj.		1		1	1	3	2		1	1								14		
1.3.2. Relative pronoun incorrect				1											1			3		
1.3.3. Addition of pronoun subj.															1		2	3		
1.4. Prepositions																				
1.4.1. Omission of preposition					2	6				1	1							10		
1.4.2. Addition of preposition						3					1			1	1	1	1	8		
1.4.3. Incorrect use of preposition		1			1													6		
2. Verb Phrase																				
2.1 Verbs																				
2.1.1 Progressive tense	1											2						3		
2.1.2 Simple present tense																				
2.1.2.1 Omission of be		1			1									3				9		
2.1.2.2 Agreement																				
2.1.2.2.1 3rd singular	3	2	1	5	4	5	2	5	4	1			1	2	7		3	45		
2.1.2.2.2 basic verb	1	4					2	2	4								1	12		
2.1.2.3 Misformation of verb																				
2.1.3 Present perfect tense		1			8			3	1		1			2			2	18		
2.1.4 Simple past tense		3				1												5		

OCCURRENCE OF ERRORS	ERROR DISTRIBUTION IN EACH PROPOSAL																	TOTAL		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	N	%	
TYPES OF ERRORS																				
2.2 Verb and verb construction											2					1		3		15.23
3. Some Transformations																				
3.1 Negative transformation																				
3.1.1. Omission of aux do		1																		
3.1.2. Omission of aux be		1																		
3.1.3. Incorrect use of aux does		1									1									
3.2 Passive transformation																				
3.2.1. Past part. incorrect	2	1		1	2							1		1	5					13
3.2.2. Omission of be	2	2		1	11	2	1	1	1				1	2	2	3				30
3.2.3. Past part + omission of be		2			3			2			1									8
3.2.4. Misformation of be																				1
4. Miscellaneous																				14
4.1. Word order							1	2												3
4.2. Fragment																				
4.2.1. Omission of subj. and verb						2			1						1		4			4
4.2.2. Omission of verb				1							2									3
4.3. Addition of subject									1											1
4.4. Conjunction		1									1		1							3
	17	33	6	22	49	22	10	37	35	10	13	5	4	18	56	8	23	368		100%



TABLE 2: LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND SURFACE STRATEGY TAXONOMY

Table 2a : Morphology

Error Types	Surface changes										Addition				Mistformation				Total		Examples
	{-s}	{edz}	{-ing1}	{-ing2}	to	be	{-ly}	{-s}	{-ed1}	{-ing1}	be+{-ed2}	{-ing1}	{-ing2}	{-edz}	v-suff	n-suff	adj-suff	N	%		
Morphology																					
1. Possessive case	9											10	10						9	11.54	...writer language... ...friend door...
2. Basic verb							17	3	3	1								24	30.77	a) ...will tries... b) ...will produced... c) ...to supporting... d) ...might be happened	
3. Past participle		9											6	(b)				15	19.23	a) ...are ... involve... b) ...the movie...bring out by...	
4. Present participle			1									6	(b)					7	8.97	a) ...are avoid... b) ...is classified...	
5. Infinitive					1	1												2	2.565	a) ...to practice their English become... b) ...like to against...	
6. Adverb											2							2	2.565	...general different...; ...relative long...	
7. Adjective																	4	4	5.13	...are importance...; ...are proficiency...	
8. Verb														4				4	5.13	...that category...; ...to analysis...	
9. Noun				8								1	(b)			1		10	12.82	a) ...before do ... b) ...before limits ... c) ...avoid problematic...	
10. Modal auxiliary	9	9	1	8	1	1	1	2	3	3	1	16	11	6	4	1	4	1	1.28	wills *transcript	
																		78	100%		

Table 2b : Syntax - Noun Phrase

Error Types	Surface changes			Omission			Addition			Misformation		Substitution		Total		Examples
	article	{-es}	rel.pron	prep	article	{-es}	pron. subj	prep	determiners	rel. pron	prep	determiners	N	%		
Syntax													100	32.26		
1. Noun Phrase																
1.1. Determiners																
1.1.1. indefinite article	13												13	10.92		...personal way....chinese film...
1.1.2. definite article	11				4								15	11.77		a) ...most of differences... b) ...the chapter five...
1.1.3. other determiners												5	7	5.88		a) ...another kinds... b) ...every children have...
1.2. Number																
1.2.1. Plural → Singular		34											34	28.57		...two or more language...
1.2.2. Singular → Plural						7							7	5.88		...a speech acts; another tables...
1.3. Pronoun																
1.3.1. Relative Pronoun			14							3			17	14.29		a) ...to find out the types of cohesive devices are used... b) ...a group which members...
1.3.1. Pronoun													3	2.52		...bilingual society which they use...
1.4. Preposition				10									24	20.17		a) ...respon the compliments... b) ...influence to the compliment responses ... c) ...the same with...
	24	34	14	10	4	7	3	8		3	6	5	120	100%		



Table 2c : Syntax – Verb Phrase

Error Types 2. Verb Phrase	Surface changes										Total		Examples		
	Omission			Addition			Misformation				N	%			
2.1 Verb	be	{-s}	{-ing}	Inf- to	{-s}	aux be	aux did	be	{-s}	V	Aux have	{-ed}			
2.1.1 Present progressive	1 (a)		1 (b)					1 (c)					3	3	a)...while he watching the film... b)...is breaking ... and make c)...the advertisements is selling...
2.1.2 Simple present															
2.1.2.1 Omission of be	9												9	9	....it necessary..., ...which the same...
2.1.2.2 Agreement															
2.1.2.2.1 third singular		31 (a)											45	45	a)... the writer discuss... b)... matter ... are...
2.1.2.2.2 basic verb					6 (a)								12	12	a)... speech acts occurs... b)... Hurford and Hearley has... ... how someone feeling ... ; ... are consist of ...
2.1.2.3 Misformation of verb										18			18	18	a)... he has been transcribed... b)... had...translated ...
2.1.3 Present perfect						1 (a)					4 (b)		5	5	... she observes ...; took and choose...
2.2.4 Simple past												5	5	5	a)... want everybody know... b)... makes the interviewee enjoys... c)... make ... acquaintances did not know...
2.2 Verb and verb construction									1 (a)	1 (b)		1 (c)	3	3	
	10	31	1	1	7	1	1	1	20	18	4	5	100	100	
															%

Table 2d : Syntax – Transformations

Error Types	Surface changes			Omission			Substitution		Misformation		Total		Examples
	aux do	aux be	{-eds}	aux be+{-eds}	be	{-eds}	aux does	{-eds}	aux be	N	%		
3. Transformations													
3.1 Negative Transformations													
3.1.1 Omission of aux do	1											1	1.79 ...people...not speak ...
3.1.2 Omission of be			1									1	1.79 ...sentence also not always an ordering...
3.1.3 Misuse of aux							2					2	3.57 ...is not always work...
3.2 Passive Transformations													
3.2.1 Past participle			10 (a)									13	23.21 a) ...which are promote ... b) ...that has been recording...
3.2.2 Omission of be		30										30	53.57 ...notices usually put ...; ... language that used ...
3.2.3 Past part + Omission of be				8								8	14.20 ...theories that will use...
3.2.4 Misformation of be										1		1	1.79 ...people who speak usually be considered...
	1	30	10	1	1		2	3	1	56	100%		

Table 2e : Syntax – Miscellaneous

Error Types	Surface changes			Omission		Misordering		Addition		Total		Examples
	Subject+verb	Verb	{-eds}	Subject+Verb	M+H	Subject	But	of	N	%		
B. 4. Miscellaneous												
4.1 Word order				2 (a)	1 (b)					3	21.43	a) ...how will he... (approaches) b) ...final exam writing...
4.2 Fragment												
4.2.1 Omission of subject+Verb		4								4	28.52	In order to apply ... on the cohesion and also having known the meaning
4.2.2 Omission of verb										3	21.43	What kind of conversational maxime that are accepted in SCTV ?
4.3 Addition of subject						1				1	7.14	...the classroom activities, which the classroom activities (s) an example...
4.4 Conjunction							2 (a)	1 (b)		3	21.43	a) ...although the use ... but ... b) ...because of she assumed ...
	4	3		2	1	1	2	1	14	100%		