



Exploring The Students' Grammatical Errors In Speaking English

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Abstract. *This research aims to reveal the types of grammatical and the causes of errors made by the students in speaking performances in first-year students from Terang Bangsa University. It is necessary to identify, classify and describe the grammatical errors in order to build the students' awareness in using english struces and rules. This research used qualitative descriptive. The results of this research shown there were five types of grammatical errors in their speaking performances such as Omission, Overgeneralization, Misformation, Misordering and Addition. The most common errors were made by the students were The error in Omission that got the highest value which was 192 errors (57,8%) and it was caused by the first language and carelessness of the students. Next is Over-Generalization that got 63 errors (18,98%) caused by the students' first language and overgeneralization. Then, followed by Misordering that got 31 errors (9,35%) caused by carelessness and the students' first language and last is Addition and Misformation that got the same number of errors which were 23 errors (6,93%). The errors made by the students were caused by the intralingual error such as omission, overgeneralization and misformation in the category of verb, noun, conjunction, pronoun and preposition. In addition, the interlingual errors were misordering and addition. They were errors of overuse of preposition and incorrect word order, which based on their first language transfer. It is suggested that The teachers should use this result in order to develop a program to improve the students' grammar skills in varies aspects. Teachers should also provide the environment so that the students might feel comfortable to speak English in the classroom.*

Keywords: *EFL Students; English Speaking Performances; Error Analysis; First-Year Students; Grammatical Error.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Grammatical accuracy is a crucial component of effective communication in English, particularly for non-native speakers. The ability to speak English proficiently often hinges on the mastery of grammatical rules, which can pose significant challenges for learners (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). As globalization continues to facilitate linguistic exchange, the demand for English proficiency has intensified, necessitating a deeper understanding of the common grammatical errors made by learners. This paper aims to explore the grammatical errors encountered by students in their spoken English, focusing on the implications these errors have for both teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

Research has consistently indicated that grammatical errors in spoken English can lead to misunderstandings and hinder effective communication (Fitriani & Zulkarnain, 2019). For students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), these errors often stem from a variety of factors, including inadequate instruction, lack of practice, and interference from their native language (Wankhade et al., 2022). Moreover, understanding the types of errors students

commonly make can provide valuable insights into their learning processes and highlight areas needing targeted intervention (Muslim, 2023).

A notable gap in the existing literature is the lack of comprehensive studies focusing specifically on the types of grammatical errors prevalent in students' spoken English, particularly in the context of non-native English-speaking countries. While there have been various analyses of written English errors (Amoakohene, 2017; Padmanabhan et al., 2023), spoken English remains an under-researched area. This lack of attention is concerning, as speaking is one of the primary skills that learners must develop to achieve fluency. Understanding the nature of these errors can inform pedagogical strategies and enhance teaching methodologies.

Exploring the grammatical errors in students' spoken English is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it informs educators about specific areas where learners struggle, enabling targeted interventions (Fitriani & Zulkarnain, 2019). Secondly, understanding the contributing factors can assist in creating a supportive learning environment that addresses students' needs and promotes more effective language acquisition (Wankhade et al., 2022). Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding EFL education and improve students' communicative competence in English. Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the objectives of this study as follow:

- a. To identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors commonly made by students in spoken English.
- b. To analyze the factors contributing to these errors and their impact on students' overall language proficiency.

This research is vital as it not only addresses a critical gap in the literature but also seeks to propose actionable solutions to enhance English speaking skills among learners. By shedding light on the grammatical errors that students encounter, educators can devise more effective teaching strategies, ultimately improving students' communicative competence in English.

Research Question

This study aims to explore the following research questions regarding students' grammatical errors in spoken English:

- a. What types of grammatical errors are most commonly made by students when speaking English?
- b. What factors contribute to the occurrence of these grammatical errors, and how do they affect students' overall language proficiency?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential contributions to the field of English language education and applied linguistics. The findings of this research will offer valuable insights into several key areas:

- a. Identification of Error Types: By categorizing the types of grammatical errors made by students, this study will provide educators with a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by learners. This knowledge can inform the development of targeted instructional strategies to address these issues effectively.
- a. Understanding Contributing Factors: Analyzing the factors that contribute to grammatical errors will shed light on the underlying issues affecting students' language acquisition. Identifying such factors may lead to more effective teaching methodologies that accommodate diverse learning needs and contexts.
- b. Implications for Language Proficiency: Understanding the impact of grammatical errors on overall language proficiency will help educators assess the effectiveness of their teaching practices and curricular materials. Insights gained from this study may guide improvements in language assessment and learning outcomes.
- c. Contribution to Research Literature: This study will contribute to the existing literature on language learning, particularly in the context of speaking proficiency. By addressing the gap in understanding grammatical errors in spoken English, this research will enhance scholarly discourse and stimulate further investigations in the field.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the enhancement of English language teaching and learning practices by providing empirical evidence that can be utilized by educators, curriculum developers, and researchers alike.

2. METHOD

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative descriptive design to explore the grammatical errors made by students in speaking English. Qualitative descriptive research is particularly useful for obtaining a clear understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences in natural settings (Brodsky et al., 2016). By focusing on the students' spoken language, this study aims to uncover the types of grammatical errors that occur during English speaking activities and to identify the underlying factors contributing to these errors.

Samples/Participants

The participants in this study are first-year students from Terang Bangsa University who are enrolled in an English language Subject. A purposive sampling method is utilized to select students who are willing to participate in the research, ensuring that the sample adequately represents the target population. There are 15 university students. This approach allows for a more focused examination of students whose experiences can provide valuable insights into their grammatical challenges in speaking English (Padmanabhan et al., 2023). The students were asked to talk about their “Daily Life” in front of the class. This topic was chosen because most students would likely have a strong interest in talking about this topic.

Instruments

The instruments of the research are observation, interview, and document analysis. Each method serves a specific purpose in capturing the essence of the students' speaking experiences. In observation, the researcher conducts observations during speaking activities in the classroom. This method allows for real-time assessment of students' spoken performance, providing direct insight into the types of grammatical errors made during natural communication. Observations were systematically recorded to ensure that detailed notes on students' speech patterns, errors, and contextual factors were captured (Mun, 2024). For the interview, semi-structured interviews are conducted with selected students to gather in-depth information regarding their perceptions of their grammatical challenges in speaking English. These interviews allow participants to express their thoughts, experiences, and feelings related to their speaking abilities and grammatical errors, thereby providing a richer understanding of the factors influencing their performance (Song & Song, 2023). Lastly, for document analysis, the analysis of students' written assignments and feedback relate to their speaking tasks served as a supplementary data source. This method helps identify recurring grammatical errors and provided context to the findings from observations and interviews (Sullivan et al., 2023).

Data Analysis

The data collected from the three methods were analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involved identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic analysis allows for flexibility in interpreting qualitative data and can provide comprehensive insights into the grammatical errors students make while speaking English (Saeli & Cheng, 2019). Then, all the recorded transcriptions the students' speaking performances were analysed in order to identify the grammatical error of each sentence. This process is the part of analysis that requires a lot of time and in-depth investigation. It is because

every sentence with grammatical errors needed to be codified. As the concept of error analysis which proposed by Crystal & Alan (2023) that error is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms that produced someone learning a foreign language, using linguistically provided principles and procedures. Based on the surface strategy taxonomy, a specific code is used for each error such as underline, circle, single arrow, checklist and question mark.

In addition, to know the most common errors, there is a formula that is used as follow:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

.....(i)

The description:

P : Percentage of Error

f : Frequency of error

N : Total number of errors

The types of errors are classified based on the surface strategy taxonomy in the book Language Two Dulay (1982) such as Omission, Addition, Misformation, Over-Generalization and Misordering (error arranging). Then, the causes of errors were based on on Brown (2007) that there are four sources such as Interlingual error (L1), Intralingual error (L2), Learning context and method and Communication strategy. Therefore, based on Brown (2007) theory, the interview was conducted in order to reveal the causes of error made by the students. By analyzing and providing descriptions, the recommendations and future pedagogical implications are expected to be presented.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher would like to put the explanation of the data in the form of findings and discussion.

Findings

Based on the results of speaking performances, the researcher analyzed the data provided by identifying, classifying and describing the students' grammatical errors. After several analysis stages, the researcher found out that from total number of 15 students showed many errors. The errors from the students who participated in this research, there were 332 errors committed. The data would be shown as follow:

No	Name	Classification of Error					Total of Error
		O	A	MF	O-G	M	
1	BM	17	3	-	5	5	30
2	BR	15	-	-	4	1	20
3	E	22	4	3	3	1	33
4	KP	14	-	5	6	2	27
5	KT	12	2	3	6	3	26
6	LR	11	1	-	2	1	15
7	MYS	7	1	-	2	1	11
8	RG	14	2	-	6	7	29
9	SPDL	18	3	3	7	5	36
10	VN	8	-	1	1	-	10
11	VR	14	2	3	7	-	26
12	YY	13	3	1	6	1	24
13	YJ	11	1	-	4	2	18
14	YTL	10	1	2	4	2	19
15	TAW	6	-	2	-	-	8
TOTAL		192	23	23	63	31	332
		57,8%	6,93%	6,93%	18,98%	9,35%	100%

Table 1. The Results of the Errors.

The results of the table above showed that there were several types and the percentage of each error found in the students' speaking performances. It is said that each classification of errors had different percentage. The error in Omission got the highest value which was 192 errors (57,8%), next is Over-Generalization that got 63 errors (18,98%), then followed by Misordering that got 31 errors (9,35%) and last is Addition and Misformation that got the same number of errors which were 23 errors (6,93%).

Discussion

In this part, the researcher would like to discuss about the results of the research such as the errors made by the students in speaking performance and the cause of the errors. Based on the results of presented table 1 above, it can be seen that the students' grammatical errors vary from one student to another. After analyzing the students' grammatical errors, the researcher found that the most common errors were Omission. Next is Over-Generalization, followed by Misordering, lastly, Addition and Misformation.

Omission errors are indicated by missing the item that must appear in a speech. An omission is the lack of the form of grammar that is supposed to be in the sentence. The students still omit it such as missing article, verb, preposition, punctuation, possessive, object and subject (Fitriani & Zulkarnain, 2019). The Omission in this research is the error with the highest frequency with 192 errors (57,8%). Here is an example; *I eat fried chicken last night (False)*, *I ate fried chicken last night (True)*. From the example, the students' significant error was in

the use of verb in the past tense. The frequency of “Usually” did not help them to understand the tense usage.

Next is Over-Generalization. The selection of grammar represents the other grammar is a general characteristic of the effort to generalize the grammar usage. Over-Generalization got the second highest frequency that got 63 errors (18,98%). Based on that, the students’ first language caused the error because they were not familiar with the grammar system of the target language. They made errors in pairing the subject with verb such as auxiliary verb. Here is an example; “my father and brother is buying foods (false), *my father and brother are buying foods (true)*).

Then, the errors that made by the students were Misordering. This category of error showed the placement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a speech. Misordering means that one word cannot be arranged into another. Misordering got the third frequency that had 31 errors (9,35%). Here is the example of this error; “*she is going where? (false)*, *where is she going? (true)*).

The last is the errors from Addition and Misformation. They got the same number of error for each category. The error of Addition was made by an item that didn’t necessarily appear in the sentence. This error got 23 errors (6,93%). Here is an example; *we usually go in there (false)*, *we usually go there (true)*. From this example, it can be seen that the student made an error of addition by adding preposition “in” before “there” which was unnecessary. Then, the error of Misformation is made up by the students when a formation of error regarding use of regular markers used in places of irregular markers. This error got 23 errors (6,93%). Here is an example; *she is old and my brother is more old than my friend (false)*, *she is old and my brother is older than my friend (true)*).

In addition, the cause of making errors was discussed in this part. Based on the results of the interview, it showed that the students were unaware of the target language rules, verb forms, the use of verb and other categories. The students’ lack of target language caused them the errors because of unfamiliar with the verbs’ item. They didn’t aware of the use of Verb 1 and verb 2 in the sentence. It was indicated by the Omission in the ignorance of signal such as “ed, usually, last night, always”. According to Masruddin (2019), missing the past tense marker is a kind of intralingual error.

The incompetency of the students’ performances also indicated the other intralingual error in making correct sentences in their speech. One the cases was shown when students made errors in Subject Verb agreement in a sentence; they usually Over-generalized the language rules. For example, they used “is” instead of “are” for plural subject in the sentence. This is in

accordance with Simbolon (2015) who stated that Over-generalized deals with overgeneralizing the verb inflections, the use of articles, preposition, simple present and progressing and agreement between subject and verb of auxiliary verb.

The errors that the students made also in the regular and irregular markers in the sentence. The error was in comparative adjective such as “more” and “er”. This kind of error is caused by the students in generalizing the grammar rules which they felt confused in using them. It is called Misformation, it was stated by Ruminar (2018) that Misformation occurs when the students can not produce the correct structure in the sentence. The variations in English grammatical structure might cause the misformation errors. The researcher regarded this as part of intralingual error.

Then, the errors in misordering classification also were made by the students. There were many sentences made directly translating the first language to the target language. As stated by Simbolon (2015) that wrong word choice, literal translation and misordering let us to know that the students still do not master the rules. The direct translation of Indonesian sentence structures into English is visibly in this error. These errors were caused by the students' interlingual error.

Furthermore, the errors made by the students were in preposition usage. For instance, the use of preposition of “in” before adverb of place “here” and “there”. This addition was not necessarily included in the sentence. It was because it would be redundant and incorrect. This is due to Indonesian that use the phrases such as “disana, disini and keatas”. So they practised it in their speaking performances. This example was also found in Ruminar (2018) in which the common error of addition in preposition in which Indonesian usually said “in here”. This error was caused by the negative transfer of L1 translation (interlingual).

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are two factors that caused the students' grammatical in speaking performances. The students' knowledge also was poor. Therefore, they made errors based on intralingual error such as Omission, overgeneralization and misformation. Then, the interlingual errors were misordering and addition. The students admitted that they did not understand the English grammatical, even though they had learnt it in the classroom. They felt loss of words when speaking in real condition. Their hesitation caused these errors. It was because the learning happened only in the classroom; they had very limited time to use English outside classroom in which the natural context to practice. Furthermore, the use of L1 based on communication strategy to overcome their communication problem such as literal translation and core switching became the source of errors. Thus, errors

such as omission, over-generalization, misinformation, misordering and addition had occurred in their speaking performances.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The most common errors were made by the students were The error in Omission that got the highest value which was 192 errors (57,8%) and it was caused by the first language and carelessness of the students. Next is Over-Generalization that got 63 errors (18,98%) caused by the students' first language and overgeneralization. Then, followed by Misordering that got 31 errors (9,35%) caused by carelessness and the students' first language and last is Addition and Misformation that got the same number of errors which were 23 errors (6,93%). The errors made by the students were caused by the intralingual error such as omission, overgeneralization and misinformation in the category of verb, noun, conjunction, pronoun and preposition. In addition, the interlingual errors were misordering and addition. They were errors of overuse of preposition and incorrect word order, which based on their first language transfer.

Suggestion

This result suggests some valuable suggestions for strengthening and improving the method of teaching grammar in the classroom. The teachers should use this result in order to develop a program to improve the students' grammar skills in varies aspects. Teachers should also provide the environment so that the students might feel comfortable to speak English in the classroom. For further researchers, the results are expected to provide insight for future researchers about the urgency of evaluating the students' difficulties in learning English grammatical. This result also can be a source to give the valuable recommendations for teaching English grammar.

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