

**ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THESIS WRITING : A  
CASE STUDY AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS FACULTY OF  
TEACHERS TRAINING MATARAM UNIVERSITY IN ACADEMIC  
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**ARTICLE**

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*By:*

**YUSUF HAIRUL IMAM**  
**NIM : E1D 112 134**

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## **RATIFICATION**

An article entitled “**Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Thesis Writing : A Case Study at English Department Students Faculty of Teachers Training Mataram University in Academic Year 2015/2016**” by Yusuf Hairul Imam (E1D112134) has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Bachelor Degree in English Department Faculty of Teachers Training and Education University of Mataram.

Mataram, May 17, 2016 :

**Advisor I**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Udin', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Drs. Udin, M. Pd.**

**NIP. 196412311993 03 1 016**

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IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016**

**Yusuf Hairul Imam, Udin, Ni Wayan Mira Susanti**

**ABSTRACT**

This study was aimed at finding out the most common type of grammatical errors in thesis writing and the dominant grammatical errors in thesis writing by English Department students at Mataram University in Academic Year 2014/2015. The population were taken from 122 persons of the graduated noon students in English Department in Mataram University in academic year 2014-2015. The sample were taken from 12 theses by using random sampling technique. This research used qualitative data. In analyzing data, this research used four steps, they were identification, classification, description and explanation. It was found that the most common type of grammatical errors in thesis writing was in subject-verb agreement (51.587%). The second position is about tenses (34.126%). The use of clauses is last with the lowest percentage of errors in this research (14.285%).

Key words : Analysis, Grammatical Errors, Thesis Writing, Subject-Verb Agreement, Tenses, Clauses

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini ditujukan dalam menemukan kesalahan grammar yang paling banyak ditemukan di penulisan skripsi dan kesalahan grammar yang paling dominan di penulisan skripsi oleh mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Mataram Tahun Akademik 2014/2015. Populasi diambil dari 122 mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris kelas sore yang sudah lulus dari Universitas Mataram Tahun Akademik 2014-2015. Pengambilan sampel diambil dari 12 skripsi dengan menggunakan teknik sampel acak. Penelitian ini menggunakan data kualitatif. Dalam analisis data, penelitian ini menggunakan empat langkah, yaitu identifikasi, klasifikasi, deskripsi dan penjelasan. Ini ditemukan bahwa kesalahan grammar yang paling banyak ditemukan di penulisan skripsi adalah *Subject-Verb Agreement* (51.587%). Posisi kedua adalah *tenses* (34.126%). *Clauses* berada di terakhir dengan persentase terendah dalam kesalahan grammar di penelitian ini (14.285%)

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a tool to communicate with other people. It is used to express their feelings, to give some statements or to share the ideas. Sapir (1921:8) stated that language is a method to communicate the ideas, passions, and emotions by using the system of producing the symbols voluntarily. It means that language is not about speaking activity, but it can be used in signs or symbols.

English is one of languages in the world. In Indonesia, English is an important subject taught and learnt in all schools. It actually happens because English relates to some important subjects. Huda (2000) said that English has important roles in some fields, such as science, politic and geography. Then, Crystal (2003a) stated that English is needed in many sectors, such as business, education, communication and international relation, media and tourism.

However, because Indonesia is not a country which uses English as First Language, it is difficult for Indonesia citizens to learn English in schools, especially for beginner learners. The learners feel that learning English is a new experience for them so that they are confused to produce the second language. It is because they do not have any input from second language knowledge.

Therefore, For some students in English Education major, it is difficult to them to learn and produce English appropriately and accurately because of their lack of knowledge, especially in grammar. Watkins (2005:42) said that grammar is not about the patterns, but it also helps to make a meaning in a sentence clearly. So, if there is a grammatical errors in a sentence, a sentence will be a meaningless sentence.

Writing and speaking are in the same function as a tool to communicate and as a productive skill in language. In fact, some students of English education have difficulties to produce writing rather than speaking. The difficulties are usually caused by their lacknesses in the topic ideas, vocabularies and grammatical order.

Because the students' lacknesses, they make some errors, especially in grammar.

Based on the problem explained above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the grammatical errors in thesis writing of English Department students at Mataram University in academic year 2015-2016. It is because when the researcher took an observation in thesis writing, the researcher found that there were many grammatical errors in thesis writing from english departments students at noon class in Mataram University in Academic Year 2014/2015.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **a. Interlanguage**

Interlanguage is a theory that refers to the linguistic system. Tarone (2006) explained that interlanguage connects between the native speaker of target language and second language learners. It means that interlanguage is a theory about the use of target language in linguistic system and the reaction from native speakers of target language towards target language learners. Therefore, Ellis (1997) added that interlanguage relates to the behaviourist learning theory and mentalist theory of language learning.

Behaviourist learning theory is a theory about learning depending on the environment of the learners. Ellis (1997) explained that the target language learners try to learn from imitating the positive habits at the environment of native speaker. Moreover, mentalist theory of language learning is an ability in learning second language. Ellis (1994) explained that human mind has a language acquisition device that is able to learn language. therefore, although input is needed, it is just as a trigger.

### **b. Interference**

Interference is a process in transferring the abilities of producing the second language. Dulay et al (1982) stated that interference is an automatic transfer, which is a process of transfer from the structure in first language to the second language. ellis

(1997) added that interference is as the influence of the second language learners in using second language. Therefore, interference can be defined as the process of producing the knowledge of second language from the learners.

**c. Definition of Grammar**

Grammar is one of the systems in a language. Watkins (2005) stated that grammar is used to conquer the words syntactically. It means that grammar is a part of constructing the sentences. based on a handbook for writing assessment from New South Wales Ministry of Education (2006), there are two levels to learn about grammar. The first level is textual grammar. Textual grammar means that grammar and writing relate to the whole of processes in making a text. It means that the meaning of the texts is actually based on the compability on the texts, such as the theme and the purpose of the texts. The second is syntactical or sentence grammar. Syntactical or sentence grammar has smaller field than textual grammar. It just discusses about paragraph, sentence and word choice in a text. Moreover, grammar can be defined as the structural pattern and meaning of a text in a language.

**d. Aspect of Grammar**

- **Basic Words**

In structuring sentence, the first thing we should know is the basic words. The basic words are the word types of the sentences. It has to be known to help categorize the words. Based on the grammar book from Capella University, there are seven types of basic words. There are nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, articles. Furthermore, based on a handbook from New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2006), it is said that clauses and phrases are the types of basic words.

- **Types of Grammatical Structures : Morphological Structure and Syntactical Structure**

In using grammar, there are two types. the first, grammar is used in the morphological segment. Morphology is a linguistic study which learns about the smaller unit of words. Based on the understanding on the statement from Galasso (2002), the relation between grammar and morphology segment is that affix can make a word change grammatically. Second, grammar can be used in syntactical segment. Syntax is the study of linguistic which learns about the parts of sentence. Galasso (2002) said that the relation between syntax and grammar is to analyze the grammatical in a sentence correctly.

Syntax and morphology are related each other. Galasso (2002) shows that morphology and syntax in a sentence which are closely related because syntax learns about the class of the word and morphology learns about making a word from the smaller to the larger. It means that when we learn about morphology, we are unconsciously learning about syntax.

- **Rules of Grammar**

Grammatically, there are many forms to make a sentence grammatically correct. However, in this case, the researcher wants to inform the basic grammar. Martin (1977) stated that in learning grammar, there are tense, modality and aspect. Therefore, subject-verb agreement is unit of grammatical orders because it makes a relation between subject and predicate in a rule of sentence.

**e. Subject-Verb Agreement**

In a sentence, there are subject, predicate (verb), object and complement. Subject and predicate are relating each other. There are two types of subject, singular and plural. Singular subject

includes the singular pronoun, such as **someone** and using word **every**. Plural subject includes the plural nouns like some, plural noun and using conjunction in the subject. To know the subject is singular or plural, predicate uses suffix in the ends of the verb or use plural to be in a sentence. If the subject is a singular noun, then we have to use verb as predicate with suffix –s/-es or we can use singular to be, such as **is, am, was** and **does**. However, if the subject is a plural noun, then we have to use verb as predicate without suffix or we can use plural to be, such as **are, were** and **do**.

#### **f. Errors Vs. Mistakes**

Brown (1994a) said that errors and mistakes are different. Error are an irregularity of a language to the interlanguage of people's knowledge. It means that errors happen regularly and systematically. Then, mistakes are a failure in producing a known system correctly. It means that mistakes happen in some conditions, it is not regularly.

However, Ellis (1994) argued that errors and mistakes are relating to indicate the identification in Error Analysis. Errors and mistakes reflect to the divergences in producing the second language. Therefore, it concludes that errors and mistakes are in the same condition because they are in the same way to explain the failures in producing second language.

#### **g. Factors Contributing to Grammatical Errors**

Longman dictionary of Linguistic (1985 : 96) defined that errors analysis is a study about analyzing some errors by native-speakers or learners. Ellis (1985 ; 296) defined that error analysis is a technique to collect, identify, explain, classify and evaluate the errors for people who research something. From those statements, it is concluded that error analysis in language is a linguistic study to analyze the errors in producing the language and straighten the errors. Errors can be from the learners or native speakers. Error analysis is needed in doing a research for producing the language.

Furthermore, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) announced that the most errors found in writing are tenses, clause, subject-verb agreement and preposition. From this statement, the researcher is going to search grammatical errors on tenses, clause, subject-verb agreement and preposition in thesis writing. Then, subject-verb agreement is going to be the focus on this research.

In this research, the researcher is using writing assessment relating to the error analysis. Based on Horowitz (1986) and Braine (1995) on Hyland (2009), they stated that there are summarizing, experimental report, case study and research paper to categorize a writing.

#### **h. Grammatical Errors in Thesis Writing**

The journal writing thesis in education from Monash University (2014) said that there are some grammatical errors in writing thesis. They are subject-verb agreement and modifiers. UWIC Academic Skills Team (2010) added that the errors in subject-verb agreement relate to the tenses and clauses. It means that grammatical errors in thesis writing are from subject-verb agreement, tenses and clauses.

### **III. RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **a. Research Method**

This type of research method is qualitative research. It is a qualitative data research because in this research, the researcher analyzed the thesis writing of the graduated students of English Department in Mataram University in academic year 2014-2015.

#### **b. Population**

The population was taken from the graduated students in English Department in Mataram University in academic year 2014-2015. The students were taken at noon class. The population was taken at noon class because the students who graduated from 2014-2015 were more than those who were in the morning class. Then, the researcher took chapter II in analyzing the grammatical errors

in thesis writing because the students wrote their review of literature in that chapter by themselves.

**c. Sample**

Arikunto (2006:134) said that there are two types of taking sample. The first, if the population is less than 100 persons, the researcher will take them to be a sample. However, if the population is more than 100 persons, the researcher will take the data 10-15 % or 20-25 % as the sample of this research. Therefore, the population from graduated English Department noon class Students in Mataram University in Academic Year 2014-2015 were 122 persons. Then, the researcher took 10 % from the data. Then, the number of sample of this research is 12 persons. They were taken from thesis writing of graduated English Department noon class students in Mataram University in Academic Year 2014-2015.

**d. Method of Data Collection**

There are many ways to take the data collection in qualitative data. However, the researcher just took one way to take the data collection based on the case of the study. The methods of data collection were analysis from 12 theses writing.

The step of analyzing thesis writing is the researcher did error analysis according to Richards (1971) in Ellis (1994). It was stated that there were some steps to analyze errors. There were identification, classification, description and explanation.

**e. Method of Analyzing Data**

After collecting the research data, the data were analyzed through identification, classification, description and explanation by using theory of Error Analysis by Richards (1971) in Ellis (1994). The first was identification and classification the errors based on the data collection. The next step was description. We had to describe the errors and give the correct grammar. Finally, the last step was explanation. We had to correct the right rules of

grammar based on the text. The steps were identification, classification, description and explanation.

#### IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

##### a. Findings

This step is to identify and know what the most common types of grammatical errors are in a thesis writing. Then, the data is accumulated in an instrument of data.

NO.	Initial Name	Grammar Errors								
		S-V Agreement		Tenses				Clauses		
		S	P	SP	PP	Spa	SF	Simple	Compound	Complex
1	MHH	5	3	3	0	1	0	0	0	6
2	UW	2	4	3	0	1	2	0	0	2
3	YP	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	2
4	IFA	11	1	5	1	0	1	0	0	2
5	DAN	7	2	6	1	1	0	0	0	1
6	IH	9	3	7	0	3	0	0	1	2
7	RPA	5	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	2
8	DMW	12	9	15	1	0	0	0	1	5
9	M	10	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	2
10	MA	10	4	7	0	0	0	0	2	2
11	MT	8	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
12	SSY	14	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	4
TOTAL		96	34	73	3	7	3	0	5	31
		130		86				36		
		252								

Explanation :

S : Singular

P : Plural

SP : Simple Present Tense

PP : Present Perfect Tense

SPa : Simple Past Tense

SF : Simple Future Tense

From the data research above, there are 252 grammatical errors in 12 theses writing. There are 130 grammatical errors in

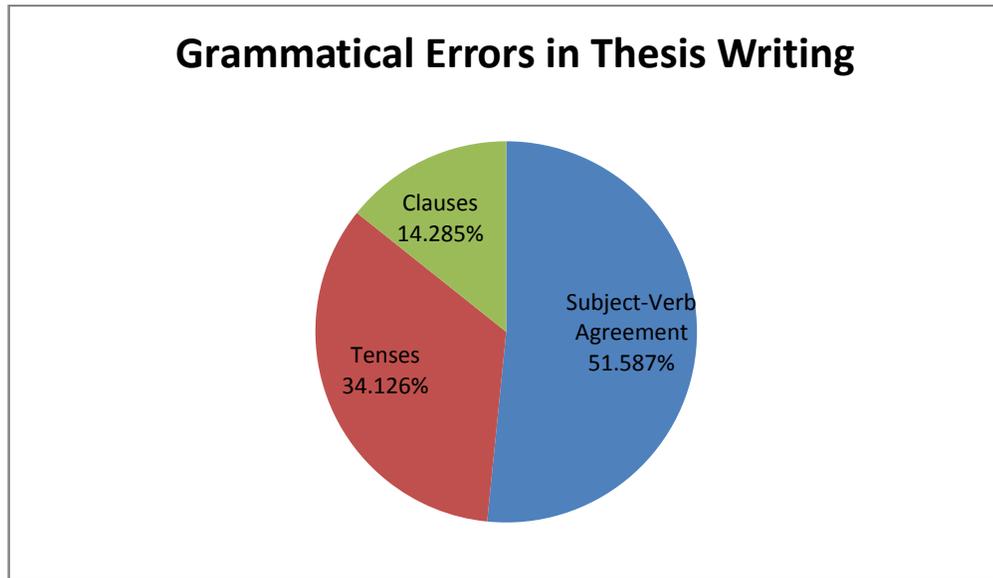
subject-verb agreement, 86 grammatical errors in tenses and 36 grammatical errors in clauses. It means that subject-verb agreement is the most common types of grammatical errors in 12 theses that are taken as the sample. It is shown that subject-verb agreement errors are the highest from all of grammatical errors based on the research and the instrument of data. In subject-verb agreement, the most grammatical errors are from singular words. Therefore, the most grammatical errors in tenses come from simple present tense. Then, complex clauses are the most of grammatical errors in clauses.

Therefore, the writer is going to classify the most frequently committed grammatical errors by using percentage and bar chart. This step is to know the dominant grammatical errors in a thesis writing by English Department students of FKIP in Mataram University in academic year 2014-2015.

The writer uses two ways to classify the grammatical errors in those thesis writings. The first is using percentage. The first percentage is from subject-verb agreement. There are 130 grammatical errors from 252 grammatical errors in 12 theses. Then, the percentage for subject-verb agreement is 51.587%. The second is from tenses. There are 86 grammatical errors in tenses from 252 grammatical errors. The percentage for tenses is 34.126%. The last is from clauses. In clauses, there are 36 grammatical errors from 252 grammatical errors. The percentage for clauses is 14.285%.

From all of the percentages, the highest percentage is from subject-verb agreement which is about 51,587%. The percentage of Grammatical errors from tenses is about 34,126% and clauses is about 14,285% which is the lowest percentage in this instrument of research data. It means that subject-verb agreement is the most dominant grammatical errors committed in a thesis writing and the writer suggests that every English student who writes thesis writing

have to be aware in subject-verb agreement because the fact says that subject-verb agreement is being the most dominant errors in theses. In order to prove more about this classification, the writer is going to give a bar chart about this classification.



#### **b. Discussions**

This step is to correct the most and dominant grammatical errors in a thesis writing. From the identification and classification, the researcher concludes that the most common type of grammatical errors in thesis writing is from subject-verb agreement, especially in singular words. Then, in this step, the researcher corrects some errors in order to make the readers learn about other errors which are not explained and explains why those subject-verb agreement errors can be classified as errors. The researcher is going to do this step by analyzing 12 theses that have been analyzed before. First, the researcher takes all the grammatical errors in subject-verb agreement from 12 theses.

Second, from grammatical errors in subject-verb agreement, the researcher analyzes by description and explanation. Then, the researcher finds that there are six types of subject-verb agreement errors found in 12 theses writing. The six errors in subject-verb agreement are found in using singular subject, using

pronoun or name of person, using plural subject, using conjunction in the subject, using preposition in the subject and using the word 'there/here' and 'these/those' as a subject.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **a. Conclusion**

Based on the research finding, the researcher concludes that the most common type of grammatical errors in thesis writing is in subject-verb agreement. It is proven by the result of analyzing 12 theses taken as the sample. Then, The highest percentage of grammatical errors in thesis writing is subject-verb agreement (50.980%). The second position is tenses (34.901%). The use of clauses is the lowest percentage in this research (14.117). It means that the theses' writers are aware of the clauses. From all the data above, it can be concluded that subject-verb agreement is the dominant frequent committed grammatical errors in thesis writing. That is to say that the most common types of errors in subject-verb agreement are from the errors of using singular subject, name of person, plural subject, conjunction, preposition and the use of word 'there' and word 'these/those'.

### **b. Suggestion**

Based on the result of the research, the researcher offers some suggestions to the students, the lecturers and the next researchers. For the students, Because of the fact writing thesis is difficult, the English students have to focus and learn grammar seriously. Therefore, the college students who write thesis writing have to be aware of grammar in order to avoid the grammatical errors in their thesis. For the lecturers, This thesis warns to the lecturers who teach English, especially grammar, that they have to teach the students carefully. Then, the lecturers have to give more attention to write grammatically in order to avoid the grammatical errors in the students' writing. Then, for the next researchers, the researcher suggests that researchers analyze the grammatical errors

in active-passive voice and in the errors in the relationship between present tense and past tense in thesis writing because when the researcher was doing research, the researcher found errors either pertaining to active-passive voice or relationship between present and past tense.

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