ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' QUESTION SENTENCES

Prichatin
Universitas Pamulang
dosen00538@unapm.ac.id

Abstract

Indonesia and English have different grammatical rules. That is why some students make mistake in writing or speaking English sentences. For example, in Indonesia Language, the question sentence does not use auxiliary, while in English, we need different auxiliaries in making question sentence. The aim of this research is to know the errors which have been made by the second semester students at English Department in Pamulang University in question sentences, to identify the error made by the students, and to correct the errors. The research uses theory of grammatical errors taxonomy by Ho (2005). According to Ho, there are four types of Grammatical errors; are noun and noun group errors, verb and verb group errors, prepositional errors, and sentence structure errors. Qualitative method is used to obtain valid finding. Twenty five (25) question sentences were collected from 41 students in the second semester Faculty of Letters Pamulang University. Based on the error analysis conducted, it is found that the most dominant errors is errors regarding to verb-verb group (11 case or 44%), with the omission of auxiliary verb is the highest number of errors done by students (36%). This is followed by the errors regarding to sentence structure (28%). In the third position, there are errors regarding noun-noun group (12%) and capitalization errors (12%), which is not categorized in the (Ho, 2005) theory. Last the error regarding to the preposition is in percentage 4%. The finding indicates that some students find difficulties in using auxiliary verbs in their question sentence. This problem may occur because Indonesian does not use auxiliary verb in the question sentences.

Keywords: *grammatical errors, question sentences*

INTRODUCTION

One of skills that an English learner have is good Grammar. They have to speak or write grammatically, especially when they are in the class, doing a task, writing a paper or presenting a material. But, for many English learners, Grammar is difficult subject, moreover when they apply it to their writing. These difficulties cause a lot of error in their speaking and writing. The effect of bad grammar is not only in the score of writing, but it also may cause misunderstanding. The incorrect form of the structure makes the purpose of the question is not delivered well. The additional of auxiliary in question sentence, for example, will differ the answer. The answer of a question "*who did you see?*" is different from *"Who saw you?"*

Making mistakes or error, especially error in Grammar, in speaking and writing is a commonly made by English learners. In this case, they make some errors because the language structure of their mother tongue is different from English. For example, Indonesian only has one type of verb (*makan*) whenever it is done while English has

four types of verb (eat, ate, eaten, eating). This Problem also occurs when they make question sentences. Almost all English question sentences have different auxiliary verbs depend on when the action happens, whether it is followed by a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, or verb. This often causes many English learners confused.

Error in Grammar usage is commonly done by students, especially in their writing. Many researchers have done the error analysis in students' writing. Here are some of them. Solihah (2017) did *Grammatical Errors Analysis in The Fourth Semester Students' Essay Writing at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo.* She analyzed the types of grammatical errors based on surface strategy taxonomy in students' essay writing which often made by the fourth semester students of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo. Ilyas (2017) also analyzed *An Analysis on Grammatical Errors in Students' Proposals: A Case Study at English Department Hasanuddin University.* In his research, Ilyas analyzed the type of Gramatical error and which one the most dominant is. Error analysis was also done by Latifah & Hani (2017) in *Paragraph Writing in Undergraduate English Department: Errors and Its Factors* to investigate the type of error and the dominant factors.

The purposes of the research are to know the noun and noun group errors, verb and verb group errors, prepositional errors, and sentence structure errors which have been made by the learners in their question sentences, and to identify the error made by the learners, and to correct the error. The significance of the study is to give some contributions for both lecturers and students. Knowing the error that students commonly do will make lecturers easier to find the right way in delivering the material about making question. The students also recognize the error in their sentences and will avoid to do the same mistake.

Grammar

Grammar is one important aspect that an English learner should master. Grammar is the rules of construction and formation of every word in a sentence. Grammar is the basic element of knowledge in communication. In Meriam Webster Dictionary mentioned, "Grammar is a system of rules that defines the grammatical structure of a language." Mastering Grammar means mastering the structure of the language.

Greenbaum and Nelson (2002) writes, grammar is the main aspect of a language. It is rules that can be used to combine some words in a language into larger units. It can connect between the system of written symbols and the meaning system. Grammar is also one of the most important aspects of language study. It is simple for learners to learn and use dictionaries to identify the pronunciation, spelling, or meaning of words, but it is still difficult for them to consult grammar books without having a good understanding of grammar. While Patterson (1999) states that applying grammar in the tasks is supposed for both speakers and writers.

Sentence

When a person talks with another person, he utilizes sentences. A sentence is a

collection of words that includes both a subject and a verb and expresses a full notion. According to Seaton and Mew (2007), a sentence is a collection of words that communicates a full notion. A sentence must have a subject and a verb, but an object is optional. According to Seaton and Mew (2007) there are four kinds of sentences; declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, exclamatory sentence, and imperative sentence.

1. Declarative sentence

Declarative sentence is statement sentence. This kind of sentence is usually used when someone want to state something. Declarative sentence begins with capital letter and ends with period. This kind of sentence begins with a subject which can be a noun, subject pronoun, noun phrase, or noun clause.

Example of declarative sentence with non as the subject: *Tina is a student.*

2. Interrogative sentence

Interrogative sentence is also known as question sentence. This sentence is usually used to ask a question. Azzar (2011) divided interrogative sentences into two types; yes/no question and information question.

1) Yes/ No question

Yes/no question is a question that requires yes or no as the answer. This type of sentence begins with an auxiliary verb or a form of do and followed by the object. The use of auxiliary and the form of do depends on the tenses of the sentences and the subject. Auxiliary verb *is* for example, is used when the tenses is present and the subject is the third singular person (he/she/it or name of a person) or singular noun.

Example:
Are you sleepy?
Is Sarah studying now?
Was the movie boring?
Were her parents at home last night?
Have you read the book?

The form of do is used when there is no auxiliary verb in a sentence and usually the sentence is in the simple present tense or in the simple past tense. Do is used for plural noun subject in the sentence with simple present tense. Does is used for singular subject in the sentence with simple present tense while did is used in the sentences with simple past tense with both singular or plural subject. In question sentence, the form of do is not used as verb, but it is used as a helping verb.

Example:
Does your father go to office every day?
Do you live with your parents?
Did you like the concert?

2) Information question

Different from yes/no questions, this type of question sentence requires

longer answer; this questions ask further information. Information question uses a question word in the beginning of it. The question words used are *what, when, where, why. Who, whom, whose, which,* and *how.*
Example:
Where do you live?
What does Alex read?
Whose book is this?

Except the use of question word, information question and yes/no question have same subject-verb word order.

3. Exclamatory sentence

Exclamatory sentence is sentences that expresses strong emotion. What and how are two words that are used in the beginning of exclamatory sentences followed by a part of the predicate. The exclamatory phrase is followed by the subject and the verb.

1) What

What is used when a noun ends the exclamatory phrase. The form of the exclamatory sentence with what is:

What (+ adjective) + noun (+ subject + verb)
Example:
What a nice day!
What beautiful flowers!
What lovely smile she has!

2) How

How is used if an adjective or and adverbs ends the exclamatory phrase. The form of the exclamatory sentence with how is:

How + adjective/adverb + subject + verb
Example:
How cold it was!
Rainbow! How nice!

In writing, an exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamatory mark (!), but sometimes a period is used to lessen the force of exclamation.

4. Imperative sentence

Imperative sentence is used to give an order. In this type of sentence, only verb is expressed. The base form of verb is used, regardless of subject and tense. In writing, imperative sentence ends with a period.
Example:
Open the door.
Eat your lunch.

Error analysis

Many students often make error when they write or speak English. The error must be corrected in order to they will not make same error in the future. The use of

language in a way that a native or fluent speaker of the language considers incorrect or insufficient learning is called an error (Richard and Schmidt, 2002). A systematic error of competence, both hidden and overt, that deviates from the target language's norms is referred to as an error.

To figure out what is wrong with their sentences, they must conduct an error analysis. Error Analysis (EA) examines the learners' performance in terms of the cognitive processes they employ in recognizing or coding the target language's input. As a result, one of EA's main focuses is on "proof that learners' errors provide insight into the underlying process of second language acquisition." He contends that Error Analysis (EA) reveals that learner errors were caused not only by the native language but also by their reflection in various learning tactics (Erdogan, 2005).

Error analysis, according to Brown (2000), is a helpful source of information for teachers. It contains information on students' errors, which aids teachers in correcting them and improving the effectiveness of their instruction. As a result, whether the usage process is effective or not, errors award marks to teachers and researchers.

The importance of error analysis for all phases of the learning process cannot be overstated (Kwok, 1998). In the meantime, Corder (1974) emphasized the need of recognizing errors made by second or foreign language learners. He argued that error research is a part of the analysis of the language acquisition process. It gives us a picture of a learner's linguistic progress and may provide us clues about the learning process (Corder, 1974).

METHOD

This study employs descriptive qualitative research to determine the study's purpose. "Descriptive research had no theory, but merely described certain variable and condition naturally," (Arikunto, 2007). So, this research had a purpose to describe grammatical error in second-semester students' question sentences in English Literature Department Faculty of Letter in Pamulang University. In this research, the data were taken randomly from the question sentences written by the students. The tools were a e-learning forum discussion and a form of error recording for each data.

After collecting 41 the data, the next step was data classification and analysis. The following are steps for classifying and analyzing grammatical errors in students' sentences: (1) Identify the are noun and noun group errors, verb and verb group errors, prepositional errors, and sentence structure errors found on every word, phrase or sentences; (2) Classify the data into the sub category of surface strategy taxonomy; (3) Interpret and describe the data which have been classified systematically; and (4) Analyze the data to infer the causes and sources they commit errors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on Ho (2005), there are four grammatical errors. There are noun and noun group errors, verb and verb group errors, prepositional errors, and sentence structure errors. Students' inquiry sentences contain all of these errors. Below are the examples:
Nouns and noun group errors.

Incorrect : Who is the main characters?
Correct : Who is the main character?

        This sentence has overgeneralization of plural marker –s. The subject of the sentence is in plural form (the main characters) while the verb takes singular verb (is). According to Betty (2011), a singular subject has a singular verb. However, the correct sentence is "Who is the main character?"

Verbs and verb group errors.
        The errors regarding verb and verb groups consist of omission of suffix –s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing, inappropriate form after modal verb (unnecessary insertion/overgeneralization of suffix –s, -ed, -ing, omission of infinitives to, omission of –ing participle, omission of auxiliary verb, and inversion of verb-subject in indirect question format. This type of error is the highest number of errors in students' question sentences. The example of this error is:
Incorrect : Why young people in Britain leave home and choose to the city of London?
Correct : Why did young people in Britain leave home and choose to the city of London?

        A question sentence has subject-verb word order that is auxiliary verb + subject + main verb. The sentence above has omission of auxiliary verb. There is no auxiliary verb between the question word why and the subject young people in Britain. An auxiliary did should be added because this question sentence asks about something that happened before now, and it has main verb leave. The correct sentence should be "Why did young people in Britain leave home and choose to the city of London?"

Prepositional errors
        Error regarding to preposition is also found in student's sentence. Here is it:
Incorrect: What is the reason young people in Britain leave home?
Correct : What is the reason for young people in Britain to leave home?

        The sentence above has omission of preposition. The preposition for should be added after the word the reason. Azar (2009) mentioned that a noun word *reason* should be followed by preposition *for* and then followed by an object of preposition. The correct sentence should be "What is the reason for young people in Britain to leave home?"

Sentence structure errors.
        One of the examples of this type of error can be seen in the example below:
Incorrect: what the main idea of the text?
Correct: What is the main idea of the text?

        This sentence is fragment sentence since it doesn't have verb. As Oshima (2006) explained that fragment sentence is incomplete sentence. To correct this sentence is by adding a verb. Because this sentence is nonverbal sentence, be replaces the verb. Therefore, the correct sentence should be "what is the main idea of the text?"

        Besides, the writer also found some errors that cannot be categorized in the Grammatical Errors taxonomy by Ho (2005). Some sentences have incorrect capitalization usage which cannot be categorized in the errors regarding nouns and

noun groups, errors regarding verbs and verb groups, error regarding preposition, and errors regarding sentence structure. Here are the sentences:

1. Why do these young people in british want to leave they home?
2. What are the pull facfors in the cause of homeless in among teenagers according to london's bigget homeless charty?
3. How Homelessness is not a big problem in London?

All of the sentences above have capitalization errors. Azar (2011) mentioned capital letter is used in 1) the first word of a sentence, 2) the names of people, 3) titles used with the name of people, 4) names of days, months, and holiday, 5) the name of places such as city, state, country, etc., 6) the names of courses, 7) the titles of books, articles, movies, 8) the names of languages and nationalities, 9) the names of religions.

Sentence no 1, *Why do these young people in british want to leave they home?,* has error capitalization in the word british. British is a name of nationalities, so it should be written in capital letter: British. The correct sentence should be *Why do these young people in British want to leave they home?*. The second sentence also has errors of capitalizations. London's bigget homeless charty is a name of an institution. It should also be written in capital letter. So, the correct sentence should be *What are the pull facfors in the cause of homeless in among teenagers according to London's bigget homeless charty?* Example no 3 also has error capitalization. The word homeless should be written in lowercase letter because it is not a proper name. The correct sentence should be *How homelessness is not a big problem in London?*

The table below shows the grammatical errors which are done by the second semester students at English Literature in Pamulang University in their question sentences.

Table 1. *example of type of grammatical errors.*

No.	Types of errors	Correct sentence
1	Noun-Noun groups Errors	
	Inappropriate combination of subject and verb *Who is the main characters?*	Who is the main character?
2	Verb-Verb groups Errors	
	Omission of auxiliary verb *Why young people in Britain leave home and choose to the city of London?*	Why did young people in Britain leave home and choose to the city of London?
3	Preposition Errors	
	Omission of preposition *What is the reason young people in Britain leave home?*	What is the reason for young people in Britain leave home?
4	Sentences structure Errors	

	Incomplete or fragmented sentences *what the main idea of the text?*	What is the main idea of the text?
5.	Capitalization errors *Why do these young people in british want to leave they home?*	Why do these young people in British want to leave they home?
	Total numbers of errors	

The table above shows the grammatical errors done by students in making question sentences. The highest number of the errors in students' question sentences is the errors regarding to verb-verb group with eleven, followed by the errors regarding to sentence structure in the second place. The errors regarding to noun-noun group and capitalization errors have same numbers of errors. And in the last position is the errors regarding to prepositions.

In the part of verb-verb group errors (11 case or 44%), omission of auxiliary verb is the highest number of errors done by students. There seven students (36%) who did this error. While in the second place, which is the sentence structure errors, there are seven students (28%) did this error. The noun-noun group errors and capitalization errors have same number of cases. There are three students (12%) who did noun-noun group error, and three students (12%) who did capitalization errors. And there is one student (4%) who did the prepositional error.

Based on the frequency of the grammatical error from the table above, the verb-verb group error is the most dominant error of all. It has the highest percentages that is 44% with omission of auxiliary verb as the highest numbers of errors occurred (36%).

CONCLUSION

All of types of grammatical errors are made by the learners in their question sentences. Some students made capitalization errors which cannot be identified using grammatical errors by Ho. Among the four types of grammatical errors, the verb-verb group errors is the highest numbers of errors which is done by the learners. The most learners did omission auxiliary verb. They write question sentence without using an auxiliary between the question word and the subject. It can be caused since Indonesian, as their mother language, doesn't have auxiliary verb in forming question sentences. Realizing that fact, the lecturers should explain more and pay attention to the usage of auxiliary in students' sentences. For students, they have to be more careful in using auxiliary in their sentences.

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