

A Grammatical Errors Analysis in Students' Comparison and Contrast Paragraph Writing

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Abstract

This research focuses on analyzing grammatical errors in comparison and contrast paragraphs written by second-semester students of the English Department at Universitas Pamulang. Grammatical errors often occur in students' writing when the grammatical arrangement does not follow grammar rules. The main purposes of the research were to identify the types of grammatical errors and to describe the most frequent types of grammatical errors found in students' writing of comparison and contrast paragraphs. This research was carried out from October 2023 to June 2024 and used a qualitative descriptive research design. The subjects of the research were the twenty comparison and contrast paragraphs written by the students as a writing assignment. The data were collected from the original students' writing products, and the data were observed to find grammatical errors and classify the types of errors. Furthermore, the most frequent type of grammatical error was also calculated. The researcher analyzed the types of grammatical errors in students' writing based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's theory. The results showed that there were 127 grammatical errors, which were classified into 47 omission errors, 35 addition errors, 30 misformation errors, and 15 misordering errors. Additionally, the most frequent type of grammatical error was omission errors, which accounted for 37% of the total errors and had the highest percentage. The results of this research have implications for understanding strategies to address students' grammatical problems when they are producing text.

Keywords: *comparison and contrast paragraphs; grammatical errors; writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the English skills that should be mastered by the students. Writing is a process of expressing an idea, an experience, or a feeling in a written form. As Harmer (2001) stated writing is a communication form to convey someone's thoughts or feelings through written form. However, writing is considered as the most difficult skill to learn by the students since it is not only about producing words in written form but it is also about organizing the idea and the grammatical rules. Mayer (2017) explained that writing skill is the most complex skill to learn since beside it deals with grammatical and rhetorical aspects, it is also deals with conceptual and judgment aspects. It means that many processes must be exceeded in writing such as gathering the idea and the concept, using grammatical rules, and using rhetorical devices.

Grammar is one of essential components in writing process. As Gerot and Wignel (1994) said grammar is the theory related to how the language is organized and how it is worked. Moreover, Harmer (2001) defined grammar is the rules regarding how the word forms are

arranged into sentences in a language. Thus, to make good structured sentences and to make the readers easy to comprehend the text, the writer needs to comprehend the grammatical rules.

Writing is one of the skill subjects learnt by students from the second semester through the fifth semester in Universitas Pamulang. According to the curriculum and the learning syllabus, the second semester students are expected to be able to write many kinds of paragraph such as narrative paragraphs, descriptive paragraphs, recount paragraphs, argumentative paragraphs, and comparison and contrast paragraphs. Moreover, those paragraphs must be written as well as possible such as the use of grammatical aspects, punctuation, capital letters, proper vocabulary, word structures, and spelling. Besides, a good paragraph must also have unity and coherence. However, writing a paragraph is not an easy thing to do for the second-semester students of Universitas Pamulang. This can be seen in students' first-paragraph writing assignments. The majority of the second-semester students achieved low scores in the first assignment given. It shows that the second-semester students of Universitas Pamulang still have many problems with writing a paragraph. Their most common problem in writing a paragraph is in using grammatical rules, using tenses, and arranging sentences. For example, they make many errors about subject-verb agreement such as how to put final -s or -es after the singular subject. Thus, conducting this research could bring many insights for the teacher to solve learners' writing problems mainly grammatical errors which are often faced by the learners in writing. The teachers could choose the best teaching strategies to minimize students' error in using grammatical rules while producing text. Moreover, knowing the common types of errors done by the learners is an essential part of informing the teachers where should direct the learners' efforts related to the most problematic area of grammatical rules faced by the learners. Therefore, analysing the grammatical errors and finding the types of errors made by the learners in their paragraph writing is essential to conduct.

Regarding to the background of the research explained above, there are two objectives of this research. This research is conducted to find out the types of grammatical errors in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs made by second-semester students of Universitas Pamulang and to describe the most frequent type of grammatical errors found in their writing. The result of this research is expected to bring many benefits not only for English teachers but also for other researchers. For the English teacher, this research will give more input regarding writing problems and common types of grammatical errors while the students are producing text. So, the teacher could use the best teaching strategies to reduce the students' grammatical errors. Meanwhile, for other researchers, this research could be an additional reference related to the same issue about grammatical errors in writing text.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Exploring grammatical errors in writing is interesting for some researchers because there was some research related to the topic. The first research was done by Fitrawati and Safitri (2021). They conducted research entitled "Students' Grammatical Errors in Essay Writing: A Pedagogical Grammar Reflection" for EFL college students. This research was descriptive. The objective of the research was to find out grammatical errors made by college EFL students and to find out the pedagogical implications viewed from those errors. They found that there were 368 grammatical errors found in the students' essays and the most common error was in verb use.

In the second research, Wildan (2021) conducted research on grammatical error analysis in writing procedure text. The research was done in order to find out the types of grammatical errors found in writing procedure text and the most common type of grammatical errors made by students. The ninth-grade students of MTs Unggulan Nuris Jember became the participants in this qualitative descriptive research. After analyzing the data, it showed that the number of errors that occurred was 112 times. Besides, there were four types of grammatical errors found, they are omission (44 times), addition (23 times), misformation (35 times), and misordering (10 times).

The last research was conducted by Nainggolan (2021) which aimed to know and analyze the students' grammatical errors in writing some sentences. This research was carried out in the

first semester of English Department of Universitas Pamulang. The kind of this research was descriptive qualitative research. Based on the data analysis about students' error analysis, every student made an error and the biggest error was an error in sentence pattern. Though there was much research conducted about grammatical errors in writing, this research focuses on comparison and contrast paragraphs. Moreover, all aspects of English grammatical rules will be explored.

Writing is a process how to gather ideas and organizing their ideas to form a word into sentence or paragraph and to change the ideas into a readable text (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Moreover, writing is considered an intellectual activity since it is related to finding an idea and expressing the idea in the arranged text (Nunan, 2005). According to Cohen (1994), five aspects should exist in writing; 1) the content must be clear and accurate, 2) the organization of the writing must be coherent and logical, 3) the vocabulary used should be correct, 4) the grammar should be good, and 5) the writing mechanism such as spelling and punctuation should be used appropriately.

Grammar is a set of rules of language structures and forms that express meaning (Bitterlin, et al., 2010; Deuchar, et al., 2006; Thornbury, 1999). Grammatical errors in writing happen when the writer does not use the grammatical rules or arrangement correctly. In line with the statement, Smith and Wilson (1979) said that grammatical errors are the contradiction of the established and acceptable rules of a language. Error analysis is the process of analyzing and investigating students' learning processes to know the errors that students make. In the learning process, students often make errors. The students made the errors because of some factors.

As Brown (2007) stated the definition of error analysis is the process of observing, analyzing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then revealing the systems operated by the learner. Moreover, Dulay (1982) classified four types of error based on linguistic category, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. In terms of Error based on surface strategy taxonomy, there are four subtypes classified by Dulay (1982), they are;

Omission is an error that occurs when a learner omits an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Content morphemes, which carry the bulk of the referential meaning of a sentence, include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For example: "The man a pilot" should be "The man is a pilot." Addition is an error where the writer adds an item that should not be included in a well-formed structure, such as double markings, regularizations, and simple additions. Examples include: "A slices of pizza" should be "A slice of pizza" and "Three sheeps are sleeping" should be "Three sheep are sleeping." Misformation is characterized by the use of the wrong form of a morpheme or structure. In this type of error, the learner supplies something that is incorrect. There are three types of misformation: regularization errors, archi-forms, and alternate forms. Examples include: "womans" instead of "women," "child" instead of "children," "these dog" instead of "these dogs," and "me sleepy" instead of "I am sleepy." Misordering is the error where the learner places an item in the incorrect position. For example: "What Daddy is doing?" should be "What is Daddy doing?" and "Please, pick up me" should be "Please, pick me up." In these examples, the items are correct, but the learner does not place them in the appropriate form.

METHOD

Qualitative method was used in this research as the research design. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) said that qualitative is the collected data which is taken from words or pictures. Therefore, the data collected in words were presented. Moreover, this research was a case study that examined a single subject. The participants of this research were twenty students in the second semester of English Department Universitas Pamulang in academic year 2023/2024. The subjects were the students' comparison and contrast paragraph writing.

The technique of data collection was obtained by reviewing the students' assignment sheets about comparison and contrast paragraphs. In this research, the researcher observed students writing comparison and contrast paragraph to find grammatical error and to classify the type of error. Furthermore, to find the most frequent type of grammatical errors in comparison and contrast paragraphs written by students, the total type of errors is calculated.

After the data were collected, the grammatical errors found in students' comparison and contrast paragraphs were analyzed. The grammatical errors were analyzed according to Dulay et. al.'s (1982) theory which classified the types of error into four types; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The table was drawn as follows:

Table 1. Classifying the Error

No	Students Code	Types of Error				Total
		Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	

Moreover, some steps used to analyze the data were adopted from Ellis (2008); identify the errors, describe the errors, calculate the errors, and explain the errors. Besides, to find out the most frequent error types made by students in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs, the percentage of error is calculated by using the formula proposed by Bluman (2004);

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Figure 1. Bluman (2004) formula

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Grammatical errors

After collecting the twenty (20) students' writing comparison and contrast paragraphs from second-semester students, the researcher analyzed the grammatical error based on the surface strategy taxonomy theory stated by Dulay et.al. As Dulay et.al. (1982) stated that there are four types of grammatical errors such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Then to analyze the data, the researcher was done by using four steps from Ellis (2008). In the first step of analyzing the grammatical errors, the researcher tried to find the grammatical error by underlying the error. The researcher started identifying the sentence that produced an error, by underlining every part of the sentence such as word, phrase, clause, or even the sentence itself. This process was to identify the location of errors in the sentence that has classified the errors into 4 types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Finally, all error sentences were put in a list to make it systematic and easy to analyze.

Table 1. Finding of Types of Error

No	Students Code	Types of Error				Total
		Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	
1	S01	2	0	3	0	5
2	S02	3	1	0	1	5
3	S03	5	3	1	1	10
4	S04	1	3	1	2	7
5	S05	3	2	0	1	6

No	Students Code	Types of Error				Total
		Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	
6	S06	3	4	2	2	11
7	S07	1	5	3	1	10
8	S08	2	2	2	1	7
9	S09	1	2	2	1	6
10	S10	0	0	3	0	3
11	S11	1	1	0	0	2
12	S12	2	0	1	0	3
13	S13	1	0	1	0	2
14	S14	4	0	0	0	4
15	S15	3	3	2	1	9
16	S16	4	3	0	0	7
17	S17	2	2	1	0	5
18	S18	5	4	2	2	13
19	S19	2	0	4	1	7
20	S20	2	0	2	1	5
Total		47	35	30	15	127

Omission

The first error type made by the students was the omission of error. The intent of the omission is for the students to remove one of the items that should be required in good writing, such as the omission of articles, morphemes, verbs, prepositions, and the subject of the sentence. The following are some examples related to the omission of errors that are taken from students' paragraphs:

“Because heavy to bring” (S05)

From the above sentence, we can see that the student omits the use of subject and verb after the subordinate conjunction 'because'. The correct sentence is 'because it is heavy to bring'. Subject 'it' is the most appropriate pronoun to refer to the object that is being discussed in the paragraph. Meanwhile helping verb 'is' is used because the subject is singular.

“Nowadays, we have pay attention to the air pollution” (S11)

The sentence shows that the student omitted the use of prepositions after the verb 'have'. The preposition 'to' must be written between 'have' and 'pay' such as “Nowadays, we have to pay attention to the air pollution. So, the function of preposition 'to' is used to form to infinitive.

Addition Error

There were several kinds of additions the students made. They were addition of articles, morphemes, and addition of conjunctions. The researcher analyzed some erroneous in the students' paragraphs as follows:

“It's doesn't cost too much” (S08)

In writing the sentence, the student uses 'is' after the subject. It shows that the sentence contains an addition error because 'is' does need to be put before 'does'. We can use 'is' before 'does' because there is the verb 'cost' after 'does'. The correct sentence must be 'It doesn't cost too much'. ***“..but you can't feels that you can focus.” (S08)***

In writing this sentence, the writer made additional errors. The student adds 's' after the verb 'feel'. This is incorrect because after the use of the modal auxiliary 'can', we can not modify the verb which follow the modal auxiliary. So, the correct sentence is “..but you can't feel that you can focus.”

Misformation Error

Misformation error was the third grammatical error type the students' made in their writings. The researcher found out that the students made some kinds of misformation errors. They were the misformation of articles, the misformation of verbs, the misformation of pronouns, and the misformation of prepositions. Below is the analysis of some misformation errors in the

students' paragraphs;

“E-book is simpler to go.” (S05)

In writing the sentence above, the student made grammatical errors in terms of misformation. It can be seen in using the word “go” after “..simpler to go”. In this context, the e-book is not a human who can go although e-book is simpler than a book. So, it is better to say “E-book is simpler to bring.” It proved that the student had misformation of the verb used for the context.

“My mother is amazing mother. Her can do anything.” (20)

The misformation error was made by a student in the sentence above. The misformation of pronouns was found in those sentences. The pronoun “Her” in the second sentence is an error. “Her” must be replaced by “She” since from the context of those sentences, it refers to “My mother”. Moreover, the position of “her” is as the subject not the object in that sentence.

Misordering Error

The fourth grammatical error type found in students' writing was a misordering error. Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. The researcher found out that the students produced some kinds of misordering error. They misplace adjectives or determiners, adverbs, misordered in forming genitive cases and misordered in forming relative clauses. Some of erroneous clauses regarding misordering error were analyzed as follow:

“She has a good hand because she, who made the food is a delicious.” (S04)

In this sentence, the misordering error is found after the conjunctive adverb “because”. The writer should explain the reason why ‘she’ has a good hand, however, the writer said that ‘she’ who made the food is delicious. It means that ‘she’ is delicious, not the food instead. This misordering brings different interpretations related to the meaning of the sentence. The best order must be “She has a good hand which made the food delicious.”

“We can write ideas our about anything.” (S15)

In the above sentence, the use of the words “our about anything” is misordering. It can be seen that the student tried to describe the word “idea”. The correct order of the sentence must be “We can write our ideas about anything.”

The Most Frequent Grammatical Errors Made by Students

After classifying and calculating the data related to types of grammatical errors, the most frequent grammatical errors made by 02SIGP009 are counted as follows;

- a. The Error of Omission

$$\frac{47}{127} \times 100\% = 37,0\%$$

- b. The Error of Addition

$$\frac{35}{127} \times 100\% = 27,6\%$$

- c. The Error of Misformation

$$\frac{30}{127} \times 100\% = 23,6\%$$

- d. The Error of Misordering

$$\frac{15}{127} \times 100\% = 11,8\%$$

The result of the error analysis process showed that the students committed errors into four types; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. From the frequency of the error types,

the omission was the error that was most frequently produced by the students. It took 37% of the total errors. Moreover, 27.6% of errors fell into addition and 23.6% of errors fell into misformation. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage of error is misordering which took 11.8%.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, there were 127 grammatical errors were made by students in writing comparison and contrast paragraphs. Those errors were divided into four categories such as omission error, addition error, misformation error, and misordering error. The total of omission errors was 47 as well as the highest number of errors. Besides, the total number of addition errors is 35 and the total number of misformation errors is 30. Meanwhile, the lowest number of errors is 15 for misordering errors. The result of the research also showed that the most frequent type of grammatical error made by students in their comparison and contrast paragraphs is omission error. The percentage of omission errors in their paragraph writing is 37%. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage of grammatical errors is misordering errors. It took 15% of grammatical errors. The error can occur because of inter- or intra-lingual interference, the lack of English grammatical mastery, and the lack of vocabulary use. The factors above show that learning some skills in a foreign language is challenging yet fascinating. To overcome those issues, a more comprehensive approach to teaching and learning writing skills is needed. Moreover, students need more exposure to correct grammatical use, need more practice in using the language, and need more feedback in the learning process from the teacher.

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