



The Impact of Syntactic Errors in Listening Towards in Academic Writing

Syahfitri Purnama*

Lecturer of University of Indraprasta PGRI Jalan Nangka No. 58 C Jakarta 12530 Indonesia

Email: syahfitripurnama@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to determine a syntax error in the exercise heard that affect the improvement of academic writing skills in English. This research was conducted in the language laboratory of the National University in Jakarta and the object of this study was written twenty students of the second semester course on Spoken English in the Faculty of Letters Department of English. The method used is descriptive method with content analysis techniques. Based on the results of the study, the most common error made by the student in connection with a taxonomic structure outside is one form (misselection), in terms of employment (58.2%), working in the phrase intralingual errors (59.7%) and local error in terms of employment (55.3). A syntax error in writing through listening comprehension includes system of language structure, vocabulary, and language usage.

Key Words: grammatical error; error analysis; surface structure taxanomy.

1. Introduction

English as the foreign language in Indonesia is taught since students in the elementary school. Even though the students have learnt English since their in primary school, but they did a lot of errors in their writing. It can be understood that the process of learning first language to second language is not easy, students (respondents) sometimes make mistake or error as what Syahfitri Purnama stated [1].

* Corresponding author.

It is popular belief that second language acquisition (SLA) is strongly influenced by the learner's first language (L1). The clearest support for this belief comes from 'foreign' accents in the second language (L2) speech of learners, vocabulary and grammar [2], and the problem of learning the target language is the problem of competence and performance [3]. Related to my teaching experienced, I am particularly concern about the syntactical errors made by 20 students of the English Department Faculty of Letters, Nasional University. To take the data for this research, I asked the students to listen to the story carefully from the cassette and asked them to write. Saussure quoted by Brown [3] that the process of listening to writing is the process of comprehension and production or it is another terms of the process of competence and performance. Based on the explanation above this study focuses on the students' syntactical errors in listening and the direct impact on academic speaking. The syntactical errors that will be analyzed include the most frequent syntactical errors, such as noun phrase, verb phrase, clause and sentence; the most frequent errors in level of syntax, such as misselection, omission, addition and misordering, the most frequent causes of errors, such as interlingual or intralingual errors, and the most frequent effects of errors, such as local and global errors.

2. Theoretical Framework

There have been several definition related to errors. Dulay, Burt and Krashen quoted by James [4] defined errors as "the flawed side of learner speech or writing, which deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance". According to them errors 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" [4]; Corder quoted by James [4] stated that errors are the result of some failure of performance. He associates errors with failure in competence and mistakes with failure in performance.

Brown also made a distinction between mistakes and errors based on the sources. A mistakes indicates "a failure to utilize a known system correctly" where an error "reflects the competence of the learner" [3]. It can be stated 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 [3].

Grammatical errors are also involved syntactical errors. To identify the errors; syntactical analysis cover noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase. Infinitive phrase, clause and sentence are applied. To describe the errors, Surface Strategy Taxonomy is used to show the ways surface structure are altered. Dulay, Burt and Krashen quoted by James [4] stated that there are four categories in Surface Structure Taxonomy, namely omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and blend added by James.

- a. Omission: the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance, example, He'll pass his exam but I 'll [Ø]too.
- b. Addition: the utterance of an item that must not appear in a well-formed utterance, example, *bayed √bought, *dove√dived, He doesn't knows me √He doesn't know me.
- c. Misformation: use of the wrong form of the structure.

Example, I* seen her yesterday √ I saw her yesterday

- d. Misordering: the incorrect placement of a phrase or group of phrases in an utterance.

* He every time comes late home √ Every time He comes late.home.

- e. Blend : two alternative grammatical forms which are combined to produce an ungrammatical .

* According to Erica's opinion √ According to Erica.

According to Brown [3], the causes of errors are interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual transfer is a significant source of error for all learners. The beginning stages of learning a second language are especially vulnerable to interlingual transfer from the native language or interference. In the early stages before the system of the second language is familiar, the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner draw. It can be heard if learners says "sheep" for "ship" or "the book of Jack" instead of Jack's book. Intralingual transfer is one of major contributions of learner language research has been its recognition of source of error that extend beyond interlingual errors in learning a second language. Jaszczolt and Taylor in Brown [3] have found that the early stages of language learning are characterized by a predominance of interference (interlingual transfer), but once learners have begun to acquire parts of the new system, more and more intralingual transfer-generalization within the target language- is manifested. Heaton [4] made the distinction between global and local errors. According to him local errors are those errors which cause only minor trouble and confusion in a particular clause or sentence without hindering the reader's comprehension of the sentence (example,. misuse of articles, omission of prepositions, lack of agreement between subject and verb, incorrect position of adverbs, etc. While global errors are usually those errors which involve the overall structure of a sentence and result in misunderstanding or even failure to understand the message which is being conveyed (example,. the misuse of connectives: example "Although the train arrived late, we missed the last bus to the city center"; the omission, misuse and unnecessary insertion of relative pronouns; "You should try to be as healthy as the girl arrived on bicycle a short time ago. Finally, error analysis is needed and can keep us too closely focused on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspects of language [3].

3. Research Method

This research used descriptive method with content analysis techniques and data was conducted in the laboratory of Faculty of Letters, Pasar Minggu, South Jakarta. The students listen to the story and they are asked to rewrite it. All of their activities are recorded. Researcher and recording of respondents are the instrument of data. It is classified and analyzed based on the surface structure taxonomy, the cause of error, and the impact of error.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

Based on the analysis that have been done, the syntactical errors can be grouped based on the form of surface structure taxonomy, the frequent causes errors and the frequent effects of errors. The result can be seen below:

1) The Tabulation of Grammatical Errors Based on The Surface Structure Taxonomy

Table 3-1: The Frequency of Grammatical Errors Based on The Surface Structure Taxonomy

Syntax	Surfaces structure			
	Misscl	Addition	Misord	Omiss
Noun Phrase	28	2	0	21
Verb Phrase	78	0	2	8
Adverb Phrase	1	0	0	0
Adjective Phrase	0	0	0	0
Prep. Phrase	10	0	0	1
Gerund Phrase	0	0	0	0
Inf. Phrase	1	0	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0	0	0
Clause	16	0	7	8
Sentence	0	0	1	0
Σ	134	2	10	38

Table 3-2: The Percentage of Grammatical Errors Based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

Syntax	Surfaces			
	Misscl (%)	Addition (%)	Misord (%)	Omiss (%)
Noun Phrase	21	100	0	55,3
Verb Phrase	58,2	0	20	21,1
Adverb Phrase	0,7	0	0	0
Adjective Phrase	0	0	0	0
Prep. Phrase	7,5	0	0	2,6
Gerund Phrase	0	0	0	0
Inf. Phrase	0,7	0	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0	0	0
Clause	11,9	0	70	21
Sentence	0	0	10	0
Σ	100	100	100	100

The above table shows that the most syntactical errors are Verb phrase, noun phrase, clause, and prepositional phrase . Based on the surface structure taxonomy the most errors in those levels of syntax are misselection/misformation (134) and omission (38). From the two aspects, it can be seen that the frequent errors in misselection is verb phrase and noun phrase.

2) Tabulation of grammatical errors based on causes of errors

Table 3-3: The Frequency Grammatical Errors Based on Causes of Errors

Syntax	Causes of errors	
	Intralingual	Interlingual
Noun Phrase	36	4
Verb Phrase	92	9
Adverb Phrase	0	1
Adjective Phrase	1	0
Pref. Phrase	9	3
Gerund Phrase	0	0
Inf. Phrase	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0
Clause	15	1
Sentence	1	0
Σ	154	18

Table 3-4: The Percentage of Grammatical Errors Based on Causes of Errors

Syntax	Causes of errors	
	Intralingual (%)	Interlingual (%)
Noun Phrase	23,40	22,22
Verb Phrase	59,74	50
Adverb Phrase	0	5,55
Adjective Phrase	0,64	0
Pref. Phrase	5,84	16,67
Gerund Phrase	0	0
Inf. Phrase	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0
Clause	9,74	5,56
Sentence	0,64	0
Σ	100	100

From the causes of errors, it can be seen that the most frequent causes of errors is intralingual (154), it means that the respondents have lack of knowledge about English grammar rules. The most frequent causes of errors is in verb phrase and noun phrase.

3) Tabulation of syntactical errors based on effect of errors

Table 3-5: The Frequency of Syntactical Errors Based on Effect of Errors

Syntax	Effect of error	
	Lokal	Global
Noun Phrase	39	4
Verb Phrase	68	30
Adverb Phrase	1	0
Adjective Phrase	0	0
Prep. Phrase	8	5
Gerund Phrase	0	0
Inf. Phrase	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0
Clause	7	15
Sentence	0	1
Σ	123	55

Table 3-6: The Percentage of Syntactical Errors Based on Effect of Errors

Syntax	Effect of error	
	Lokal (%)	Global (%)
Noun Phrase	31,7	7,3
Verb Phrase	55,3	54,5
Adverb Phrase	0,8	0
Adjective Phrase	0	0
Prep. Phrase	6,5	9,1
Gerund Phrase	0	0
Inf. Phrase	0	0
Participle Phrase	0	0
Clause	5,7	27,3
Sentence	0	1,8
Σ	100	100

From the above of the chart, it can be seen that the most frequent effects of errors are the local errors (123); verb phrases (68) , noun phrases (39). Below is the chart of the result of the study related to the impact of the syntactical errors.

Table 3-7: The Impact of the Syntactical Errors

Category of Error						
NO.	FORM	Σ / %	CAUSE	Σ / %	EFFECT	Σ / %
1.	Misscl	134/72,8	Intraling	154/89,5	Local	123/69,1
2.	Addition	2/ 1,1	Interling	18/10,5	Global	55/30,9
3.	Missord	10/ 5,4				
4.	Omission	38/20,7				

4.2 Discussion

Based on the findings errors that have been found , the syntactical errors will be explained based on forms, causes, and effects.

1) The forms of errors

The most frequent causes of errors are misselection and omission.

a) Misselection

*The most frequent causes of errors are misselection (134); in the verb phrases(78) , especially in using tenses, example in R4 K2 *called the waiter √calls the waiter and R17 K9 *don't √doesn't have, R6 K3 *asked by his wife √is asked by his wife. It is also found in to infinitive, example in R13 K4 *to brought √to bring and the combination between verb and preposition, example in R8 after eat √after eating, without pay √without paying, R8 *for check √for checking, R 16 K2* with check √ by check*

Misselection in the noun phrases (68) are especially in misselection in using *indefinite article a/an* and *definite article the*, examples in R11 K2 *a steak √Ø steak, R15 K1 *a soup √Ø soup, R8 K3 *the knife √ a knife

*The misselection is also found in prepositional phrases, examples in *in the table √on the table and . R8 K4 *Ø for check √for checking*

The respondents make errors in written texts because they still do not understand how to use the system of grammatical orders; in this case is how to use the verb phrase (tenses), to infinitive phrase and prepositional phrase, They also do not understand how to use the noun phrase; definite article and indefinite article, especially for uncountable and countable nouns.

b) Omission

Omission in the noun phrases (21) are omission in using count nouns and mass nouns: examples R15 K4 *a $\sqrt{\emptyset}$ steak, R1K2 * \emptyset soup $\sqrt{\text{the soup}}$, R2 P6 * \emptyset knife $\sqrt{\text{a knife}}$, R2 K3 * \emptyset spoon $\sqrt{\text{a spoon}}$.

Omission in the verb phrases (8) are omission in using to be and prepositions, examples in R7 K5 *went away \emptyset the restaurant $\sqrt{\text{went way from the restaurant}}$, R9 K1 * \emptyset $\sqrt{\text{are at the restaurant}}$, R7 K5 * \emptyset confused $\sqrt{\text{was confused}}$, R8 K3 * \emptyset also impossible $\sqrt{\text{is also impossible}}$, R9 K1 * \emptyset at the restaurant $\sqrt{\text{are at the restaurant}}$

Omission in clauses (8) are when the respondents do not put the subjects, examples in R16 K2 * \emptyset said, *What the restaurant* $\sqrt{\text{He says "What the restaurant it is}}$, R16 K1 *George \emptyset surprised $\sqrt{\text{George and wife were surprised}}$, R18 K1 * \emptyset who eat $\sqrt{\text{are eating}}$, R18 K2 *the husband \emptyset name $\sqrt{\text{the husband's name}}$, R2 K3 * \emptyset angry $\sqrt{\text{He was angry}}$, R16K1 * \emptyset choose to eat steak $\sqrt{\text{he chooses to eat steak}}$.

c) Misordering

The respondents made errors because it were influenced by their native language (first language) especially in tenses, examples in R7 K2 *to bring away the soup $\sqrt{\text{to bring the soup away}}$. R3 K4 *Then, he called the waiter again to take away the soup $\sqrt{\text{Then, he called the waiter again to take the soup away}}$.

Errors in clauses, examples in R1 K5 *calls to bring him the bill $\sqrt{\text{call him to bring the bill}}$, R2 K9 *where is to find a pen $\sqrt{\text{where to find a pen was}}$, R14 K4 * but he forgets to bring the pen, his wife forget the same $\sqrt{\text{not only him forget to bring a pen but also his wife.}}$

d) Addition

Addition in the noun phrase is in article and *definite article* examples in R6 K1 *the soup $\sqrt{\text{soup}}$, R13 K1 *their soup $\sqrt{\text{soup}}$, R13 K3 *the steak $\sqrt{\text{steak}}$, .and also errors in using to infinitive, examples in R19 K3 *didn't to change $\sqrt{\text{didn't change}}$.

2) The causes of errors

From the study it can be found that the *most frequent cause of error is interlingual. Most of errors the students did are in verb phrases (59,74 %) and noun phrases.(23,40). These errors will influence in the development of language equation target in communication. It can be seen from the following explanation;*

a) Verb phrase

Example R1 K2 *serves √is served, R1 K3 *bring the spoon √brings him a spoon, R2 K3 *realize √realized, R2 K12 *hasn't got √hadn't got, R3 K3 *is cold √was cold R4 K5 *want √wants to pay, R5 K2 don't √doesn't want to pay, R6 K5 *call waiter √calls the waiter, R6 K6 *bring the bill √brings the bill.

b) Noun phrase

Example; R11 k2 *a √Ø steak, R15 K1 *a √Ø soup, R15 K4 *a √Ø steak, R8 K3 *the √a knife.

c) Prepositional phrase

Example; R4 k3 *in √on the table.

d) Clause

Example R16 K2 *Ø said, What the restaurant √He says "What the restaurant it is, R16 K1 *George Ø surprised √George and wife were surprised, R18 K1 * Ø eat √are eating, R18 K2 *the husband Ø name √the husband's name, R2 K3 * Ø angry √He was angry.

3) The effects of errors

The most frequent errors are local errors, they usually only affect in a single element of a sentence, do not prevent a message from being heard; the context of sentence will support meaning. Local errors usually need not be corrected since the message is clear and correction might interrupt a learner in the flow of productive communication. Below it can be seen the result of the research.

a) Verb phrase , example R4 K2 *called √calls the waiter, R17 K9 *don't √doesn't have, R6 K3 *asked √is asked by his wife.

The combination between verb phrase and preposition, example R8 after eat √after eating, without pay √without paying, R8 *for check √for checking, and errors in using to infinitive, example in R13 K4 *to brought √to bring

b) Noun phrase, example in R11 k2 *a √Ø steak, R15 K1 *a √Ø soup, R15 K4 *a steak √Ø steak, R8 K3 *the √a knife.

c) Prepositional phrase. example in R4 k3 *in √on the table.

d) Clause, example in R17 K7 he *call Ø waiter √calls the waiter, R17 K5 *George was his name called by Mrs. Jhonson √Mrs. Jhonson called him George.

5. Conclusion

From the research above, the most frequent causes of errors in level of syntax are misselection in verb phrase (58,2 %) and omission in noun phrase (55,3 %); the most frequent causes of errors are intralingual errors in verb

phrase (59,7 %); the most frequent effects of errors are local errors in verb phrase (55,3 %). So, the impact of syntactical errors in listening towards academic writing is errors in writing sentences (system, vocabulary, all the pieces of language and how the pieces fit together) even though the readers still understand the meaning of the texts that the students wrote. It relates to the competence and performance of their language.

It is hoped that lecturers not only should correct the students' grammatical errors in the class but also drill them in pronouncing the sentences well. By drilling the sentences to the students in the class will impact to their grammatical correct. In the class, lecturer or teacher as corrector and motivator can help them to discuss the errors. If the students have begun to acquire parts of the new system, more and more intralingual transfer-generalization within the target language is manifested. Students can learn from their errors and it is hoped they do not make the errors any more.

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