

AN ANALYSIS OF SYNTAX ERRORS IN DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS

Analisis Kesalahan Sintaksis pada Esai Deskriptif

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis kesalahan sintaks. Objek penelitian ini adalah esai deskriptif mahasiswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris angkatan 2019 yang dibuat pada semester kedua. Tujuan penulis dalam penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis adanya kesalahan sintaksis dan jenis kesalahan dalam menulis esai deskriptif. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian pada bagian temuan dan diskusi menyatakan bahwa esai deskriptif siswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris angkatan 2019 menyatakan bahwa terdapat sejumlah kesalahan sintaksis. Di bagian temuan, penulis menemukan tiga puluh contoh kesalahan sintaksis dalam empat esai deskriptif siswa. Dari tiga puluh contoh, penulis menemukan letak kesalahan dalam struktur frasa, klausa, dan kalimat. Dan dari tiga bidang kesalahan sintaksis, lima jenis kesalahan sintaksis ditemukan oleh siswa, kesalahan dalam artikel, kesepakatan subjek dan kata kerja, tense, kata depan, pertanyaan Wh, dan kata hubung. Kesalahan sintaksis yang paling banyak adalah kesalahan struktur frasa dalam artikel dan yang terkecil adalah kesalahan klausa pada pertanyaan 'Wh' dan kata hubung. Banyak kesalahan kalimat dalam penghilangan karena salah karena tidak ada kata kerja dalam klausa. Setiap klausa membutuhkan subjek dan kata kerja. Dalam beberapa kasus, kata kerja terbaik untuk digunakan adalah *is or was* (atau bentuk lain dari kata kerja *to be*).

Kata Kunci: analisis kesalahan, kesalahan sintaksis, esai deskriptif.

Abstract: This research was conducted to analyze the syntax error. The object of this research is a descriptive essay for English education students batch 2019 which was made during the second semester. The researcher's aim in this study is to analyze the existence of syntax errors and the types of errors in writing descriptive essays. In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative descriptive method. The researcher found thirty examples of syntax error in four students descriptive essays. From thirty example, the researcher finds the errors were in the structure of

phrases, clauses, and sentences. And from the three error syntax areas, five types of syntax errors were found by students, there are errors in articles, subject and verb agreement, tense, prepositions, Wh questions, and conjunctions. The most syntax errors is phrase structure errors in articles and the smallest is clause errors in 'Wh' question and conjunction. Many sentence errors in omission because there is no verb in the clause. Each clause needs a subject and a verb. In some cases, the best verb to use is a simple is or was (or some other form of the verb to be).

Keywords: error analysis, syntax error, descriptive essay.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity that someone does when they are going to express their ideas or thoughts through a series of words. Writing can be done on paper or through electronic devices such as mobile phones, computers, tablets, etc. There are two kinds of writing, namely writing fiction and non-fiction, or commonly called writing scientific works. Writing is also one of the four skills in English. However, a person's writing skills are not the same from one individual to another. Moreover, the writing that we will discuss this time is writing on scientific works, namely descriptive essays using English. In this study, the researcher aims to analyze syntactic errors in descriptive essays.

Writing is one of the most important exercises related to language learning and a very effective way to cultivate vocabulary. Another benefit is improving the ability to process grammar, especially in editing writing (Kennedy, 2018).

Learning to write in an EFL context requires a deeper understanding of linguistic modalities such as grammar and syntax. The ability to understand syntax and grammar in the context of the EFL classroom can be realized by EFL students who study these two subjects separately. In other words, learning syntax and grammar should come first. Writing in English is more difficult than reading in English. All of these abilities, as they are required in writing skills, require students to understand and acknowledge that mastering writing skills in EFL English takes time and requires a high level of motivation from the students (Sukandi & Syafar, 2018).

Writing scientific papers using English is not easy, many things must be considered such as grammar rules, sentence patterns, syntax, etc. It does not rule out the

possibility of errors in writing descriptive essays such as syntax errors. Syntax errors are errors in the use of language, common syntactic errors are incomplete sentence structure, subject verb agreement errors, improper use of conjunctions, prepositions, articles, etc (Reski, 2021).

The syntactic arrangement of language deals with the rules that followed while grammatical arrangements of words in the sentence (Batool & Abdul Hameed, 2018). Therefore, it is important to examine syntactic errors in writing. From the syntactic error analysis process, we can find out whether the writing results are by the existing grammar and syntax rules.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Relevant Literature

In a previous study entitled ‘Evaluation of Second Language Learners’ Syntactic Errors in ESL Writing’ by Talosa & Maguddayo the conclusion says the learners were found to be generally less exposed to ESL writing. More so, the syntactic errors committed by the Second Language learners in ESL writing are significantly related to their year level and writing exposure. These findings underscore the importance of writing activities to bilingual learners at a Higher Education Institution employing English as a medium of Instruction and as a second language (Talosa & Maguddayao, 2018).

The findings show that extrovert EFL learners made more errors than introvert EFL learners because the number of syntactic errors made by extrovert EFL learners was twice that of introvert EFL learners. Even though there was a significant difference between extroversion and introversion in the writing task, both have an equal chance to improve their ability in learning foreign language, particularly in writing skill; however, extrovert EFL learners must be given extra attention on syntax because they tended to be more careless and less correct in constructing the phrases in the writing task (Zainuddin, 2016).

The Error Analysis Method is an effective method for tracing and identifying students' errors, particularly errors in the use of the simple present tense and the simple past tense. The method is very methodically laid out to allow the researcher to reach a conclusion based on the essays written by the students. According to the study's findings, errors caused by misinformation due to regularizations are the most frequently made by students. According to the data, nearly 96 percent of students made such errors when using the simple present tense, and 81 percent made such errors when using the simple past tense. Students continue to struggle with good grammar, particularly in terms of subject-verb agreement, tenses, vocabulary, and parts of speech. Some factors known to contribute to student errors include: the influence of mother tongue, a lack of knowledge and competence in English grammar, the influence of "loan words," the inherent difficulties of learning English, overgeneralization, and a lack of exposure to the English language (Abdullah, 2013).

Syntax Error

Syntax errors are errors in the use of language, common syntactic errors are incomplete sentence structure, subject verb agreement errors, improper use of conjunctions, prepositions, articles, etc (Reski, 2021). These are errors that affect texts larger than the word, namely phrase, clause, sentence and ultimately paragraphs (James, 2013).

1. Phrase structure errors

There were as many different phrase types as there were different lexical word types: Noun Phrases (NP), Verb Phrases (VP), Adjective Phrases (AJP), Adverb Phrases (AvP) and Preposition Phrases (PP). This ought to yield five syntactic classes of error, but there are problems. First, the fact that these five phrase types are not discrete entities, since one finds NPs inside PPs and these

inside NPs.

An example is provided by examining a few phrasal errors.:

- (He is) *a cleverest boy in the class. Misselection of the article at position m1 in NP. Note that m2 cleverest, Head boy, and Q in the class are unproblematic.
- (He) *no can swim. A double error. Misselection and misordering of negator in VP. Not is an allomorph of no that belongs at m2 position, not m1: can *notJnot swim.
- That *fat big fish (is the mama fish). An error of misordering m2 and m3 in the AjP inside the NP.

2. Clause errors

These are the ways in which well-formed phrases operate in clauses. While phrase errors involve violations in the internal (or 'textual') relationships between parts of phrases, clause errors involve entire phrases entering the structure of clauses. Once again, deviance will emerge where any of five conditions exists.:

- a) The [phrase] in question is superfluous: He shaved himself { *the beard}; New articles were invented, like 'chiclets' which nobody calls { *THEM] anything else.
- b) It is omitted: Give * {NP] to the dog.
- c) It is misordered: Watson sent [to him] the letter; In 1820 [were] many villages near Berlin (ZydatiB, 1974).
- d) It is misselected: He seems * {crying tJto cry}.
- e) It is a blend or hybrid: *You would be most likely get (first prize) which is an amalgam of -'./ You would be likely to get and -'./ You would most likely get.

3. Sentence errors

These entail the selection and grouping of clauses into larger units. Whole

clauses can be combined, as in the sentence below from a PhD student's essay: Lightfoot for example argues that it is only in terms of a hierarchical analysis like (26) *can we account for the ungrammaticality of the construction in (25).

The two candidate complement clauses that have become one are plausibly (argues) that it is only . . . that we can . . . and that only . . . can we. Other types of sentence errors are what Shaughnessy (1977: 55) refers to as consolidation errors, which include the two subtypes of coordination and subordination errors. Coordination's golden rule is that only syntactic equals can be joined, and attempts to join unequals result in 'broken coordination.'

4. Inter sentence errors

The five types of cohesive links that operate at the upper reaches of text structure are: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. It is important to note that the use of cohesive markers, whether by the speaker-researcher when composing text or by the reader-listener when understanding it, is not required. Their use is optional, and sometimes even undesirable. This is true when the logical relationships between sentences in a text are not obscure in and of themselves, or when the reader can make bridging inferences (James, 2013) in Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Using explicit cohesion markers will occasionally be a courtesy to the readers, reducing their uncertainty and, in many cases, their processing effort. At times, depending on who the readers are, they may appear patronizing, which is taken as a sign that the researcher or speaker does not trust them to see the logical relationships without all of this unnecessary signposting. Since their use is optional, discussing errors of omission of such markers would be contradictory: omission may be a case of discourtesy to the reader, but it is hardly a case of text error.

Descriptive Essay

The descriptive essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to describe an object, person, place, experience, emotion, situation, etc (David, 2012). This is the structure of descriptive essay:

1. Introduction

- The hook introduces the object or event of description
- The middle sentences provide the background
- The thesis statement tells why the object or event of description is important to the researcher.

2. Body paragraphs

- Most of the description is in the body paragraphs.
- Adjectives and adverbs make the experience more vivid.
- The scene is often described with prepositions and prepositional phrases that specify location or position in space.
- Comparisons, such as similes, can make the writing more descriptive, familiar, and expressive.

3. Conclusion

The conclusion gives the researcher's final opinion about the description.

RESEARCH METHOD

The data for the study was obtained by collecting the descriptive essay writing assignment of three students from English Department class 2019 during the second semester. All of them have the same mother tongue, namely Indonesian language. The specific writing task is a descriptive essay written by each student on a descriptive topic of their choice. They described a place, person, pet, etc in their descriptive essay

In this study, the researcher analyzed the data by using descriptive qualitative

method. The whole data in this research will be described in a descriptive way from students' essay writing Products.

- 1) The researcher asked students to send a descriptive essays.
- 2) The researcher collects four descriptive essays writing from the students.
- 3) The researcher analyzing the syntax errors in descriptive essays.
- 4) The researcher make conclusions through the syntax analysis table of errors.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher found some syntax errors in student descriptive essays. Among them are syntax errors in the phrase and clause area the following table is about syntax errors in descriptive essays. There are five types of syntax errors, the five types of errors are:

Article

In English, there are definite nouns that are usually preceded by 'the' (for example, the student, the tables) and indefinite nouns (i.e. a student, tables) (Hafiz et al., 2018). In sentence number 1 untill 11 are about types of error in articles. For example 'My brother is a famous person at the his university' show that the sentence doesn't need article 'the' before 'his'. Articles are also determiners that modify a noun. A, an, and the are not used to modify pronouns or possessive names. 'He has a nice lips' The indefinite article a may not be required with the plural noun lips in this sentence. An indefinite article (a or an) modifies a noun to indicate one singular thing. It does not modify a plural noun.

Table 1. Article

Syntax error	Correction	Types of error
1. My brother is a famous person at the his university.	My brother is a famous person at his university.	Article

2. He has a nice lips	He has nice lips/He has a nice lip	Article
3. My brother is also famous person	My brother is also a famous person	Article
4. My brother also kind person	My brother is also a kind person	Article
5. She support me and give me solution	She support me and give me a solution	Article
6. Khusnul is pretty girl	Khusnul is a pretty girl	Article
7. Nur has beautiful smile	Nur has a beautiful smile	Article
8. Nur is diligent girl	Nur is a diligent girl	Article
9. She is the smart mathematics girl	She is a smart mathematics girl	Article
10. I'm proud to have bestfriend like Nur	I'm proud to have a bestfriend like Nur	Article
11. She has a inner beauty	She has an inner beauty	Article

Agreement Subject and Verb

Learners' mistakes in identifying the subject, which resulted in learners failing to produce the correct form of the verb. It means that the students made a mistake when forming the agreement between subject and verb (Khoirunisa et al., 2021). For example "Nur live with her father". The plural verb live doesn't appear to agree with the singular subject.

Table 2. Agreement Subject

Syntax error	Correction	Types of error
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12. His body is also has well-built and tall	His body also has well-built and tall	Agreement subject and verb
13. He also smart	He is also smart	Agreement subject and verb
14. Nur live with her father	Nur lives with her father	Agreement subject and verb
15. She always smile in front of me	She always smiles in front of me	Agreement subject and verb
16. Nur always help me	Nur always helps me	Agreement subject and verb
17. She really care about my conditions	She cares about my condition	Agreement subject and verb

Tense

Tense is the form a verb takes to indicate the time it occurred. The degree of completeness of an action or state is referred to as its aspect. When discussing aspects, it can be stated that the main concern is whether the action is complete, partial, ongoing, or yet to occur (Hafiz et al., 2018). For example “Nur have small lips”. The verb have does not seem to agree with the subject. A singular subject requires a singular verb, and a plural subject requires a plural verb.

Table 3. Tense

Syntax error	Correction	Types of error
18. She have fair skin	She has fair skin	Tense
19. Nur have small lips	Nur has small lips	Tense
20. When she smile	When she smiled	Tense

21. when she reading when she reads Quran is	Tense
Quran is good sounds	good sounds
22. I also speechless	I'm also speechless Tense

Preposition

Prepositions are short words (on, in, to) that usually stand in front of nouns (sometimes also in front of gerund verbs). In sentence number ‘We are friend since in primary school’ preposition use may be Incorrect here. Prepositions are function words that indicate how a noun or noun phrase relates to the rest of the sentence. Therefore, this sentence is noun phrase error in addition.

Table 4. Preposition

Syntax error	Correction	Types of error
23. We are friend since in primary school.	We are friend since primary school	Preposition
24. She graduated in SMPN 1 Prambon	She graduated from SMPN 1 Prambon	Preposition
25. if listen her voice	if listen to her voice	Preposition
26. I need her help in mathematics assignments	I need her help with mathematics assignments	Preposition

Why Question and Conjunction

Table 5. Why Question and Conjunction

Syntax error	Correction	Types of error
27. Many girls who ask for me his number	Many girls ask for me his number	“Wh” question

28. in the public **or** in the public **and** religious Conjunction
religious fields fields

In sentence number 29, 'Many girls who ask for me his number' there is a pronoun problem here. A pronoun is a word that is used as a substitute for another noun or noun phrase. They come in a few different forms depending on what they refer to and how they're used in a sentence. It is an embedded clause in 'Wh question. Therefore, this sentence is clause error

In sentence number 30, in the public or religious fields these are not the same two things. Conjunctions are words like and, but, because, and when. They connect other words and phrases and show relationships between them. Public dan religious are different things, so can't use 'or' conjunctions but should use 'and' conjunctions. Therefore, this is sentence error.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researchers found syntax errors made by students in descriptive essay. There are three location found syntax errors, namely phrase structure errors, clause errors, and sentence errors. Moreover, five types of syntax errors in this essay descriptive are errors in articles, agreement subject and verb, tenses, preposition, Wh question and conjunction. The most syntax error made by English Education Students class 2019 is phrase structure errors in articles while the least syntax error is clause errors in 'Wh' question and conjunction. The researcher suggests that English teachers pay more attention to technique of teaching English as a second language or foreign language with a more interesting method. So that in the future it can minimize errors in English, especially in students' writing skills.

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