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COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON STUDENTS' THESIS PROPOSALS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to describe the grammatical errors and to investigate the most common grammatical errors made by English Study Program students of Jambi University in thesis proposals. This research was designed as a non-experimental quantitative method with descriptive approach. The sample of this research was thesis proposals of 2009 English Study Program students. The data were collected through thesis proposal of 15 students. The finding showed that the common grammatical errors on students' thesis writing were Subject-Verb Agreement, Simple Present Tense, Passive Voice, and Punctuations. Then, the most common grammatical errors on students' thesis writing were about Punctuation. The result showed that from 15 participants, all of them made errors because they forgot to put comma before "and", "because", and "but". Based on that, it is suggested that the students have to find some ways to learn Punctuation more. Then, for the teachers and lecturers, they should give more attention in teaching the students, especially in teaching Grammar. Whereas, for the next researchers who are going to conduct a research with the same topic, they should use larger participants or to observe why Punctuation becomes the most common grammatical errors made by the participants.

Key Words: grammatical, error

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is very important for English Study Program students for writing journal, thesis proposal, and thesis. Although they have learnt Grammar I, II, III, and IV, they still make some grammatical errors in writing journal, thesis proposal, and thesis. The grammatical errors may be made because English Grammar has many parts, such as tenses, phrases, clauses, parts of speech, etc. Each part has its own rules, which has to be used to build a good communication in English, in written or spoken. Many students said that, the different rules of each grammar contents were the reasons of grammatical errors that they made in thesis writing. It happened because the students were confused and found difficulties to understand and comprehend how to use the grammar contents appropriately.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "error" in this study refers to the use of a language with incorrect way. The incorrect way here is a deviation from the grammar rules of the language. Ellis (1997) said that errors reflect gap in learners' knowledge. The errors may occur because the learners do not know what is correct, while mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance. The errors occur because in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. There are three significances of learners' errors analysis. First, it provides the teachers with information about how much the learners had learnt. Second, it shows evidence how language was learnt. Third, it helps the learners to learn when they correct the mistakes that they have made by themselves. Error analysis is one of the ways to investigate the learners' errors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are common grammatical errors made by English Study Program students of Jambi University in thesis proposals?
2. What is the most common grammatical error made by English Study Program students of Jambi University in thesis proposals?

OBJECT AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

This research was conducted on January 2014. The researcher took the thesis proposals of some 2009 English Study Program students as the object of this research. There were some errors that have been found. The researcher took a consideration for taking the 2009 students' thesis proposals because the researcher was easier to get and collect the data. The researcher took 15 students' thesis proposals because only 15 thesis proposals were available. In addition, the researcher used total sampling procedure in conducting the research. The researcher took all the fifteen students' thesis proposals which were available to be investigated.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher employed error analysis research with qualitative approach through analyzing students' thesis proposals. According to Corder as quoted by Ellis (1997), there are some steps in typical English analysis research in collecting samples of learner language: identifying the errors, describing the errors and explaining the errors. In this research, the researcher took the data from students' thesis proposals.

FINDINGS

There are five (5) categories defined in this research as the common grammatical errors on students' thesis proposals. They are Subject Verb Agreement (S.V.A), Verbs (V), Simple Present Tense (S.P.T), Passive Voice (P.V), and Punctuations (P). After the identification of the errors, the researcher classified the common grammatical error made by students on their thesis writing.

From the 15 students' thesis proposals, the researcher found that some common grammatical errors made by the students. The first is participant A, A made 5 errors in Simple Present Tense and 6 errors in Punctuations. B made 2 errors in Passive Voice and 3 errors in Punctuations. C made 2 errors in Punctuations. D made 3 errors in Subject-Verb Agreement, 2 errors in Simple Present Tense, and 11 errors in Punctuations. Participant E made 3 errors in Simple Present Tense and 6 errors in Punctuations.

Then, F made 2 errors in Subject-Verb Agreement, 3 errors in Simple Present Tense, and 3 errors in Punctuations. Participant G made 3 errors in Subject Verb Agreement, 14 errors in Simple Present Tense, 6 errors in Passive Voice, and 8 errors in Punctuations. Next participant was participant H. H made 3 errors in Subject Verb Agreement, 3 errors in Simple Present Tense, and 5 errors in Punctuations. Next participant, I made 2 errors in Simple Present Tense and 6 errors in Punctuations.

Participant J made 3 errors in Subject Verb Agreement, 3 errors in Simple Present Tense, 7 errors in Passive Voice, and 7 errors in Punctuations. K made 2 errors in Simple Present Tense and 6 errors in Punctuations. For the last four students, there are L, M, N, and O. L made 5 errors in Punctuations. M made 5 errors in Punctuations, while N made 3 errors in using Subject Verb Agreement, 4 errors in Simple Present Tense, 4 errors in Passive Voice, and 5 errors in Punctuations. Whereas, last participant, O, made 5 errors in Punctuations.

The researcher counted the total amount of grammatical errors that made by the students in thesis writing. The number was 158 grammatical errors totally; 17 errors of Subject Verb Agreement, 38 errors of Simple Present Tense, 19 errors of Passive Voice, and 83 errors of Punctuations.

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