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Error Analysis in Composition Written by Nursing Department Students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

ABSTRACT

There is more freedom nowadays for workers to move across border. One of the promising opportunities is to become an overseas nurse. However, to become an overseas nurse, one needs a certain level of language skills; thus, it is important to embed English, as the world's lingua franca, in the nursing science course. When the students of the Nursing Department master the English, they will be able to engage in a communication with others within the international scope. It is very important to prepare them with standard, error-free English to prepare them entering the global market. This research tries to figure out the students' language proficiency by viewing their grammatical errors especially in the S-V agreement. The data were taken from the composition written by Nursing Department students, which were then analyzed using the concordance program, namely SCP 4.05. Using the seven pronouns (I, we, you, they, he, she, it) as the key words, the sentence contexts were examined. Then, the sentences that contain errors were taken and categorized. From this research, there are 5 kinds of students' problems reflected in the errors. They are: 1) sentence without verb, 2) errors in the use of be and stem, 3) inflectional -s for the third singular person, 4) modals, and 5) auxiliary verb.

Keywords: error analysis, written composition, students

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology and transportation along with the global policies, such as Asean Economic Community (AEC) or European Union, makes it possible for a person to work in another country easily. Consequently, there is a need for lingua franca because of the mingling of different person with different nationalities needs one language to communicate to each other to conduct the business (www.ncsbn.org). One of the most widely known and used language is English. Therefore learning English becomes very important nowadays, and at the same times becomes the rich source to do a research on it. The phenomenon of language produce by the learners already attract attention since

many time ago and “has long tradition” (Sridhar in Ellis, 1985, p.51). The purpose of error analysis has moved from merely checking the errors and linguistics classification to more pedagogic one, to provide information on the teaching materials and remedy (Ellis, 1985). Fauziati (2011) support Ellis view in her writing that error analysis function is broadened to view the learning process by analyzing the language produced by the learners. One way to understand English proficiency is by looking at the errors made by the learners because they are part of the learning. According to Fauziati (2011, p.26), some experts believe that

Current literatures view errors not just as deviations but rather as a source for studying the process/ strategies used by the learner in learning the TL. They are evidence about the nature of the process and of the rules used by the learner at a certain stage in learning course. Therefore, if we want to study the learners' IL system, we should find clues to the systems by analyzing the errors they make.

The term TL here is the target language; it is the language that is learned by the learner. IL is the interlanguage or the language produce by the learner which is not yet the similar to the target language and it has its own characteristics (Richard and Schmidt, 2002).

Hence, it is very interesting to analyze the errors made by the students to understand their competence in using the language. Analyzing the written text is easier because it is the tangible evidence that can be studied over and over. Therefore, the writer chooses to study the composition made by the Nursing Department Students of UMY. Based on the writer's experiences in teaching them, they still had difficulties in accom-

plishing the minimum requirement of writing a sentence, such as subject-verb agreement. Some examples of the sentences are as follow:

She afraid with her boy friend.

They are become piece worker.

She agree to do it.

They not yet married.

Sentence may have correlation in many different ways called “sentences relatedness” (Fromkin, Blair, & Collins, 2000, p. 129) and the relationship between subject and verb in a sentence is called agreement or “subject-verb (S-V) agreement” (Fromkin, et al, 2000, p. 136). S-V agreement is a basic ability to make an intelligible sentence. The students' acquisition on the rules of this S-V agreement can be used as an indication of the student language competency on the understanding of the basic sentence. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 184) state that “errors have been studied to discover the process learners make use of in learning and using a language”. This research will figure out the student's language ability viewed from the ability to perform correct S-V agreement in their sentences. The aim of doing the error analysis is to provide information on the difficulties students have in learning English to help teachers or institution to design program (Richards & Schimdt, 2002).

To find out the errors in the S-V agreement, the subject pronoun (I, we, you, they, he, she, it) in the students' compositions were used as the key words in the concordance program to limit the sentences. The focus of the analysis was in the agreement between the subject and verb in those selected sentences. The results of the analysis can be used to investigate the pattern of

S-V agreement and the problems commonly faced by the students in composing a good and eligible sentence. Thus the research question will be: (a) Do the sentences used by the students in their composition meet the requirement of the S-V agreement? And (b) what kind of errors in the subject-verb agreement that the sentences commonly have?

LITERATURE REVIEW ERROR ANALYSIS

To define errors in language learning, one should also understand interlanguage because both are interrelated. Errors are defined as the norm deviation or faulty in using the target language from the result of “incomplete learning” (Ellis, 2003, p. 260; Richards & Schimdt, 2002). When the errors occur in the language as the learners produce the target language, the specific language is made by them. This kind of language produce by the learners is called interlanguage. Brown in Hourani (2008) defines interlanguage as the language produced by the learners which is different from their mother tongue and the target language. Mitchell and Myles (2004, p. 137) support the argument by stating that

...interlanguage...involved a major shift away from viewing learner language as a defective version of the target language, or as a mixture of first and second language...viewing it as an organic system with its own internal structure.

Thus, interlanguage is the language produced by the language learner that has not been complete yet and contain errors. The language is also different from both the native language and the target language. Below are the examples of the interlanguage:

- 1) *My name is Gilang Cikal Romadhan, I am school at SMA 7 Jakarta.
 - 2) *I love biology but I love not subject language French.
 - 3) *I have a sister, she age 19 years old and she study at University Esa Unggul.
 - 4) *I like sport because with sport we can healthy and strongly.
- (Fauziati, 2011, p. 26)

Error analysis is a methodology or study to investigate learners’ errors when they learn a target language. The errors made by the learners in their language production can be the result of their learning process or the product of the language learning instructions made by the teachers. Therefore, the error analysis can be used to figure out the learner’s learning process and portrait the language competence mastered by the learners. The language mastery can be treated as the input to emphasize on how to teach learners, and as a basis to prepare the material. Indeed, the error analysis has the pedagogical application or implication in language teaching (Corder in Ellis, 2003).

To study the errors, it is important to know the differences between errors and mistakes as well as the classification of errors. Errors are the result of the imperfect learning where the learners do not master the language completely yet. Meanwhile, mistakes lay on the inability to perform the language correctly not because they lack of competence. Mistakes occur because the factors that influence the performance, e.g. slip of the tongue, carelessness, or fatigue (Richards & Schimdt, 2002). The classification of errors will be explained in the next paragraph.

TABLE I: A SURFACE STRATEGY TAXONOMY OF ERRORS

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Omission	The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance.	She sleeping
Addition	The presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances.	We didn't went there
Misinformation	The use of wrong form of the morpheme or structure	The dog ated the chicken
Misorderings	The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance	What daddy is doing?

Source: Dulay et al in Ellis, 2003, p.56)

The classification of errors fall into “vocabulary (lexical errors), pronunciation (phonological errors), grammar (syntactic errors), misunderstanding of a speaker’s intention or meaning (interpretive errors), production of the wrong communicative effect, e.g. through the faulty use of a speech act or one of the rules of speaking (pragmatic errors)” (Richards & Schimdt, 2002, p. 184). Another category is called “a surface strategy taxonomy of errors” (Dulay et al in Ellis, 2003, p.56).

The surface strategy taxonomy of errors is one way to describe errors “that focus only on observable, surface features of errors, as a basis for subsequent explanation” (Ellis, 2003, p. 54). The term surface structure comes from transformational grammar “to denote the actual syntactic realization in a language of an utterance” (Poole, 1999, p.195). Chomsky defines the surface structure as the structure which is obvious in the surface to contrast it with the deep or abstract structure (Aitchison, 2003). Therefore the surface strategy taxonomy of errors tries to describe the errors based on the linguistics categories as mentioned in table above (Ellis, 2003).

Besides the categories, there are some steps or

procedures in conducting the error analysis. Corder in Ellis (2003) and Gass and Selinker (2001) propose almost the same steps. There are similarities of both steps from step one to three and there are variation starting from steps four and five. The first step is the determining the data or what is so called language corpus that can be written or oral data along with its size. The second is the error identification, which may refer to the category or type of errors that is chosen, such as grammar (syntactic errors) or vocabulary (lexical errors). The third is to classify the errors based on the grammatical description, e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb form, etc. For steps four and five, Gass and Selinker (2001) use analysis of source and remediation while Corder in Ellis (2003) promotes explanation of errors and evaluation of errors. For this research, the writer took step four belong to Corder in Ellis (2003) namely explanation of errors as the last step because the aim if this research is to explain the errors made by the Nursing Students.

FORM VERSUS MEANING

It is obvious that the form of language determine the meaning. Syntax rules are needed to

construct phrases and sentences out of morphemes as well as words, and the sequences of part of speech in a sentence must be meaningful and make sense. Once the requirement of putting the part of speech in the right order is obtained, the sentence is well formed or grammatically correct (Fromkin et.al, 2000). Hogue (2003) argues that a sentence can also be defined as a group of words that has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. By this, it means that if grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer. It is what Hogue (2003) says as having a complete thought. In addition, Harmer (2001) states that the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language. Through the sentences, the meaning is conveyed or the communication takes place. Therefore, correct grammar is needed to produce an eligible sentence.

It can be summed up here that the form and the meaning are closely interrelated. The evidence of how form can affect the meaning can be seen from the active passive sentence making. The different position of subject and verb will influence the doer and the sentence meaning can be totally different. To perform a language or to put the language into the actual use, the system of language need to be acquired. By obtaining the grammatical or syntactic rules, the sentences produced will be in line with the language system; thus, the sentences will make sense and be understood. Ungrammatical sentence will lead to the disturbance of communication. As the result, the message is failed to be conveyed. It is in line with Ellis (2003, p. 707) who states that analyzing

learners' language should also concern with the "correctness" and "appropriateness" where the former involves "rules of usage" or grammar and the latter involves "rules of language use" or communicative message.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT OF S-V AGREEMENT.

This research tries to find out learners' problems in using S-V agreement as the minimum requirement, which shows the language ability of the users. However, if the learners have not yet been able to write correctly the minimum requirement, it means that teaching learning process should solve this problem first before moving on to more complex materials. This is in line with one of the functions of error analysis proposed by Richards and Schimdt (2002) to provide information on the problems the learners encounter during their learning language to determine the 'pedagogically relevant materials' (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 65)

In conducting an error analysis, it is very important to determine the identification and classification of errors whether it is grammatical or vocabulary errors and to classify the errors (Gass & Selinker, 2001). In this article, the correlation between subject and verb is used to classify the errors. Thus, it is important to know the different forms and types of verbs and any part that correlate with the verb such as auxiliary verb, inflectional -s, modals and stem.

To begin with, verbs can be classified into linking verb and action verb or transitive and intransitive. The component of the verb is the auxiliary verb and the stem. According to Shiach (1995) there are several points to avoid the errors

when using the verb. The first is that verbs have to agree with the subject of the sentence or the part of sentence. The form of verbs varies according to who or what is carrying out the action, expressing the feeling or 'being'. Next, the two main factors that affect the form of the verb are the person or subject whether it is the first, second, or the third person, and also the plurality, whether the person or subject is plural or singular. Hogue (2003) also states that verbs must agree with their subject in number (singular or plural) and person (I, we, you, they, and so on). A singular subject (one person or thing) has a singular verb. On the other hand, a plural subject (two or more people or subject) has a plural verb. Another aspect to be considered is the tenses of the sentence, whether it is in the past, present or future. A pronoun such as 'each, anyone, everybody, etc.' takes a singular verb. Collective noun as they mean a single group, usually take a singular verb.

RESEARCH METHOD

In line with the steps proposed by Corder in Ellis (2003) and Gass and Selinker (2001) that are presented in the previous section, below are the steps:

1. Determining the data or what is so called language corpus
2. Identifying the errors
3. Classifying the errors
4. Explaining the errors

First, the corpus data should be determined. The data were collected from nursing students' compositions consisting of 56 soft-files or compositions. The compositions were typed in the

computer. The compositions were the final written assignment and the students could choose some topics provided by the teachers. The assignments made by the students were submitted in the form of the soft copy as part of the marking. The writer did not tell the participants that their works would be used for research because the interest to do research rose when the writer read carefully the compositions and there was no time to meet the participants again to ask their permission to use their work.

The data then were entered in the concordance program, and the results showed that there were 1482 sentences with 22.853 words. This data then was shortlisted using the key words to make further analysis and to limit the investigation within the subject-verb agreement. The key words were the seven pronouns, namely I, we, you, they, he, she, and it. After each key word was sorted, then the sentences were identified using the grammatical features involving the subject-verb agreement, such as verb form, auxiliary verb, and modals. The next step was to classify the errors which resulted in the types of S-V agreement errors found in the composition written by Nursing Department students.

The writer used concordance software namely Simple Concordance Program (SCP) 4.05. Concordance program is software used to search word queries in the linguistic corpus (www.tuchemnitz.de). The corpus serves as the database, and the concordance program provides help to search and to sort words in the database. Since this research tries to find the subject-verb agreement focusing on the verb form, auxiliary verb and modals, the pronouns of I, we, you, they, he, she, and it were chosen as the key words

TABLE 2: SAMPLES OF SENTENCES WITHOUT VERBS

They sad if we sad	he the lord that
they happy	he the only child.
he healty an freesh	it less in nutrient composition
she/he still young than us,	I the activites that contribute often
she always angry and very blazed	and they time to use in the outside house
she afraid with her boy friend	they always health
It curious if there	also they still kids.
I sure that she is	she/he more adult thinking than us
we free for express	
we lazy to walk again	they permission to Aslan for
we similar other people to stop	if we often consumption fast food
if we happy When and	we consumption
you difficult to call him	they always attention their diets they
They difficult to get job	you often consumption of fast
you while together	
we beside our dear	
If they usually with it	
If they still at school,	
They for that small body to take limit	

to see the agreement between the subjects and the verbs. After the sentences were sorted based on the key words, then the sentences were analyzed based on the types of errors that commonly occur in them. The concordance program was able to shortlist the sentences using a certain keyword(s); but, the program cannot classify the sentence errors. The writer was the one who did the analysis to identify and classify the errors.

FINDINGS

After the corpus data were put in the SCP 4.05, they were shortlisted using the keywords consisting of six pronouns. The writer then identified and classified the findings based on the relation between the subject and verb. The findings showed some problems with subject-verb agreement that the writer noticed. The problems were divided into several categories: a) sentence with no verb, b) problems with modals which is

not followed by stem, c) problems with the auxiliary verbs, d) problems with the inflectional -s for the third singular person, and e) problems with be + stem or just S+V-ing without be.

SENTENCE WITHOUT VERB

They sad if we sad they happy he healty an freesh she/he still young than us, she always angry and very blazedshe afraid with her boy friend It curious if there I sure that she is we free for express we lazy to walk again we similar other people to stop if we happy When and you difficult to call him They difficult to get job you while togetherwe beside our dearIf they usually with it If they still at school,They for that small body to take limit he the lord that he the only child. it less in nutrient compositionI the activites that contribute often and they time to use in the outside housethey always health also they still kids. she/he more adult thinking than usthey

permission to Aslan for if we often consumption fast foodwe consumption they always attention their diets they you often consumption of fast

The table reveals that most participants had problems with the use of 'be' and its variations. After a subject, there should be 'be' form if it is followed by adjective, adverb, and noun. For example "She always angry", "We beside our dear", and "They still kids". They were also still confused about word formations since they used noun derivations for the verb. For example "they permission to Aslan", or "We often consumption fast food"

PROBLEMS WITH BE + STEM AND S+V-ING WITHOUT 'BE'

TABLE 3: SAMPLES OF SENTENCES WITH BE + STEM AND S+V-ING WITHOUT BE.

be + stem	s + v-ing without be
she was gave big knife.	it existing activity in it.
It's depends from	we falling in love
It's meaning this faction	we including of good peoples
it is make the	you and/your friends walking together
it is must fulfilled. Sometimes	What you ever of living in the
it is make we miss	What you ever of listening region
it is manage our destiny	explain to you what making pregnant
I'm agree with give mother's	Do you ever falling in love?/•
I'm read on the magazines	all af you ever falling in love
I'm apologize if	you are becoming a fatherwhen you
I'm continue study	You are becoming a rich man and you
I'm very agree the opinian	they willing to kill
we are dead	he usually according to what
we are know what is the meaning	
it is make we miss at situation in	
they are answer	
the finish they are problem	
they are become piece worker	

Unlike the previous issue, 'be' and its variations were used excessively here for stems do not need the form of 'be', for example "I'm continue study". However when the students did not use 'be', they wrote V-ing instead of just stem, for example "We including in good peoples". If the

sentences were intended to be in continuous tense, they lacked form 'be', e.g., "We falling in love".

PROBLEMS WITH THE INFLECTIONAL -S FOR THE THIRD SINGULAR PERSON

TABLE 4: SAMPLES OF SENTENCES WITH PROBLEMS WITH THE INFLECTIONAL -S FOR THE THIRD SINGULAR PERSON SUBJECTS.

he like,	she/he feel lonely
he talk	she agree to do it
he drop	she never feel
he love of god	She live in
he live nearthe	she/he feel lonely
He think,	she hope can back to the
He say that	
he live in	She seen arrogant
He give Lucy a hurt	I hopes, the government

The next problem found was the problem with the inflectional -s. Suppose that the sentences were in the simple present tense with the third singular person meaning that the sentences should use verbs with inflectional -s, such as "He like" or "she agree to do it". It was obvious that it was not because of carelessness or mistyped because it occurred quite frequently.

PROBLEMS WITH MODALS

Modals must be followed by stem and no preposition whatsoever. However, the data showed that most participants used 'to+stem' after modals, e.g., "We must to protect beauty". The other problem was that they used past verb after modals probably because it was intended to be past tense, but instead of changing the modal into past, they change the verb, for example "We can found many advantages". In addition, the students also had problems with modals followed

by adjective and noun. They also tended to use noun formation as verb, for example “So we can conclusion that...”

TABLE 5: SAMPLES OF SENTENCES WITH PROBLEMS WITH MODALS

we must to protect beauty	so we will able to do
we can to less our smoking so	We must able to hold
we must to start from	So, we could conclusion
we must to keep	they will awareness that
we must to increase	we must consumption of nutrient so
We must to close him	we can economizing expenditure
we will to vomit, dizzy	we must collaboration with the
they must to hold of hungry	
they must to be put to	we can quiet and relax
	we will quiet
free mustn't prevented by multistoried	we must always near our mine to God
you will got the beauty	they could pleasant
we must always triad	
we must lerned know how w	that we can of living in the countryside
e will scorned we will escaped	we will only dreaming about
We can spared from stress and looking	we must doing good
beautiful scenery	
we must lerned know how to	
we can found many advantages	

PROBLEMS WITH AUXILIARY VERB

Do you ever goes to mountain rangelf you ever goes you most don't you be afraid if Are you even heard about Genotipe Z Are you agree about news avian influenza Are you like freesh air?/ Would do you fell ? to you how is important become healthyHad you imagined a bad incident struck make we doesn't pleasant in thereMake we doesn't free to move, after that will they not worry sick because In love we not only find passionthat we not must see anything to we not struck they are not know negatives they not yet marriedbut they not think about they not want if they not want if their they haven't capabilityshe is not endure life in city

This section shows that the participants did not have adequate knowledge about how to make a negative and affirmative sentence. This part represents the students' problem in using the auxiliary verb. They were still confused about

using auxiliary, such as 'form be', do, does, and modal. The sample sentences are “Do you ever goes to mountain range?”, “Are you agree about...”, “we not must see anything” and “We doesn't pleasant in there”.

TABLE 6: SAMPLES OF SENTENCES WITH PROBLEMS WITH AUXILIARY VERB

Do you ever goes to mountain range	In love we not only find passion
If you ever goes you most	that we not must see anything
don't you be afraid if	to we not struck
Are you even heard about Genotipe Z	they are not know negatives
Are you agree about news avian influenza	they not yet married
Are you like freesh air?/	but they not think about
Would do you fell ?	they not want if
to you how is important become healthy	they not want if their
Had you imagined a bad incident struck	they haven't capability
	she is not endure life in city
make we doesn't pleasant in there	
Make we doesn't free to move, after that will	
they not worry sick because	

DISCUSSION

The results of the research show that the students' English was still very much influenced by their *Bahasa Indonesia*. In *Bahasa Indonesia*, a sentence can still be understood even though there is no verb in it, for example:

Dia mahasiswa yang baik. or *Dia adalah mahasiswa yang baik.*

Dia Tuhan yang Maha Pemurah. or *Dia adalah Tuhan yang Maha Pemurah.*

Both sentences above have the same meaning and are grammatically correct. However, when the principles in *Bahasa Indonesia* are put in English, the sentences become grammatically incorrect. The fact can be seen in category *a) sentence without verb*. Subjects in the example below are followed by adjectives without linking verb 'be'.

error which means “the use of elements from one language while speaking another” (Richarad in Ellis, 2003, p. 60). During the process of learning, if students, especially Nursing Department students, still have the native language influence surely that their language, especially the written one, will be hard to understand because it is unintelligible for the other. To overcome the problems, it is very important that there should be a paradigm shift from Bahasa Indonesia to English so that the students will be aware of the differences and later are able to use English system and syntactic rules when they use it.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, in this globalized era the mastery of foreign language especially English is very important to prepare the students to face the challenge in the workplace and to give them better bargaining position. One way to know the students' mastery is by analyzing the errors that they made during the learning. This information can be used as the basis to determine the learning materials suitable for them. The aim of this research is to know the students language competence by viewing the errors they made in their sentence viewed from the S-V agreement. There are 5 types of errors that the students made; first is sentence without verb, second is errors in the use of be and stem, third is inflectional -s for the third singular person, then modals and finally auxiliary verb.

This research is preliminary one. Many parts of speech still need to be analyzed. Researchers who want to conduct a similar research may analyze the other grammatical points as the basis to conduct the error analysis. As the influence of

Bahasa Indonesia is quite obvious here, there is also an open opportunity to study the influence of first language on the second or foreign language using this method.

It is likely that teachers or curriculum makers should adjust with the students' ability in English. It is important to know the level of students' English proficiency and the goals that students should reach so that teachers and institutions as the curriculum makers can decide the best intervention for the students. The teaching should be conducted from the easy level before moving on to more complex features. It is important to make sure that the students master the Basic English first so that the students will learn language that is in line with their competency and pace. When the teacher acknowledges the students' level, it seems that the teacher can give a higher language skills to promote the learning.

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