

AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON ACADEMIC ESSAYS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS OF STBA LIA YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

This is an analysis of grammatical errors written by students of STBA LIA Yogyakarta, academic year of 2011/2012. The aims were to find out the most common grammatical errors in the academic. The approach used was Corder's error analysis. The error analysis included identification, description, and explanation errors. The grammatical error types were categorized into errors of overgeneralization, transfer, and simplification by omission. The result indicated that the errors were mostly about simplification by omission (60 times), followed by overgeneralization (35 times), and transfers (7 times). Those errors can be attributed to interference of the mother tongue and students' learning strategies of false analogy, incomplete rule application, and overlooking co-occurrence.

Keywords: error analysis, grammatical error, overgeneralization

Introduction

Writing is the representation of language in a textual medium through the use of a set of sign or symbol (Wikipedia 2011). Writing is not just a basic skill taught at school. Writing is an integral part which people should learn more because writing is the basis of written communication.

Written communication is the ability to use written language in a precise and accessible way in order to clearly express oneself to the intended audience. It is a tool for people to express their ideas. People can share their ideas, feeling and imagination through writing.

Writing for a second language learner is challenging. It is difficult for a number of reasons. According to Norrish in Language Learners and Their Errors, writing is not easy. In some ways writing is more difficult than speaking (63). Writing is different from speaking. When we make a mistake while speaking, the hearer can interrupt, but in writing, we cannot do it. Heaton in Writing English Language Tests explains that the writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not

only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgment elements. Thus, writing needs a special skill (138).

In composing a good writing, according to Myles in "Second Language Writing and Research: The Writing Process and Error Analysis in Students Texts," there are some important aspects that we must notice which include grammar, organization, and structure. Grammar is important to master in order to make a well-structured writing. The correct use of grammar is important in writing because ungrammatical sentences will make misunderstanding. Besides grammar, organization is also important in writing. Good organization helps the reader to understand what the writing talks about. Without an effective organization, the writing becomes confusing and the main idea which the writer delivers can get lost. Every essay is written according to the basic structure which includes introduction, body, and conclusion. Writing with correct structure is important because the structure is the core of each paper that helps the writer to make a very well-founded written construct. The reader can easily understand what the writer is trying to express. From the explanation above, we can see that writing is complicated.

Because of the complexity of writing, the second language students made errors in their writing composition. Moreover, the students made error mostly in grammar. Errors in writing are mostly obvious when it comes to examinations. It is difficult to find students' writings which have less grammatical errors. For example, in sentence *If you will going to another country as a tourist but you do not know what the country language, you can use English*. In the sentence, the student wrongly used the future tense. The form of future tense is S + will + V1. The sentence should be *if you will go to another country as a tourist but you do not know the country's language, you can use English*. Therefore, making errors for a second language learner is natural. It shows the process of learning. Norrish in his book Language Learners and Their Errors stated that "error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong" (7). There are many aspects that can cause the learners of English as foreign language make errors. According to Sunardi Hasyim in his article "Concept of Error Analysis", aspects that make the learners produce errors are interference, overgeneralization, markers of transitional competence, strategies of communication and assimilation and teacher-induced error (42).

Errors in language learning have been the centre of attention. Littlewood in Foreign and Second Language Learning says that "errors are sign of learning failure and, as such, not to be willingly tolerated"



(22). So, errors must be learned in order to make less error in learning process both in writing and speaking.

Dealing with the phenomenon above, error analysis is one of the approach used to analyze errors. Error analysis is an approach influenced by behaviorism through which applied linguists sought to use the formal distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict error. Error analysis is a methodology that the linguist or teacher uses to know the error that the learners make in their writing or speaking.

Research on grammatical errors has been done by some previous researchers, both in speaking and writing. A previous study done by Effendi (2011) investigated the grammatical errors that occurred in students' spoken utterances found 987 grammatical errors. The finding showed that the highest number of errors in the students' spoken utterances was misinformation (582 times), followed by omission (250 times), addition (117 times) and misordering (17 times). In writing, Rahayu (2005) investigated the grammatical errors in paragraph writing written by the 4th semester students of STBA LIA Yogyakarta and the total of errors that the students made was 845 errors. In the research she analyzed the errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy. Her finding showed that the highest number of errors in the students' paragraph writing was misinformation (659 times) followed by omission (129 times), addition (51 times) and the last was misordering (13 times).

In this research, the writer wants to know the errors, especially the grammatical errors that the students of STBA LIA Yogyakarta made in their essays.

Method

Participants

The participants of this research were students of STBA LIA Yogyakarta who took Writing IV in 2011/2012. There were 21 students in a class. In Writing IV class they learned to write academic essays in English.

Data Collection

The data of the research are taken from the students' writings. The writings that the writer uses in this research are process essays and cause and effect essays. From the students' essays, the writer is going to analyze the kinds of grammatical errors that they produce in their writings. The writer follows the error analysis system proposed by Corder.



There are three steps in analyzing the errors namely identification, description and explanation of errors. To collect the data, the writer does the first step. The first step is identification; the writer identifies errors on the students' writings. After identifying the errors, the writer classifies the errors into their grammatical types, for example, errors in using tenses, adjective, preposition and so on.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data in this research, the writer does the second and the last step of Corder's Error Analysis. In the second step, the writer describes the errors of overgeneralization, transfer and simplification by omission based on Littlewood's theory. After identifying the types of errors, the writer calculates the frequency of the errors. The last step that is explaining the errors, the writer explains the errors based on the source or the possible causes of the errors based on Norrish and James' theory.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the writer analyzes the data. The writer discusses the types of grammatical errors produced by the students in their essays. Besides, the writer discusses the possible causes of the errors.

Results

As stated before, this research means to explore the grammatical errors in students' writing. After collecting and identifying the data, it was found that there were a lot of errors produced by the students and the writer classified the errors based on 5 error types; those were errors in producing verb, preposition, article, pronoun and pluralization.

Table 1. Frequencies of Errors Based on Grammatical Category

Grammatical categories	Frequencies	Percent %
Verb	51	50
Pluralization	12	11.76
Preposition	14	13.72
Article	15	14.70
Pronoun	10	9.80
Total	102	100

A total of 102 grammatical errors of various kinds were found as seen in Table 5. Based on the data, it was revealed that the highest number of

all error types was verb. 50% of verb errors were produced by the students. Verb errors were categorized as tense, -be and verb agreement. Most errors that the students made were the -be form. Secondly, the students had difficulty in using article. The number of this error was 14. 70%. Preposition, whose frequency was 13. 72%, was in the third rank. The fourth common error was pluralization. Based on the data, 11. 76% of errors were found in the students' writing. Pronoun which occurred 9.80% was in the last rank.

After identifying the data, the writer analyzes them into Littlewood's categories namely overgeneralization, transfer and simplification by omission.

Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization occurs when the learners use their previous knowledge of the second or foreign language that they use to generalize the target language. E.g. He *goed* to Paris yesterday. In this sentence the learner overgeneralized the rule of adding -ed to verb for forming past tense.

Transfer

Transfer is a kind of error that happens because the learners use their previous mother tongue experience to organize the second language data. E.g. I go to beach yesterday (*saya pergi ke pantai kemarin*). Indonesian does not have tenses in forming a sentence. The learner transfers his mother tongue rule in forming the sentence.

Simplification by omission

Simplification by omission is sometimes called 'redundancy reduction' because in composing sentences the learners eliminate many items which are redundant to convey the intended message.

E.g. The English language *become* an international language for all *country* in the world. (Omission of third person singular's)

Here is the result of errors classification based on Littlewood's categories that the students made in their writing.

Table 2. Frequencies of Errors Based on Littlewood's Categories

Grammatical Categories	Overgeneralization	Transfer	Simplification by Omission
Verb	23	-	28
Pluralization	2	-	10
Preposition	4	4	10
Article	3	-	12
Pronoun	7	3	-
Total	35	7	60

The table above shows that the highest number of error was simplification by omission (60 times). The students omitted many items when they composed sentences in their writing. The second position is overgeneralization (35 times), and the last is transfer (7 times)

Discussion

After identifying, analyzing and tabulating the data, the writer examined the errors that the students made in their writing composition. Besides that, the writer tried to find out the reasons why the students made the errors in their writing and to find out the sources of errors. The discussion below analyzed some data based on the grammatical errors. Then, the writer discussed them based on Littlewood's categories.

Errors in using Verb

Verb is important in a sentence. At least there is one verb in a sentence. A verb in Indonesian is just like in English. It is used as a word that represents an action, an event or a state of being. Verbs in English change their form that relate to things as tenses (present, past and future), person (first person, second person and third person) and number (singular or plural).

The following sentences are examples of the incorrect usage of verb, particularly in overgeneralization, omission and transfer.

Overgeneralization in Verb

Verb is the most complex in part of speech and maybe the most difficult for second language learner. For example, in using subject verb agreement especially in adding final –s or –es to simple present tense verb that go with 3rd person singular subject. The students tend to generalize the rule that whenever there is a verb in simple present, they immediately add the final -s or –es to the verb. In using final –s and –es, the students made errors by adding –s or –es in a verb which should not end in –s or –es. For example:

- a. Sometimes they *wants* choose a major study that they choose but their parents forbidden and they must *follows* their parents. (R12)
- b. There are many causes that *makes* me *selects* my major of study. (R13)

Note : R: Respondent

The errors in these sentences above are the product of overgeneralization. Overgeneralization is caused by the tendency for students to use their common senses and come to generalization of certain sets of grammatical rules. In sentence a the morpheme –s in the sentence *they wants* indicate overgeneralization. *They* is a third person plural. If the pronoun is plural, then the verb does not end in –s/-es. The verb *wants* should be *want*. Also, modal auxiliary should be followed by V1 without –s/-es. So, in sentence a, the modal auxiliary *must follows* should be *must follow*. The verb *select* in sentence b also should be without –s/-es ending because when *make* is followed by a direct object, it is then followed by another simple form of a verb. It seems that the students generalized the suffix –s for all verbs. And it led the students make overgeneralization error.

This overgeneralization happens because students try to extend the general rule. Ellis in Understanding Second Language Acquisition stated that overgeneralization occurs because the students try to extend the general rule to item which is not covered by this rule (31). In English affirmative simple present sentences, only the verb after he, she and it (3rd person singular) end in –s/-es (e.g. he walks), and modal auxiliaries are followed by the simple form of a verb.

The other cause of this error is false analogy. Generally, false analogy occurs when the students wrongly assume that item B behaves like A. For example, respondent 12 in her writing wrote: *his father asks him to choose literature*. The form of the sentence is S (sing) + Vs + O. However, mostly in her writing this respondent added –s/-es in verbs of

which the subjects are plural. In producing sentence in the given example, this respondent mistakenly thought that the subject *they* behave like *he*. This respondent wrongly assumed that –s/-es must be added after a verb in present tense form.

Omission in verb

- a. When we __ accustomed to do that list regularly, it means that we __successful to kick our bad habit and change it into the positive one. (R6)
- b. How often __ you eat junk food? (R10)
- c. We can still do our habit with safety devise and it *make* us save. (R16)

These omission errors or redundancy by reduction are associated with transfer. Because of the differences in grammatical structures between Indonesian and English, the students tended to omit the auxiliary verbs *be/ do* as seen in sentences a and b. The omission of the verb seems to be from the mother tongue interference. Interference seems to be the major cause of the students' errors. In Indonesian grammar rule, the auxiliaries –*be, do, have* do not exist, thus, the students applied their mother tongue rule in producing the target language.

The lack of morpheme –s in sentence c is caused by the influence of the students' mother tongue. In Bahasa, subject verb agreement does not exist. In Indonesian grammar, there is no such thing as a subject verb agreement that requires inflection based on the number of the subject, thus, the students tend to drop the morpheme –s in producing the target language. George in Common Error in Language Learning said that a learner whose mother tongue does not have verb inflection in the finite stem form always finds the –s inflection entirely redundant (76). In producing sentences, all Indonesian verbs are in the base form of the verb. There is no difference between verbs with singular or plural subject. For example:

English	Indonesian
<i>She <u>goes</u> to school.</i>	<i><u>Dia pergi</u> ke sekolah</i>
<i>They <u>go</u> to school.</i>	<i><u>Mereka pergi</u> ke sekolah.</i>

In addition, the omission of –s may occur because of the input that the students receive in the classroom. The lack of conducive teaching and learning situation might also affect the students to make errors. Sometimes, the students hear their teacher said *she sings* and

he works but the morpheme –s is unstressed and the students hear *she sing* and *he work*. Thus, in producing sentences in the present tense in which the third singular plural pronouns (he, she, and it) require morpheme –s, the students just drop it.

Errors in pluralization

Pluralization is adding morpheme -s or -es to pluralize noun. There are many exceptional nouns that do not end in -s or -es, for example: *mouse* becomes *mice*, *person* becomes *people* etc. The examples of errors using pluralization are below:

Overgeneralization in pluralization

- a. At least, with the process the *childrens* can feel comfortable and feel safe. (R19)
- b. ...it may be simple for some *peoples* turn off all the electronic devices. (R1)

This kind of error happens when students treat irregular noun as regular noun. Pluralization does not exist in Indonesian. In Indonesian the words are repeated twice to make them plural. While in English, pluralization is formed by adding suffix –s/es to the singular. E.g. *tassaya* – my bag (singular) becomes *tas - tas saya* – my bags (plural).

Both sentences a and b are the examples of overgeneralization in which the regular plural –s has been respectively added to the nouns which do not take such marker. This overgeneralization happens when the students have mastered the general rule but they do not know the exception of the rule. In the sentences above, the students did not use the correct form of noun *children* and *people*. However, when students write *children*, they have overgeneralized the rule since *children* is one of the exceptions to it. *Children* and *people* are already plural form; there is no need to add suffix –s in *children* and *people*. Littlewood in Foreign and Second Language Learning stated that even though we have allocated the item to the appropriate category, we must therefore learn the exception to the general rule (23).

The students have learnt a rule for forming plural. They know that suffix -s is needed to change singular noun become plural noun. By knowing this rule, actually the students have understood the use of noun whether it is singular or plural noun. But in this case, they did not know that this rule cannot be applied into irregular noun form. The students thought that by adding suffix –s in all nouns can make them plural. In this case, the students generalized that all nouns that are

added by suffix –s/-es are plural although the noun form is irregular which does not need suffix –s/-es. For this reason, the writer assumed that the students were still unable to differentiate between the singular and plural noun.

False analogy is also one of the causes that make the students produce error in using pluralization. It seems that the students mostly used analogy of thought in producing the target language. False analogy occurs when students wrongly assume that the new item B behaves like A. The students already know that *books* is plural form of *book*, thus, they think that *childrens* and *peoples* are plural form of *children* and *people*. As James stated in Errors in Language Learning and Use, false analogy occurs because learner incorrectly thinks that a new item behaves like another item already known to him or her (185). They are unaware that their analogies do not always work in producing their target language. They simply apply the newly created rules in most circumstances resulting in overgeneralization.

Omission in pluralization

- a. If you follow some simple *step*, I'm sure you will be easy get up in the morning. (R9)
- b. Like we should throw rubbish in the dust bean, we sleep in proper time, like we need to sleep per 7 *hour* every night. (R15)

The learner has the tendency to simplify the formations or the rule of the target language. It seems that the learner tends to use the simple rules to generalize the uses. In the sentences above, the students simplified the sentences by reducing or deleting suffix –s of the pluralization form.

In sentences a and b, it can be seen that the word *step* and *hour* must be pluralized. They must be added by "s" since the word *some* and *seven* indicate plural noun. Ellis in Understanding Second Language Acquisition stated that the dropping of the pluralization process can only constitute linguistic simplifications if the learners can be shown to possess the rule (179). Based on Ellis's argumentation, it can be concluded that the students do the simplification on dropping plural marker because they are lack of knowledge about forming plural sentences.

This kind of error also can be seen as incomplete application of rules. In other words, the students fail to achieve complete knowledge of the target language. The examples above can reflect the students'

incomplete application of pluralization rules since the words *step* and *hour* are supposed to be added with suffix *-s*.

Errors in using preposition

Preposition is a word which shows relationship among other words in the sentences. The relationships include direction, place, time, cause, manner and amount. Below are the examples of errors in using preposition:

Transfer in preposition

- a. Playing hand phone, browsing with computer *in the* night will consume our time. (R1)
- b. It will have a bad effect *for* your eyes. (R3)

This transfer may show exhibit interference from the mother tongue. Here, the respondents had tendency to translate the prepositions for Indonesian into English. As in example a and b the respondents produced error in simple preposition. In sentence a, respondent1 used preposition *in the* instead of *at*. Based on Murphy in English Grammar in Use, to compose a sentence that states the time of the day we should use preposition *at* (240).

In Indonesian, a simple preposition consists of one word, for example: *ke*, *di* and *dari*. The Indonesian prepositions *di* is translated into *in the*. The reason of this error is probably from negative transfer since in Indonesian grammar rule to state place and time uses preposition *di* (*di rumah*, *di malamhari*). But, in English, preposition *di* can be interpreted as *on*, *in*, and *at*. While in sentence b, the respondent translated *bagi* into *for*. Sentence *Ini akan menimbulkan efek bagi mata anda* is translated into *It will have a bad effect for your eyes*. According to Murphy in English Grammar in Use to compose a sentence that states part of body we should use preposition *on* (244), for example *on her nose*.

Moreover, the use of English prepositions is different from Indonesian preposition. In using preposition, there are many things that must be noticed. Besides, English preposition seems to be more complex than Indonesian preposition, not only the kind of the prepositions itself but also the function of preposition. Murphy in English Grammar in Use gives an example: *There were a lot of people in the shop. It was crowded*. Compared with *Go along this road, then turn left at the shop* (244). These sentences are translated into Indonesian become: *Ada banyak orang di toko. Penuh dan sesak*. Compared with

Jalan lurus sampai di sebuah toko belok kanan. From this reason the respondents made errors in using preposition in their writing.

In addition, Edge in Mistakes and Correction stated that when people do not know how to say something in a foreign language, one possibility is to use word and structures from their own language and try to make them fit into the target language (7). Based on this theory, the difficulty that the students faced in using preposition made the students transfer their mother tongue rules to the target language.

Omission in preposition

- a. To solve this problem we need to have a piece of paper and write it down what kind ___ activity or job that we need to do and we make a list. (R15)
- b. We only need ___ wait ___ the seller cook it, or choose them directly. (R10)

These omissions of errors in using preposition are associated with transfer from the respondents' mother tongue. This error is influenced by the native language which interferes with the target language. The students used their mother tongue language experiences for organizing second language data.

In sentence a, respondent 15 omitted preposition *of*. In Indonesian sentence a becomes *Untuk mengatasi masalah ini kita perlu menyiapkan selembar kertas untuk menuliskan jenis aktivitas atau pekerjaan yang perlu kita lakukan. Jenis* when transfer in English becomes *kind*, and in English *kind* is bound with preposition *of*. As stated before, this error is because of transfer of mother tongue; thus, preposition *of* was dropped by the respondents.

So does in sentence b. Respondent 10 also dropped the preposition in her writing. It is possible in Indonesian to say *Kita hanya menunggu penjual untuk memasaknya* and the word *untuk* can be omitted. Even though the word *untuk* is missing, the reader still can understand the meaning of the sentence. But in English it becomes ungrammatical because the sentence needs preposition *for*. Preposition *for* is used to indicate the use of something.

This is because the differences between their native rules and target language rule. When the language rules in two languages are different, learning difficulties happen and lead students to make error. Abbott and Wingard stated in Teaching English as an International Language that "where the structure of the first language and the target

language differed, there would be problems in learning and difficulties in performance" (230).

Errors in using article

In English there are two types of article. They are indefinite (an/a) and definite (the). The usage of those articles depends on the nature of words that follow. Indefinite article is used before a singular countable noun in general. Definite article is used to say one thing in particular. Below are the example errors in using article:

Overgeneralization in article

a. It can help you realize and not to do a bad habit again. (R8)

b. Forget a bad habit that we have. (R17)

Overgeneralizations in article above occur because the students did not know the exception of the rule. Article *a* is used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns, while article *the* is used to indicate particular things.

Although the students allocated the article in an appropriate way, the students failed to apply that. In sentence a and b, for example, both respondent 8 and 17 used article *a* instead of *the*. Based on Murphy in English Grammar in Use, when we are thinking of one particular thing, we use article *the* (142).

Another reason of overgeneralization of article is false concept hypothesis. False concept refers to the error which is derived from the students' misunderstanding of the target language distinction or inaccurate ideas about target language rules. In the examples above, the students substituted a definite article to indefinite, whereas these two articles have different function. The students may assume that the functions of the articles are the same.

Omission in article

a. Next arrange the position of your bad into __ right side. (R7)

b. There are two types of English. English from __ united stated of America and from __ United Kingdom but it is no problem for studying. (R21)

These types of errors are frequently found in students' writing because in their mother language rule definite and indefinite articles do not exist. The ungrammatical sentences above could be the result of interference of the Indonesian language structure. Indonesian nouns stand alone

without article. For example, in Indonesian we can say *Selanjutnya, atur posisi tempat tidurmu pada posisi yang benar*. In this sentence, an article is not required. But when this sentence is translated to English, the sentence requires an article. Because of this reason the respondents omitted an article in producing their writing.

Besides, it can happen because of the students' incomplete knowledge of the target language. It refers to the failure in learning complex types of structure since the students sometimes find they are able to achieve effective communication by using simple rules. The students' incomplete knowledge of the target language made them neglect the rules of the target language.

Errors in using pronoun

Pronoun can be used instead of a noun. Pronoun is used to avoid repeating a noun. The kinds of English pronouns are: personal (he, she, it), demonstrative (this, that, these, those), interrogative (who, which, what), possessive and reflexive pronouns.

Overgeneralization in pronoun

- a. If we have a bad habit and it has a bad effect for *our self* or another people. (R3)
- b. They really proud of *their self* when they get A on their exam. (R2)

The sentences above are examples of overgeneralization of pronouns that the students made in their writing. The students tried to use a rule in a context where it does not belong. Basically, the students know how to use the pronoun. But in examples a and b, they used inappropriate word. *Our self* and *their self* should be *ourselves* and *themselves*. This error may occur because of the students do not know the exception of using pronoun as Littlewood stated in Foreign and Second Language Learning overgeneralization happens because of the rule does not apply to this particular item, even though we have allocated the item to the appropriate category. We must therefore learn an exception to the general rule (23).

Based on the examples above, overgeneralization in using pronoun can be seen as overlooking co-occurrence restrictions which means that the learner doesn't know that certain words go together with certain complements. The students occasionally overlooked or failed to observe the restrictions of existing structure. The students mistakenly assumed that the two words *their* and *self* can be used interchangeably though in fact they are not.

Besides, false analogy is also one of the causes students' errors. The students already know that *myself*, *himself*, *herself* and *itself* are reflexive form of singular pronoun *I*, *he*, *she* and *it*. Thus, the students wrongly assumed that *our self* and *their self* are reflexive form of *we* and *they*.

Transfer in pronoun

- a. People can use safety device to make *they* still save. (R16)
- b. It make *we* thinking limitedly and narrow. (R5)

This error occurs because students may misapply a category label because they misrepresent the category. In examples a and b, the students used subject pronoun instead of object pronoun. In the example a and b, the pronouns' function are as direct object because the pronouns come after verb. So, it is supposed to be an object and the pronoun that must be used by the students is an object pronoun.

Beside that, this error happens because of interlingual transfer. It can be seen as interlingual transfer because of the mother tongue influence. In forming the target language the students seemed to use their mother tongue rule in organizing the second language data. Transfer will cause error when the mother tongue's rule is different from the target language. As Norrish said in Language Learners and Their Errors, "if language is essentially a set of habit, then when we try to learn new habits, the old one will interfere with the new one" (22). Indonesian pronouns do not change despite of the position as a subject or an object. However, in English, pronouns would change if the position is as a subject or an object. For examples:

English	Indonesian
	(Pronoun as a subject)
<u>They</u> can use safety device.	<u>Mereka</u> dapat menggunakan alat pengaman.
	(Pronoun as an object)
People can use safety device to make <u>them</u> still safe.	Orang- orang dapat alat pengaman untuk membuat <u>mereka</u> tetap aman.

We can see in the sentences above that the students seemed to use their mother tongue's rule to construct the target language.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis done in this research, 102 grammatical errors were found in the students' writing. The finding of the research shows that the students still faced some problems in the target language grammar, even at the level of university. It shows that the highest frequency of errors is simplification by omission (60 items) followed by overgeneralization (35 items) and the lowest is transfer (7 items).

There were several causes that made the students produce errors in their essays. In language learning, mother tongue plays an important role in learning a second language. Based on the analysis, interference of mother tongue is considered as one of the major causes of the grammatical error on the students' academic essays. It happens in simplification by omission and transfer errors. Students' writing errors are mostly caused by mother tongue interference and language transference of some elements from mother tongue that make the students omit some elements of English rule in writing. Transfer happens when the learners use the first language to formulate hypothesis about the second language rules.

In producing errors, interference of mother tongue was not the only reason for committing errors. Learning strategies also had part in students' errors. The learning strategies included false analogy, incomplete rule application, and overlooking co-occurrence. This case happened in overgeneralization. Overgeneralization is a process that occurs as the second language learner acts within the target language. Errors which cause overgeneralization help to reveal how learners learn the language.

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