An analysis of the grammatical errors in the narrative writing of the first grade students of SMA 6 Yogyakarta

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Abstract: This study was aimed at finding out: (1) the types of grammatical errors in the narrative writing of the first grade students of SMA 6 Yogyakarta, and (2) the causes of the grammatical errors in their narrative writing. The study was a case study. The participants were 30 students of the first grade students of Senior High School Six Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2011/2012. The study comprised five steps, namely collection of data, identification of errors, quantification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. The research instrument was in the form of a writing assignment. The data were obtained from the students' writing works. The results of the study were as follows. First, fourteen types of the grammatical errors of the students' narrative writing were found concerning verb tenses, finite verbs, non-finite verbs, pronouns, prepositions, spelling, agreement of singular and plural, punctuation, contexts of usage, contexts of meaning, redundancy, word choices, word orders, and unintelligibility. Second, the verb tense errors occupied the first rank (24.47%), followed by the pronoun errors (11.56%), and the finite verb errors (10.51%). Third, five types of the causes of errors were: (1) interference in copulative verbs, word orders, verb tenses, and article usages; (2) ignorance of rule restrictions in articles, relative clauses, causative verbs, and verb + gerund constructions; (3) incomplete application of rules in prepositions, verb phrases, subjects of the sentence, and objects of the sentence; (4) false concepts hypothesized in past verb tenses, non-finite verbs, agreement of the singular and plural, and adverbs of degree; and (5) over-generalization in irregular past verbs, articles, verb phrases, and plural nouns.

Keywords: errors, causes of errors, error analysis.

1. Introduction

In the teaching of English in the Senior High School (SMA), the skill of writing is not only used to test how well students acquire a second or foreign language, but also to express ideas into a readable text. The ability to express ideas in English writing with reasonable coherence and accuracy is a major objective. However, many students never truly master these skills. The students still make errors in English writing.

The students' errors can be seen from the errors produced in their works. They often produce errors of grammar such as mapping its grammatical patterns inappropriately. Another example of their errors is the wrong application of the sentence structures, for example, *I more stronger than he.*

In the classroom, the students' errors have been neglected in the teaching of English. The students rarely get feedback and correction in the writing assignment. Consequently, they do not have explanation of the errors in more detail for their works and have weak language proficiency. It indicates that

their errors do not receive proper control in their language learning from their teacher.

To achieve a great proficiency in the skill of writing, students need feedback and correction for their works. The more they get correction, the more they have a thorough knowledge of English writing. Thus, it is imperative that an error correction needs an accurate error analysis in the teaching of English writing. By investigating students' errors in their writings, teachers will be able to provide a means of helping students to overcome their errors and to improve their language proficiency.

Those phenomena, especially related to the students' errors in writing, encourage the writer to study this case. Therefore, the writer would like to conduct the study by the tittle "An analysis of the grammatical errors in the narrative writing of the first grade students of SMA 6 Yogyakarta."

The results are expected to give a valuable insight into how the teachers can use the findings of the study to improve students' writing skills.

The objectives of this study are to describe (1) the types of the grammatical errors in the narrative writing of the first grade students of SMA 6 Yogyakarta, and (2) the causes of the grammatical errors in their narrative writing.

Hopefully, this study can give some contributions to the teachers and other researchers. For the teachers, the findings of the study will be useful for them. For example, they may prepare the learning material properly based on the students' writing errors. In addition, studying students' writing errors adds to the significance of the learning of English writing. It provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. For other researchers, the result of the study can be used as a source of reference in conducting similar kinds of studies.

Gass & Selinker (2008: 102) define mistakes as slips of the tongue. They are generally one-time-only events. The learner who makes a mistake can recognize it as a mistake. An error, on the other hand, is systematic. It is likely to occur repeatedly and is not recognized by the learner as an error.

According to Brown (2000: 217), a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a "slip," in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Meanwhile, an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker. It reflects an incompetence of the learner's language use.

The significance of an error can be seen from two points, pedagogical and theoretical. From the pedagogic standpoint, it is useful for the teachers to know that their students have not yet mastered certain forms but are capable of self-correcting them. From the theoretical point of view, it can be argued that a form has not been fully acquired until the learners can use it with the same degree of accuracy as the native speakers (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 64).

Richards & Schmidt (2010: 201) state that error analysis is the study of errors made by second and foreign language learners. Error analysis may be carried out in order to: a) find out strategies which the learners use in language learning, b) find out the causes of the learners' errors, and c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in preparing teaching materials.

Based on some points of views above, it can be concluded that error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying, and explaining incorrect forms of a target language made by a learner.

According to Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005: 65), Brown (2000: 224), and Norrish (1983: 22-25), the causes of errors are divided into two categories. They are interference and intralingual. Interference

errors are made under the influences of the mother-tongue. They are seen as a process in which learners use their knowledge of the first language in learning a second language. Intralingual errors, on the other hand, are learning strategies that are universal. Meanwhile, Richards (1970: 3) states that interlingual errors are caused by the mother tongue interference. Intralingual errors occur during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge.

Richards and Schmidt (2010: 323) state that interference is the effect of one language on the learning of another. They add that interference is the use of a native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language.

Richards (in Ellis, 2008: 53) states that intralingual phenomena reflect the general characteristics of rule learning. He classifies the causes of errors into four categories. They are over-generalization, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized, and ignorance of rule restriction. To make those clear, the four classifications are explained below.

Richards & Schmidt (2010: 416) state that over-generalization is a process common in both first and second language learning, in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule of a linguistic item beyond its accepted uses, generally by making words or structures follow a more regular pattern.

Richards (1973: 175) defines ignorance of rule restrictions as the application of the rules of grammar to contexts in which the correct rules are not applied correctly. This cause of errors results from the learners' failure to observe the restrictions of the existing structures. Some rule restriction errors may be accounted for in terms of *analogy*; other instances may result from rote learning of rules. Accordingly, the failure of observing the rule restrictions

may lead to an analogy. It means that the learner rationalizes a deviant usage from his previous experience of English because of ignorance of rule restrictions.

Incomplete application of rules as the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce the acceptable structures. Incomplete application of rules occurs when the learner fails to use a complete rule of grammar (Richards, 1973: 177). For example, in the sentence *"You like to sing?"* in place of *"Do you like to sing?"*, the auxiliary verb *"do"* is not written.

Richards (1970: 4) states that semantic errors such as building false concepts or systems are called false concepts hypothesized. It means that the learners do not fully understand rule distinctions in the target language. False concepts hypothesized refer to errors derived from faulty knowledge of target language distinctions or inaccurate ideas about language rules. One example is that learners often substitute one word for another such as *bring* for *take* in *I will bring it to you*. Though these words, in fact, have contrasting meanings, learners may assume that this pair is a synonym and can be used interchangeably.

The first study is from Saiful Bahri (2009). He conducted the study entitled *"Difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second year students of SMPN I Selong East Lombo West Nusa Tenggara in the second year 2008/2009.* The results showed that (1) eight most common errors of studens' writing were: verb-tenses, articles, word forms, capital letters, punctuation, missing words, spelling, and preposition; (2) verb-tense errors occupied the first rank (23.76%), followed by article errors (20.85%), and word form errors (10.62%); (3) two kinds of direct factors which caused the students make errors in the writing skills were: negative interlanguage and intralangual transfers in

the forms of adverb interference, copulative verb interference, word-order interference, tense form interference, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete application of rules; and (4) five sources of indirect factors which caused the students make errors in the writing skills were: students' low motivtion, lack of parents' support, and loose control of students' learning.

The second is from Sadiyah Darus and Khor Hei Ching (2009). They conducted the study entitled "*Common Errors in Written English Essays of Form One Chinese Students.*" The results of the analysis showed that four most common errors were mechanics, tenses, preposition, and subject-verb agreement. In composing the assigned essays, the students were very much influenced by their first language. Intralingual transfer of Malay and developmental errors were also observed in their writing.

The next research is from Rula Fahmi Bataineh (2005). He conducted the study entitled *"Jordanian undergraduate EFL students' errors in the use of the indefinite article"*. The results of the study show nine types of errors that are found. These errors are: (1) deletion of the indefinite article, (2) writing "*a*" as part of the noun/adjective following it, (3) substitution of the indefinite for the definite article, (4) substitution of the definite for the indefinite article, (5) substitution of "*a*" for "*an*", (6) use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals, (7) use of the indefinite article with marked plurals, (8) use of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns, and (9) use of the indefinite article with adjectives.

Based on the theoretical description above, the research questions are proposed. Four research questions are formulated. They are: 1) what are the most common grammatical errors from the fourteen categories in the students' writing?; 2)what types of grammatical errors do the students make in their writing?; 3) what are the

most common causes of grammatical errors from the fourteen categories in the students' writing?; and 4) what types of the causes of grammatical errors do the students make in their writing?

2. Method

This study was categorized into a case study by using a qualitative descriptive approach. In carrying out this study, the researcher worked in identifying, describing, categorizing, explaining, and evaluating grammatical errors (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 51). The aim of this study was to describe the types and causes of errors. For this purpose, the researcher collected the data from the students and identified the students' writing works to find grammatical errors in the students' writing. Then, the researcher categorized errors into each category, quantified each item of errors to obtain the percentage of each error, and explained grammatical errors to identify the causes of errors.

The researcher conducted the study in SMA 6 Yogyakarta. Every grade in the school consisted of eight classes. The total of the classes in this school was 24. The researcher took one class as the research sample. It consisted of 30 students. This study was conducted in four months (February 2012 until June 2012). The researcher administered the test to collect the data of the students' writing on Monday 10th of March 2012.

The participants of this study were the first grade students of SMA 6 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2011/ 2012. There were eight classes in the first grade, but the researcher took one class as the research sample. It was the X.6 class. This class had 30 students, 17 female and 13 male. The age of the students was about 15 up to 16 years old. The researcher chose this class due to the results of the interview with the English teachers of the school. Based on the interview, the researcher found a large

number of grammatical errors made by the students in their writing works.

The instruments for collecting the data in this study were a writing assignment and a format of error identification. In the writing assignment, the researcher used a narrative text. The researcher used this text type, since a narrative writing was quite easy for the researcher to investigate grammatical errors (Norrish, 1983: 20). The writing assignment included the instructions of the writing, the topic of the writing, and the length of the writing.

The second instrument was a format of error identification. It was used to analyze all data in the students' writing to find the types and causes of errors. This instrument was used by two lecturers and one English teacher in investigating errors of the students' writing (Ellis, 2008: 50). They used this format of error identification as guidance in classifying, categorizing, and identifying grammatical errors. They clarified and crosschecked the results of their rating. This instrument consisted of fourteen categories. They are verb tenses, finite verbs, non-finite verbs, pronouns, prepositions, spelling, agreement of singular and plural, punctuations, contexts of usage, contexts of meaning, redundancy, word choices, word orders, and un-intelligibility.

To have construct validity, the researcher used the theory by Dulay *et al.* (1982) which consisted of two taxonomies of error identification, namely linguistic taxonomy and comparative taxonomy.

To insure the data reliability, two lectures and one English teacher were asked to assist in clarifying grammatical errors. First of all the writer and the inter-rater analyzed the data and classified grammatical errors. Afterwards, the two lecturers were asked to crosscheck the results of the rating. The English teacher served as a referee if there was no agreement in classifying grammatical errors.

In this study, the researcher used Corder's steps (1981) with some modification as the research procedure. These steps were collection of the students' writing, identification of errors, quantification of errors, description of errors, and explanation of errors. The descriptions of these steps are as follows.

Collection of the Students' Writings

In this step, the researcher collected the data of the students' writing from the sample class. The researcher specified the sample of the students' writing in order to be able to investigate grammatical errors. This way allowed for specific research questions to be addressed in the design of the error analysis (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 57-58).

To collect the data, the researcher asked the students to complete the writing assignment. The researcher gave some instructions which should be understood by the students. The students wrote 120-150 words about a narrative text based on the topic that the researcher offered or based on their own stories. In addition, the researcher allowed the students to open a dictionary to make sure that they wrote each word correctly.

In doing this assignment, the students did not need specific preparation. The students completed the writing work under their present condition at the time when the researcher came to the class to give the assignment. This spontaneous production was expected to produce authentic data.

Identification of Errors

In this step, the researcher identified the data of the students' writing to find out grammatical errors. In identifying the data, the researcher used the instrument of error identification. The researcher identified the errors based on the linguistic taxonomy for the types of errors and the comparative

taxonomy for the causes of errors. To identify the errors, the researcher gave the marks in pencil. The researcher used the marking of errors proposed by Nation (2009: 122).

Classification of Errors

To classify the errors, the researcher used the format of the error classification (Table 18). First, the researcher wrote the incorrect sentence on the left-hand column of the table. Secondly, the correct version of the sentence was written on the middle column of the table. Afterwards, the researcher classified the errors in the form of errors classification based on the fourteen categories of verb tenses, finite verbs, non-finite verbs, pronouns, prepositions, spelling, agreement of singular and plural, punctuation, contexts of usage, contexts of meaning, edundancy, word choices, word orders, and unintelligibility.

Quantification of Errors

The researcher also counted the frequency of the errors in each category based on the frequency of error types. To obtain the numerical data of the errors, the researcher classified the errors into each category. Then, the researcher counted the percentage of errors based on the number of errors in each category divided by the total of the errors by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{\sum e}{t} x 100\%$$

Note :
P : Percentage
e : Number of errors of each type
t : Total of errors
(Adapted from Mahsun, 2007: 192)

Explanation of Errors

After quantifying the errors, the researcher continued with the next step of error analysis which was error explanation. The researcher explained in more details the errors found. This explanation presented a discussion of the causes of errors. To explain the causes of errors, the researcher used Richards' terms (1970). There were two major causes of errors. Those were *interference* errors and *intralingual* errors. In the *interference* errors, the researcher explained the errors which were caused by negative transfers of the mother tongue. Meanwhile, in the *intralingual* errors, the researcher explained the errors which were caused by ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized, and over-generalization.

3. Findings and Discussion

To obtain the numerical data of the errors, the errors are classified into each category. The percentage of the errors is counted based on the number of errors in each category divided by the total errors. The result of the calculation is presented in Table 1.

The Verb Tense

In the verb tense error, four types of errors can be found in the students' writing. The examples of these are the incorrect regular verb in (1), the incorrect irregular verb in (2), the double marking of the past verb tense in (3), and the incomplete past progressive verb in (4).
(1) Finally, we <u>play</u> in the river.
(2) They <u>leaved</u> their fragrance behind.
(3) Her husband <u>was died</u> long time ago.
(4) When he was <u>help</u> her mother to collect fire woods, he found a big egg.

The Finite Verb

In the finite verb error, four types of errors can be found, namely the substitution of the progressive for the

Table 1.
The Result of the Errors

No	Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Errors
1	Verb Tense	178	24.47 %
2	Finite Verb	85	10.51 %
3	Non-Finite Verb	55	6.01 %
4	Pronoun	92	11.56 %
5	Preposition	51	5.41 %
6	Spelling	48	4.95 %
7	Agreement of Singular and Plural	46	4.65 %
8	Punctuation	25	1.50 %
9	Context of Usage	32	2.55 %
10	Context of Meaning	55	6.01 %
11	Redundancy	27	1.50 %
12	Word Order	21	0.90 %
13	Word Choice	25	1.50 %
14	Unintelligibility	29	2.10 %
	Total Number	769	100 %

simple past in (5), the substitution of the infinitive for the simple past in (6), the missing of the finite verb in (7), and the overuse of the finite verb in (8).

(5) Malin Kundang's mother always <u>waiting</u> for her son coming home.

(6) In the garden the farmer <u>to keep</u> his cucumber.

(7) His mother very broken heart.

(8) But he <u>is have</u> a kind-hearted.

The Non-Finite Verb

In the non-finite verb error, four types of non-finite verb errors can be found in the incorrect use of non-finite verbs after the main verb. Examples of these are the addition of the *-ed* suffix in (9), the missing of *to* in (10), the incorrect use of the *-es* suffix in (11), and the incorrect use the *–ed* participle in (12).

(9) But the giant came to <u>collected</u> on her
promise.

(10) Sangkuriang was angry because he failed <u>make</u> the ark.

(11) He decided to <u>goes</u> to the city to earn money and his mom let him go.

(12) ... he didn't like the dog always <u>followed</u> him.

The Pronoun

In the pronoun error type, four errors can be found, namely the incorrect use of a subjective pronoun in the subject position in (13), the relative pronoun in (14), the incorrect use of a subjective pronoun in object position in (15), and the incorrect use of a subjective pronoun referring to an antecedent in (16).

(13) <u>They</u> name's Tompel, Rwo, and Gakso.

(14) ... there was a mother pig <u>who</u> lived with her three little piglets.

(15) So we left <u>he.</u>

(16) Because Mouse Deer was so smart, <u>it</u> could pass the trap and has saved,..

The Preposition

In the preposition error, four types of errors can be found, namely the unneeded preposition in (17), the incorrect form of preposition in (18), the missing of

preposition in (19), and the appropriateness of preposition in (20).

(17) So, you can join <u>with</u> us.

(18) The crocodiles lined up <u>along</u> the river.

(19) I will prove you that I didn't do it.

(20) After Malin Kundang arrived <u>to</u> Sumatra Barat, ...

The Spelling

In the spelling error, four types of errors can be found when the sentences are written with the incorrect spelling of the words. The examples of these are the spelling of a verb in (21), the spelling of an adjective in (22), the spelling of an adverb in (23), and the spelling of a noun in (24).

(21) He <u>praied</u> to God for this situation.

(22) A <u>fragant</u> sunset come from them.

(23) Not long <u>after wards</u>, a baby was born.

(24) The baby's birth gave much

The Agreement of Singular and Plural

In the agreement of singular and plural error, four types of errors can be found, namely a singular noun in (25), a plural noun in (26), an irregular noun in (27), and a subject-verb agreement in (28).

(25) ... there lived a <u>teenagers</u> named Gakso.

(26) He tried to survive his own self with <u>many way.</u>

(27) Again, he didn't know that <u>women</u> was his mother.

(28) They <u>was</u> a poor family.

The Punctuation

In the punctuation errors, four types can be found. They are the use of an apostrophe in (29), the use of a comma in (30), the use of a full stop in (31), and the use of a capital letter in (32).

(29) He took poison and threw it to <u>Nando hair.</u>

(30) Knowing that her baby had gone the young mother was very sad.

(31) "Good job Tom, you are the bas cat in the house".

(32) He had a young princes named <u>sidapaksa</u> ...

The Context of Usage

In contexts of usage, four types of errors can be found. They are use of the definite article in (33), use of the indefinite article in (34), the repetition of a word in (35), the usage of a determiner in (36).

(33) Long time ago, in <u>the</u> village, there lived an old woman ... <u>happines</u> to the young mother.

(34) Sangkuriang meet a beautiful woman. <u>A</u> beautiful woman is his mother, Dayang Sumbi.

(35) After king of mouse heard this problem, the king of mouse goes out.

(36) In the Malin Kundang and his girl's married party,...

The Context of Meaning

In the context of meaning errors, four types can be found. They are the context of meaning in a verb (37), the context of meaning in an adverb (38), the context of meaning in a pronoun (39), and the context of meaning in an adjective (40).

(37) She <u>found</u> firewood.

(38) Ten years <u>ago,</u> Malin Kundang became a rich trader.

(39) She lived <u>by herself</u> because her husband had long passed away.

(40) Everyday she looked for some <u>burn</u> wood in a forest.

The Redundancy

In redundancy, four types of errors can be found. They are redundancy of an article in (41), redundancy of a pronoun in

(42), redundancy of an adjective in (43), and redundancy of a non-finite verb in (44).

(41) Mouse Deer looked around for <u>the</u> twice, ...

(42) Her <u>husband/father</u> was very loyal to Sangkuriang.

(43) She is a very <u>poor-poor</u> woman.

(44) Malin still kept his argument <u>to join worked</u> in big ship.

The Word Choice

In the word choice errors, four types are found. They are the choice of an adjective in (45), the choice of a noun in (46), the choice of an infinitive in (47), and the choice of a verb phrase in (48).

(45) Malin Kundang felt angry after looking his mother and then he felt <u>shy</u>.

(46) Finally his mother <u>permit</u> Malin to join price contest.

(47) He wasn't afraid of other bigger animals who wanted to <u>eat</u> him.

(48) Nando that has cruel hair can <u>change</u> into a snake.

The Word Order

In word orders, four types of errors can be found. They are the incorrect appositive in (49), the incorrect possessive adjective in (50), the incorrect noun phrase in (51), and the incorrect *wh*-question in (52).

(49) A princess Jebule was kidnapped by super villain named Tompel.

(50) They meet in a joke about <u>ugly mouse's face.</u>

(51) The <u>king mouse</u> invited a little mouse in to this nest.

(52) "hm... how <u>I will</u> serve it?" said

mouse deer..

The Unintelligibility

In the unintelligibility errors, four types can be found. They are the unintelligibility of noun use in (53), the unintelligibility of adjective use in (54), the unintelligibility of verb use in (55), the unintelligibility of determiner use in (56).

(53) Malin Kundang's mother worked in the <u>flores.</u>

(54) Dayang sumbi said to him to go hunting and wanted <u>same</u> deer liver.

(55) Once <u>open</u> a time, lived a boy name Malin Kundang.

(56) He was wondering how to cross the river when he met a <u>view of</u> crocodiles.

The Number of the Causes of Errors

To obtain the numerical data of the causes of the errors, the causes of the errors are classified into each category. The percentage of the causes of the errors is counted from the number of the causes of the errors in each category divided by the total errors. The results of the calculation is presented in Table 2.

Interference
This cause deals with interference of the first language to the target language in which grammatical rules in the first language are incorrectly transferred to the second language (Richards & Schmidt, 2010: 323). Examples of errors that can be included in this category are shown below.

(1) Dayang Sumbi [ ] angry ...

(2) The <u>king mouse</u> invited a little mouse into this nest.

(3) They <u>pray</u> for their children,...

(4) ... he became [ ] stone forever...

Table 2.
The Results of the Causes of Errors

No	Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Errors
1	Interference	216	31.77 %
2	Ignorance of Rule Restrictions	157	21.18 %
3	Incomplete Applications of Rules	151	20.10 %
4	False Concepts Hypothesized	142	18.29 %
5	Overgeneralization	103	12.02 %
	Total Number		769

In sentence (1), the error is found in the absence of the finite verb in the sentence. An equivalent sentence in the first language is *Dayang Sumbi marah*. In Indonesian, this sentence is grammatically correct. In English, however, this sentence is ungrammatical, since it does not have a copulative verb.

In Indonesian, the words *berada* and *adalah* correspond to the English copula *to be*. However, they are frequently optional. These are dropped in a sentence that expresses a condition or state of existence (Swan and Smith, 2010: 287-288). Thereby, this error is derived from the negative transfer of the mother tongue, since, in Indonesian, a complete sentence may have the absence of a copulative verb.

In sentence (2), the phrase *king mouse* is an error from the intended *mouse king*. In Indonesian, the modifying word is placed after the modified word. However, in English, the modifying word is put before the modified word.

The incorrect placement of a group of words is caused by the influence of the native language. In English, the pattern of a noun phrase is by putting the adjective before the noun. Thus, this ungrammatical phrase can be the result of interference, since the phrase *raja kucing* is written

with the composition of the Indonesian word order (Dulay. *et al.*, 1982: 177).

In sentence (3), the error can be seen in the use of the present verb instead of the past verb. In the past regular verb, the verb *pray* should be *prayed*. In Indonesian, there is no such thing as a verb tense rule that requires the *-d* or *-ed* inflections at the end of the verb to indicate the past action. In English, however, the *-d* or *-ed* inflections are required.

Thus, this error is caused by interference of the Indonesian grammar rules in the verb tenses. In Indonesian, the verbs do not change their forms when the time referred is changed from present to past, or vice versa. In the case above, the verb *mengetik* has the same form in both the present sentence and the past sentence.

In sentence (4), the error is found in omitting an article. In Indonesian, the equivalent word *batu* can stand by itself without an article. English, however, requires the noun *stone* to be preceded by a determiner.

In Indonesian, the demonstratives *ini* and *itu,* and the article *sebuah* can overlap in functions. However, the use of these words is often optional. They can be dropped particularly before nouns relating to the concept of mass and quantity, and other abstract nouns (Swan & Smith, 2010: 286). Thereby, this error is derived from the influence of the mother tongue, since, in Indonesian, the noun phrase may have the absence of a determiner.

Ignorance of Rule Restrictions

This cause deals with the generalization of deviant structures in which grammatical rules are applied into inappropriate contexts in which other rules should be used instead (Richards, 1970: 9). Examples of errors that can be included in this category are shown below.
(5) A grandmother whom I threw <u>her</u> into the river is here.
(6) Malin Kundang denied meeting <u>she</u>.

(7) He told <u>don't</u> make a joke about mouse's ugly face.

(8) There lived [a teenagers] named Gakso.

In sentence (5), *A grandmother whom I threw her into the river is here.*, the error is found in the use of the relative pronoun *her* as an object of the verb *threw*. Actually, in the relative clause, the position of an object is placed before the subject. In this case, *whom* is an object.

The relative clause whose antecedent is a person uses the relative pronoun *whom*. In this case, the relative pronoun *whom* substitutes for the object *grandmother*. Then, the sub-clause does not require an object after the verb. Thus, the error can be considered as ignorance of rule restrictions in the relative pronoun usage.

In sentence (6), *Malin Kundang denied meeting <u>she</u>.*, the subjective pronoun *she* is incorrectly used. The pronoun *she* should be changed into *her*. The pronoun *she* should be put in the subject position not in the object position.

Thus, this error is caused by the ignorance of the rule of the pronoun use. In the case above, the pronoun *she* occurs in the incorrect position. This error refers to the application of rules to an inappropriate context, since the pronoun *she* cannot function as an object.

In sentence (7), *He told <u>don't</u> make a joke about mouse's ugly face.*, the error is found in the use of the negative form of the sentence. The underlined word shows the incorrect form of the negative.

Thus, this error is caused by the ignorance of the rules of the use of the negative form. It ignores the pattern of the negative form: *subject + verb + noun/ pronoun + not + to-infinitive*. In this case, the auxiliary *do* is not used. *Not* should be put before the infinitive as shown in the pattern above to make the sentence correct.

In sentence (8), the error occurs in the use of the singular form in place of the plural form. This error is derived from the understanding of the use of the singular and plural nouns in English that cannot be understood well.

Thus, this error is caused by the ignorance of rule restrictions of the grammatical rules in the agreement of singular and plural nouns. In the sentence above, the nouns *teenagers* and *way* are incorrectly written.

Incomplete Applications of Rules

This cause of errors deals with an incomplete application of rules in which grammatical rules are not used fully in constructing the sentence (Ellis, 2008: 710). Examples of errors that can be included in this category are shown below.

(9) Mouse Deer pointed^ the wasp nest.

(10) One day when he <u>was help</u>^ her mother to collect firewoods,...

(11) Sangkuriang was angry because ^ failed make the ark.

(12) "How ^ I know that this is yours?" asked mouse deer.

In sentence (9), the error is found in the absence of a preposition after the verb *pointed*. In this case, the preposition *at* is required to make the sentence complete. *Pointed at* is used to mean that one shows where something is by holding out one's finger. This error shows the omission of a preposition that has made the sentence grammatically incomplete (Ellis, 2008: 59).

Thereby, this error is caused by the absence of the preposition after the verb *pointed*. It seems that the incompleteness of the preposition is applied in this rule in place of the use of the preposition.

In sentence (10), the phrase *was help* is an error since it is an incomplete form of the past continuous verb form. It is merely written with the phrase *was help*. The rule which is required to write the

correct verb phrase is by applying the verb *helping* (Richards, 1970: 12).

Thus, this error is caused by the incompleteness of the past continuous verb. In constructing the past continuous verb form, the way is by putting *to be + verb-ing*. However, this formula is not applied in the sentence above. The rule requires the complete application of the past continuous verb.

In sentence (11), the error is found in the absence of a subject in the sentence. In this case, the sentence must have a subject that indicates a thing or something about which a statement is made. However, this rule is not applied completely in the sentence. To make the sentence complete, the word *he* should be put as a subject of the sentence.

In sentence (12), the error is found in the absence of an auxiliary in the *wh-question*. The application of this rule in constructing the question form is not done in the sentence since it omits the auxiliary. To make the sentence complete, an auxiliary *do* is required.

Thus, this error is caused by omission of the application rule of the *wh-*question. In this case, the presence of the auxiliary *do* is required. It cannot be deleted by omitting the part of speech which can function as the *wh-question*.

False Concepts Hypothesized

This cause deals with the faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language in which word choices are incorrectly made. It means that this cause arises when the learner does not fully comprehend the distinction of the con-trastive meaning of words in the target language (Ellis, 2008: 710). Examples of errors that can be included in this category are shown below.

(13) Sangkuriang has no <u>appetite</u> at all to go hunting a deer.

(14) King Mundi <u>borrowed</u> the prince a sword.

(15) Dayang Sumbi had been waiting for his son <u>since</u> ten years.

(16) That food made King Baraway <u>ill</u>.

In sentence (13), the error is found in the use of the word *appetite* instead of *desire*. This error derives from the faulty comprehension of distinctions of the word choice usage in the target language (Richards, 1970: 14).

Thereby, the false concept of the use of the part of speech causes an error. In the case above, the noun is incorrectly used. The noun *appetite* is related to food eating. Meanwhile, the noun *desire* is required in this sentence to tell a strong feeling to go hunting.

In sentence (14), the verb *borrowed* is an error from the intended *lent*. In this case, the verb *borrowed* means to get or receive something from someone with the intention of giving it back after a period of time. However, the sentence requires verb *lent* to make the intended meaning correct. *To borrow* means to "receive". *To lend* means "to give".

Thus, this error is caused by the false concept of the use of the verb choice in the sentence. In this case, this sentence requires the verb *lent* to tell the intended meaning of giving something to someone for a short period of time, expecting it to be given back.

In sentence (15), the error is found in the use of the preposition *for* instead of the preposition *since*. In this case, *for* is used to show an amount of time or distance. Thereby, the preposition *since* is required to mean that the action occurs from a particular time in the past until a later time.

Thereby, the error of the use of the preposition *for* can be seen as a false con-cept hypothesized, since it derives from the contrast in the intended meaning between *for* and *since* (Richards, 1970: 19). In this case, the adverb *since* is required to mention the beginning time

from a particular time in the past until a later time.

Over-generalization

The cause of over-generalizatrion deals with the creation of a deviant structure in which grammatical rules are generalized with one deviant structure instead of the other rule of the regular structures (Richards, 1970: 16). It means that this error occurs when certain sets of grammatical rules are applied with gene-ralization. Examples of errors that can be included into this category are shown below.

(17) She _knowed_ that the man is her own child.
(18) Finally, the farmer met his <u>childs</u> in the garden.
(19) He ignored his mother with <u>un-respectfull.</u>
(20) Some deer enjoyed <u>themself</u> in the woods.

In sentence (16), *That food made King Baraway ill.*, the adjective *ill* is an error from the intended *sick*. The adjective *ill* means suffering from a disease or an illness. However, the sentence requires the adjective *sick* to mean a tendency which is caused by something.

Thereby, the error of the use of the adjective *ill* can be seen as a false concept hypothesized, since it derives from the contrast between the intended meaning of *ill* and *sick* (Richards, 1970: 19). In this case, *sick* is required to tell the condition carrying the meaning of *not well* or *not healthy*.

In sentence (17), the error is found in the incorrect use of the irregular past verb. It seems that the use of the past marker has been generalized by adding the *–ed* suffix. However, not all the *–ed* marker can be applied in all verbs.

Thus, adding the morpheme *-ed* to the verb stem *know* as the past verb marker is caused by generalizing the use

of the *–ed* suffix in forming the past verb form. Generalization of English irregular verbs influences this form. However, the verb *know* is not formed by adding *–ed* the regular past tense. The past tense form of the verb *know* should be *knew*.

In sentence (18), the error is found in the use of the *–s* suffix as a marker of the plural noun. However, not all the *–s* suffix can be generalized in all nouns. When an irregular noun becomes plural, its spelling changes in a different way. In this case, the noun *child* should be *children*.

Thus, this error is derived from gene-ralizing the use of the *–un* to mention lack of respect. In the case of derivational adverb, the prefix *–dis* and suffix *-ly* ending are required to make the adverb correct.

In sentence (20), the error is found in the use of the reflexive pronoun *themself*. In the use of the reflexive pronoun, the reflexive ending *–self* changes to *–selves* in the plural.

Thus, the over-generalizing form with *-self* caused an error in the use of the reflexive pronoun. In the above case, the incorrect form of the third person *themself* should be changed into the correct form *themselves*.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

For the first research question, the data from the results of the analyses show that there are 769 grammatical errors in the students' writing. The biggest number of errors comes from the verb tense category. There are 178 errors (24.47%). The second common error is the pronoun category. There are 92 errors (11.56%). The third common error is the finite verb category. There are 85 errors (10.51%). Meanwhile, the smallest number of errors comes from the word order category. There are 21 errors (0.90%).

For the second research question, different types of errors are found in 14

categories of grammatical errors. *First*, there are three types of verb tense errors. They are incorrect regular and irregular verbs, double marking of the past verb tense, and incomplete past continuous verbs. *Second*, there are four types of finite verb errors. They are substitution of the past continuous for the simple past, substitution of the infinitive for the simple past, missing of finite verbs, and overuse of finite verbs. *Third*, there are four types of non-finite verb errors. They are addition of the *–ed* suffix, missing of *–to* infinitive, the incorrect use of the *–es* suffix, and the incorrect use of the *–ed* suffix. *Fourth*, there are two types of pronoun errors. They are incorrect use of relative and subjective pronouns both in the subject and object positions. *Fifth*, there are four types of preposition errors. They are unneeded prepositions, incorrect forms of prepositions, missing of prepositions, and the appropriate use of prepositions. *Sixth*, there are four types of spelling errors. They are the spelling of verbs, the spelling of adjectives, the spelling of adverbs, and the spelling of nouns. *Seventh*, the four types of the agreement of singular and plural errors are related to the use of singular nouns, plural nouns, irregular nouns, and subject–verb agreements. *Eighth*, the four types of punctuation errors are related to the use of apostrophes, use of commas, use of full stops, and use of capital letters. *Ninth*, there are four types of context of usage errors. They are related to the use of definite articles, indefinite article, repetition of words, and usage of determiners. *Tenth*, the four types of context of meaning errors are related to contexts of meaning in verbs, adverbs, pronouns, and adjectives. *Eleventh*, the four types of redundancy errors consist of redundancies of articles, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs. *Twelfth*, the four types of word choice errors are related to the choices of adjectives, nouns, infinitives, and verb

phrases. *Thirteenth*, there are four types of word order errors. They are in the forms of incorrect appositives, possessive adjectives, noun phrases, and *wh*-questions. *Fourteenth*, there are two types of unintelligibility errors. They are unintelligibility of the use of nouns and unintelligibility of the use of determiners.

For the third research question, the results of the analyses show that there are five causes of errors in the students' writing. They are interference, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized, and over-generalization. The biggest number of the causes of the errors comes from interference. There are 216 causes of errors (31.77%). This cause of errors appears when grammatical rules in Indonesian as the first language of the students are incorrectly transferred into English as their target language in learning. The second common cause of errors is ignorance of rule restrictions. There are 157 causes of errors (21.18%). The third common error is related to incomplete applications of rules. There are 151 causes of errors (20.10%). Meanwhile, the smallest number of the causes of the errors comes from false concepts hypothesized (18.29 %) and over-generalization (12.02 %).

For the fourth research question, different types of errors are found for the five causes of errors. *First*, there are four causes of errors in interference. They are interference in copulative verbs, word orders, verb tenses, and articles. *Second*, there are four types of ignorance of rule restrictions. They are ignorance of rule restrictions in relative clauses, objective pronouns, negative forms, and passive voices. *Third*, the four types of incomplete application of rules are incomplete application of rules in prepositions, verb phrases, subjects of the sentences, and *wh*-questions. *Fourth*, there are four types of false concepts hypothesized. They are false concepts hypothesized in nouns, verb

choices, preposition choices, and adjective choices. *Fifth*, the four types in the over-generalization errors are over-generalization in verbs, nouns, adverbs, and reflexive pronouns.

The suggestions are addressed to the teachers and other researchers. For the teachers, considering the fact that the biggest number of errors comes from the verb tense category, the teachers should emphasize the concepts of the verb tenses. It is essential for the teachers to ensure that the students really understand the use of verb tense rules, specifically in the use of the past verb tense which is frequently used in narrative writing. For example, the teachers can give writing instructions of how to use the past regular verbs, the past irregular verbs, and the past continuous verbs correctly.

For other researchers, the present study is an attempt to investigate the types and causes of grammatical errors. However, the findings of the study are focused on fourteen categories; namely verb tenses, finite verbs, non-finite verbs, pronouns, prepositions, spelling, agreement of singular and plural, punctuation, contexts of usage, contexts of ing, redundancy, word choices, word orders, and unintelligibility. Thereby, it will be possible for other researchers to conduct studies which cover other categories such as developmental taxonomies, surface strategy taxonomies, and communicative effect taxonomies.

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