MORPHOSYNTACTIC ANALYSIS ON INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

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Info Artikel	Abstrak
	This study is aimed at investigating the morphosyntactic issues in English descriptive writing of EFL learners in Indonesia. Therefore, qualitative data were collected from the students' descriptive writing and analyzed in the morphosyntactic issues that lead to the grammatical errors, which take place in descriptive writing. Furthermore, the technique of collecting data was a documentation technique and the analysis technique used is the descriptive analysis. The findings in this study indicated that the EFL learners in Indonesia did not aware of using "s" for plural mark and third singular in present tense. Then, they did not aware of using "ed" for regular verb in past and past participle form. Moreover, they did not build sentence according to the syntax structure in English because they followed the Indonesian language sentence structure.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is commonly known as one of the skills in learning English that need to be mastered by the EFL learners. Accordingly, since writing is the applied knowledge of linguistics, the linguist distinguished between linguistic competence and performance. Linguistic competence is the knowledge in human's brain (Chomsky: I-language), however, linguistic performance is the actual use of this knowledge (Chomsky: E-language) (Gabrys, 2008). Thus, Foreign Language (FL) learners might have the knowledge of a language rules but their writing activates still have many errors.

Literally, the writing of EFL learners is affected not only by their first language (L1), but also by the educational context where they learn to write. This socially and culturally characterized context provides meta-knowledge about writing (i.e. view of audience and goals of writing) as well as linguistic and textual knowledge, affecting the ways in which students process and produce writing (Rinnert and Kobayashi, 2009). Thus, the EFL learners tend to do mistakes in morphology (word formation) and syntax (sentence structure) in the written production even though they have mastered the target language.

Furthermore, in the process of acquiring and learning a foreign language, a learner is going to make mistakes or errors. A learner might make mistakes because he/she does not master a language rule. However, an error might be a product of unawareness of a language rule. As many researchers claim, making errors is an unavoidable problem in foreign and second language acquisition (Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982), Brown (2000), Zainal (1990) and Aronoff & Fudeman (2005)).

However, Indonesian tertiary English learners were anticipated to have enough linguistic competence in English linguistics which can be seen in his performance in the academic field. Nevertheless it has not been given its due as a subject of study, nor has it received enough critical attention from scholars or students of language in terms of morphological and syntactical analyses.

Therefore, the research objectives are formulated as below:
1) to determine the morphosyntactic errors operating on the descriptive writing of the EFL learners in Indonesia;
2) to analyze the morphosyntactic errors operating on the descriptive writing of the EFL learners in Indonesia, and
3) to explicate to what extent the morphosyntactic errors operating on the essay writing of the EFL learners in Indonesia affecting the whole clause structure.

Moreover, this study intends to cover the morphosyntactic errors operating on the desc-

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riptive writing of the Malaysian secondary school students and how these errors affect the whole clause structure. Mainly it makes use of, random sample, ten (10) selected students' writings from an English Language and Literature Department (ELLD) in Indonesia. As for the analysis, a morphological and syntactic analysis is carried out in terms of Chomsky's theory (1995) the Minimalist Program (MP) using X-Bar theory to represent the tree diagram.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morphology

The domain of morphology is words. How words are formed is the concern of this field. Thus, morphological structure is the structure, which consists of the elements to form words. The most common word formation in language including English is affixation. Affixation is the process of word formation by adding the affixes or bound morphemes in bases or roots (free morphemes). In other words morphological structure is the structure or forms of words primarily through the use of morpheme construct (Crystal, 1980: 232).

Morpheme is defined as the smallest meaningful unit of language (Boey, 1975: 37). Morphemes can be divided into two namely free morphemes and bound morphemes. Morphemes are the components, which build words. The word *teachers*, for example, consists of three meaningful units or morphemes, *teach*, *–er*, and *–s*. The morpheme *teach* which forms the word *teachers* has the lexical meaning; the *morpheme –er* means the doer of teaching; the morpheme *–s* has plural meaning. We can identify the meaning of the morpheme *teach* although it stands alone but we cannot identify the meaning of morphemes *–er* and *–s* in isolation. We can identify the meaning of the morpheme *–er* and *–s* after they combine to the morpheme *teach*. *Teach* which can meaningfully stand-alone is called free morpheme while the morphemes such as –er and –s, which cannot meaningfully stand-alone, are called bound morphemes. Bound morphemes must be attached to free morphemes. Bound morphemes are also called affixes, which can be classified into prefix, infix, and suffix. English only has two kinds of bound morphemes namely prefixes and suffixes. No infixes exist in English. Bound morphemes are classified into two types namely derivational and inflectional morphemes. Both inflectional and derivational morphemes play an important role in the larger structure namely syntactic structure.

Syntax

Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2011:78) defines "syntax is the component of the grammar that stands for a producer's knowledge of phrase, clause and sentences, and their structures". The rules of syntax integrate words into phrases then to sentence. This definition is similar with Aarts (2001). He stated that syntax is the part of grammar that concerns itself with the structure of sentences. Furthermore, Finch, (2000) stated that syntax is a term used for the study of rules governing the way words and combined to form phrase. Then, it is concerned with the way that sentence is structured. Similarly, Bell (1991) stated that syntax is the knowledge of manipulating sentence elements in the chain and choice of the system within the proposed of semantic unite. In other words, he defines knowledge of syntactic as a matter of identifying what components exist in a sentence and how they may be legally unified.

Basri D, Ampa and Junaid (2013) said that syntax is one of the structural linguistics in which the students need to develop in learning English. It is one of the important subjects for making them capable to write in English. Its areas cover the English phrase and clause.

The scope of syntax also covers the analyses. Those analyses might be done by using bracketed, immediate constituent, and tree diagram ways. Each of these has a definite use to make the students understand for identifying and classifying the syntactic categories with their functions. The students' competence of English syntax can assist them to produce good writings. The problems to organize ideas in writing or even in speaking can be overcome because this sort of competence functions as a guide to put the words in correct positions.

Chomsky (1995) stated that X-Bar Theory is to describe the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences whatever the order of language may have adopted SVO, VSO, or OVS". In addition, Aarts (2001) asserted that X-Bar theory is a theory of syntax, which stipulates that all sentences are structured in the same way. Furthermore, X-bar theory is the arrangement of principles that explain how any particular constituent sentence can be structured internally (the way it is ultimately constructed will base on the head choice (Koopman, Sportiche, & Stabler, 2003).

Therefore, X-Bar syntax is the general formulation or description of how each phrase in clause or sentence is constructed internally in whatever the order of language may adopted Subject Verb Object (SVO), Verb Subject Object (VSO) or Object Verb Subject (OVS). Figure 1 illustrates The X-Bar theory structure.

The X-bar theory correctly represents constituents smaller than XP, and bigger than X. It also distinguishes syntactically among complements, specifiers, and adjuncts. Moreover, it ma-
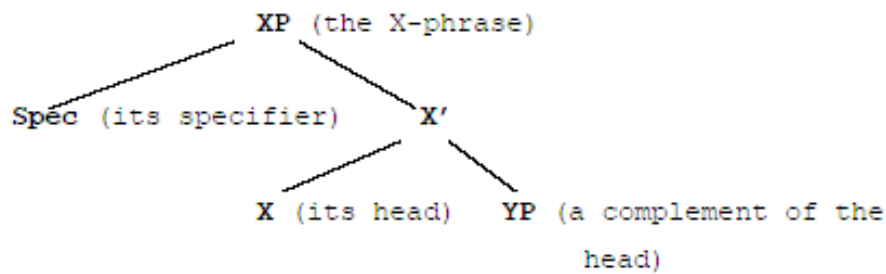
Figure 1. General Structure of X-Bar Theory.
XP   ➔ (YP) X' Specifier rule   YP X'
X'   ➔ {   }Adjunct rule X' YP
X'   ➔ X (YP) Complement rule

kes cross-categorical generalizations.

Descriptive Writing

Pardiyono (2007) state that description writing is a type of written text paragraph, in which has the specific function to describe about an object (living or non-living things) and it has the aim that is giving description of the object to the reader clearly. Furthermore, Pardiyono (2007) mentioned that there are three parts of descriptive. They are (1) communicative purpose, that is to describe an object (human and non-human) (2) rhetorical structure, there are two parts of rhetorical structure a) identification, a statement that consists of one topic to be described; b) description, that is consisting of the detailed description about object that is identified in identification, and (3) grammatical patterns. In descriptive paragraph, declarative sentence and present forms are used properly.

Jolly (1984) asserted that there are five types of descriptive writing paragraph. They are: a) describing process, describing a process is not only explaining how something is done, but also explaining why it is done and what is needed to complete the process, b) describing an event, to describe an event, a writer should be able to memorize and remember what happened in the event. Supposed the writers write about Tsunami, which is happening in Japan. In this case, he / she has to explain all details related to the event, so that the readers can imagine the real situation and condition, c) describing a personality, in describing a person, the first thing that we do is recognizing his/her individual characteristics. We need to describe people occurs fairly areas of physical attribute (hair, eyes), emotional (warm, nervous), moral attributes (greedy, honest, worthy, trust), and intellectual (cleverness, perception), d) describing a place, presenting something concrete is the way to describe place, for example: a home, a hospital, and school, and e) describing an object, to describe an object accurately is done by providing the physical characteristics of the object such as the color, form, shape, and so on.

Research Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were the 10 students from English Language and Literature Department, Universitas Negeri medan, Indonesia. All of the students wee chosen by their lecturers of Writing Subject. They are chosen based on their writing performance in the class. Furthermore, the participants were from semester 3 students. It means that they have already learnt about descriptive writing. And the level of their English is considered as intermediate level.

Materials

There were three (2) materials used in this study. They are writing book entitled "College Academy Writing: a Genre Based Perspective" Dirgeyasa (2014) (Content: explanations, examples and exercises) and descriptive writing test (created by the researcher and validated by two lecturers).

Procedures

Step one: the participants were taught by the English lecturer about descriptive writing to recall their knowledge about descriptive writing. In this step, there were explanation, exercise and discussion about descriptive writing. *Step two:* the participants were given a writing test. This test was asking the participants to describe a place in 60 minutes. The question was "please describe an interesting place that you have ever visited in your hometown! Write about 150 to 200 words!" *Step three:* 10 descriptive writing

were collected and analyzed by the researcher.

Analysis Technique

Morphology: the words errors in descriptive writing were described by using morpheme structures theory (Chomsky's Minimalist Program). From this analysis, the kind of errors would be founded in word forms. Then, *syntax*: the sentences in descriptive writing were analyzed by using tree diagram from X-Bar theory (TP Syntactic Structure). From this analysis, the sentence errors would be identified and described obviously.

Data Analysis

The entire data have been analyzed by applying Chomsky's Minimalist Program and TP Syntactic Structure. How to analyze and the example are showed in the following able and figure respectively.

Morphology

Table 1 shows the morphological analysis in the EFL learners' descriptive writings. Most of the errors deal with the singular-plural form, for instance in EFL learners 2. This phrase should be "all of my friends". The suffix 's' should be put at the end to identify the plural form. Beside that, the students also made mistakes in tenses form. For instance in EFL Learner 1 & 6, the word "visit" should be added with suffix "ed" because this is past and past particle form. Then, the EFL learners also created errors in subject-verb agreement. For instance in EFL Learner 7, the suffix "s" in "knows" should be dropped out because the subject is plural.

Syntax

Tense Phrase (TP) syntactic structure was used to analyze the sentence in EFL learners' descriptive writings. It would be known whether the sentences are in proper structures or they are errors. For instance, the EFL Learner 9 wrote:

"*Danau Toba is a lake which tourism place in Indonesia, needs to be renovated*". This sentence is indeed two sentences; the first one is: *Danau Toba is a lake, tourism place in Indonesia*. The second one is: *it needs to be renovated.*

This sentence is considered error because there are two independent clauses in one sentence, which is not allowed, but one. These two clauses should be separated by conjunction or put in two sentences. On the other hand, these two clauses also can be put in one sentence by applying subordinate clause form. So, the sentence can be: "*Danau Toba is a lake, tourism place in Indonesia and it needs to be renovated*" or "*Danau Toba is a lake, tourism place in Indonesia which needs to be renovated*".

The following tree diagram presents the syntactic structure of one clause from the sentence:
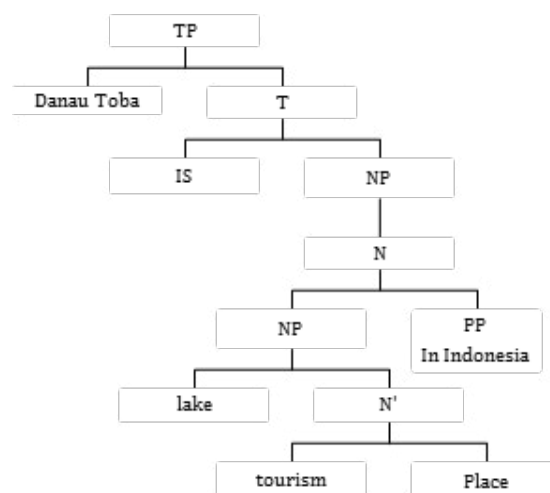

Figure 2. TP Syntactic Structure

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study shows that the Indonesian EFL students commit many morphological and syntactical errors in their writing. Morpho-

Table 1. Some errors in students' descriptive writings

No	Initial of The students	Errors in Plural Form, Tenses and Subject-Verb Agreement
1	EFL Learner 1	The beautiful <u>places</u> that <u>I have ever visit</u> <u>is</u> ……..
2	EFL Learner 2	<u>All of my friend</u> really eager to go there.
3	EFL Learner 3	There are <u>many beautiful place</u> in my hometown
4	EFL Learner 4	<u>One of my classmate know</u> this place too.
5	EFL Learner 5	There <u>is a few interesting places</u> nearby my village and ……
6	EFL Learner 6	I <u>visit that place one year ago</u>.
7	EFL Learner 7	<u>My classmates also knows</u> that place that I……
8	EFL Learner 8	This is the common place that <u>people visits</u>
9	EFL Learner 9	There <u>are many beautiful spot</u> at Danau Toba but ……
10	EFL Learner 10	He manages <u>all the activity</u> in this river

logically, they do not use the plural mark 's' in a proper way and they do not differentiate between 's' as plural mark and 's' as a '3rd singular' mark. As well they, sometimes, generalize the idea of adding's' in both cases; as a plural mark and a 3rd singular mark. However, The addition and omission of the morpheme 's' in both cases do not affect the general meaning of the phrase or sentence. Because the problem is focalized within the word, these errors can easily be indicated to the students. We can explain that by stating that the linguistic knowledge of the student is not fully developed yet.

Besides that, syntactically Indonesian EFL students are not fully aware how to build a phrase or a sentence in English. They write more than one verb in a phrase or a sentence, which does not need but one. As well they are not sure about word order in English and how to build a simple sentence. We can explain that by saying that all these forms do not exist in Indonesian language, resulting in the tendency for the students to omit or add these forms in their essays. Finally, in a general sense, the morphological errors do not affect the sentence structure or the whole meaning of the phrase or the sentence. Moreover, the erroneous construction of the sentence does not lead to ambiguity in the whole meaning of the phrase or the sentence; the meaning can be fully understood through the context.

CONCLUSION

In this study we analyzed and explained the morphosyntactic issues on Indonesian EFL Learners' descriptive writings. We indicated that some errors are because of the lack of knowledge of the English grammar system and some others are because of nonexistence of the English grammar rules in the Indonesian language system. As well some others because of the misapplying of the rule; the student applies the English grammar rule in the wrong way and place. However, we suggest that English lecturers of tertiary levels in Indonesia should focus on these errors and issues to reduce their occurrence by applying more exercises and practices. After that lecturers should discuss the students' writing output with them and give them feedback.

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