



**INTERLANGUAGE: GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXTS (A Case Study of First Year of MAN 2 Banjarnegara in the Academic Year 2014/2015)**

Isti Nurhayati✉

English Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. State University of Semarang

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**Abstract**

*Differences between Indonesian and English language makes students often feel difficult in learning English especially in terms of grammar. Those difficulties tend to lead students to make errors in building English sentences. However, errors are actually natural because they are regarded as developmental stage to gain English competence, and errors are result from the students' efforts to find ways of solving their problems. Those ways are called interlanguage. This study aims to find out the grammatical errors that students make in writing recount text and the interlanguage processes happen in it. The collecting data was done through writing recount text task to get kinds of errors data made by the students, and interview for getting interlanguage data happen to the students. The analysis steps started from identifying the errors, categorizing them into four categorizations of errors, and triangulating the errors with other supporting data. It reveals that students tend to make the errors omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. The interlanguage processes happened are systematicity, permeability, fossilization consisting of language transfer, transfer of training, strategy of second language learning, and overgeneralization.*

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✉ Correspondent Address:

B3 Building FBS Unnes  
Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229  
E-mail: [istinurhayati@gmail.com](mailto:istinurhayati@gmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges faced by Indonesian students in learning English as a foreign language is 'grammar'. Flynn (1995), for example, states that language learners have some grammar, before they begin learning their second language which may not have any bearing on their prior linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the learners will unconsciously apply their grammar while learning a new language. Because of difference between Indonesian and English grammar, many of the learners find it difficult to learn a new language, English. Therefore, it makes them are afraid of making errors when they deal with grammar.

Nevertheless, making error is natural and actually necessary for language learners so that they achieve certain language competence (Krashen, 1982: 74). Therefore, errors are not regarded as a failure anymore, but it is considered as an important learning process that the students should experience for developing their competences. Selinker (1972) calls this phenomenon as 'interlanguage'. An IL "can be defined as the language of the learner" (Davies, 1989: 460), "a point on the way to a full natural language" (Davies, 1989: 461); a development process involving the "learner's systematic approximations toward the target language" "systematic approximations toward the target language" (Davies, 1989: 448).

Wilkins as quoted by Nunan (1991: 152) says that acquiring grammatical system of the target language is a central importance, because an inadequate knowledge of grammar would severely constrain linguistic creativity and limit the capacity for communication. For that statement, it is clear that when learners are not capable in acquiring grammatical system of language, they will not be able to achieve language competence.

Rajeev Sinha (2003), states that there is a question asked "Why is grammar so popular in certain schools and with certain teachers?" First, it is possible for a teacher to teach the grammar of a language although he has no real command over that language; second, grammar is so

popular with examiner. It is difficult to test fluent speaking ability or writing ability grammar questions are easy to set and correct; third, Directors of Education demands grammar. They observe that the children in the schools speak and write ungrammatically and say, "Therefore teach them more Grammar".

The importance of grammar is not only for oral language, but also the writing language needs grammar. Some linguists argue that fluency in writing is in paramount point that accuracy. Writing skills is regarded as the highest level of language competence because it needs good performance of three other skills. Writing is also known as a complex system because it needs more tools and skills. According to Ramelan (1992: 42), writing is defined as a representative or symbol. It is not a usual symbol, but writing is a meaningful symbol.

This study focuses on the discussion about grammatical errors made by students and the interlanguage process happens in it. Interlanguage itself can be identified from the grammatical errors made by the students. As Endang Fauziati says in her journal entitled *Interlanguage and Error Fossilization: A Study of Indonesian Students Learning English as A Foreign Language*, that the errors of the students become the source for studying the system of the learners' L2 or Interlanguage (IL). Furthermore, the writer will use the errors of the students especially the grammatical errors to find out the interlanguage process happens when the students learn English, especially in writing Recount Text.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The writer aimed to find out the varieties of grammatical errors made by the students in order to be able to reveal the interlanguage happened behind the errors in that school.

Data used in this study were students' recount texts task, and interview. The task was given to 33 students of X7 of MAN 2 Banjarnegara consisting of 16 boys and 17 girls. The interview was done to 16 students which represented the kinds of errors findings. The analysis technique of the data included

identifying the grammatical errors, categorizing them into four categorizations, and analyzing the interview data to find out the interlanguage process happened.

In conducting this study, the writer came to the Subject class and explained the material about recount text to refresh the students' memory about it. Then, the writer gave the students time to choose the topics given and make a free recount text consist of seven until ten sentences of the topic they chose. After getting their written text, the writer analyzed and described the errors made by the students. Then, after knowing the students who made more grammatical errors than others and discussed with the teacher to select the Subject of interview, after that the writer interviewed the selected students to find out the interlanguage process happened and categorized it based on the matrix of interlanguage.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The kinds of errors that the students often made were omitting some elements, adding, using wrong form or misinformation, and misordering the sentence structure. It was like Corder said that errors are typically produced by people who do not yet fully command some institutionalize language systems. It happened to the students who did not yet fully understood about recount text and English sentence rule.

Moreover, from the errors we knew that the interlanguage process actually happened in it like systematicity, permeability, language transfer transfer of training, second language learning strategy, and overgeneralization as Selinker explained. Those interlanguage processes happened to the students when they faced some tasks relating to the English material and elements and they tried to solve that problem like;

a. Task of grammar

Most of the students felt difficult in grammar because the rule of grammar in Indonesian and English is quite different like the rules of 'to be', gerund, and tenses including past and present tense. In Indonesia, there is no such kind of those rules. The errors that the subjects

often made such as using 'to be' in the sentences that actually did not need that, and they also often forgot to change the tenses that should be used. It was because they had not been familiar with English rule.

Those differences made students often used Indonesian grammar when they wrote English sentence especially when they found difficulties in deciding the grammar that should be used. Even though they already knew about the differences and English grammar, when they rarely exercised writing English sentence they would often forget about English rule. Moreover, when they used inappropriate learning strategy, they would still found difficult in writing English text like they learned English by reading only and never practice writing. Furthermore, if such kind of situations happened continuously, the subjects would find ways to solve those difficulties like construct their own rule by mixing the Indonesian grammar and English grammar that they already knew. Even they used Indonesian grammar in all of their sentences because what they knew and remembered was all about Indonesian. Then, the interlanguage process happened to the students when such kind of situation above happened.

b. Task of vocabulary

Different language must have different vocabularies. This rule is applied for Indonesian and English languages. Most of the subjects felt difficult in finding the words that they wanted to use in their text while they did not know those words in English.

When they faced such kind of situations, some of the subjects preferred to open the dictionary and some others liked asking to somebody like friends and teacher. Those strategies were not wrong as long as when the subjects knew how to use the dictionary and also they knew the rule of asking. It became inappropriate strategy because the subjects used the dictionary without knowledge of how to use dictionary. They wrote what was in the dictionary directly without thinking the correct one. For example, some subjects used a dictionary to find a word 'bermain', and in the dictionary it was written 'to play'. Because of this,

those subjects directly wrote 'to play' in their texts and added word 'to' for all of the verbs in their texts like 'to swim'.

Furthermore, asking to somebody also was not wrong as long as the subjects knew the rule. A case happened to the one of the subjects that preferred to ask to somebody when they did not know the English words. For example, one of subject wanted to say 'jalan-jalan', then, he asked to the teacher. The teacher said 'go walk' in which she pronounced /gəʊ wɔ:k/, then without opening the dictionary he directly wrote what they already heard. Actually what he wrote was not 'go walk' but 'go wol'. This phenomenon happened when the subjects chose inappropriate learning strategy which became their habits, or when the subjects used a little thing about English and they thought that it was a correct thing and then they applied it in their texts. This situation showed us unconsciously that interlanguage was happening.

Other thing that happened relating to the difficulties in finding English words came to the condition of higher level confusion of the subjects that was the students used Indonesian word in their texts. This happened to one of the subject that used the Indonesian word 'setelah itu' in her text, it was because she did not know how to say it in English. The lack of knowledge relating to the English vocabularies which caused by lacking of reading habits made students came back to use Indonesian words even when they had to produce English sentences. It was also how the interlanguage happened to the students.

#### c. Task of constructing sentences

Constructing sentences became the most difficult part that the students faced during the writing process. Most of the students made misordering sentences in their recount texts. Those errors more and less were because of the difference between Indonesian and English structure especially in ordering its phrases and also an adjective used. For example, most of the students wrote 'home grandmother' instead of 'grandmother's home'. Not only that, there were students who wrote 'filed football', 'garden fruit', and other phrases that had same constructions.

Based on the interview, the subjects who made that kind of errors did not know how to construct that phrases in English. Because of that, they wrote it based on the Indonesian structure, the structure that they already knew and were familiar with. Besides, there were the subjects who actually already knew about the rule; however, when they made the text they forgot about it because they felt nervous. Furthermore, there were the subjects who made sentences exactly same with Indonesian structure that made the sentences was wrong. Those subjects reasoned that they used Indonesian structure because they felt confuse about the English structure. When such kind of situation happened, the interlanguage process happened to the students. They found a way in which they could resolve their problem in order to finish their texts. Those ways they got from the knowledge that they already knew and made experiment with it.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion related to the grammatical errors which the students of X7 MAN 2 Banjarnegara made, it concluded that there were some conclusions:

The kinds of errors made by the students in writing recount text were:

- a. Omission in all of the grammatical features aspects of recount text include:
  - 1) The omission of specific participant, the word that indicated the specific participant, and also the sign of plurality in the Subject of specific participant.
  - 2) The omission of verb that indicated material processes, the element of material processes like a morpheme, and the word that should complete a verb.
  - 3) The omission of past verb, the morpheme of past tense -ed, 'to be' in past form, and the word that completed the past tense.
  - 4) The omission of preposition in stating time and place, the article, and the sign of plurality.

- 5) The omission of temporal sequence words, the word that completed the temporal sequence word, and the letter of the word.
- b. Addition in all of the grammatical features aspects of recount text include:
  - 1) The addition of 'to be' on the specific participant and the adverb after Subject.
  - 2) The addition of word 'to' in the verb of material processes and the word that had meaning with the material processes used.
  - 3) The addition of word 'to' after past verb which was not necessary, the word that had same meaning but different form.
  - 4) The addition of plurality, the double preposition, and double morpheme in stating time and place.
  - 5) The addition of a word in the phrase of temporal of sequence, the preposition 'to', and unimportant morpheme.
- c. Misinformation of all of the grammatical features aspects of recount text include:
  - 1) Misinformation of using letter 's' as plurality sign and the writing of number as a rank number.
- d. Misordering of all of the grammatical features aspects of recount text.
  1. The interlanguage process happens to the student during writing recount text are:
    - a. Systematicity  
The students constructed a sentence and grammar based on coherent rules which students constructed and selected in predictable ways such as taking a rule from the example that they saw.
    - b. Permeability  
The students constructed a sentence and rule from the rules that they knew and worked with their feeling to combine it.
    - c. Language of transfer  
The students often used Indonesian language structure sentence to construct their English sentence.
    - d. Transfer of training  
The students constructed the sentence based on what they already did before.
    - e. Strategy of Second Language Learning  
The students laid on the dictionary and asking to the friends while they constructing a sentence.
- f. Overgeneralization  
The students used the tense and verb form that they already knew without knowing the context of the sentence.

### Suggestions

Based on the conclusions of the result of the study, the writer recommended some suggestions to solve the errors made by the students and the interlanguage process happened to the students, among others were:

1. For the teachers

The errors are not a failure that the students might not do that, so the teacher should analyze the error made by the students to know what the students need.

2. For the students

The students are hoped can really understand about the difference between Indonesian and English language and the students should find their strategies in learning English that can develop the four skills of English.

3. For the school

The school should provide the facility that supports the English learning process especially in developing the students' English skill.

4. For future researchers

For future researchers especially those who work in language program who wants to resolve the problems of kinds of grammatical errors and interlanguage can use the result of this study as the background to decide the best method in learning English.

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