

**GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING A FINAL PAPER WRITTEN BY THE  
EIGHTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES WALISONGO SEMARANG**

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**Abstract**

*The objectives of the study are 1) To find out the errors made by the students in using grammatical in writing a final paper by students of English Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies. 2) To find out the ways to eliminate the errors made by students of English Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies. The population of the research was the eighth semester students of English Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies. The number of the sample was 12 students' writing. In taking the sample, the writers used random sampling. The writer took 20% from each class. The number of the sample was 12 students. From the data analysis, the result showed that The students produced 93 errors of 12 students' writing which could be grouped into 7 categories of errors, they are errors in production of verb group, errors in agreement between subject and verb, errors in the use of article, errors in use of preposition, errors in pluralization, errors in use of pronoun, and errors in the use of conjunction. In the research findings, the number of errors in production of verb group is 43 errors, the number of errors in agreement between subject and verb is 14 errors, the errors in the use of article is 6 errors, the errors in the use of preposition is 8 errors, the errors in pluralization or 19 errors, the errors in the use of pronoun is only 3, and there is no or 0 error in conjunction. It is also found that the source of the errors is the students' grammar mastery. It can be said that the students' grammar mastery is still low, so that they have difficulties in arranging the sentences. After knowing the research findings, the writers would like to give some suggestions to the students and the English teacher. The teacher should emphasize the students that their target language has different structure from their native language. Beside that, the teacher should motivate the students to learn grammar well, so that they can master production of verb group, agreement between subject and verb, the use of pronoun, and the other elements of grammar well. The last is it will be better for the teacher to give their students more practice in using it.*

**Key words:** *grammatical, errors, final paper*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of Study**

Learning English, like learning language in general, involves the mastery of four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Now, the four basic skills are likely to be taught integratedly. Here the writers just focus on students' writing arrangement in their final paper.

The word "writing" is easy to pronounce but it is very difficult to master. English learners seem to consider writing as the most difficult skill to be mastered because it involves three other skills and all knowledge of the writer. Someone can write well if he tries hard and

practices it since it cannot be mastered instantly. The writing process covers many stages that have to be done by the writer. Related to this Brozo and Simpon (1991) as quoted by Palmer (1994:7) suggest that while there is considerable diversity in the labeling of the stages, the common motive across them all appears to be a concern for prewriting, writing, and post-writing. It means that there are many various terms used for naming stages but Brozo and Simpon suggested that there are three basic writing stages namely pre writing, writing, and post-writing.

Scott and Ytreberg (1990:68) stated that although the writing and the oral skill are combined in the classroom and the one clearly benefits from the other, writing has certain characteristics which seem to make it difficult for pupils to get to grip with, especially for university students. It means that writing and other skills especially speaking skill benefit for each other but writing has its certain characteristics. Its characteristics cover many things such as; its stages, sentence constructions, mechanics, diction, punctuation, paragraph coherence, etc. Those characteristics seem to make it difficult for students to master.

Seeing the intricacy of writing, it is understandable that students have a fear feeling and little enthusiasm in writing class. Commonly, they are afraid of making mistakes and worried about their ability in choosing and arranging words to produce sentences. Those feelings seem to make the students unconfident in composing a writing. Having a little confidence can make them reluctant to try to write, event dislike writing.

Writing a final paper is a must for all students in English Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies who want to pass their study. A final paper is a portal that must be passed before they get their *sarjana* degree. In the end semester, usually they will prepare and process their writing in conducting a research (read: a final paper) in English thoroughly. Actually they have been equipped some skills and techniques how to arrange a final paper written in English, through some subjects that deal with it.

One of the English components that they have got several sessions during they study in any every semester is a grammar mastery. They have got it since they were in the first semester until fifth semester, meaning that they are supposed to be excellent in arranging their sentences in a final paper to make it meaningful and understandable.

Conducting this study this writers want to contribute the result to the English lecturers handling their writing in final paper as well as to the students in anticipating and solving their grammatical errors made. In turn, the writers hope that the result of this study can be useful for teaching and learning writing through grammar based in writing generally.

### **Statements of the Problem**

The problems that will be discussed in this study are;

1. What are the kinds of grammatical errors made in writing a final paper by students of English Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies?
2. How to eliminate the students' grammatical errors in their writing a final paper?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Grammatical Errors**

The word "grammar" is very ambiguous since it has several meanings. Many experts define the word "grammar" in several ways and there is no universally accepted definition of it. Leech, et al. (1982: 3) state that ... the term grammar in reference to the mechanism according to which a language works when it is used to communicate with other people. In other word, grammar means that the way how a language works it is used for communication.

According to Gerrot and Wignell (1994: 2). Grammar is a theory of language, of how language is put together and how it works. In reference that grammar is the rule of language, how the language is arranged together and how the language works.

Leech et al. (1982: 23) also that grammar can be briefly described as a set of rules for constructing and analyzing sentences. It is very clear that grammar consists of rules that can be used to arrange or construct sentence so that they can be understandable. Besides for constructing sentences, grammar also can be used for analyzing sentences.

Many theories have been developed to find a new effective rule of language that it can be used as a means of communication. They also analyzed grammar to find the categories of grammar. According to Gerrot and Wignell (1994: 5-6), there are three grammar which have had a major influence in the western world in this century. The categories of grammar are as follows:

#### **1. Traditional Grammar**

Traditional grammar focuses on using words in isolation. In other words, traditional grammar focuses on rule for producing correct sentences. In this category, someone learns the part of speech (Noun, Verb, Preposition, Adverb and Adjective) in isolation. This grammar concerns with the using part of speech whether it is correct or not, whether it is appropriate or not.

#### **2. Formal Grammar**

Formal grammar focuses on learning sentences in isolation. In reference with the statement above that formal grammar is concerned to describe the structure of individual sentence. This grammar views language as a set of rules which allows or disallow certain

sentence structure. The point of this grammar is that the correctness of a sentence whether the sentences is well-structure ord not. It is also concerns in how a sentence is structured.

### 3. Functional Grammar

Functional grammar concerns with the meaning of a language, in this case whether or not the sentences are related to their contexts. In other words, functional grammar learns language in context. It means that meaning of an expression or a sentence is also influenced by its context.

Considering to those three categories of grammar, the writer chooses Traditional Grammar as the basic of the analysis in their writing a final paper. We try to explain the grammatical errors in writing arrangement based on traditional grammar. As stated in the previous page about meaning of grammar and error, we conclude that grammatical error is the lack competence or knowledge in using English grammar. Based on Richards (1971: 182-188) that there are many categories of grammatical errors. The examples are as follows:

#### **a) Errors in the Production of Verb Group**

The examples of the errors in production of verb group are “*We are think..., He didn't went..., We can brought him, and He is studied English.*”

#### **b) Errors in Agreement between subject and Verb**

The examples of errors in agreement between subject and verb can be found in sentences: “*Anita love me very much and They has beautiful dressed.*”

#### **c) Errors in the Use of Preposition**

The errors in the use of preposition can be seen in the phrases: “*consists with, go in Poland, and book of Hardy.*”

#### **d) Error in the Use of Article**

The examples of errors in the Use of Article are “*He was \_ good boy, \_ best boy in the class, and \_ sun becomes red.*”

#### **e) Errors in Pluralization**

The errors in pluralization are in the sentences “*She bought some apple yesterday and Many seller have sold the goods.*”

#### **f) Errors in Pronoun**

The examples of errors in the use of pronoun are “*The man over there called he and I and She books are very expensive.*”

#### **g) Errors in the Use Conjunction**

The errors in the use of conjunction can be found in sentences “*Rena, Dina, \_ Tony go to market to buy some books and She is beautiful and she is cruel.*”

Those errors above are just the examples of grammatical errors based on Richard (1971: 182-188). Those errors are used as the references in analyzing the writers’ data to explain the grammatical errors in writing a final paper made by the English Departmen students of State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN Walisongo Semarang).

### **Writing a Final Paper**

Writing a final paper is one of academic requirements that must be passed by students before getting Sarjana degree. In this session students can be measured about the English mastery that they have already learnt during the first semester until the end-semester.

Before students write their final paper, in the lower semester they have got a certain subject which is being occupied them in academic writing that is ‘writing for academic purposes’. Not only that, but they also got subject of writing one/ sentence based writing, writing two/ paragraph based writing, and writing three/ genre based writing.

In arranging a good writing, they need to fulfill either the four language skills or language components that will influence their English performance whether in English spoken or written. The students are expected to be able to write well-organized pieces of writing. We think that people do not know the feeling of someone if he/she just keeps quiet because he/she does not tell other people what his/her feeling or thoughts are. By writing, the writers can express what happen in their mind, so that the readers will know what it tells us about.

People can deliver their ideas through a research. In the end- semester, students are expected to conduct a kind of academic writing which is called ‘a research’. In making a research, students must deal with some procedures in composing it. In the beginning, they will face ‘introduction’ that has several subtitles such as; ‘background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, statements of problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, definitions of the key terms, and outline of the study.

Background of the study on students’ a final paper, that has various kinds, can be used as a means to express the writer’s idea in conducting his/her research based on their experiences, thoughts, and feelings though writing for specific purpose. He/she can write what he/she wants to say, only if he/she has acquired some experiences. In other words, writing background of the study is a start in conducting their research before continuing to the next steps.

Considering, those statements above, the writers assume that writing is a means of communicating message in a complex creative process, symbolized in written words. Therefore, in mastering writing skill someone has to involve all his knowledge and skill in order to convey the message by creating good writing.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

### **Research Design**

The research is a field research because it is held at State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN Walisongo Semarang). This research was conducted at Department of English Education. In this research, the writers used a descriptive qualitative study to analyze the data. Arikunto (2006) said that an educational research can be carried out at university/school, in the families, societies, factories to achieve educational objectives. To get the research target, the researchers should use a research method. Arikunto (2006: 151) said that a research method is a way which is used by the researcher in collecting the data.

### **Subjects of the Study**

Before starting the research, the writers determined the subject of the study. It consisted of population and sample. It is defined that the population of the study is all subjects of research (Arikunto, 2006: 115). In this case, the writers chose the eighth semester students of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) in the academic year 2012/2013 as the population of research. The choice of the population was based on consideration that the end/ eighth semester students of IAIN have been learning about writing and grammar during the first semester until the seventh semester. The end/ eighth semester students of Department of English Education of IAIN were divided into 3 classes. Each class contained 40 students. Then the writers took around 12 students' final paper as the sample. This sample was taken using a purposive random sampling.

### **Source of the Data**

The writers used instruments in order to get better and proper data. According to Arikunto (2006: 134) the instrument of the research is a tool or facility that is used by the research for collecting data in order to get best result. In collecting the data, the writers used the documented papers namely the students' a final paper.

### **Techniques of Collecting the Data**

The writers gathered the data by doing some techniques as following these steps:

1. Finding students' final paper at library center of IAIN as the sample data of the research randomly.
2. Selecting the proper students' final paper in academic year 2012/ 2013 intensively.
3. Classifying the errors found in their final paper.
4. Categorizing the errors in their final paper properly.
5. Identifying the errors in their final paper which are written by the students.

### **Techniques of Analyzing the Data**

The writer analyzed the data by using steps as follows:

1. Identifying the errors

Firstly, the writers studied the acquired data and try to find out the errors by underlying the errors. The writers analyzed the data as objectively as possible and then they identified all the errors they just found.

2. Classifying the Errors

The writers classified them into 7 categories, they were:

- a. Errors in production of verb group
- b. Errors in agreement between subject and verb
- c. Errors in the use of article
- d. Errors in the use of preposition
- e. Errors in pluralization
- f. Errors in the use of pronoun
- g. Errors in the use of conjunction

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this research is to identify the problems in composing *background of study*' done by the eighth semester students of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN Walisongo Semarang).

After collecting the data and identifying them, the writers conclude that the students make errors in putting the grammar in the incorrect form. Commonly, the eighth semester students those are able to make a final project. Even though, the students make *background of the study*, they still have some problems in writing it. One of the problems is presenting the generic structure. Usually the students can write it, but they cannot arrange their text in a

good generic structure. The students do not realize that a good *background of the study* has to be suitable in generic structure and in a good order.

#### **a. Students' Errors made**

Based on this research the writers find some grammatical errors in writing a Final Paper written by the end semester students of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN Walisongo Semarang). The writers find out some errors in the use of verb group, agreement between subject and verb, the use of preposition, the use of article, the use in pluralization, use in pronoun, and use of conjunction.

The most dominant of grammatical errors by students in the end semester are producing of verb group. The students have not mastered grammar well. It means that they replace the errors in using of wrong verb, for example; "...it *become principle requirement in our global life...*" that sentence should be "**it becomes**" because the subject is singular which is needed s/es in the verb. The students did not realize of using in verb group. Sometimes they use the word without considering the structure in grammar.

The less dominant of grammatical errors by students are using in the pronoun. The students can not understand in using of pronoun well. Based on the result, the writers are able to know that there are some errors in writing a Final Project written by students of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies. It means that the students' of IAIN grammar mastery is still low in their writing a final paper. They have to master for each categories above including in the use of verb group, agreement between subject and verb, the use of preposition, the use of article, the use of pluralization, use in pronoun, and the use of conjunction.

#### **b. Ways to Eliminate the Students' Errors**

After knowing the students' errors, the writer would like to give some ways to eliminate the students' errors. They are:

First, The teacher has to give more time to explain/teach about production of verb group, so that the students can learn more and can understand how to use the right verbs in arranging a sentence. Second, the teacher has to elaborate about subject verb agreement, so that the students can choose the appropriate verbs and know when they have to add "-s /-es" in a verb. Thirdth, the students have to learn more about article, the kinds of article, and also the use of article. So that they can use the articles correctly. Fourth, the students have to pay att aention more bout preposition and the use of it, so that they can use preposition correctly. Fifth, the teacher has to give more explanation about plural and singular nouns.

It is very important because in English we have to add “-s/-es” to change singular into plural nouns. Sixth, the teacher has to explain much more about pronoun. There are many pronouns that are used in English. Pronoun that is used as the subject is not same as the object, beside that pronoun is also used to express the ownership. It often makes the students confuse of the use of pronoun.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

After the writer has known about the cause of the problems in composing a background of the study faced by the end semester of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies, the writers want to give some suggestions to solve the problems.

1. For the English teacher: The teacher should emphasize the students that their target language has different structure from their native language. Beside that, the teacher should motivate the students to learn grammar well, so that they can master production of verb group, agreement between subject and verb, the use of pronoun, and the other elements of grammar well. The last is it will be better for the teacher to give their students more practice in using it.
2. For the eighth semester students of English Education Department of State Institute of Islamic Studies, The students should learn grammar and practice their ability in writing, especially for arranging their final paper.
3. For the reader: The reader can increase their knowledge about grammar and writing a background of the study in a final paper.
4. For the writers : The writer can improve their experience in composing a background of the study and increase their knowledge.

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