

INVESTIGATING GRAMMATICAL PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SEVENTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF STKIP ABDI PENDIDIKAN PAYAKUMBUH IN WRITING INTRODUCTION CHAPTER OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze grammatical problems faced by the seventh semester students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh in writing introduction chapter of research proposal. 50 students involved in the study. The study showed that the students had grammatical problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal, exactly in tenses there were 293 problems (37.66%). Those problems were described based on the indicators which were used based on the theories. The indicators were the use of parallelism, the use of subject verb agreement, the use of pronoun, the use of tenses, and the use of active and passive voice. Besides, the writer also described about miscellaneous problems in the students' research proposal especially in introduction chapter. Then, those indicators were divided into some sub-indicators so that the writer got detailed information about their grammatical problems to write the introduction chapter of research proposal.

Keywords : *Writing, Grammatical Problem, Research Proposal, Introduction*

INTRODUCTION

Having good ability in applying grammar and choosing words to write ideas in written form, it can improve the quality of the written text. Thus, it helps readers to be easy to understand all texts. This phenomenon can be seen in the real-life situation, such as in writing letter to a friend, writing an essay for a school task, writing the description of a thing to other people, expressing an idea through written form, writing research report in the university and so on. In other words, students get many advantages from this ability.

In this case, the university students in the seventh semester have been assumed that they have the highest level in writing skill. Therefore, they must conduct a research and write the research report. Before accomplishing the research report,

the students must write a proposal. Proposal is a paper that is written prior to the research process. In the proposal, the students write three chapters. The first chapter is to discuss about background of the problem that will be studied. The second chapter provides some theories that support the research. The last chapter is to discuss methodology that will be used in the research. Bogdan (1992:75) points out that proposal are prior to conducting research; people are often asked to write a formal statement about how they will conduct their study and what the potential contribution of their work will be.

Dealing with Bogdan's point of view, research proposal is written before doing the research. The students need to consult with the advisors before doing the research. As a matter of fact, the problems and difficulties in writing introduction chapter of research proposal are also faced by the students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh, especially English Department students. Based on preliminary study result, the students admit that writing research proposal is difficult. Although they have taken Research Methodology and Scientific Writing lectures, they still complain that they need extra efforts to compose such a good research proposal, especially the introduction chapter. Besides, the lecturers say that they often find some mistakes in the students' research proposal, especially in the introduction. More than 70% of students' research proposal introductions are written by using incorrect grammar. In addition, it was found from some proposal's seminar observations that the introductions written are suggested to be improved and repaired. Even, some of them are suggested to be changed.

Commonly, peoples have problems with grammar. Not only students but also researchers, even the experienced ones. Based on the phenomena above, it is needed to conduct a study about students' grammatical problems in writing introduction chapters of the research proposals. In order the researcher know the students' problem and also the factors causing the problems.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A. Materials

This research used documents in getting the research data. They were students research proposal especially chapter one.

B. Method

This research is a descriptive design. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are and involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Gay 2000:189).

RESULTS

There were 50 introduction chapters of research proposal written by the seventh semester students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh. In writing introduction chapter, the students had different problems to use grammar. Those problems were described based on the indicators which were used based on the theories. The indicators were the use of parallelism, the use of subject verb agreement, the use of pronoun, the use of tenses, and the use of active and passive voice. Besides, the researcher also described about miscellaneous problems in the students' research proposal especially in introduction chapter. Then, those indicators were divided into some sub-indicators so that the researcher got detailed information about their grammatical problems to write the introduction chapter of research proposal.

However, based on the judgment made by looking at the frequency of the occurrence of problems which the students made, there were two sub-indicators which were not included as the students' grammatical problems. Those two sub-indicators were "Make verb agree after prepositional phrase" and "Recognize active and passive meaning". It means that the students did not face difficulty to use those two elements of grammar used in introduction chapter of research proposal. To see the students' grammatical problems, the following table draws the description of the problems.

Table 1. The students' grammatical problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal

No	Indicators	Number of problems	Percentage
1	The use of parallelism	14	1.80 %

2	The use of subject-verb agreement	2	0.26 %
3	The use of pronoun	68	8.74 %
4	The use of tenses	293	37.66 %
5	The use of active and passive voice	113	14.52 %
	Miscellaneous	288	37.02 %
Total		778	100 %

Table above shows that the number of students' problem in grammar was different for each indicator. Based on the data, the total of students' grammatical problems was 778. From the table, it can be shown that the most dominant problems faced by the students was in the use of tenses with the numbers of problems 293 (37,66%). Then, it was followed by the problems which the students made related to the miscellaneous problems with the numbers of problems 288 (37,02%). In addition, in the use of active and passive voice, the number of problems faced by the students was 113 (14,52%). Next, in using pronoun, the number of problems found was 68 (8,74%). In using parallelism, the number of problems found was 14 (1, 80%). Then, in the use of subject verb agreement, the number of problems was 2 (0,26%).

The use of parallelism

Since there were five indicators, they were described separately. First, the students had problems in using parallelism. The use of parallelism is to combine two similar sentences into one. The description of students' problems in using parallelism can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. The students' problems in using parallelism

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percentage
1	Parallelism with coordinate conjunctions	7	0.90 %

2	Parallelism with paired conjunctions	6	0.77 %
3	Parallelism with comparisons	1	0.13 %

The data in table show that the students had problems in using parallelism. To create a parallel sentence, the students faced difficulty in combining those sentences. There were 11 (0.90%) problems which the students made related to the use of parallelism with coordinate conjunctions. Those coordinate conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *or*. Then, the students also had problems in the use of parallelism with paired conjunctions with the number of problems 6 (0,77%). For the use of parallelism with comparisons, the students made 1 problem (0,13%). The example of students' problem in using parallelism; *The teachers used reinforcement strategy to make the students enjoy in learning english and improve their motivation in speaking English.*

The use of subject verb agreement

The second indicator was the use of subject verb agreement. From the data collected, the students also got problems in using subject verb agreement. The use of subject verb agreement are needed by the students in order to arrange an understandable sentence. The problems were identified based on the verbs after prepositional phrases, expressions of quantity and certain words (*anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, etc*). The students' problems can be described in the following table.

Table 3. The students' problems in using subject verb agreement

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percent age
1	Make verbs agree after prepositional phrases	0	0
2	Make verbs agree after expressions of quantity	1	0.13 %
3	Make verbs agree after certain words : anybody, anyone,	1	0.13 %

	anything, everybody, everyone, everything, nobody, noone, nothing, somebody, someone, something, each (+noun) and every (+noun)		
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The data above show that the students had problems related to the use of subject verb agreement. There were 3 sub-indicators in using subject verb agreement. They were make verbs agree after prepositional phrases, make verbs agree after expressions of quantity, and make verbs agree after certain words (*anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, nobody, noone, nothing, somebody, someone, something, each (+noun) and every (+noun)*). From the data, there were 2 problems of subject verb agreement. In making verbs agree after prepositional phrases, the students didn't make any problem. Then, in making verbs agree after expressions of quantity, the students had 1 (0.13%) problems. For making verbs agree after certain words, the students made 1 (0.13%) problem. The example of students' problem in using subject verb agreement; *Through reading someone could get much information from what she / he read and reading is most useful and important skill than speaking and writing.*

The use of pronoun

The third of the students' problems in grammar was pronoun. In using pronoun, the students faced difficulty to use it. The subject and object pronouns which is suitable to use in a sentence is confusing them. Also, in distinguishing possessive adjectives and pronouns became problems for the students. Then, the problems found by the students in pronoun is in using pronoun reference for agreement. The students' problems to use pronoun can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. The students' problems in using pronoun

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percentage
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1	Distinguish subject and object pronouns	40	5.14 %
2	Distinguish possessive adjectives and pronouns	26	3.34 %
3	Pronoun reference for agreement	2	0.26 %

From the table, it can be seen that the students had problems in using pronoun. For distinguishing subject and object pronouns, there were 40 (5.14%) problems made by the students in their writing. Then, for distinguishing possessive adjectives and pronouns, there were 26 (3.34%) problems made by the students. In addition, for pronoun reference for agreement, there were 2 (0.26%) problems made by the students in their writing. The example of students' problem in using pronoun; *In speaking English we must know the several important ways to make good speak, because we must make other understand what we are talking about.*

The use of tenses

The fourth indicator used was related to the use of tenses. There were 3 sub-indicators used, namely the use of present tense, future tense, and past tense. The problems can be seen in following table.

Table 5. The students' problems in using tenses

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percentage
1	The use of present tense	253	32.52 %
2	The use of future tense	8	1.03 %
3	The use of past tense	32	4.11 %

The data in table show that the students had problems in using tenses. The number of students' problem in using present tense was 253 (32.52%) problems. then, for the use of future tense, the students made 8 (1.03%) problems. In addition, the students made problems in the use of past tense 32 (4.11%) problems. The

example of students' problem in using tenses; *Based on the phenomena above, the writer interested to do a research in order to know the reinforcement strategy used by english teachers, especially in teaching speaking at junior high school of smp n 2 kec. Lareh sago halaban in 2013/2014 academic year.*

The use of active and passive voice

The fifth indicator to see the students' grammatical problems was the use of active and passive voice. There were three indicators in the use of active and passive voice. They are *use the correct form of active, use the correct form of passive and recognize active and passive meaning*. The problems can be seen in following table.

Table 6. The students' problems in using active and passive voice

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percentage
1	Use the correct form of active	18	2.31 %
2	Use the correct form of passive	95	12.21 %
3	Recognize active and passive meaning	0	0

Table above shows that the students had problems in using the correct form of active and passive. For using the correct form of active, the students made 18 (2.31%) problems. in addition, for the use of correct passive form, the students made 95 (12.21%) problems. then, for recognizing active and passive meaning, the students didn't make any problem. The example of students' problem in using active and passive voice; *The students must be know what is they read.*

Miscellaneous Problems

The sixth parts to see the students' grammatical problems was miscellaneous problems. It consists of some sub problems. They are; the use of noun, the use of adjective clause, the use of article, the use of preposition, the use of gerund and infinitive, the use of verb, the use of noun clause, the use of conjunction, the use of modal and the use of adjective and adverb. The problems can be seen in following table.

Table 7. The students' miscellaneous problems

No	Sub-Indicator	Number of problems	Percentage
1	The use of noun	45	5.78 %
2	The use of adjective clause	19	2.44 %
3	The use of article	12	1.54 %
4	The use of preposition	54	6.94 %
5	The use of gerund and infinitive	95	12.21 %
6	The use of verb	18	2.31 %
7	The use of noun clause	2	0.26 %
8	The use of conjunction	15	1.93 %
9	The use of modal	6	0.77 %
10	The use of adjective and adverb	22	2.83 %

Table above shows that the students had miscellaneous problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal. For using noun, the students made 45 (5.78%) problems. For the use of adjective clause, the students made 19 (2.44%). then, for using article the students made 12 (1.54%) problems. In addition, to use preposition, the students made 54 (6.94%) problems. Then, in using gerund and infinitive, the students made 95 (12.21%) problems. After that, to use verb, the students made 18 (2.31%) problems. Next, for using noun clause, the students made 2 (0.26%) problems. In addition, to the use of conjunction, the students made 15 (1.93%) problems. Then, in using modal, the students made 6 (0.77%) problems. For the use of adjective and adverb, the students made 22 (2.83%) problems. The example of students' problem in miscellaneous; *In teaching English, we have four skills that important to learn.*

The students' grammatical problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal

In writing introduction chapter of research proposal, the students do not only have to pay attention to its social function and generic structures, but they also have to concern about the language features. The language features consist of the English

grammar elements used to write the text. Because of that, the students' grammatical problems can be seen from the language features of the text.

In this research, the seventh semester students of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh wrote introduction chapter of research proposal. Based on the analysis of the data gotten from their writing, it was found that the students had problems related to the use of the grammatical features. In addition, there were five indicators which were used to get the data related to the students' problems and there were fifteen sub-indicators which were used to get the data related to the students' problems. Those indicators were the use of parallelism, the use of subject verb agreement, the use of pronoun, the use of tenses, and the use of active and passive voice. Then, those sub-indicators were parallelism with coordinate conjunction, parallelism with paired conjunction, parallelism with comparison, make verb agree after prepositional phrase, make verb agree after expressions of quantity, make verb agree after certain words, subject and object pronoun, possessive adjective and possessive pronoun, pronoun reference for agreement, present, future, past, correct form of active, correct form of passive, and recognize active and passive meaning.

However, based on the data analysis, there were two sub-indicators which were not as the students' problems, namely "make verb agree after prepositional phrase" and "recognize active and passive meaning". In other words, the students had thirteen grammatical problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal.

The first problem which the students faced in grammar was the use of tenses. Related to the use of tenses, the students got problems related to the use of present, future, and past tense. In fact, the number of the students' problems in using tenses was 293 (37.66%) problems. To write introduction chapter of research proposal, the students had to be able to use the rules of constructing tenses. The purpose was to present the cases and arguments. In other words, the students need to comprehend tenses in writing introduction chapter of research proposal which can strengthen and invigorate it (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the students have to be able to use tenses appropriately. Because the students had problems in tenses, they could not express their idea by using correct grammar even simple present tense.

The students' problems in using tenses were identified when the students made errors. From the students' tasks, it was found that the students had problems to use

simple present tense, future tense, and past tense. In using simple present tense, the students still got difficulty to arrange the words into sentences. In fact, they got problems in making verb agree with the subject. For example in the sentence *in conclusion, many of students have no motivation in speaking English*. in this sentence the students write *have no* to show negative meaning, while based on the correct form of present tense the students should write *don't have*. It was also found in using future and past tense, the students still confused in differentiating between present and past participle used in past tense. For example in the sentence *interesting strategy will helped student to understand what they read more*, and, *based on the observation the researcher can get conclude there are two problem in teaching reading*. Both of the examples show that the students are confused to use the correct present or past participle. In the first example the students should use *help* and the second example the students should use *got*.

The students' problems in using tenses were because of the language transfer which they did. The students tended to transfer directly Indonesian into English. While Indonesian didn't have tenses like in English. The students' problem to use the tenses is similar to what has been explained by Coffin, et al (2003). He states that the students whose first language is not English often have significant difficulties with some aspects of English grammar that are distinct from the problems that native English speakers have. It is strengthened by the findings of previous research which was conducted by Zawahreh (2012). He found that the students had problems in using simple present tense. Based on his research, the most predominant errors within tenses were errors of using simple present tense.

The second problem which the students faced was the use of active and passive voice on their writing. Related to the use of active and passive voice, the students got problems about using correct form of active and correct form of passive with the number of the students' error was 113 (14,52%). It means that the students had serious problem to use the rules of passive and active voice. In other words, the students got confused to create the active and passive sentences because they made errors to construct the voice.

Then, Azar (2002) explains that a sentence can be created as active and passive voice. She explains that in the passive, the object of an active verb becomes the

subject of the passive verb. Then, only the transitive verbs (verbs which can be followed by an object) are used in passive. In other words, intransitive verbs cannot be formed into passive. Then, the rule for creating passive voice is be+v3 (participle). However, those theories were not concerned by the students since they did not follow the rules. In fact, they made errors in using the passive voice. It can be said that they did not realize when they used and how to use the passive voice. Consequently, they could not produce a good introduction chapter of research proposal.

The students' problems in using passive voice were because of the language transfer which they did. The students tended transfer the Indonesia language into English which has different rules. The finding of this research is similar with the findings of the research conducted by Nakmontri (2009) and Yuniswati (2010). They found that the students had problems in constructing the passive voice. The major factor which caused the students had problems was the interference. The students did not recognize the difference between Thai and English grammar in passive voice.

The third problem which the students had related to grammar was the use of pronoun. Based on the data, the number of the students' problem to use pronoun was 68 (8.74%). In using pronoun, the students had problems related to the use of subject and object pronoun, possessive pronoun and possessive adjective, and pronoun reference for agreement. It means that the students faced difficulties in using pronoun in writing introduction chapter of research proposal. According to phillips (2001:312) pronouns are words, such as *he, she, or it*, that take the place of nouns. When you see a pronoun in written expression questions on the TOEFL test, you need to check that it serves the correct function in the sentence (as a subject or object, for example) and that it agrees with the noun it is replacing.

Then, Azar (2003) explains that if the pronoun is used as part of the subject, use a subject pronoun and if it is part of the object, use an object pronoun. She explains that the verb of a sentence depends on the subject it refers to. The students' problem in the usage of pronoun is they still confused on how to make the subject agree with the verb. Also, the students do language transfer when they make a sentence; it influences them in determining the verb of the sentence.

The fourth problem which the students had in writing introduction chapter of research proposal was the use of parallelism. Based on the data analysis, the number of the students' problems to use parallelism was 14 (1.80%). Related to parallelism, the students had problems about parallelism with coordinate conjunction, parallelism with paired conjunction, and parallelism with comparison.

According to Phillips (2001) you can achieve parallel structure by making the forms of words as similar as possible. In making parallel sentence, the students should pay attention to the structure for both of the sentences and make them similar.

The students tend to combine two sentences without seeing at the structure of the sentence. And it is influenced by the language transfer they did before writing.

The fifth problem which the students had in writing introduction chapter of research proposal was the use of subject verb agreement. After analyzing the data, it can be seen that the number of the students' problems to use subject verb agreement was 2 (0.26%). It was related to make verb agree after expressions of quantity and make verb agree after certain words.

According to Phillips (2001) Subject/verb agreement is simple: if the subject of a sentence is singular, then the verb must be singular; if the subject of the sentence is plural, then the verb must be plural. And on a verb usually indicates that a verb is singular, while an s on a noun usually indicated that the noun is plural.

Based on the discussion, it could be stated that the students in the seventh semester of STKIP Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh had grammatical problems in writing introduction chapter of research proposal. In other words, the students got difficulty to use five of grammatical features which were involved in writing introduction chapter of research proposal. So that, the students had problems in using tenses, active and passive voice, pronoun, parallelism, and subject verb agreement.

CONCLUSION

The result showed that the students had problems to use twelve grammatical features in the target language of research proposal. Namely, problem in parallelism with coordinate conjunction, problem in parallelism with paired conjunction, problem in making verb agree after expressions of quantity, problem in making

verbs agree after certain words (any, every, no, some, each, every), problem in using subject and object pronoun, problem in using possessive adjective and possessive pronoun, problem in using pronoun reference for agreement, problem in using present tense, problem in using future tense, problem in using past tense, problem in using correct form of active, and problem in using correct form of passive. Actually, those elements of grammar were needed to be concerned to get good quality of writing.

Based on the finding and conclusion, the researcher would like to give some suggestions.

The first is English department should offer an additional class for writing by using the correct grammar in order to minimize the students' grammatical problems in writing.

Next, It is also suggested to the lecturers, especially grammar lecturers to use various teaching strategies in teaching grammar to make the students master grammar before starting writing.

Then, related to the result of this study, tenses become the most problematic grammatical variables in writing introduction chapter of research proposal, the future researchers are suggested to study about minimizing the grammatical problems in writing research proposal.

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