

# **Indirect corrective feedback on the students' grammatical errors in writing by the third year students of MA Al-Fatah Lampung**

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**Abstract.** The objectives of this research are 1) to find out the types of grammatical errors that XII MA Al-Fatah students encountered in their writing and 2) to find out the effect of teacher's indirect corrective feedback on the students' capability of grammar. The approach of this research was qualitative. There were 20 students of the third-grade chosen randomly. Writing test was used to collect the data. The result showed that the students made error in grammar mostly in misformation error as 38%. In addition, based on the result of the test analysis in the table Repeated Measure T-test, hypothesis is not accepted because the Sig. (2-tailed) is  $0.874 > 0.05$ . It means that there was no effect in teacher's indirect corrective feedback on the students' capability of grammar, especially for the students of MA Al-Fatah Lampung.

*Keywords: writing, grammatical error, indirect corrective feedback, error analysis.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Grammatical rules cannot be separated in writing. Hewings and Hewings (2005) state that grammatical rules are the way in which words are organized in a language to make a correct sentence. It helps learners to identify grammatical forms, which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning. Besides, people can express their ideas correctly both spoken and written. Gunn and McCallum (2005) state that grammar is an important and necessary skill that a student must have. It becomes unimportant if the student cannot use it accurately in communication. An English Foreign Language (EFL) learner is needed to learn grammar and use it correctly, so that they will be able to make communication in a clear and accurate way. A correct grammatical structure will determine the meaning of the sentence and it can avoid misunderstanding to the readers. An understanding of grammar is required to clearly communicate the ideas into a form of writing.

Even though writing skill is important, it does not get enough attention and proper time allocation in the teaching and learning process (Parmawati, 2013). The teachers must be able to guide the students to write well because it is not easy for the students. Most Indonesian students regarded writing as a difficult subject to learn and to practice. Brown (1994) notes that human beings universally learn to walk and to talk but that swimming and writing are culturally specific learned behaviors. We learn to swim if someone teaches us. We learn to write if we are members of a literate society and usually only if someone teaches us. Consequently, many Indonesian English students are frequently criticized from their lack of writing ability. This caused students to make errors during their writing process especially in grammar.

Feedback is an essential component of any English language writing course. It can be an information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of the learning task, usually with the objective of improving their performance (Srichanyachon, 2012). There are teacher-feedback, peer-feedback, and even self-feedback as ways to improve writing. Research by Flora, Farhana, Nisa, & Mentari (2020) stated that though the results of their study indicated that there was a significant improvement in the students' writing, the empirical data obtained through the guidance sheet and from each student's score for each writing aspect demonstrate that the improvement was not entirely caused by Peer-Corrective Feedback, but self-correction also played a considerable role. Yet in this research, the researcher will focus on indirect corrective feedback which is self-correction feedback. Self-correction is a process in which the students reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work and their learning, judge the degree to which they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly (Andrade & Du, 2007).

Moreover, the writer's reason of choosing this case is based on her interview with an English teacher and some second-grade students at Islamic Boarding School of MA Al-Fatah Lampung. By interviewing, the researcher will

find out that students still have difficulty on writing by using grammar correctly. They keep making mistaken when they have to write by their own using proper grammar rules. If the students are aware of the errors and mistakes, they will aware and be capable to compose a text with proper also correct grammar. Hence, the researcher wants to know further about kinds of grammatical aspects which are often met. The researcher also adds indirect corrective feedback after analyzing the errors to make the students aware of the errors and mistakes for their next work writing activity.

## II. METHODS

This research was conducted through qualitative method. The researcher intended to discover the phenomenon exists in student writing, that was errors in grammar rules. According to Sugiyono, (2012) a qualitative methodology is a research methodology that is based on postpositive philosophy and used to do a research on scientific subject (not experiment) where the writer is an instrument key. Moreover, this study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative approach to provide qualitative data regarding error production of the students. According to Kothari (2004), the main purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present, it describes exactly what the research has observed. To collect the data, the researcher asked the students to write a text consisting of 150-200 words. Each student was provided with a piece of paper test containing the instruction of doing the test in which they were asked to compose a writing text. Next, the researcher analyzed the error and mistake.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the research, the researcher gathered the result of the writing test.

<b>Table 1. The Result of Each Grammatical Error Types</b>								
<b>Types</b>	<b>Pretest</b>				<b>Post-test</b>			
	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>%</b>
M	0	100	37	38%	0	100	39	44%
O	0	100	33	34%	0	100	25	24%
A	0	67	15	16%	0	67	18	18%
Mo	0	67	15	11%	0	100	20	15%

Table 4.1, as can be observed above, noticeably indicates that the students had difficulty in using grammar. They made error in misformation, omission, addition, and misordering. The type of grammatical error that students most frequently encountered was misformation. The mean score of the pretest was 37. Followed by omission accounts 33, addition and misordering accounts for 15.

<b>Table 2. The Result of All Grammatical Types Mean Score</b>		
<b>Types of Error</b>	<b>Mean</b>	
	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Misformation	37	39
Omission	33	25
Addition	15	18
Misordering	15	20
<b>Average</b>	<b>24,75</b>	<b>25,25</b>

Table 4.2 showed the mean score of all grammatical error types in general. For the misformation type, the mean

score is 37 in the pretest and 39 in the post-test. Omission in the pretest is 32 and in post-test is 24, Addition in the pretest is 16 and in the posttest is 17, Misordering in the pretest is 15 and post-test is 20. Generally, the average of all mean scores are 24,75 for the pretest and 25,5 for the post-test.

**Table 3. Statistical Calculation of the Pre-test and Post-test in All Types**

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRETEST - POSTEST	- .50000	5.80230	2.90115	-9.73275	8.73275	-.172	3	.874

Based on the result of the test analysis in the table Repeated Measure T-test, hypothesis is not accepted because the Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.874 > 0.05. It means that there was no effect in teacher's indirect corrective feedback on the students' capability of grammar, especially for the students of MA Al-Fatah Lampung.

### Discussion

Based on the result, the students in MA Al-Fatah Lampung had difficulty in using correct grammar in English writing, they frequently made misformation error. Student 7 wrote "*wish we luck!*" which should be "*wish us luck!*". The student made misformation error in differentiating subject and object pronoun use. This source of error also can be indicated due to interferences. In Indonesian, there is no difference in using pronoun "*kita*" in "*Semoga kita beruntung!*" sentence, while in English, there must be a change if a writer wants to use subject pronoun and object pronoun. It is also indicated that inter-lingual become the source of this type of grammatical error.

Student 12 wrote "*I hope you always happy*" of which the correct sentences is "*I hope you **are** always happy*". The omission error in this study was marked by the omitted items that must appear in a sentence (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982). Brown (2000) states the omission error occurred because of the influence of the mother tongue of the students. It could be caused by the intra-lingual transfer. For example, in the sentence "*I hope you happy*", the students omitted the auxiliary verb "*are*" because in the students' mother tongue, the sentence "*Saya berharap kamu selalu bahagia*" did not need an auxiliary verb. Moreover, student 5 wrote '*three day*' and student 20 wrote '*all of our friend*' by omitting 's' at the end of the words for the plural nouns '*three*' and '*all of*' and ('*days*' and '*friends*'). This can be indicated that they made those error due to dominant interferences (inter-lingual transfer). According to Zaim (2002) interferences happens because the learner makes the similarity between the sentence in English (as target language) and the sentence in Indonesian (as mother tongue) that he has mastered. If the sentences are translated to Indonesian, it will be "*tiga hari*" and "*seluruh teman kita*", without inflection -s at the end because the meaning will always represent the plural form.

As clearly stated by Littlewood (1994), the majority of intra-lingual errors are instance of the same process of overgeneralization that has been observed in first language acquisition. Student 3 wrote "*I want goes*" which should be "*I want to go*" and student 20 wrote "*always **bringed** a cake*" which should be "*always **brought** a cake*". They made addition error by adding inflection -es and -ed which could not be added in the verbs. It could be indicated that student 3 and student 20 encountered the errors due to negative intra-lingual transfer (overgeneralization). In relation with Jupriaman, Yeni, Rosminah, and Luke's (2018) finding statement that the use of past forms is main aspect that causes the type of grammatical error. In this study, the researcher also found

the misinformation error in forming tenses as student 1's wrote "*I am going to the beach*" which should be "*I went to the beach*". Most students experienced overgeneralization errors because Indonesian as their mother tongue or first language does not have any rule in the inflection -s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing to the verb. Furthermore, the Indonesian grammatical system does not also have rule in tenses. As Wilkins (1978) states that the greater differences between languages, the greater difficulties will be. It made the students did not pay attention of the aspect in the process of their writings. Especially in irregular verbs, they did not know how to change it into the past forms. It happens because in irregular verb so many rules that they have not known. They probably would use similar form of sentence even though they would like to describe their events in present, past, and future.

In attempting to enhance students' writing accuracy in grammar aspect, they were provided indirect corrective feedback by the researcher. Supported by Babellian (2020) that applying indirect corrective feedback is not only able to help students getting some space in writing a text, but it is also able to increase the students' awareness of their learning process. The result showed that 20 students (100%) can revise all their mistakes. Those students got English background knowledge more than the other students at first and second grade language class before they moved to the third grade of social class. Hence, when the researcher gave corrective feedback and reminded them about the grammar rules, they said that they remember then revise the mistakes into the correct one immediately.

On the other hand, Truscott's claim (1999, 2007) that giving feedback has predictable negative effects on learners' writing and if advantageous, it is negligible. That is not in line with the findings of this research. The researcher found an error made by student 16, she wrote "*If you back we are play*" then made wrong correction "*If your back we play*". If she aware about grammar, at least about sentence structure, probably she would write "*If you come back, we will play (together)*", so it will ease the reader to get the meaning.

The researcher agrees with Sheppard (1992), Frantzen (1995), Fazio (2001), and Chandler (2003) who proved CF to be a way of improving the accuracy of L2 students' writing. Although there were some students who needed time and struggling in revising their own writing, and keep making error in misinformation yet, for example student 19 wrote "*But you give me your word that you are sure*" become "*But you gave me your word that you are sure*" which should be "*But you gave me your word that you were sure*", after all, she was able to revise the mistake in misordering "*He is okay too?*" become "*Is he okay too?*"

Therefore, it can be concluded that students make mistake and error is normal as their learning process, but the teacher must help and provide them some ways in improving their grammar because it is important especially in writing skill to avoid ambiguities in meaning. If it is always being neglected all the time, the awareness of the student in processing written production will be affected. By giving indirect corrective feedback, the researcher believes this can be one of the appropriate ways for the teachers to be applied in enhancing the students' writing accuracy especially in grammar aspect.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

##### Conclusion

1. The third-grade students of MA Al-Fatah Lampung had difficulty in writing by using grammar appropriately, they made error in misformation, omission, addition, and misordering. The types of grammatical error that the students made frequently was misformation which produced 46 errors (38%).
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##### Suggestion

1. For the English Teacher  
The English teachers should guide their students to write a composition which is grammatically correct, especially for mastering tenses that is the most commonly type of grammatical errors that occur in their writing. They have to give the students some tasks in mastering grammar in English writing. Then, the teachers should give some suggestions for them to write well by revising their writing by themselves.
2. For the Future Researcher  
Since this study was only dealt mainly with students' grammatical error and indirect corrective feedback, future researchers are hence suggested to use another type of corrective feedback such as direct corrective feedback. Most importantly, future researcher has to find a good method or technique to improve students' English writing skill especially in grammar.

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