

Language Errors Related to Syntax in the Writing of Explanatory Text by Eleventh Grade Students

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The purpose of this research is to describe the sentence errors related to syntax in the explanatory text written by the eleventh grade vocational students. The research approach is qualitative descriptive with the method of a case study. The data of this study are the errors in writing sentences in the explanatory texts written by students. The data source of this research is the explanatory texts composed by students. Distributional method is used to analyze the research data. The results show that the writing of explanatory text by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo still contain some errors. There are several factors which cause the errors with the details as follows: 10 sentences have non-standard structures, 4 sentences related to coherence, 12 sentences contain redundant words, 1 sentence is an illogical sentence, 3 sentences are contaminated with foreign languages, 6 sentences are unclear, and 3 sentences contain improper dictions. It can be concluded that students still experience difficulties and errors in writing an essay.

Key words: *Language error, syntax, explanatory text.*

Introduction

One of the learning orientations of Indonesian language in vocational schools is improving language skills. Language skills include four aspects which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is the main language skill and the most difficult among the other three. If students are able to have such abilities, they show a good quality of skill (Segers & Verhoeven, 2019). The learning of grammar should be encouraged by the teachers. This is in accordance

with the statement of Madi & Al-Khalifa (2018) that learning related to grammatical aspects needs to get attention so that confusion, which results in incorrect texts, does not occur.

It is necessary for language learning to take aspects of writing into consideration besides developing the other three language skills. The problem is that educators pay little attention to learning and tend to ignore the importance of grammar or syntax (Cormier, Schembri, Vinson & Orfanidou, 20112; Morrell, Hood & Mellgren, 2019). Therefore, educating students about proper and correct grammar is necessary for both spoken and written languages. Indonesian subject not only teaches the language in general, but also linguistics which includes phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

Language has a central role as a means of communication in the global society of the fourth industrial revolution. Indonesian subjects become a driving force for science. Based on the identification of language use in the field of education, especially in vocational schools, there are still many errors. Students also still make phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic mistakes while writing (Setiawan, 2016; Musmulyadi, 2016; Hamlan & Karim, 2018; Apriliana & Martini, 2018; Oktaviani, 2018). The implication of using incorrect language causes the mistakes to become second nature, therefore language development is needed.

Literature Review

The misuse of language rules by an individual is due to some factors which are as follows: (1) the influence of language that is mastered first (2) lack of comprehension of the language used (3) improper teaching of language (Setyawati, 2010: 15-16). Teaching is one of the factors that causes misuse of language rules, thus, the education conducted by the teachers has a central role in developing the proper and correct use of language in accordance with the rules and contexts.

The error in written language usually lies in the grammar. It includes phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Morphology and syntax particularly have an important role in the correct interpretations of a sentence (Moukrim, Tragha, Benlahmer & Almalki, 2019; van Rij, de Swart, Wijnands, Coppen, 20119). Therefore, it is necessary to have education related to phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics for the students of vocational schools so that the correct and proper use of language can be achieved. To be more precise, syntax is the one that is often to be wrong in composing sentences such as sentence structures, patterns, and modes.

Every language has its own syntax which cannot be ignored by the user. One of the rules is the one that regulates a specific type of sentences such as active and passive sentences. Error in the sentences can be found when an individual speaks or writes as it is known that a sentence

is a grammatical unit that is limited by long pauses and the final note that rises and falls during the spoken activities (Ima, 2017: 245).

Error analysis is a procedure that is used to identify the level of error in the language use of researchers and language teachers. The procedure of the analysis includes: (1) Sample gathering (2) Explanation of the errors (3) Classification of the errors based on the causes, and (4) Evaluation (Setyawati, 2013:15). The definition stated by Setyawati is in line with Musmulyadi (2016) that the analysis of language error is a working procedure conducted by researchers or language teachers. Sari (2017) states that the misuse of language often happens in essay writing by students which includes the error in the application of Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System.

Writing is an inseparable part of learning activities experienced by the students. The result of the writing skill is in the formation of essays. Through the essay, the student's ability in writing can be observed. It is also necessary that the essay consists of well-composed sentences so that the readers can understand the intended message from the author. One of the writing skills that is taught in Indonesian subject for eleventh grade students in vocational schools is writing explanatory text as stated in the curriculum of 2013.

Writing explanatory text is a main skill that is needed to be taught to senior high school/vocational school students which is in accordance with the curriculum of 2013. Explanatory text contains facts and information related to the process of an event or phenomenon (Suherli, dkk., 2017: 71). There is a lack of attention from the teachers in terms of learning to write explanatory text in schools. This is proven by the lack of writing competition considering that writing learning has positive functions that are to sharpen thinking skills and practice creative thinking. Misuse of language by the students in the learning process can imply that the teaching objective has not been achieved optimally yet. One of the mistakes in written language that is often made by the students in syntactic mistake.

Syntax is a branch of language that discusses the details of sentences, clauses, and phrases. This is unlike morphology, which talks about the intricacies of words and morphemes (Markhamah, 2014:5). Syntactic mistake are errors or deviations in the structure of phrases, clauses, or sentences, and inaccuracies in the use of particles. Error analysis in the field of sentence structure involves word order, cohesion, phrase structure, sentential cohesion and logic.

Method

The approach of this study is qualitative descriptive (Tojo & Takagi, 2017; Zurqoni, 2019). Qualitative approach in this study aims to produce descriptive data in the form of language

errors which are related to syntax in the explanatory essays by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (*RPL*) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools of Sukoharjo. Data in this study is in the form of language errors which are related to syntax in the explanatory essays made by the students. The source of the data in this study is the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (*RPL*) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools of Sukoharjo. The data collection in this study used the methods of documentation and listening and continued with the note taking technique. The intended documentation was the explanatory texts written by the students. The method of listening was conducted by reading explanatory texts carefully and thoroughly to identify language errors related to syntax in the students' essays. Furthermore, after identifying the syntactic errors in the explanatory text, the data was recorded on the data card in accordance with the syntactic mistakes. The resource people of this study were the eleventh grade students of software engineering 1 of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo. To obtain the data in the form of explanatory text, the students were given a task to write explanatory text with a predetermined theme. Data analysis of this study used the distributional method. The distributional method was carried out by connecting the language data to the syntactic rules in the students' explanatory text.

Results and Discussion

Result and discussion of this study will be focused on the language errors related to syntax in the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering 1 of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo.

The writing of explanatory essay by those students still contains some mistakes. It is due to lacks of comprehension and knowledge on how to compose an explanatory text as well as write correct and good sentences. Language errors on the explanatory text are displayed on Table 1.

Table 1: Sentence errors in the students' explanatory essays

No	Syntactic error	Frequency
1.	Informal sentence structure	10 sentences
2.	Coherence	1 sentence
3.	Redudancy	12 sentences
4.	Sentential logic	1 sentence
5.	Contaminated sentence	3 sentences
6.	Unclear sentence	6 sentences
7.	Incorrect diction	3 sentences

According to Table 1, there are 7 syntactic mistakes in the explanatory text. This shows that the students' abilities in writing the essay based on the syntax are not good. Thus, it is necessary to improve the learning of grammar, specifically about syntax. Considering that syntax is more

difficult than phonology which studies the sound of language and morphology which studies words. Syntax is more than those two fields so that it is more difficult.

Sentence Errors Related to Syntax in the Writing of Explanatory Text Informal Sentence Structure

Explanatory text is one of the texts that is a part of the curriculum of 2013 which must be mastered by the students. Competencies that must be achieved by students, in addition to being able to identify and compose an explanatory text, are to understand the characteristics and rules of language of explanatory texts. The characteristic of an explanatory text is the formal style or the use of standard sentences. Good sentences are the ones who have a standard structure and are not confusing (Meyer & Ray, 2011). Therefore, students should write explanatory texts in the standard language. The implication of using non-standard language will become a bad habit that is using the wrong grammar (Jiménez-López & Urrutia, 2015). Here is an example of the use of non-standard language in the explanatory text.

(1)	Occurred piles of garbage on the side of Tanjung Lekong road along the Neighbourhood of 07 to 15 (<i>Terjadi tumpukan sampah di pinggir jalan Tanjung Lekong dari RT 07 sampai RT 15</i>)
(1a)	Piles of garbage scattered on the side of Tanjung Lekong road along the Neighbourhood of 07 to 15 (<i>Tumpukan sampah berserakan di pinggir jalan Tanjung Lekong dari RT 07 sampai RT 15</i>)

Data (1) is an inaccurate sentence because there is a non-standard sentence structure. It occurs because the sentence structure is incomplete. This shows language errors which are in accordance with the research of Uswati & Nuryanto (2018) that structural errors include the ones related to syntax. The sentence on data (1) does not have any subject, whereas one of the main requirements of sentences is having a subject. It shows on the usage of the first word in the sentence “occurred piles of garbage” which are incorrect because of the lack of subject. The correct sentence is “Piles of garbage scattered on the side of Tanjung Lekong road along the Neighbourhood of 07 to 15” (*Tumpukan sampah berserakan di pinggir jalan Tanjung Lekong dari RT 07 sampai RT 15*).

The sentence in data (1a) is an example of a correct sentence that has a complete structure, which are the presence of a subject, predicate, and adverb. The subject is piles of garbage, predicate is scattered, and the adverb is on the side of the road, and so on. Therefore, it can be said that the correct sentence is the one in the data (1a) which has a standard sentence structure which is a sentence that at least has a subject and predicate structure.

Coherence Error

In terms of the analysis of language errors related to syntax, coherence is defined as the closeness of the relationship among elements of a sentence. When we write a sentence, we must pay attention to the cohesiveness of the relationship of one element with other elements. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo, there was a mistake due to the coherence.

(2)	Mount eruption the positive impact and the community around the land becomes fertile while the negative community is traumatized (<i>Gunung meletus dampak positif dan masyarakat sekitar tanah menjadi subur sedangkan negatif masyarakat trauma</i>).
(2a)	Mount erupts has a positive impact which is the land becomes fertile (<i>Gunung meletus memiliki dampak positif, yaitu tanah menjadi subur</i>).

Data (2) is a sentence regarding the explanatory text. It can be observed that there is a coherence error which is an omitted element. The word that was omitted was the word on the phrase “Mount eruption the positive impact”. Those phrases are not common to be used in a sentence of a written language. However, it can be understood if it occurs in a verbal situation, yet, it is uncommon for written language. The common sentence is that **mount erupts has an impact**. When comparing the first sentence to the second sentence, it can be seen from the aspect of coherence that the second sentence is more relevant.

Redundancy

Sentences that contain redundant words are excessive sentences which result in ineffectiveness, pointlessness, and uselessness. Redundant means to be useless, wasted, wasteful, or excessive. The meaning of redundant is almost the same as pleonasm which is the use of words that is more than what is necessary. Thus, redundancy is a language error caused by excessive use of the words or those that are not needed. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools of Sukoharjo, there are students who still use redundant words.

(3)	Mount erupts resulting in some rocks melted, dozens of people passed away, several people were injured, and many residents lost their homes and were traumatized, there were also positive impacts of this disaster (<i>Gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan beberapa batuan meleleh, puluhan orang meninggal, beberapa orang luka-luka dan banyak warga kehilangan rumah dan trauma, ada juga dampak positif dari bencana ini</i>).
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(3a)	Mount erupts resulting in some rocks melted, dozens of people passed away, several people were injured, residents lost their homes and were traumatized, in addition there were also positive impacts of this disaster (<i>Gunung meletus mengakibatkan beberapa batuan meleleh, puluhan orang meninggal dan luka-luka, warga kehilangan rumah dan trauma, selain itu ada juga dampak positif dari bencana ini</i>).
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Data (3) is a sentence that has a language error. This can be seen from the use of words that are redundant or excessive. The redundancy in the sentence lies in the use of *banyak warga* (many residents). The word *warga* (resident) has the meaning of a group consists of many people. The use of *banyak warga* (many residents) is incorrect because the word *warga* (resident) has referred to a group of people or plural. The sentence in the data presented will be more appropriate if the words of *banyak warga* (many residents) are fixed to *warga* (resident) by removing the word *banyak* (many).

1. Sentential Logic

Sentential logic is a logical relationship between a sentence (preposition) and another sentence. A sentence can be said to fulfil the logic of a sentence when the meaning of it can be accepted by common sense. That kind of sentence can be called as logical. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo, there is a mistake due to illogical sentences.

(4)	This erupting mount resulted in dozens injuries and several houses collapsed and damaged causing a variety of rock material to melt and the occurrence of erupting mount or magma discharge from the earth's interior (<i>Gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan puluhan luka-luka dan beberapa rumah roboh dan mengalami kerusakan sehingga menyebabkan berbagai material batuan meleleh dan terjadinya gunung meletus atau keluarnya cairan magma dari perut bumi</i>).
(4a)	This erupting mount resulted in the injuries of dozens people and several houses collapsed and damaged causing a variety of rock material to melt and the occurrence of erupting mount or magma discharge from the earth's interior (<i>Gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan puluhan orang luka-luka, beberapa rumah roboh dan mengalami kerusakan sehingga menyebabkan berbagai material batuan meleleh dan terjadinya gunung meletus atau keluarnya cairan magma dari perut bumi</i>).

Data (4) has a sentence error related to the irrationality of the sentences presented. This can be seen in the sentence which states that *gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan puluhan luka-luka* (this erupting mount resulted in dozens injuries). The irrationality is apparent in the sentences

presented which stated *gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan puluhan luka-luka* (this erupting mount resulted in dozens injuries). Yet, there was no mention of who suffered the injuries due to the erupting mount. This causes various interpretations and the sentences are difficult to be understood. Therefore, the sentence should be improved by adding information about who were injured. The revision of the sentence is *gunung meletus ini mengakibatkan puluhan orang luka-luka* (this erupting mount resulted in the injuries of dozens people). Revision of the sentence is the addition of the word ‘people’ who refers to humans who have suffered injuries due to the mount eruption and not animals.

Contaminated Sentence

The term ‘contamination’ is taken from the English word which means pollution. In linguistics, the word is translated as ‘confusion’. Confusing means chaotic and confusion means chaos. What is meant by the chaos itself is an improper arrangement of language elements such as morphemes and words. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo, there are contaminated sentences.

(5)	The positive and negative impacts of the mount eruption for the people around the land became fertile and many residents lost their houses (<i>Dampak positif dan negative terjadinya gunung meletus bagi masyarakat sekitar tanah menjadi subur dan banyak warga yang kehilangan rumah</i>).
(5a)	The positive and negative impacts of the mount eruption for the people around the land became fertile and many residents lost their houses (<i>Dampak positif dan negatif terjadinya gunung meletus bagi masyarakat sekitar tanah menjadi subur dan banyak warga yang kehilangan rumah</i>).

Data (5) is an Indonesian sentence that has been contaminated with another language that is an English word. This can be seen in the use of ‘negative’ word. The word ‘negative’ is an English word which means bad or ugly. Such words should not be used in the writing of explanatory text, even if it is necessary, the ‘negative’ word should be italicized or use Indonesian word that is *negatif* (negative).

Unclear Sentence

Unclear sentences are sentences that contain ambiguous meaning. The ambiguity causes the listener or reader not to understand the meaning of the sentence. Lack of clarity is often related to a combination of improper choice of words and non-standard structures. Sometimes this is due to the words with contradicted meanings. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh

grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo, there are unclear sentences, as follows:

(6)	This flood results in clogged garbage and also high rainfall, so that flood happens (<i>Banjir ini mengakibatkan tersumbatnya sampah dan juga curah hujan yang tinggi, sehingga terjadi banjir</i>).
(6a)	Flood is resulted from piles of garbage and high rainfall (<i>Banjir disebabkan oleh tumpukan sampah dan juga curah hujan yang tinggi</i>).

Data (6) is a sentence that has an error which is the unclear meaning of the sentence presented. This can be seen in the sentence of 'this flood results in clogged garbage' whereas the intended message is the cause of the flood that is unorganized piles of garbage which cause flooding. However, data (6) implies that flood causes clogged garbage which contradicts the message that wants to be conveyed by the author. The revision of the sentence is 'flood is resulted from piles of garbage'. Thus, one of the causes of flood is piles of garbage that are not managed well.

Incorrect Diction

Diction is a word choice. Diction is the choice of words and the clarity of pronunciation to describe certain effects in public speaking or in writing essays. In composing a sentence, the right words must be chosen according to their meaning. Inaccurate choice of words that is used in sentences can cause the meaning to be unclear. In the explanatory essays written by the eleventh grade students of software engineering (RPL) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo, there are an incorrect diction in the sentences.

(7)	In addition, damage also hit the people (<i>Selain itu kerusakan pun melanda masyarakat</i>).
(7a)	In addition, damage of houses also hit the people (<i>selain itu kerusakan rumah melanda masyarakat</i>).

Data (7) has incorrect use of diction which results in different interpretations for each reader. The inaccuracy of diction used causes ambiguous meaning and can provoke misconceptions (Ihsan, 2018). Errors of diction were also found by Mardianti, Wibowo & Karim (2016) in the essays of vocational students. This shows the importance of learning about language rules. Inaccurate diction used in the sentences is shown is the diction such as "damage", "hit", and "people". The diction used is not quite right because the diction that has been mentioned has the possibility to be misinterpreted as "damaged society". The use of diction in the text

presented will be more appropriate when using diction such as "building", "yard", "rice field", etc. Thus, it is more clear and accurate when it comes to the object that is said to be damaged. The total number of sentences containing syntactic errors out of 32 students' essays is 181 sentences, with the details of 36 sentences have syntactic mistakes. The details of the errors are as follows: 10 sentences have non-standard structures, 4 sentences related to coherence, 12 sentences contain redundant words, 1 sentence is an illogical sentence, 3 sentences are contaminated with foreign languages, 6 sentences are unclear, and 3 sentences contain improper dictions. This is obtained according to the selection of data that has been done as part of the analysis process by reading carefully and repeatedly.

Based on the research, the percentage containing syntactic errors out of 36 sentences was 19.89% while those without syntax errors out of 145 sentences were 80.11%. The percentage of the data was based on the number of errors found in the sentences or the correct sentences divided by the total number of sentences in the students' explanatory texts and then multiplied by 100%.

Conclusion

Based on this study, the competency of writing explanatory text of the eleventh grade students of software engineering (*RPL*) I of Muhammadiyah Vocational School of Sukoharjo still shows language errors related to syntax. In addition, there are still a number of similar sentences in the students' essays because some students prefer to cheat or do it in groups. Syntactic errors in the explanatory text essay vary in the form of seven factors causing syntactic mistakes. The seven causes of errors in the students' explanatory essays are as many as 36 sentences or 19.89% of the total sentences in 32 explanatory texts. Factors causing errors include non-standard sentence structure (10 sentences), coherence (1 sentence), redundant words (12 sentences), sentential logic (1 sentence), contaminated sentences (3 sentences), unclear sentences (6 sentences), and incorrect diction (3 sentences).



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