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AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONAL ERRORS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This research is aimed at identifying the grammatical errors focused on English Prepositions produced by Senior High School's Students in Garut. The objectives of this research are to investigate the types of grammatical errors focused on English prepositions by Senior High School Students and to find the most frequent type of these errors. The method of this research is the descriptive qualitative method. The researcher gave the test consists of 20 sentences that were incomplete in narrative composition. The students were asked to complete the sentence with the correct preposition chosen in multiple-choice. The finding shows that the twelfth-grade students as the participant contributed three types of errors on the use of prepositions to complete the sentences. Those errors are 30,93% in the error of omission, 26,25% in the error of insertion, and 42,81% in the error of selection. Thus, the most frequent type of errors produced by students of twelfth grade is the error of selection that reaches 42,81%. It indicates that students faced difficulties in using prepositions appropriately.

Keywords: grammatical error, prepositional error, preposition, students.

INTRODUCTION

As world globalization, English lesson has become one of the most attentive lessons in some levels of school, particularly in Senior High School in which are graduated from Senior High School must prepare their ability to have great communication. Communication itself comprises four abilities, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From those of them, the only attentive grammatical error found in writing skills. The four centre language abilities are listening, speaking, reading, and writing where writing is clearly the most troublesome expertise for second and foreign language learners to master (Choudhury, 2013). He attests that the primary justification for this trouble is the way that writing is a perplexing cycle that includes both creating and organizing ideas and translating them into cohesive text which is readable. Rakasiswi (2008) adds that the low writing ability is generated by difficulties in writing, the students are difficult to find the idea of writing and always make errors in learning those skills.

Errors in writing is the error which is inappropriate with certain grammar. Learning grammar is the troublesome thing that understudies consistently discover stuck in writing. Numerous standards in language structure can't be disregarded and it can be seen in writing skills. Educators/teachers can discover the errors effectively in such writing. One major grammar error observed in both students' speech and writing is the error of prepositions (Sudhakaran, 2015).

Seaton & Mew (2007) characterize relational word as a word that interfaces one thing with another, showing how they are connected. Relational words consistently are trailed by a thing or pronoun. In accordance with this, Mutmainna (2014) states that relational words can be ordered on the premise on their capacities, for instance, relational word for time (I will reach at five o'clock), spot (he lives in Lahore), course (Maria went to lab), specialist (the room was painted by him), and instrument (she opened the storage with key). Alongside being a mistake in syntactic, prepositional blunder can change the significance of the sentence.

According to Suzanne (2017), using English well in both written and spoken language can affect the transmission of messages. As students of English as a foreign language, students should comprehend some aspects of grammar such as the use of verbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, prepositions, and gerunds. A good comprehension will help them to produce meaningful sentences or utterances and communicate well with others. Unless, errors or mistakes will occur and disturb the message.

There are many genre of texts including descriptive, narrative, expository, and so on. From those types of texts, narration is the text that is considered as easier text to write because telling a story or experience is mostly liked. Besides that, it is also easier to be analysed in case of a prepositional error for students often mention prepositions in time, place, direction, and instrument.

From those backgrounds of research, the researcher decided to analyse the grammatical error focused on English prepositions produced by Senior High School students in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut. The test was conducted on the students which aimed to get the sample of this research by choosing the most errors by twelfth-grade students. The test consists of 20 sentences that were incomplete in narrative composition. The students were asked to complete the sentence with the correct preposition chosen in multiple-choice. Therefore, the title of this research is *An Analysis of Grammatical Error Focused on English Prepositions by Senior High School's Students in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut*.

The research purposes are to identify the types of grammatical errors focused on English prepositions by Senior High School Students in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut and to identify the most frequent type of errors in the use of English prepositions by Senior High School's Students in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut.

There are some studies related to prepositional errors. First, the research conducted by Etisa (2017) focused on identifying error in using prepositions of place and time by seventh grade students of SMPN 10 Yogyakarta.

The results of this research show that of 66 students, the average of errors in using prepositions of place and time with 55.01%. The dominant of students' errors in using prepositions of place and time are at an average errors percentage of 59.28%. In addition, out of a total of 25 questions, there are 22 cases of errors caused by interlingual errors. Furthermore, 19 cases of errors were caused by intralingual errors. These results showed that there was low comprehension of students in understanding the types and functions

of prepositions of place and time. The students should comprehend deeply and study more about the function of a preposition.

Second, the research was done by Alhamid (2018). She analyzed the study entitled *Students Error Analysis in Using Preposition "to"*. From the analysis, it was found that the first errors in miss-formation, with the frequency 56% as the highest number of occurrences. The second level in addition, with frequency 22%. The finally lower in omission with frequency 21%. In learning the English process students make an error in using the preposition in miss-formation, it happened to do not mastery about the material and also writer found caused the error of students to include first language, translation error. Based on the discussion, it is included that the students at the second grade of MTS Al-Ma'arif 1 Animas still low in the understanding function of a preposition. Finally the writer hopes that it will help the teacher in their teaching to improve the students' ability in learning English.

Third, the research was done by Tulabut et al., (2018). The title of the research is *Common Errors in Prepositions Committed by Grade 9 Students: Implications for Teaching*. This descriptive analysis measured and analysed the common errors of 44 grade 9 students in the use of prepositions using an objective test. Using the measures of central tendency, particularly the mean, the study revealed that the students had more errors in prepositions of direction. Moreover, the students tend to choose inappropriate prepositions that are out of context. The results showed that students were confused with the multiple functions of prepositions. English teachers, on one hand, should review their students on how to make distinction among the rules of different prepositions and apply effective learning strategies in teaching them.

Different from the previous researches, the objectives of this research are to investigate the types of grammatical errors focused on English prepositions by Senior High School Students and to find the most frequent type of these errors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition

In analysing learners' errors in English prepositions, it is important to make the difference between mistakes and errors. To distinguish between two concepts, Ellis, (1997) proposes two ways; the first one is to check the consistency of the students' performance. When they utilize the appropriate form and use the inappropriate form in some cases, it is a mistake. However, when they always use the incorrect form, it is an error. Lokeman Loke et al., (2013) state that mistakes are inevitable especially in the process of learning a new language. Furthermore, Yahya et al., (2012) argue that basically errors are unavoidable and they occur for some reasons.

According to James (1998), native speakers (NS) don't and cannot commit errors (of competence) because they know their language perfectly and comprehensively: they can only make mistakes, when they are distracted and tired. James (1998) also asserts that clearest and most practical deviances into four types. The first type is slip, or lapses of the tongue or pen, or even fingers on a keyboard. It can easily be detected and self-corrected by their author unaided. The second type is a mistake. It can be only corrected by their agent if their deviance is a sufficient prompt for self-correction, then we have a first-order mistake. If additional information is needed, in the form of the exact location and some hint as to the nature of the deviance, and we have a second-order mistake.

The third type is an error. It cannot be self-corrected until further relevant (to that error) input (implicit or explicit) has been provided and converted into intake by the

learner. In other words, errors require further relevant learning to take place before they are becoming self-corrected. The last type is a solecism. These are breaches of the rules of correctness as laid down by purists and usually taught in school, for example: 'split infinitives' and 'dangling participle'.

Concept of Error Analysis

Richards & Schmidt (2010) state that error analysis is the study of errors made by second and foreign language learners. They suggest that error analysis may be carried out to identify strategies that learners use in language learning, try to identify the causes of learners' errors, and obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Besides, Ellis (1997) suggests four steps in analysing students' errors. The first step is identifying errors, for example *I sit between all of the students*. The correct form in the target language is: *I sit among all of the students*. By comparing two sentences, it can be seen that the student produces errors on the use of preposition where *between* is used when only two parties are involved instead of *is* used when more than two parties are involved. The second step is describing errors. In this step, all errors that have been identified, then they will be classified into the types of errors which consist of omission, insertion, and selection. From the example above, the student made an error in the selection of prepositions where *between* is the selection of incorrect prepositions. The third step is explaining errors. The explanation concerns the causes of errors. The fourth step is error evaluation. Evaluating error is essential if the error analysis is intended to identify students' problems so that teacher can help to solve them.

Sources of Errors

Uddin & Alam (2015) mention two sources of errors made by the learners, they are; the first is interlingual transfer. When learners make errors because of the first language, those errors are known as an interlingual transfer. The second is intralingual transfer. Intralingual errors are created without referring to L1 resources, the outcome produced by the learners is non-existence in the second language but result from the misapplication of language rules.

Preposition

Humeid (2013) states that preposition is used to express a relation between two entities, one is represented by another part of the sentence. In addition, Seaton & Mew (2007) define preposition as a word that connects one thing with another, showing how they are related. They assert that it is usually followed by a noun or pronoun. In detail, Azar (2000) states that there are common prepositions;

About	at	beyond	into	since	up
Above	before	by	like	through	upon
Across	behind	despite		near	throughout
	with				
After	below	down	of	till	within
Against	beneath	during	off	to	without
Along	beside	for	on	towards	
Among	besides	from		out	under
Around	between	in	over	until	

Classifying those prepositions, Aarts & Aarts (1986) divide preposition into two forms, they are one-word preposition (at, from, since, up, etc) and multi-word preposition (according to, as to, because of, etc)

Based on its function, the preposition can show place, time, direction, and with special uses (Sargeant, 2007)

1. Preposition of place
Some prepositions show where something happens. For example:
 - a. There's a wooden floor underneath the carpet
 - b. Some geese flew over their house
2. Preposition of time
Some prepositions show when something happens. For example:
 - a. School starts at nine o'clock
 - b. I brush my teeth in the morning and at night
3. Preposition of direction
Some prepositions show where something is going. For example:
 - a. The boys chased after each other
 - b. The football rolled down the hill
4. Preposition with special uses
 - 1) Of (I bought a bag of rice and a quart of milk)
 - 2) For (I made this bookmark for Mom)
 - 3) With (he pounds nails in with a hammer)
 - 4) Except and instead of (I like all kinds of food except pasta, you should eat fruit instead of candy)
 - 5) Like, as, and than (Kathleen looks like her dad, Sue is nearly as tall as the teacher, Dad is taller than all of us)

Besides, Lindstromberg (2010) states that talking about prepositions is sometimes related to the phrasal verb. A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and one or more prepositions plus possible other words in addition. A key feature of a phrasal verb is that the whole combination of words should function as a lexical unit that has its meaning. This meaning may be relatively literal as in pick up (litter), gather and remove (litter), or not. But when students and teachers speak of phrasal verbs, it is generally the ones that are (semi) idiomatic that they have a mind. e.g. the semi-idiomatic get over (a cold) and the very idiomatic put up with (bad behavior).

As it happens, grammarians tend to divide multi-word verbs into the following three classes: True phrasal verbs: e.g. look up a word/look a word up, in which up is considered to be a 'particle' rather than a full-blooded preposition. - Prepositional verbs: e.g. look after a cat (look a cat after), in which after is considered to be a preposition whose grammatical object is a cat. - Phrasal-prepositional verbs: e.g. put up with bad behavior, each of which is considered to consist of a phrasal verb (put up) followed by a prepositional phrase (with bad behavior). However, in an investigation of prepositional meaning, this three-way classification is far less helpful than the classification we'll look at next.

The Classification of Prepositional Error

Jha (1970) classifies three types of errors in relation to the use of preposition which can be detected in the writing of learners.

1. Omission of Preposition

In omission of a preposition, the learners drop using any prepositions in the sentence where it is obligatory as in:

- a. I woke up in the morning 5 o'clock
 - b. My class started 10 to 4 o'clock
2. Insertion of preposition
In insertion of preposition, students supply preposition in the sentence where it is undesirable as in:
- a. I reached to the campus
 - b. I saw to my teacher
3. Selection of incorrect preposition
In selection of incorrect preposition, students supply preposition in the sentence which is not appropriate as in:
- a. I came here in the 15th of July
 - b. I came in campus at 10 o'clock

METHOD

The researcher conducted this research by using the descriptive qualitative method. This method was used to describe the collected data. As per Vicky A Lambert & Clinton E Lambert (2012), the goal of qualitative descriptive studies is comprehensive summarization of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals. As characterized by Trochyn (2006), it is simply describing what the data shows and focuses on the present condition (L.P & Calmorin, M.A, 2007).

Descriptive analysis is composed of raw data transformed in a form that is easy to comprehend and explains rearranged, organized, and manipulated data that produce descriptive information. The descriptive analysis provides a simple summary of the sample and measures. In the present research, the researcher has identified, described, explained, and evaluated the common preposition errors that the twelfth-grade students usually commit based on Bao (2015). The respondents of the research are 50 students from the grade of twelve. Their ages ranged from 17 to 18 years old and most of them are female. Therefore, this research describes the observed phenomenon in the form of words. Generally, the purpose of this research is to describe the fact behind the phenomenon in deep and descriptively.

The researcher built a 20-item target test embraced from various tests on relational words. One model among the negative things that were changed was the sentence, "I'm so exhausted _____ this show!" Some distractors were likewise changed in certain things. The test comprises four sections. The test I was received from the instrument utilized in the investigation of Blom (2006). It was a various decision test covering the various relational words. Test II was embraced from the activities on relational words in Learnclick.com built by Julian (n.d). It was likewise a various decision test wherein the students would choose.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Classification of Error

After collecting the data from 20 incomplete sentences that were given to students of twelfth grade (50 students), the researcher found those three classifications of errors and the percentage can be seen as follow:

Error of Omission

In omission of the preposition, the learners drop using any prepositions in the sentence where it is obligatory. To know the percentage of omission errors, the following formula was used:

$$P = \frac{\text{Total of Error Classification}}{\text{Total of Errors}} \times 100\%$$
$$30,93\% = \frac{99}{320} \times 100\%$$

It can be seen that the percentage of omission errors was 30,93%. Students did not put the prepositions while they were needed. Those prepositions were *of*, *to*, *with*, and *along*. The learners did not put those prepositions in the sentences while they are obligatory to be put in the sentences. After that, to know the percentage in those four errors of omission, the same formula is used. The percentage of amount identified omission errors can be illustrated in chart 1:

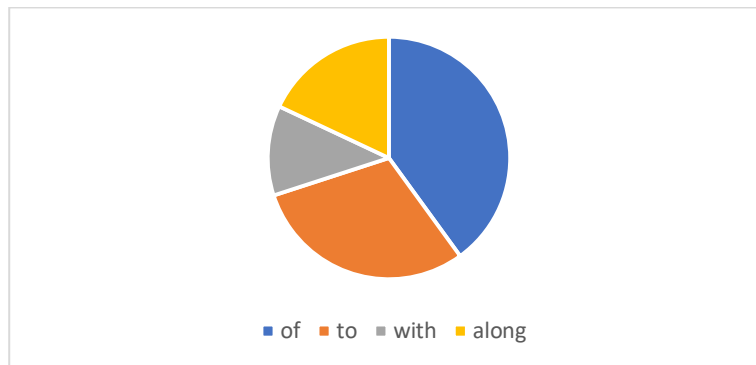


Figure 1. Error omission

The error in the use of preposition *of* is 40%, *to* is 30%, *with* is 12%, and *along* is 18%. *Of* expresses the relationship of a part of something to its whole. It is the most used preposition in English. *With* means 'accompanied by' something or someone. *Along* can be used in the following ways: as a preposition (followed by a noun): *Go along South Street and turn left*, as an adverb (without a following noun): *Can I bring the children along?*

Error of Insertion

There are 84 errors of insertion found in the data. The percentage of this error is as follows:

$$P = \frac{\text{Total of Error Classification}}{\text{Total of Errors}} \times 100\%$$
$$26,25\% = \frac{84}{320} \times 100\%$$

It can be seen that the percentage of selection errors is 26,25%. Students put some prepositions that are not needed. Those prepositions were *in*, *of*, and *by*. After that, in order to know the percentage in those three errors of insertion, the same formula is used. The percentage of amount identified insertion errors can be illustrated in chart 1:

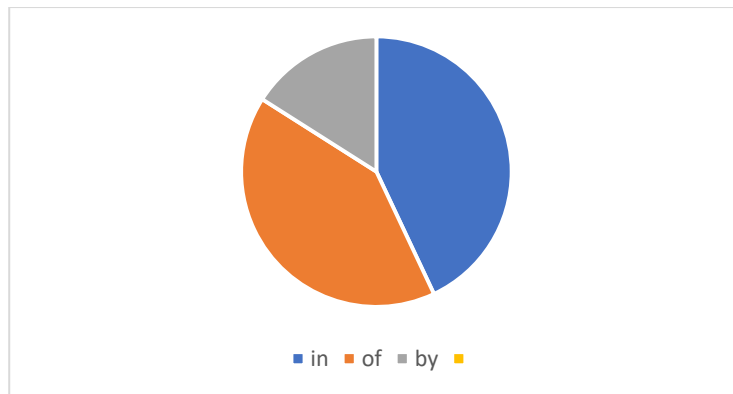


Figure 2. Error of insertion

The error in the use of preposition *in* is 43%, *of* is 41%, and *by* is 16%. *Of* expresses the relationship of a part of something to its whole. *By* means 'as a means of' something or someone. This preposition often comes in a passive sentence. *In* is used for unspecific times during a day, month, season, year, for example: She always reads newspapers in the morning. It can also be Used to indicate a location or place, example: She looked me directly in the eyes. etc

Error of Selection

There are 137 errors of selection found in the data. The percentage of this error is as follows:

$$P = \frac{\text{Total of Error Classification}}{\text{Total of Errors}} \times 100\%$$

$$42,81\% = \frac{137}{320} \times 100\%$$

It can be seen that the percentage of selection errors is 42,81%. Students chose incorrect prepositions to be put in the sentences. Those prepositions were *between*, *by*, *at*, *on*, *in*, and *over*. After that, in order to know the percentage in those six errors of selection, the same formula is used. The percentage of amount identified selection errors can be illustrated in chart 1:

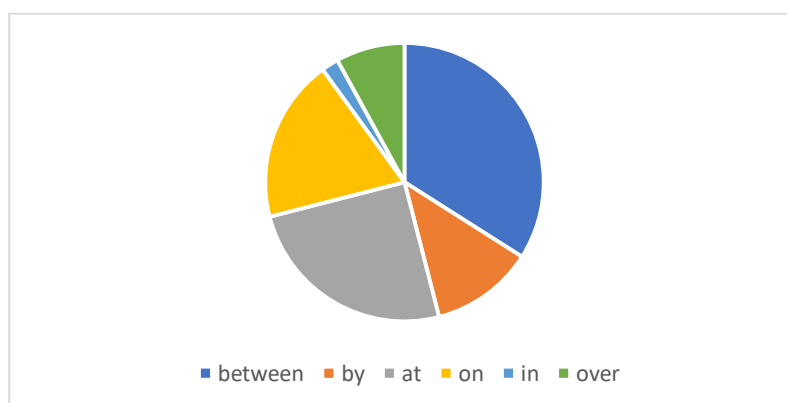


Figure 3. Error of selection

The error in the use of preposition *between* is 34%, *by* is 12%, *at* is 25%, *on* is 19%, *in* is 2% and *over* is 8%. *By* means 'as a means of' something or someone. This preposition often comes in a passive sentence. *In* is used for unspecific times during a day, month,

season, year, for example: She always reads newspapers in the morning. It can also be Used to indicate a location or place, example: She looked me directly in the eyes. Etc. Between is in or into the space that separates two places, people, or objects. Then, we use *over* to talk about movement or position at a higher level than something else; *A beautiful white bird flew over the lake*

From the finding, it is found that selection error is the most frequent type of errors produced by students of twelfth grade in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut. The total of errors reaches 42,81%. Jha, (1970) states, "selection is marked by the supply prepositions in their sentences which are not appropriate". While other types of errors are lower in percentage than the error of selection. The error of omission is 30,93% and the insertion error is 26,25%.

Arjan et al.(2013) states that the students are confused about choosing the right preposition because, for the second language learner, prepositions can be perceived as one of the difficult topics to be mastered. In line with this, Brown (2000) explains that interlingual transfer is the system of the second language that is familiar and the native language is the only previous linguistic system upon which the learner can draw. From those definitions, it can be related to the findings that the twelfth-grade students of Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut who learn English as a foreign language tend to supply prepositions in the sentences which are not appropriate because it is difficult to transfer language correctly and grammatically. For this reason, the teachers are expected to pay more serious attention to this problem because it can hasten the students' progress in making better writing. Teachers should develop more student activities in the use of prepositions to improve the students' proficiency in the use of prepositions. Students need to be clarified on how to appropriately use these prepositions.

CONCLUSION

Data analysis expresses that there are several errors in the use of prepositions found in the students' answers. The errors prove that attention should be given not only in analyzing or correcting the errors but also in improving the ability of the students in using the correct grammatical rules of the English language. Communication still can run with errors, however, the quality of the message is low. If this happens again and again, consequently, the errors will stand by the students or learners forever and become more difficult to be corrected.

Based on the finding and interpretation in the previous explanation, the researcher concludes that: firstly, the twelfth-grade students of Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut as the participant contributed three types of errors on the use of prepositions to complete the sentences. Those errors are 30,93% in the error of omission, 26,25% in error of insertion, and 42,81% in the error of selection. Secondly, the most frequent type of errors produced by students of twelfth grade in Yayasan Al-Barokah Garut is an error in the selection that reaches 42,81%. It indicates that students faced difficulties in using prepositions appropriately. The errors are caused by some factors but are dominantly influenced by the interference of first language (*Bahasa ibu* and Bahasa Indonesia). This study strengthens the argument that errors cannot be ignored and should be decreased as the students learn the English language more and more. The very limited data of this study cannot give enough description for various types and categories of preposition errors.

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