



Error Analysis in Complex Sentences Written by Indonesian Students from the English Education Department

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Abstract

This study was aimed to analyse errors made by learners in writing four types of complex sentences; complex sentences with adjective clauses, noun clauses, adverb clauses, and multiple-clause structures in an Essay Writing class. This study was done based on the realisation that learners' grammatical knowledge is not always translated into accurate language production in real writing contexts and as a continuation of a previous study with the same participants which found that learners' mastery of complex sentence structure affected their L2 writing achievements. Through document analysis of 40 essays, by these learners, using Thematic Analysis, the present study found five major themes of errors. They were lack of tense consistency, errors of omission, which included omission of verbs, omission of subjects and verbs, and omission of subjects, errors of addition, incorrect verb formations (double finite verbs), and the combination of several errors. Using Error Analysis as a framework, some possible contributing factors were further examined. Based on the findings, pedagogical implications and limitations, along with suggested directions for future research were also presented.

Keywords: Complex sentences, adjective clauses, noun clauses, adverb clauses, multiple-clause structure, error analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

English Education Departments (EED) of Indonesia's universities at an undergraduate level typically have courses assessing learners' basic skills, reading, listening, writing, and speaking, and three basic elements, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, in the first few semesters of their generally four-year study. Hence, these learners will typically be required to take at least two levels of classes such as Reading,

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Listening, Writing, Speaking, Vocabulary, Pronunciation, and Grammar classes, regardless of the nomenclatures in their respective institutions. Hence, the classes these learners take will be very different from the classes taken by undergraduate students of non-English majors, which are normally in the form of General English with mixed foci of learning objectives.

Writing classes, furthermore, regardless of the various nomenclatures, become the place where these learners' train to improve their writing. The way that their teachers deliver the teaching-learning materials is various, depending on their teaching styles, the approaches they use and the description of the course in their respective institutions. However, the essence in these classes, remains the same: they will be required to progress towards becoming more proficient learners in terms of writing competence. Despite emphasising writing activities, writing classes require learners to be able to use their grammatical competence as the marking criteria normally consist of contents, organisation, and language use, in which grammatical aspects are embedded (Hartfield et al., 1985).

Furthermore, in these writing classes, lecturers may tend to focus on contents and organisations compared to grammar, which is understandable as in EED, learners are supposed to have learnt grammar extensively in their grammar classes. Grammatical mastery is often seen as a "prerequisite" for writing classes. That is to say that learners are often assumed to be able to apply the knowledge they've obtained in their grammar classes in their writing.

Furthermore, the position of the EED students as future teachers necessitates them to have a very good command of the language they are going to teach, including command of its grammatical aspects. However, more often than not, the grammatical knowledge they have obtained in their grammar classes is not always translated into accurate language production in real writing in their writing classes. Hence, it was deemed necessary to investigate the mastery of grammar of these future teachers of English.

Considering such importance, I previously investigated their mastery of writing complex sentences and its impacts on their second language (L2) writing achievements (see Subekti, 2018). In that study, I found that, in general, their mastery of complex sentences was quite low. The study found that the mean level of mastery was 58% suggesting a low level of mastery. I further found that their level of mastery moderately affected their L2 writing achievements, $R^2=0.19$. Considering their low level of mastery of complex sentences, despite it being an important factor affecting their L2 writing achievements, and considering that these learners will possibly become future teachers of English who are supposed to have a good command of the language, it was considered appropriate to study the errors they frequently made further using Error Analysis (EA).

Recently some scholars have "abandoned" EA studies (Zheng & Park, 2013). One contributing factor, in the last three decades, is the emergence of the Global English (GE) paradigm which does not see native users of English as the benchmark of right or wrong in language production and puts more emphasis on intelligibility (Jenkins, 2006). EA, on the other hand, focuses on learners' errors, i.e., the noticeable deviations from the grammar of native users (Brown, 2000; Mitchell et al., 2013). It focuses on forms and accuracy in language production, seen from the grammar of native users. Hence, with this perspective taken into account, it might be understandable if some scholars, especially Global English advocates, now tend to

leave EA behind. The second contributing factor might be the rise of communicative teaching and learning in the last three decades. The shift of focus in learning from accuracy to fluency in communicative teaching and learning could possibly lead to EA being side-lined. As communicative teaching and the GE paradigm have grown in popularity, less and less empirical studies have been done on EA. This can be seen through the years of publication of such studies which had their hayday back in the 1970s and 80s.

However, there are some reasons to do more studies on EA whilst still acknowledging the growing importance of Global English and communicative teaching-learning. Firstly, intelligibility in GE is clearly very difficult to achieve without a fair degree of accuracy in language production. Besides, despite creating perfect grammar is very difficult to attain for L2 learners, if grammatical rules are too carelessly violated, intelligible communication and fluency may be difficult to achieve (Harmer, 2002). In addition, as Luk and Lin (2006) asserted, if non-native users of English neglect language accuracy too much because of the growing prominence of GE, rather than benefitting from GE discussions, they might suffer as their use of English might mark them off as poorly proficient users who may even be stigmatised by the L1 English communities. Thus, in order to help learners in their learning, EA can take a role in diagnosing their learning problems at any stage seen from their errors (Ellis, 1994). Only when these learning problems are identified, can they be minimised (Zafar, 2016). This may be especially true in those Asian contexts in which English is not widely spoken outside the classroom.

Hence, due to the importance of EA, recently, more and more empirical studies have been done on EA especially in Asian countries. Zheng and Park (2013), for instance, despite acknowledging that EA has been side-lined by some SLA scholars, conducted an EA empirical study in Chinese and Korean universities because they acknowledged the merits of EA. They found that both the Chinese and Korean participants made relatively the same error types when writing in English. This similarity might be due to the closeness of some Chinese and Korean language features which are different from those of English (Zheng & Park, 2013). Thus, these participants made similar types of errors as a result of L1 interference. Moreover, a case study conducted by Muhsin (2016) involving 17 Indonesian Junior High School students found that the participants made numerous errors, such as errors of omission, errors of addition, misformation errors, and errors in improper ordering when writing descriptive essays. Besides the above-mentioned two studies, there have been several other studies conducted on EA in various Asian countries, (e.g. Chen, 2006 in Taiwan; Lim, 2006 in Malaysia; Sarfraz, 2011 in Pakistan; Sukasame et al., 2014 in Thailand; Zafar, 2016 in Pakistan), which might suggest the ongoing relevance of empirical studies of EA.

Furthermore, a study of learners' errors, can be used to help map frequent errors and thus to anticipate them in the future. Teachers can use the results from this study and other similar ones to pay more attention to the most frequently found errors in students' writing (Ellis, 1994). The students, furthermore, can also benefit from the results of EA studies as they can be taught-learn what are the most frequent errors that are made and thus they can learn to avoid making those mistakes and can pay more attention to those detailed aspects when writing EFL.

Considering the above-mentioned rationale, this study seeks to answer this question: What are the most frequent errors made by Indonesian students in writing complex sentences in their EFL writing classes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Sentences

Phillips (2004) asserted that a sentence should contain, at least, a noun or a noun phrase which functions as the subject plus a verb or a verb phrase. The noun phrase and verb phrase form what is called an independent clause (Andersen, 2014). In other words, a sentence must have at least one independent clause, which consists of one subject and one verb (Phillips, 2004).

Sentences, furthermore, can be divided into four based on the number of clauses and the types of clauses within them (Azar, 1999). They are simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences (Azar, 1999). A simple sentence contains one independent clause (Andersen, 2014). As the name suggests, independent clauses are clauses that can stand alone as sentences, as opposed to dependent clauses, which cannot stand alone as sentences. An example of a simple sentence is: “My writing class is fun”. Secondly, a compound sentence is a sentence which contains more than one independent clause (Haussamen et al., 2003). These independent clauses have to be joined using co-ordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, and *yet*. An example is “My writing class is fun but it can be difficult”. Furthermore, complex sentences, which will be explained further in the next section, are sentences which consist of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause (Azar, 1999). These clauses are joined using subordinating conjunctions or relative pronouns. The sentence, “My writing class is fun because we learn to write essays in various genres,” for example, is a complex sentence using “because” as the subordinating conjunction joining the independent clause, “My writing class is fun” and the dependent clause “because we learn to write essays in various genres”. Lastly, compound-complex sentences refer to sentences which consist of more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause (Azar, 1999; Chalker, 1984). “My writing class is fun, but it can be difficult if I do not have enough persistence” is an example of this type of sentence. In the sentence, “if” functions as a subordinating conjunction and “I do not have enough persistence” functions as a dependent clause.

2.2 Types of Complex Sentences

Specifically concerning complex sentences, Azar (1999) and Phillips (2004) divided complex sentences into three types, complex sentences with adjective clauses, adverb clauses, and noun clauses. The first type of complex sentences, those with adjective clauses, refers to sentences containing dependent clauses which modify a noun, a noun phrase, or a pronoun (Werner & Nelson, 2007). The dependent clause in this type of sentence has the same function as an adjective, that is to describe a noun or a pronoun (Subekti, 2018). For example, in the sentence, “Many Indonesian learners, who rarely speak English outside class, may consider English difficult,” “who rarely speak English outside class” gives further information about the noun phrase –

“Many Indonesian learners”. Furthermore, complex sentences containing adverb clauses refer to sentences with dependent clauses which function as adverbs (Azar, 1999). As an adverb, an adverb clause tells more about a verb and it can be positioned where any adverbs can be positioned (Subekti, 2018). For instance, in the sentence, “When learners are interested in the materials, they will likely be engaged in the activities,” “when learners are interested in the materials” functions as the adverb clause of the sentence and it explains when (the time) of the action “will likely be engaged” in the independent clause. This dependent clause, furthermore, can also be positioned after the independent clause, in which case no comma (,) is needed in-between the clauses (Azar, 1999). The next type of sentences, those containing noun clauses, refer to sentences with dependent clauses which can replace nouns or noun phrases (Azar, 1999; Werner & Nelson, 2007). In the sentence, “English teachers know that their students learn at different paces,” for example, the dependent clause “that their students learn at different paces” can replace some possible noun phrases like “these facts,” “this as a fact,” or “their facts”.

Last but not least in relation to complex sentences, there are also sentences which have more than one dependent clause and these dependent clauses may become super-ordinate to one or more dependent clauses (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1985). For example, in the sentence, “Many English teachers believe that learners will likely be engaged in the activities when they are interested in the materials,” – “Many English teachers believe” is super-ordinate to “that they will likely be engaged in the activities,” which, in turn, is super-ordinate to “when they are interested in the materials”. Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) referred to this type of complex sentence as sentences with multiple-clause structure.

2.3 The Concept of Error Analysis (EA)

EA was developed from Contrastive Analysis (CA) in order to better understand the nature of learners’ errors in language learning (Mitchell et al., 2013). Mitchell et al. (2013) stated that, as in CA, learners’ errors are only seen as a result of language interference, related to the interference of learners’ L1 in the learners’ L2 learning processes, as CA, was unable to explain a vast number of learners’ errors, this realisation finally led to the birth of EA in the 1970s.

Rather than being interested in learners’ L1 and L2, EA is interested in language produced by learners. EA analyses learners’ L2 errors in order to understand inter-language development (Mitchell et al., 2013). Corder (1967) in his seminal work on EA stated that understanding learners’ errors can be useful in various ways. EA can show teachers to what extent learners have learned, it can tell teachers or researchers how the language is learned, and it can serve as a tool through which learners can learn the rules of the target language (Corder, 1967). Further, Gass and Selinker (2008) asserted that EA is a linguistic analysis focusing on learners’ errors which are not merely seen as a product of imperfect learning and thus teachers should pay attention to it. They add that to “focus on errors is the beginning of the field of Second Language Acquisition” (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 102) which has pedagogical implications as a result of better understanding of L2 learning, as well as theoretical implications for the field of psychology and linguistics (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Simply put, conducting EA has multiple benefits for teachers, researchers, and learners.

2.4 L2 Learners' Errors

In the field of L2 studies, [Dulay et al. \(1982\)](#) stated that “mistakes” and “errors” are two different concepts. Mistakes refer to occasional lapses in performance by a learner ([Dulay et al., 1982](#); [Ellis, 1994](#)). This means that mistakes happen because learners do not apply what they already know. Errors, by comparison, are the results of learners' language proficiency's level ([Ellis, 1994](#)). However, to differentiate these two is often very difficult as there may not be a clear-cut boundary distinguishing what learners know and what they do not know. Thus, the concept of errors used in the present study refers to “any deviation from a selected norm of writing performance, no matter what the cause of the deviation might be” ([Dulay et al., 1982, p. 139](#)).

Furthermore, [Norrish \(1987\)](#) stated that there are three typical causes of learners' errors in L2 writing. They are carelessness, L1 interference and translation (including collocation) errors. The first is carelessness. In writing contexts, for instance, carelessness can take a number of forms such as learners' haste in writing and writing products which lack editing. The second contributing factor is learners' L1 interference. Being a behaviourist, [Norrish \(1987\)](#) believed that L2 learning is a matter of habit formation. When learners are learning a “new habit”, which is their L2, the old one, their L1, may interfere ([Norrish, 1987](#)). Finally, the third contributing factor to learners' errors is the L1 translation. It happens when learners “translate” their sentences and idiomatic expressions from their L1 into their L2 word by word. This is possibly the most frequent cause of errors. When an error is made, however, it may happen due to the combinations of these causes in which case one cause will be more dominant than the others, rather than the error being due to a single cause exclusively.

Moreover, there are some types of errors which are more frequently made by L2 learners, three of these are errors of omission, errors of addition, and misformation errors ([Dulay et al., 1982](#)). The first type- errors of omission, are characterised by “the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance” ([Dulay et al., 1982, p. 154](#)). A sentence which lacks one or more necessary elements is an example of an erroneous sentence of this type. For example, the sentence, “My favourite food is noodles which cooked by my mother” lacks “are” or “have been” that should be added between “which” and “cooked” to form a grammatically correct sentence. The second type of error is an error of addition. As the name suggests, these errors are characterized by “the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance” ([Dulay et al., 1982, p. 156](#)). For example, the sentence “Once a week, my mom is cooks chicken noodles which is my favourite food” has an unnecessary “is” between “mom” and “cooks”. Thus, this “is” should be dropped to form a grammatically correct sentence. The last type is misformation. Misformation errors are characterized by the use of an incorrect form of the morpheme or structure ([Dulay et al., 1982](#)). For example, the sentence, “The food, which I liked, is noodles,” has an incorrect form of the finite verb. To make the sentence grammatically correct in the present tense, the verb “liked” can be changed into “like”. Alternatively, the verb “is” can be changed into “was” to make the sentence correct in the past tense.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study used document analysis in which the grammar of complex sentences found in 40 essays was analysed. These 40 essays were some of the written products of ten students taking an Essay Writing course during the first semester of the 2017/2018 academic year. The essays selected for analysis were Selected Essay 1, Selected Essay 2, Progress Assessment Essay and Final Assessment Essay by the learners. The use of document analysis is intended to enable researchers to investigate a phenomenon within its own context and as such it allows researchers to obtain a natural and authentic data-set (Ary et al., 2002). As these essays were not originally written for this research purpose, it can be said that this study used these essays as secondary data (Kothari, 2014; Pandey & Pandey, 2015). In many empirical studies, the use of secondary data may be seen as inadequate to answer research questions (Kothari, 2014). In this study, however, the use of secondary data was deemed appropriate because the study intended to seek the frequent errors made by learners in a realistic writing context and this data fulfilled that need.

To identify the errors, made by the learners, this study used Thematic Analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) asserted that in Thematic Analysis, important data which represents “some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” will be reported as emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Aronson (1995) previously argued that these emerging themes are put together to form “a comprehensive picture” of the dataset (p. 3) which will enable researchers to see the recurring themes across the data-set. In the present study, the recurring themes were the most frequent errors learners made in their essays. To find these recurring themes of learners’ errors, the complete steps of Thematic Analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed in this study. These were getting familiar with the dataset by reading and rereading it, searching for the recurring themes, and reviewing these themes by generating a thematic map of the analysis.

3.2 The Participants in the Study

The participants in the study were ten EED students taking an Essay Writing course. They were in the third semester of their study at a university in a major city in Indonesia. As a basic ethical procedure, consent forms were distributed to the participants and the students gave their voluntary consent to participation by handing back the signed consent form the same day (Oliver, 2003). During the distribution, an explanation of what the study was about and their rights as participants was given to ensure that the students knew what the research, in which they were going to participate, was about (Basit, 2010; Thomas, 2013).

3.3 Data Analysis

The 40 essays were analysed and the errors were categorising into some themes based on procedures for Thematic Analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). These procedures were conducted by annotating each of the essay documents and taking separate notes as necessary. The most frequently recurring themes along with

examples that best reflect these themes are presented in this paper for further analysis and report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Thematic Analysis found five emerging themes namely: 1) lack of tense consistency, 2) errors of omission, which included omission of verbs, omission of subjects and verbs, and omission of subjects, 3) errors of addition, 4) incorrect verb formations (double finite verbs), and 5) the combination of various errors as seen in Figure 1 which follows:

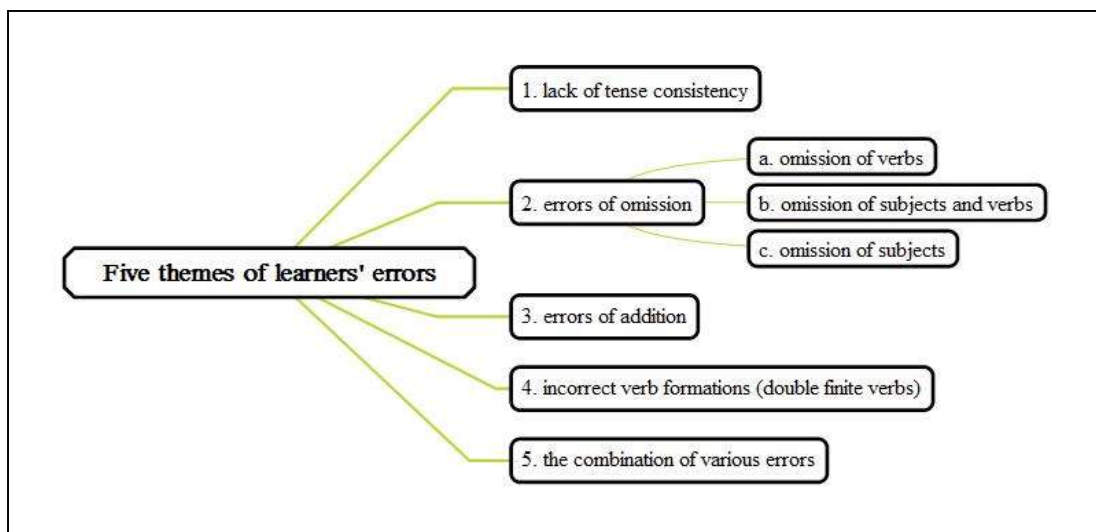


Figure 1. Five themes of learners' error.

In the following sections, each of the above-mentioned themes are presented and discussed further.

4.1 Lack of Tense Consistency

It was found that most of the 40 students' works contained errors in regard to lack of tense consistency. This is a type of error in which learners inappropriately use certain tenses in clauses or sentences. In Table 1 below, some examples are presented.

Table 1. Examples of errors in the use of tenses.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	That is why, social media can be dangerous if we did not use it wisely.	That is why, social media can be dangerous if we did do not use it wisely.
2	There were so many street foods, we can find.	There were so many street foods; we can could find.
3	I was surprised because we have arrived.	I was surprised because we have had arrived.

Table 1 continued...

4	The teacher wants to meet us because he heard that the teacher of computer laboratory cries because of us.	The teacher wants wanted to meet us because he had heard that the teacher of in the computer laboratory cries cried because of us.
5	In summary, IAIN Salatiga is the first place that we visited on our first day in Salatiga.	In summary, IAIN Salatiga is was the first place that we visited on our first day in Salatiga.
6	So, if you visited java it is good to try three traditional foods above.	So, if you visited visit J Java , it is good to try the three traditional foods above.

As seen from Table 1, the learners at times used the past tense when they were required to use the present tense, and vice versa, they used the present tense while they were required to use the past tense. With regard to this phenomenon, Schachter (1996) in Han (2002) stated that even “fluent” non-native users of English will produce inconsistencies in the use of tenses on a random basis. She further speculated that the lack of tense consistency cannot solely be attributed to the lack of grammatical competence of non-native users of English. This phenomenon may rather be “due to the lack of control over the use of language” (Myles, 2002, p. 553). Students often get confused when they are faced with various verb forms and are required to associate them with time. In regard with that, lack of tense consistency, apparently, is not a new phenomenon found in L2 learners’ written productions. In the Indonesian context, many of the eighth-grade participants in the study by Muhsin (2016) also made errors in using tenses. As *Bahasa Indonesia*, the Indonesian language, which is the learners L1 in both studies, does not have the concept of tenses in relation to verb conjugations, this might also play a role. In the Indonesian language, a verb will not change form even if the time reference changes. Thus, these learner participants, whilst having been taught about verb conjugations in English, might not have internalised them as a habit, thus the occasional errors in tense consistency coming from their L1 paradigm (Norrish, 1987).

This type of error, furthermore, also seems to become one of the typical errors made by Asian L2 learners of English. It became one of the major types of errors made by participants in the study by Lim (2006) in Malaysia. Chen (1998) also found that the Chinese participants in his study had difficulty in using the appropriate English tenses. A similar result was also obtained by Chen (2006) among his Taiwanese participants. The studies conducted by Sukasame et al. (2014) in a Thai university context and Zafar (2016) in Pakistan also found that the participants had problems with tense selection. Sukasame et al. (2014) further stated that even though the participants could use all tenses comfortably, they were not confident to select tenses in some situations.

In relation to this, Halliday (2002) asserted that if L2 learners do not understand the concept of tense, they will likely have difficulty in advancing their English to a higher level. In other words, improved mastery of tenses can also improve learners’ L2 learning in general, and vice versa, low mastery of verb tenses will likely hinder it (Halliday, 2002).

4.2 Errors of Omission

The next errors were errors of omission. In general, the results for errors of omission were consistent with the results from many previous studies in Asian contexts (e.g. Muhsin, 2016; Wu & Garza, 2014; Zheng & Park, 2013). This study, more specifically, found several types of omission errors, namely: omission of verbs, omission of subject and verb, and omission of subject.

4.2.1 Omission of Verbs

The absence of verbs could be found in many sentences that the learner participants wrote. In Table 2 that follows, some examples are presented. All of the examples in Table 2 show that the learners made verb omission errors in the form of omitting the verb “to be”. The absent verbs were “are”, “is”, “be”, and “was”. There might be some explanations for this phenomenon. The Indonesian language, the learners’ L1, does not have any element which has the same function as “be” in English. Thus, the learners’ L1 might interfere in their L2 production (Richards, 1973). However, this explanation might not be so legitimate if other sentences in which learners correctly used the conjugations of *be* are taken into consideration. For example in sentence number 4, “The coconut water is good for people who suffering from stomach ulcers because of its antibacterial qualities,” it could be observed that despite the missing necessary “are” in the adjective clause, this writer could use “is” correctly in the independent clause. Thus, it could be stated that the errors may also be due to carelessness (Norris, 1987).

Furthermore, some of the errors made were found in the passive voice clauses. Learners often left out the “be” element when writing in passive structure which necessitates the construction with the “be” *Past Participle* as can be seen in sentence number 8, “As it called the mini animal zoo, we just found some animals”. Interestingly, this study found many sentences with the same errors in which the “be” element was missing, when the *Past Participle* element was present.

Table 2. Examples of errors of verb omission.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	They busy with their gadget and do not care about what they parents are talking about.	They are busy with their gadgets and do not care about what their ry parents are talking about.
2	Deliberate of abortion is the same as the miscarriage, in which a fetus death caused by medical issues.	Deliberate of abortion is the same as a the miscarriage, in which a fetus’ death is caused by dies because of medical issues.
3	The non-genuine software cannot installed on Windows 10 because the security system defends the PC from software that has no license.	The non-genuine software cannot be installed on Windows 10 because the security system defends the PC from software that has no license.
4	The coconut water is good for people who suffering from stomach ulcers because of its antibacterial qualities.	The coconut water is good for people who are suffering from stomach ulcers because of its anti-bacterial qualities.
5	So, it is good to try three ways above if you still lazy doing your homework.	So, it is good to try the three ways above if you are still lazy doing your homework.

Table 2 continued...

6	I didn't talk for a while to my brother because I still shocked with the city.	I didn't talk for a while, to my brother, because I was still shocked with by the city.
7	Lastly, Sidandang garden was my last trip that located in Kaligono village, Purworejo.	Lastly, Sidandang garden was my last trip, that was located in Kaligono village, Purworejo.
8	As it called the mini animal zoo, we just found some animals.	As it was is called the mini animal zoo, we just found just saw some animals there.
9	Last but not least, measles, an infectious disease that people always underestimate.	Last but not least, measles; is an infectious disease, that people always underestimate.

This result may imply that these learners actually “knew” the basic structure for passive voice but failed to implement their knowledge in writing practice, especially when they needed to write sentences of great complexity, such as complex sentences. Littlewood (2002) asserted that this kind of errors can be attributed to learners’ oversimplifying grammatical rules and also to incomplete progress in learning in which learners only partially understand the concept of passive voice as one with a *Past Participle* instead of *be + a Participle*.

4.2.2 Omission of Subjects and Verbs

The next type of error of omission was the omission of both subjects and verbs in a sentence. Five representative examples of this type of error are set out in Table 3, which follows below. As can be seen in Table 3, the omission of both subject and verb altogether in a sentence often results in a fragment, a piece of information. punctuated as a sentence but lacking some of the characteristics of a complete sentence, such as a subject and a verb (Azar, 1999). This error might be attributed to the possibility that learners wrote these erroneous “sentences” when they felt they had finished expressing an idea or a thought, and decided to add to it – but added to it incorrectly (Wu & Garza, 2014). Even though sentence fragments are acceptable in some types of writing, such as poetry, creative writing, and journalism, for stylistic or emphatic purposes (Schuster, 2006), in this study’s writing context, an Essay Writing class, necessitated that the learners write in the academic and formal style, hence sentence fragments were considered incorrect.

Table 3. Examples of errors of omission of both subject and verb.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	Since home-schooling is a private study which makes a small circle of the kids' friends.	Since it is done with a small circle of the kids' friends, home-schooling can make kids have few friends. Or Since home-schooling is studying in a private group study which makes with -a small circle of the kids' friends.
2	Thirdly, although some people argue that women have their choice to decide whatever that they want to do in their life,	Thirdly, although some people argue that women have their own choice to decide whatever that they want to do in their own life, abortion is also related to the baby's life.

Table 3 continued...

3	Actually, many delicious foods that I want to describe but I just choose 3 among them.	Actually, there are many delicious foods that I want to describe but I will just choose 3 among them.
4	Many benefits if we mastered English as soon as possible.	There are many benefits if we mastered master English as soon as possible.
5	Then, adding by the white cranes that fly over the beach that makes my eyes pampered.	Then, it is adding added to by the white cranes that fly over the beach that pamper makes my eyes pampered .

With regard to this, there are some further points to be commented on. First, it is possible that these errors originated from Indonesian-into-English translations. Norrish (1987) stated that this error often happens when learners translate their L1 sentences or idiomatic expressions into L2, word for word. Indonesian people often use fragments in language production and this might affect learners when they write sentences in English. For example, erroneous sentence number 4, “Many benefits if we mastered English as soon as possible” might have originated from “*banyak keuntungan jika...*” translated into “many benefits if...”. The word “*ada*” in the Indonesian language which means “there is/are/were” is sometimes omitted in language production in Indonesian especially in informal language. As such, some learners omitted these elements in their sentences. This kind of errors was also found in Wu and Garza’s (2014) study in Taiwan in which the majority of errors that their learner participants made were associated with the learners translations from their L1, Mandarin, into their L2, English.

4.2.3 Omission of Subjects

The last error of omission was the omission of subjects in sentences. This meant that these sentences lacked a subject either in the independent clause or the dependent clauses. Some examples are set out in Table 4 that follows below. As can be seen in these sentences, there are at least three possible reasons for these errors that can be highlighted. The error in the first sentence which lacks an “it” as the subject of the independent clause might be attributed to L1 translation. The Indonesian language often uses a phrase with a preposition as the subject of a sentence, for example, “*dalam lagu mereka ‘I’ll See You Again’ menceritakan tentang...*” which when translated into English is “in their song ‘I’ll See You Again’ tells about...”. However, written in English, this “sentence” lacks one necessary element, a subject, and so “it” should be added before “tells” or better still drop the “in” and “their song” becomes the subject.

Table 4. Examples of errors due to the omission of the subject.

No	Incorrectly written sentences	Possible corrections
1	As you can see in their song “I’ll See You Again” tells about Brian McFadden when he left.	As you can see, in their song, “I’ll See You Again,” it tells about Brian McFadden when he left. Or As you can see, in their song “I’ll See You Again” tells about Brian McFadden when he left.

Table 4 continued...

2	After had a lunch we went to the Tuol Sleng Genocidal museum.	After we had a lunch, we went to the <i>Tuol Sleng Genocidal</i> museum. Or After had a lunch we went to the Tuol Sleng Genocidal museum.
3	Then, we had a discussion after watched a short movie with the theme, social justice.	Then, we had a discussion after we had watched a short movie with the theme, social justice. Or Then, we had a discussion after watching a short movie with the theme, social justice. Or After watching a short movie with the theme, social justice Then , we then had a discussion.
4	Secondly, you also can consume <i>paracetamol</i> or <i>ibuprofen</i> which can buy in the drug store.	Secondly, you also can also consume take <i>paracetamol</i> or <i>ibuprofen</i> which you can buy in the a drug store.

The errors in the second and the third sentences, furthermore, could be attributed to at least two possible inter-related reasons. The first is L1 translation (Norris, 1987). In Indonesian complex sentence structure, it is common to use a verb without a subject in the dependent clause, for example “*Setelah makan siang, kami pergi ke...*” which could be translated into “After having lunch, we went to...” However, as seen in sentences numbers two and three respectively, learners used the finite verbs “had” and “watched” instead of “having” and “watching”. Hence, those sentences each needed a subject, thus the addition of the subject “we” is needed in both examples. These examples also show the second possible reason, the incomplete progression of L2 learning (Corder, 1967). Learners might not have known the rule of changing dependent clauses into a phrase by changing the finite verbs into non-finite ones and omitting the subjects of the dependent clauses. But note the alternative in example two is to drop the verb so that it becomes an adverbial phrase “After lunch”. Finally, the errors found in example number four might also be attributed to incomplete progress of learning, i.e. lack of practice, especially in using the passive structure.

4.3 Errors of Addition

Different from errors of omission, errors of addition are characterised by the presence of an element which should not appear in a well-formed sentence. The study by Muhsin (2016) in Indonesia found that his participants also made errors of addition although they were minor errors. The present study also found this kind of error, but less frequently compared to the previously mentioned ones. Some examples are set out in Table 5 which follows below.

Table 5. Examples of errors of addition.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	Thus, people who have the commitment to be vegetarian are usually cooked their food by themselves.	Thus, people who have the commitment to be vegetarians are usually cooked cook their food by themselves.

Table 5 continued...

2	Gadget is an effective learning tool which is can help children to learn automatically.	A G gadget is an effective learning tool which is can help children to learn automatically.
3	When people suffer from measles, the virus could infect easily by the help from air when they are sneeze.	When people suffer from measles, the virus could infect easily by the help from spreading through the air when they are sneeze.
4	Women that have done the abortion, they get psychological problems after abortion.	Women that have done the had an abortion, they can get psychological problems after their abortion.

It is interesting that three of the four examples shown in Table 5 show that learners made the error of adding some conjugation of “be” to their sentences. Whilst there might not be studies to date specifically discussing this phenomenon, it is possible that it was caused by fossilised errors (Myles, 2002) where learners occasionally demonstrate the “habit” of producing subjects (typically pronouns) along with some conjugations of “be”, for example “they are” instead of “they” or “it is” instead of “it” even though these subjects already have non-finite verbs, for example, “they are sneeze” instead of “they sneeze” in example number three. Myles (2002) asserted that fossilised errors can be problematic in writing as the errors become rooted, like bad habits, in a learner’s repertoire, and they can reappear very often despite remediation and correction. However, considering that this kind of error in the present study was fairly minimal, it is probably safe to say that these errors were more attributable to recklessness in writing or editing rather than to fossilised errors per se.

4.4 Incorrect Verb Formations (Double Finite Verbs)

The next type of errors were incorrect verb formations in which each sentence had more than one finite verb without a necessary element of sub-ordination. Some examples are set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Examples of errors in writing double finite verbs.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	A stranger came out of nowhere asked us to take taxi with him.	A stranger, who came out of nowhere, asked us to take a taxi with him. Or A stranger, came out of nowhere and asked us to take a taxi with him
2	Before we left the temple, there was tourist called at me.	Before we left the temple, there was a tourist who called at out to me.
3	At the hall, there were five students welcomed us with Islamic songs.	At the hall, there were five students who welcomed us with Islamic songs. Or At the hall, there were five students welcomed us with Islamic songs
4	The material is used is simple.	The material which is used is simple. Or The material is used is simple.

Table 6 continued...

5	So, everything is there will make you enjoy your vacation at Timang beach.	So, everything which is there will make you enjoy your vacation at Timang beach. Or So, everything is there will to make you enjoy your vacation at Timang beach.
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As can be seen in the above table, these errors of verb formation could be corrected with the addition of a relative pronoun to signal subordination in a complex sentence. As the Indonesian language has the word “*yang*” which is a word with similar meaning to the relative pronouns in the table and Indonesian people frequently use this word both in written and spoken productions, this error was unlikely to be caused by L1 translation. These errors might simply indicate that learners were still in the progress of learning to produce complex sentences with adjective clauses as the dependent clauses.

4.5 Combinations of Several Errors

The last type of error includes sentences written with a combination of several errors together. Some examples are in Table 7 which follows.

Table 7. Examples of learners’ several errors in a sentence.

No	<i>Incorrectly written sentences</i>	<i>Possible corrections</i>
1	As we know that nowadays, most of the snacks that sell in a supermarket there are contain lots of higher protein	As we We know that nowadays, most of the snacks that are sold sell in a supermarket there are contain lots of higher protein. Or As we know, that nowadays, most of the snacks that sell in a supermarket there are contain lots of higher protein
2	It’s funny that we only asian guy on that ship.	It’s was funny that we were the only a Asian guys on that ship.
3	In conclusion, my mind was relaxed after visited Sidebuk-debuk.	In conclusion, my mind was relaxed after I had visited Sidebuk-debuk.
4	100 lessons that provided by this application helps you to study English faster.	The 100 lessons that are provided by with this application will helps you to study English faster.
5	The main reason that caused students do not do their homework is that they do not have a time.	The main reason that caused causes students do not to do their homework is that they do not have a time.
6	The funny moments that was happened here was when some traders offer us to buy some beer.	The funny moments that was happened here was when some traders offered us to buy us some beer.
7	The decline of productivity on children as their physical growth that is not optimal.	There will be the a decline in the of productivity on of children as if their physical growth that is not optimal.
8	Also, the atmospheres that supportive by the air conditioner, the slow instrument and the clean library.	Also, the atmospheres that is supportive supported by the air conditioning, the slow instrumental music , and the clean library will help students concentrate .

Table 7 continued...

9	Since my brother is studying in this university, he was helped me to complete my registration.	Since my brother is was studying in this university, he was helped me to complete my registration.
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As can be seen in Table 7, the sentences with more than one error were typically quite long with run-on clauses. Errors found in these sentences included lack of tense consistency, errors of omission, and incorrect verb formations. These learners might have made errors when trying to incorporate many ideas into one sentence. These combinations of errors might arise due to the combination of various contributing factors such as L1 translation, learners' limited L2 command, and their carelessness such as haste in writing, lack of practice and lack of editing in particular critical re-reading and self-editing .

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of this study's results, there are some pedagogical implications that need to be emphasised. As the most frequent errors have been identified, teachers should focus on these types of errors when teaching, teach these aspects better, and remind learners to be aware of them when writing and editing and/or when checking their own or other's writing. In relation to that, there might have been many studies on EA which stopped at identifying errors and at suggesting teachers pay more attention to these errors when teaching. Hence, the implication now is more on the "how to teach" rather than the "what to teach". The frequent errors learners made in writing might be due to the "weak" connection between grammar classes and writing classes. The learner participants who were studying an English Education major and had specific grammar classes were actually at an advantage as they obtained more exposure to English grammar. Despite that, they seemed to "forget" the rules of grammar that they had learnt in their grammar class when writing essays in their writing class. In regard to that, something should be done in grammar classes in order to equip learners with the ability to employ their grammatical knowledge in real writing contexts (Subekti, 2018). For example, instead of providing isolated grammar exercises like cloze-tests, grammar teachers can design activities which enable learners to use their knowledge of grammar in real contexts such as analysing sentences in authentic materials and writing portfolios containing grammatical points being taught. That is to acknowledge that grammar mastery also means the mastery of its use in contexts (Bumela, 2003).

Furthermore, despite the possible benefits of this study's findings, its limitations should also be acknowledged. First, the categorisation of emerging themes of errors in the present study was bound to be one of the limitations. Some sentences under the theme "Incorrect verb formations (double finite verbs)", for example, could be viewed as "Errors of omission" because some of the sentences in this category lack relative pronouns. In other words, there might have been some overlaps in the theme naming process. Secondly, as the present study used Thematic Analysis to find the emerging themes of learners' errors, it produced descriptive, qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, it is difficult to claim the generalisability of the present study's findings (Gray, 2014). These findings, were, however, consistent with the findings from other previous studies (Chen, 1998; Muhsin, 2016; Sarfraz, 2011; Sukasame et al., 2014;

Wu & Garza, 2014; Zafar, 2016) and from many other scholars ideas (e.g. Dulay et al., 1982; Ellis, 1994; Norrish, 1987), thus providing further evidence of the phenomena of these errors made by L2 learners

Finally, the present study offers two directions for future research. The first is to investigate the extent to which contextual grammar teaching affects learners' L2 writing proficiency. Secondly, learners' attitudes towards contextual grammar teaching, as opposed to isolated grammar teaching, may also be worth investigating. These two suggestions lie on the acknowledgment that grammar mastery also means the mastery of its use in context, especially including writing contexts.

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