PIONEER

LEXICAL ERRORS IN ENGLISH STUDENTS' WRITING

[1]Afrillia Anggreni*
[1]Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia
[1]*afrillthe1st@gmail.com*

[2]Siska Bochari
[2]Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia
[2]*siska.bochari@gmail.com*

*Corresponding author: afrillthe1st@gmail.com

Abstract: This research analyzed lexical erros in writing of English students and focused on three types of errors; they were errors in literal translation, errors of word formation, and errors in word choice. This research aimed to explore the most frequent errors and the factors of errors made by English students. The design of this research was qualitative in which the data were colleted by using document in the form of students' writings and interview. The informants of the research were thirty students majoring in English study program at Tadulako University. The result of this research showed that the most frequent errors made were in word choice and followed by errors in literal translation and errors in word formation. The factors causing the errors were students' inability to consider the context of the topics when writing. They only focused on using dictionary, Google translate, or simply the words that they had in mind to express ideas in their writing. The students also never used words that were related to the topic in their daily interaction.

Keywords: *error, lexical, writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing a text in foreign language presents big challenges for EFL learners. One of the challenges is the selection of lexical items in their writing. Using correct lexical item in writing will present a qualified writing. Furthermore, choose appropriate lexical item will help the readers to interpret or comprehend the ideas or the message of the writing accurately that the writer will be conveyed to the reader but in vice versa if the writers select incorrect lexical, it will provide some impacts to the reader such as misunderstanding or

misinterpreting related to the content of the writing and it will lead miscommunication between the writer and the readers.

Choosing incorrect lexical or lexical errors are normal for foreign language (EFL) learners since the learners still rely on the words that they have in mind and using dictionary to select word that they will use in their writing without consider the use, the form and the context how the word is used. Lexical errors occur because the EFL learners do not have adequate English vocabulary and never try to expand new vocabularies (Andre, 2015). Lexical errors are essential to be investigated to explore the students' obstacles in target language. According to Llach cited in Ander and Yildirim (2010) argues that identify and remedy lexical errors in foreign language learners' compositions is very significant to be analyzed because those errors appear to be one of the main causes of communication problems.

Hence, the researchers conducted this research and focused on three types of lexical errors: errors in literal translation, error in word formation, and error in word choice to find out the most frequent errors made by the students and the factors causing the errors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Error is different from mistake. Error refers to a deviation that produced by EFL learners because of lack of language competence while mistake refers to the performance of language learners because they fail to exploit a known system correctly while error refers to the competence in which the language learners do a conspicuous deviation because of lack of language knowledge or competence(Charles Owu-Ewie & Miss Rebecca Williams, 2017). Furthermore, while mistake is related to learners' performance, error is related to learners' incompetence (Tarigan, 2011). Errors are often made because the learners have limited knowledge or understanding related to language system of target language (Sari, 2016). Errors happened because the learner is lack of knowledge of the target language and occurred consistently and systematically (Gayo & Widodo, 2018). Errors are caused by lacking knowledge of the language system and cannot be corrected by the learner –self (Al-husban, 2018). In addition, language errors can be caused by interlingual interference and intralingual interference. Interlingual interference refers to a negative transfer of first language learners

(L1) while intralingual interference involves errors caused by learners' incomplete knowledge of the target language(Kaweera, 2013).

Lexical error is one of language errors. It refers to a deviation of word selection that used in communication. Lexical errors refers to a wrong choice of content words that express meaning in communication either oral or written that causes misunderstandings related to the outcomes or messages that speaker or writer wish to convey (Cordero Badilla & Martin Núñez, 2020). Lexical error is scrutinized as first language interference (Kaweera, 2013). Llach cited in Andre and Jurianto (2015) claims that lexical errors are the use of incorrect lexical item as the impact of the confusion of the semantic similarity between two words and as the influence of the first language (L1) or the second language (L2). Some lexical errors that are always found in students' writing, those includes errors of wrong word choice, errors of literal translation, errors of omission or incompletion, misspelling, errors of redundancy, errors of collocation, and errors of word formation (Ander & Yıldırım, 2010). James cited in Andre and Jurianto (2015) divides lexical errors into two types, formal errors include wrong selection, wrong formation, and distortion while semantic errors include confusion of sense relation and collocational errors.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method to analyze the lexical errors in students writing that had been laid out. Qualitative is an approach that allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspective of the researcher's study participants and understand the meaning and interpretations that they give to behavior, events or object, identify people' experiences and behavior and also seek to embrace and understand the contextual influences on the research issues (Hennik, Hutter&Baley.,2020).The researchers chose this method because the researcher wants to represent or describe the result of the data. The data were collected by taking some documents or students' writing and conducting interview. The documents or students' writing were students' tasks in Text Type Writing Course in which involved three topics, Junk food, Covid-19 and Mybedroom.Next the documents were scrutinized related to lexical errors and then identified, counted, interpreted and classified into categories. Those were done to find out the most frequent errors regarding to three types of errors, those were

errors in literal translation, errors of word form and errors in word choice while the interview was conducted to find out the information related to the factors of errors made by English students. The interview was only conducted to the students who were found lexical errors in their writing related to the scopes of this research. The informants of the research were thirty students in Third Semester of English Study Program, Tadulako University. The informants were chosen because the researcher thought that they had vocabulary mastery well.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

After collecting the data, it was found that English students 'writing still contained some lexical' errors related to this research' domain. It can be seen on the following table:

Table 1. Errors in Literal Translation

No	Informant initial	Errors	Correction
1	IIM	➢ Most people who **contract** covid-19 will experience mild to moderate symptom	➢ Most people who (are) **infected** (by) Covid 19 will experience mild to moderate symptom.
		➢ You can **catch** it when you breathe air that contains the virus if you are near someone who is already infected with covid-19	➢ You can (be) **contaminated**(by)it when you breathe air that contains the virus if you are near/ **contact** with infected people.
2	AS	➢ The conclusion we get from this pandemic is that the virus that **hit** Indonesia caused economic crisis and lack of discipline in education while studying on line	➢ The conclusion that we get from this pandemic is the virus that **attack**Indonesia causes economic crisis and lack of discipline in education.
3	TS	➢ Consuming junk food can lead to obesity and other diseases later in life because the body **lacks nutrients**	➢ Consuming junk food can lead to obesity and other diseases because the body is **malnourished**
4	WA	➢ We will **fall sick** too	➢ We will **get sick** too
5	LS	➢ Junk food contains more calories than nutrients and lack of fiber and it can **hinder** digestion.	➢ Junk food contains more caloric than nutrional, lack of fiber and it can **harm** digestion.

Source: English Students' Writing

Table 2. Errors of Word Formation

No	Informant initial	Errors	Correction
1	UT	➢ Junk food is consider as a type food that is not healthy for **consumption (noun)**	➢ Junk food is consider (*considered*) as a type food that is not healthy for **consumed (verb)**
2	LS	➢ Junk food contains more **calories** than **nutrients** and lack of fiber and it can hinder digestion	➢ Junk food contains more **caloric** than n**utrional**, lack of fiber and it can harm digestion

Source: English Students' Writing

Table 3. Errors of Word Choice

	Nama (initial)	Students Error	Correction
1	MN	➢ Not only **destroy** our health, it is also slowly killing us by accelerating climate change	➢ Not only **harm/injure**our health, it slowly kills us .
2	NRY	➢ If you are already addicted to junk food, there are several ways you can reduce it, set limits, snack healthy, find subtitutes other than junk food, **eliminate** bad habits	➢ If you are addicted by junk food, there are several ways that can reduce it namely: set limits, snack healthy, find other subtitutes, **get rid of** bad habits/**reduce** bad habits
3	ZA	➢ With **piece** and quiet all around nothing and except the wind	➢ With **peace** and quiet, nothing in around, except the wind
4	WD	➢ I think a small room it would be nice if not a lot of **stuff.**	➢ I think a small room would be nice if not a lot of **Furniture/things**
5	MCN	➢ People use the term junk food to describe a food that has **few of the** nutrients. ➢ You know that junk food can **hurt** your health	➢ People use the term of junk food to describe a food that **low in** nutrients. ➢ You know that junk food can **harm/injure**your health
6	MRN	➢ It has very **little** nutritive **content**.	➢ It has **a few** nutritive **subtances**.
7	RMN	➢ Under the small table, there is a cardboard place to **store** various school equipment or other important **items**	➢ Under the small table, there is a cardboard to **put** various school equipment **things**
8	ASY	➢ The conclusion that can be drawn from this corona virus **disaster** is that it has become a major problem in Indonesia…..	➢ The conclusion that can be drawn from this corona virus **disease** is it has become a major problem….
9	ATR	➢ Corona virus has now infected more than 20 million of **mankind** in the world	➢ Corona virus has infected more than 20 million **people** in the world.
10	TS	➢ Junk food does not have good **nutrition.**	➢ Junk food does not have good **nutrients.**

Source: English Students' Writing

Three tables above show that from thirty writing that had been collected from thirty informants, fiveteenwritingare identified contain lexicalerrors. Five writing contain errors in literal translation, two writing contain errors of word formation and ten writing contain errors in word choice.

Discussion

The result of the research that has been analyzed show that only fiveteen writing involve three topics, Junk food, Covid-19 and My bedroom are identified contain lexical errors that become scopes of this research. Eight writing related to junk food, five writing related to Covid-19 and two writing related to my bedroom. While other writings are not identified containlecixal errors that become scope of this research but contain other types of errors.

For error of literal translation, five students are indicated translating literally and directly the first language into the second language without consider the topic or the context of what had they write, for example, the student IIM translates the word *terkena/terjangkit* becomes *contract*and *mendapatkan* becomes *catch* to express an act related to the people who having an infection of Covid -19 while the most correct word to express them are *infected* or *contaminated*. Next student, AS, translates the word *menyerang* becomes *hit* to express an act to be injurious by saying "The conclusion we get from this pandemic is that the virus that **hit (attack)** Indonesia caused economic crisis and lack of discipline in education while studying on line" while the correct word to place it is *attack.* The next error is produced by Student TS, she translates kurang gizi becomes *lacknutrients* while the correct word to express it is *malnourished*. Next student who translates word literally is WA, she translates *jatuhsakit* into *fall sick*, while in English sick is collocated with *get* to express *jatuhsakit* or 'get sick'. Last students is LS, she translates *menganggu* into *hinder* to state an act that injure people' physical but the correct one is should be *harm.* These errors clearly inform that the students write some texts in English are still interfered by their mother tongue or first language (L1). It seems that interlingual interference still affect in perform the target language.

For error of Word Formation, only two writing from two students are identified doing the error. The first student is UT who placed noun for verb:

Error : Junk food is consider as a type food that is not healthy for **consumption (noun)**

Correction : Junk food is consider (*considered)* as a type (of) food that is not healthy for **consumed (verb)**

The second student is LS. She uses *noun* to compare noun not adjectives. It is indicated by placing the word *more* in front of those words and followed by *than*, it can be seen as follow:

Error : Junk food contains more **calories** than **nutrients**…

Correction : Junk food contains more **caloric** than **nutrional** ….

These errors reflect that the students are still confused to differentiate class of words since the words have visual similarity.

For error of word choice, ten students are identified do the error. It is indicated happened because the writers/students seem focus on meaning of the words but ignore the use (context) of the word. The first case from Student MN, she selects the word '*destroy'* to express an act that injures the health by saying:

Error :Not only **destroy** our health, it is also slowly killing us

Correction :Not only **harm/injure** our health, it slowly kills us

The word *destroy*and *harm* has same meaning but the word *destroy* is more appropriate to state an act that damage a building but to state an act that injure people' health is better to choose the word *harm or injure*. Next students are NRY, ZA, WD, MCN, MRN, RMN, ASY, ATR dan TS. For student NRY, he chooses the word *eliminate* to state an act to make a free from something like bad habid while the appropriate word to place it is *get rid of bad habit or reduce bad habit*. Next is ZA who choose word *piece* to state a quiet condition or she wants to say *peace*, seem that she chooses piece because the sound of the words almost similar.

Furthermore, the student WD selects the word *stuff* to describe *things/furniture*. Stuff is refers to material that thing is made of and it also informal in writing and it is often used to describe uncountable noun, so *things or furniture* is most appropriate to place it. Next is

MCN who choose *few of* to describe the nutrionalsubtancesof the food while the most appropriate is l*ow in* or *high in*. He also chooses the word *hurt*to express an act that injures health. Hurt generally is used to describean act that injure a part of body not a whole of body, so the appropriate word is *harm or injure*

For MRN, he chooses the word *content*to describe s*ubtances* of food. Next is RMN, the student who chooses word *store* to place something in specified place or in whichthe word put is more appropriate to place itt. *Store* and *put* have same meaning but use in different context. Store is generally used to put things in large place such as warehouse or put somethings/devices refer to technology such as store in computer, flask disc, smartphone and others. But if the things are placed in specified place such as a card board, put is better to be placed it. The student RMN also chooses items to describe things that are in his bedroom. Items and things also have same meaning but item refers to the enumerated things and it is usually used for saintific.

Next ASY, the student who chooses *disaster* to describe Corona virus but in fact corona virus is *disease* so the appropriate is Corona virus disease not corona virus disaster, next error is produced by ATR in which place mankind for people by saying:

Error : Corona virus has now infected more than 20 million of **mankind** in the world

Correction : Corona virus has now infected more than 20 million **people**in the world

People is more appropriate to describe all person belonging to nation, community or in general while *mankind* is used to describe human species. The last student is TS which chooses nutrition for nutrients. Nutrition refers to the knowledge about nutrients (subtances). This error actually was not only found in TS' writing but in almost all students's writing about junk food. It seems that they cannot differ nutrition, nutrional, nutrients and nutritive. The results of errors in word choice convey that the students have a low skill in semantic competence or they still have confusion of sense relation.

From the three topics written by the students as the informants of this research, the dominant errors are found in topic of Junk food. It can be indicated that the students are unaccustomed or new with some terms/words related to this topic. It is also supported by the

result of interview that conducted to fiveteen students who have erros in their writing, the students clarify that they never discuss or talk about the topic in English in their daily interaction. They also do not consider the topic in choosing the words in their writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

After identifying and analyzing the data, the researchers found that the most frequent error in English students writing was error of word choice and then followed by error in literal translation and error of word formation. The errors were also most found in Junk food topic.

The students made some errors because they did not consider the context of the topics of writing and never used some kinds of words related to the topic in their daily interaction. They only wrote and translated the words literally using a dictionary, Google Translate, or simply used the words that they had in their mind. The students also clarified that they were lazy to read so they were not rich in vocabulary.

Suggestions

After conducting this research, the researchers suggest some recommendation to the English learners, teachers, lectures, and other researchers who read this article and who will conduct the research related to this topic. For English learners, the reserchers suggest to give attention related to the form, meaning, and context in selecting lexical items that they will use in their performance either in oral or written form and read many English articles in various topics to expand their knowledge about the use of lexical item. For teachers and lectures, the researchers suggest that they should always notice and give corrected feedback related to the lexical item that the students use in their performance.

In addition, the researchers also suggest other researchers who will conduct the similar topic to expand their research areas/scope related to the lexical errors so it can give more information related to the lexical errors in which are still found in students' performance because it helps the teachers to identify the areas that seems difficult for students and they will focus and emphasis to teach about it.

REFERENCES

Al-husban, N. (2018). Error Analysis of Jordanian First—Year University Students' English Language Writing at Arab Open University – Case Study. *International Journal of Pedagogical Innovations*, *6*(1), 23–30. https://doi.org/10.12785/ijpi/060103

Ander, S., & Yıldırım, Ö. (2010). Lexical errors in elementary level EFL learners' compositions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *2*(2), 5299–5303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.864

Andre, R. (2015). *An Analysis of Lexical Errors in the English Narrative Writing Produced By the Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 9 Surabaya in EFL Classroom*. *04*(02), 8.

Charles Owu-Ewie & Miss Rebecca Williams. (2017). Grammatical and Lexical Errors in Students' English Composition Writing: The Case of Three Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Central Region of Ghana. *Sino-US English Teaching*, *14*(8). https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2017.08.001

Cordero Badilla, D., & Martin Núñez, V. (2020). Lexical Errors in EFL Students' Written Production. *LETRAS*, *68*, 175–198. https://doi.org/10.15359/rl.2-68.7

Gayo, H., & Widodo, P. (2018). An Analysis of Morphological and Syntactical Errors on the English Writing of Junior High School Indonesian Students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *17*(4), 58–70. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.17.4.4

Hennik, M., Hutter, I & Bailey, A. (2020).*Qualitative Research Methods.*UK: SAGE Publications Ltd

Kaweera, C. (2013). Writing Error: A Review of Interlingual and Intralingual Interference in EFL Context. *English Language Teaching*, *6*(7), p9. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n7p9

Sari, E. M. P. (2016). INTERLINGUAL ERRORS AND INTRALINGUAL ERRORS FOUND IN NARRATIVE TEXT WRITTEN BY EFL STUDENTS IN LAMPUNG. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, *17*(2), 87. https://doi.org/10.23917/humaniora.v17i2.2501

Tarigan, H.G. (2011). *Pengajaran Analisis Kesalahan Bahasa*. Bandung :Aksar