

## LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS ON SMA STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to analyze the students' speaking mastery on linguistic and grammatical elements, types of difficulty and level of errors frequently made in the school year of 2021/2022. It applied qualitative method, took 20 students as its samples and applied speaking test as its instrument which required them to speak one by one in front of the class during 3-5 minutes. Their performance was recorded by mobile phones. To analyze the data, it applied the taxonomy of linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy. The results showed that they made 252 errors in speaking. The errors distributed on linguistic taxonomy and surface strategy taxonomy of errors. In verb, they made 48 (19%) errors; In pronoun, they made 36 (14%) errors; In preposition, they made 42 (17%) errors; In article, they made 29 (11%) errors; In singular/plural, they made 24 (10%) errors; In conjunction, they made 29 (11%) errors; In word order, they made 20 (8%) errors; and in negation, they made 24 (10%) errors. The most frequent errors are verb (48 or 19%) on linguistic strategy taxonomy while the highest frequency of the categories of grammatical errors or surface strategy taxonomy is omission (103 or 41%). It indicates that grammatical errors or surface strategy taxonomy got more errors than linguistic strategy taxonomy. The results imply that the pedagogical instruction should direct the students on speaking oral performance.

Keywords: *grammatical errors, linguistic category, SMA students, speaking performance*

### INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning process, many students still face speaking as a difficult activity of English subject. Their difficulty is clearly seen from their inability to speak any words, express their ideas and take part in the classroom. They also have low vocabulary mastery (Handini, Prasetyaningrum, Jaelani & Azima, 2021), bad word pronunciation (Susilawati, Supardi & Arifin, 2017), and confusing word arrangement, fear of making mistake, lack of confident, grammar and pronunciation (Heriansyah, 2012).

There are some factors that influence the students' difficulties in speaking especially in introducing themselves, such as unable to produce words correctly and to use correct tenses (Handini,

Prasetyaningrum, Jaelani & Azima, 2021). However, students' speaking problems are classified into linguistic and nonlinguistic problems. Linguistic problems cover lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar while nonlinguistic or psychological problems deal with making mistake, lack of confident, and apprehension of other evaluation (Heriansyah, 2012).

Students' English speaking is also negatively affected by psychological factor (Haidara, 2016). This factor indicates the insecure feeling of the students when they speak English. In almost the same vein, students' speaking difficulties are caused by affective, social, instructor, facilities and linguistic factors and Indonesian education system (Mufidah, 2017). There are many factors that hinder foreign language learners to have a good command of speaking, one of which is *first language interference*. It is realized in the differences of grammar, structures and sounds between learners' first language and those of English the students are learning (Amiruddin, 2019).

This fact contradicts with the nature of speaking as one of productive skills. Therefore, it requires classroom instruction to develop speaking with the practice of perceptive skill. Productive skills naturally deal with speaking and writing. They are the language skills which teachers and/or instructors can apply in their learning condition of using English in real context. They are the students' competence to proceed information and to realize the real use of language productive skills (Masduqi, 2016). In other words, productive skills are the main measurements for teachers to weight their students' language use (Shteiwi & Hamuda, 2016).

To involve in the meaningful productive test, students should be forced to speak individually or in group to face monologue or dialogue that may involve no interaction or interaction. Furthermore, speaking is seen as the important ability that can push the students' fluent progress on learning and practicing the real use of language (Harmer, 2002). This ability then becomes a mirror that portrays not only their knowledge but also competence of processing information and language. In different way, SMK students' speaking difficulties covered linguistic such as lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar knowledge and non linguistics problems like inhibition, nothing to say, uneven participant, mother tongue interference, anxiety, shyness, lack of self confidence and low motivation (Widyasworo, 2019).

The results of the previous studies mentioned above have proven about the students' errors on linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy. Their focus is on students' speaking difficult on ideas, low vocabulary, word pronunciation and arrangement. Those difficulties were classified into

linguistic and nonlinguistic problems. Their problems are due to psychological, affective, social, instructor, facilities and linguistic factors and education system.

To know the students' speaking performance, the researchers came to SMA Negeri Bateti in Malaka Regency. It showed that the students could not speak English in the classroom because. To overcome the students' problems in speaking, teachers of English always taught the first-grade students using Bahasa Indonesia to explain the materials. It is helpful for the students to understand the materials and pushes them to speak English.

The application of bilingual approach, that is, using Indonesian and English, is not a sudden act. Before teaching and learning process, teachers of English forced their students to memorize a passage. However, only certain students could speak while others could not. It is because the time provided in the classroom is quite limited for them to develop their speaking capability. They also felt ashamed when they expressed their feeling in front of the class because they rarely had an opportunity to speak English in the class. The conditions mentioned above motivated the researchers to conduct this study and attempt to find the answers of two problems: (1) What types of errors do the students face in speaking? and (2) what types of difficulty do the face in speaking performance?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this part, this study will review some previous studies which are relevant with the present one. It aims to compare whether the present study really promotes the novel problems or just conforms to the results of the previous one. While the subsequence part will highlight the theories and taxonomy of errors.

Error is the use of a linguistic item dealing with a word, a grammatical item, or a speech act. It is the expression of faulty or incomplete learning. The term 'error' is not the same as 'mistake.' It takes place when the deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge and lack of competence (Hasan & Munandar, 2018). So, it happens in the failure of performing competence. However, it should be kept in mind that mistake is results of low memory. They then identify errors into grammatical errors that occur in their submitted assignments, and structures in his second language speech and classify the errors found according to their grammatical features.

The definitions of error and mistake above actually refer to doing something wrong. Mistake is related to lack concern and attention while error is lack of knowledge. However, they are not that

concerned. It is like a slip of tongue. It is false less formal. While an 'error' is more formal and it happens when that person does not have the proper knowledge do something. So, they cannot correct it. They need guidance.

As a source of learning problems, many experts of English as foreign and second language have identified errors into grammatical errors that occur in their submitted assignments, and structures in their second language speech and classified the errors according to their grammatical features. This condition has motivated the linguists to divide error in certain context then called taxonomy. The taxonomy consists of four types. They are linguistic category, have divided grammatical error into five categories: (a) Sentence pattern that tells us about the relationship among subject, predicate (verb) and object (O); (b) tense that identifies when an event happens or describes a state; (c) pronoun that is used in the place of a noun or noun phrase; (d) preposition that is always followed by nouns (or pronouns) and connects words to show the relationship between the nouns following them; (e) punctuation that is special marks that separate phrases and sentences, to show that something is a question; and (f) capitalization (Nainggolan, 2021). They also mention two categories of grammatical error, namely morphology and syntax errors. In morphology error, there are five lexical word types in English: noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition. While in syntax error, they are some elements that are used to connect and/or combine some sentences to build clauses.

Other experts classify error into four types (Hasan & Munandar, 2018). Those types are (a) additions occurring when an item appears in an inappropriate position; (b) misformations occurring in incorrect use of morpheme or structure; (c) omissions occurring in using a regular marker in place of an irregular one; and (d) misorderings occurring in the alteration of position of an item. In almost the same way, error has been classified into four classes on the basis of (a) linguistic category, (b) surface strategy taxonomy, (c) comparative taxonomy, and (d) communicative effect taxonomy (Damaiyanti, 2021).

Some studies were specifically interested in researching grammatical error in students' performance. It is reported that students made some grammatical errors in forms of omission (40.82%), addition (31.74%), misformation (15.07%), preposition (16.47%), conjunction and article (11.37%), and singular/plural and negation (10%). So, students still made errors on linguistic category on spoken English (Kamlasi & Nokas, 2017). In addition, a study fourteen linguistic categories

revealed that students made 97 (54.49%) misformation, 38 (31.11%) omission, 22 (12.78%) misordering, and 20 (11.11%) addition errors.

In linguistic categories, they made 300 misformations of verbal, 20 misorderings of complex sentence and 19 omissions of determiner (Hasan & Munandar, 2018). While in translating Bahasa Indonesia into English, it is found out that students made 53% lexical aspect, 18% grammar and syntactical aspects, 7% morphological aspects and 3.9% phonological aspects of total errors. So, students' language acquisition on the linguistic component was not adequate to translate the lexical items (such as vocabulary and choice of words), grammar and syntax (Chandra & Wahyuni, 2019).

The three studies above inform us that grammatical errors and linguistic ones still become the interesting conditions the students face in learning English. These conditions should be seen as chances for the educators and/o teachers of English to pay more attention on students' speaking performance as a productive language skill.

Speaking as one of the language skills has defined by some English Language Teaching (ELT) experts. It is related to the ability to make the right sound, choose the right words or get the construction, and make a real communication (Amelia & Komariah, 2017); as an activity on the part of one individual to make oneself understood by another and therefore it is an interactive process of constructing meaning that concerns producing, receiving and processing information (Hidayati, 2021); or as the condition when people transfer their ideas into verbal and nonverbal communication as a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed (Ratnasari, 2020). Those observations are invariably expressed by the skill of the test taker's listening accuracy and effectiveness realized in their abilities to face the oral production test (Widyasworo, 2019).

In addition, as a competence the students have to master speaking to process information and produce productive performance (Masduqi, 2016). Their productive competence will help their teachers and/or instructors understand their learning condition of using English in real context (Shteiwi & Hamuda, 2016).

Speaking is a skill that deals with a real process of communication among people (Masduqi, 2016). Therefore, it is a language skill that uses language accurately to express meanings in order to transfer or to get knowledge and information from other people in the whole life situation (Shteiwi & Hamuda, 2016). However, not many students could speak English. If they can use it in their daily communication, it does mean that they are free from errors.

Therefore, this study will try to describe the meaning of errors, linguistic and grammatical errors in the following turns. The description will help the researchers to identify the types of their linguistic and grammatical errors and type of difficulties in oral performance.

## **METHOD**

This research applied a qualitative descriptive method, meaning that the data obtained were analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive qualitative method is a method that describes the data in the forms of words, phrase and simple numerical figures (**Sahan & Nokas, 2017**). The description aims to organize the sequence of point that should be analyzed on the basis of its arrangement (**Sahan & Kamlasi, 2017**). In this study, the data are the students' speeches (**N= 20**) in their oral performance. The students were purposively taken from XII IPA 1 class of SMA Negeri Bateti who were learning English in the School year of 2021/2022.

To collect the data needed, this study applied an oral test. Before taking the test, the students were asked to find and choose freely local wisdom-based stories which are really closed to their social background (Kamlasi & Sahan, 2019). To run well their oral presentation, they were trained to present their own oral stories. It spent about two days. They were also reminded to write down their experience (Kamlasi & Sahan, 2019). A week later, they were given a chance to tell their story in front of their friends and researchers in the classroom on January 11, 2022.

Each student spent about 3 to 5 minutes for presentation. To record their presentation, the researchers used handphones (Sahan, Abi, Wisrance & Seran, 2022). It aims to keep their performance (Kamlasi & Sahan, 2019). After finishing the test, the results of students recording were copied.

To analyze the data, this study applied the taxonomy of grammatical errors (Hasan & Munandar, 2018) and linguistic category, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy and communicative effect taxonomy (Damaiyanti, 2021).

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the findings as the results of data analyses and discussion. The data analyses contain the types of students' grammatical errors and difficulties in spoken English while the discussion describes the data as the findings of this research.

*Figure 1*  
*Surface strategy taxonomy errors on spoken English*

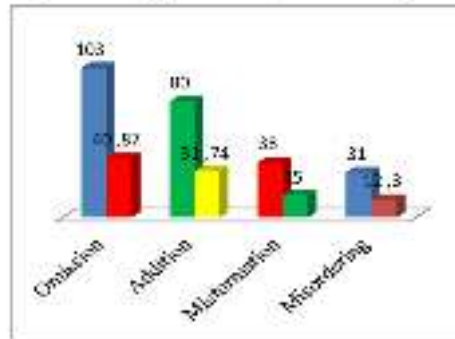


Figure 1 shows that the students made error in omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. The total number of errors they made reaches 252 times in their speaking consisting of simple past tense. The highest frequency of error is omission (40.82%), addition (31.74%), misinformation (15.07%) and misordering (12.30%).

The result of the present study dealing with the surface strategy taxonomy as exposed in Figure 1 is also reported in some previous studies. The first previous study reveals that in speeches, students made misinformation, misorder, addition, omission, blends, and miscellaneous errors. These findings indicate that misinformation dominated errors produced by both levels of proficiency, followed by omission, addition, miscellaneous, misorder and blends expose (Ruminar, 2018). Omission is the most dominant error, followed by misinformation, addition, and misordering (Dewi, Rangkuti & Supriadi, 2021). In addition, students made omission, over-regulation, misinformation, misordering, and addition in speaking. Their errors are caused by intralingual and interlingual factors including the monotonous learning environment (Damaiyanti, 2021). In speaking performance, students made five omission, four addition, three misinformation and two misordering errors in speaking performance (Karisma & Bulan, 2022).

The facts above indicate that error is a mirror that depicts the students' comprehension and production in learning English. Therefore, error can be a deviation from the norms of the target language (Corder, 1974).

The finding as presented in Figure 1 will be elaborated in the following table. It aims to see whether the surface strategy taxonomy errors are interchangeably found in the linguistic strategy



taxonomy. This interchange will tell us the fact that surface strategy taxonomy errors are the duplication of linguistic strategy taxonomy expressed in different linguistic items.

*Table 1*  
*Linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy*

No	Lines of Linguistic Category	Errors of Surface Strategy Taxonomy				Total	Percent
		Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering		
1	Verb	23	18	2	5	48	19
2	Pronoun	18	10	8	0	36	14
3	Preposition	21	14	5	2	42	17
4	Article	15	8	6	0	29	11
5	Singular/Plural	9	11	4	0	24	10
6	Conjunction	12	7	6	4	29	11
7	Word Order	0	0	0	20	20	8
8	Negation	5	12	7	0	24	10
Total		103	80	38	31	252	100
Percentage		41	31	16	12	100	

Table 1 presents the distribution of errors on linguistic taxonomy which also covers the surface strategy taxonomy of errors. In verb, students made 48 (19%) errors that are distributed in 23 omissions, 18 additions, 2 misformations and 5 misorderings. In pronoun, they made 36 (14%) errors distributed in 18 omissions, 10 additions, 8 misformations and 0 misordering. In preposition, they made 42 (17%) errors distributed in 21 omissions, 14 additions, 5 misformations and 2 misorderings. In article, they made 29 (11%) errors distributed in 15 omissions, 8 additions, 6 misformatios and 0 misordering. In singular/plural, they made 24 (10%) errors distributed in 9 omissions, 11 additions, 4 misformations and 0 misordering. In conjunction, they made 29 (11%) errors distributed in 12 omissions, 7 additions, 6 misformations and 4 misorderings. In word order, they made 20 (8%) errors distributed in 0 omissions, 0 addition, 0 misformation and 20 misorderings. And in negation, they made 24 (10%) errors distributed in 5 omissions, 12 additions, 7 misformations and 0 misordering.

In almost the same studies, it is reported that the students made 127 morphology errors distributed in 34 (14,5%) noun, 77 (33%) verb, 4 (2%) adjective, 2 (1%) adverb, 10 (4%) preposition errors. In syntax, they made 107 errors dealt with 26 (11%) phrase, 33 (14%) clause, 21 (9%) sentence, and 27 (11.5%) intersentence errors. So, verb errors dominate the grammatical errors (Amanda & Donal, 2019). It is also counted that the students' grammar competence in speaking skill is categorized poor. It was seen from their difficulties to use grammatical and correct sentences in their speaking (Rezkita, Hamid & Ardiana , 2021). At last, it is exposed that 16 kinds of grammatical



errors were found in students speaking performance. The dominant kind of grammatical error was simple past tense. Their errors were caused intralingual transfer aspects such as incomplete rule application, overlooking co-occurrences restriction, overgeneralization, and exploiting redundancy (Najla & Fatimah, 2020).

Students' errors as expressed in Table 1 and some previous studies would like to underline the facts that learning a foreign language including English demands not only willingness, but also practice and commitment of both students and teachers of English. Therefore, error is fundamental and relevant facts in language teaching to improve strategy of teaching and learning process.

As seen in Table 1, students have made errors on linguistic taxonomy. To know whether their linguistic errors are also realized in surface strategy taxonomy, the researchers will try to combine their errors in the following table.

*Table 2*  
*Linguistic category and surface strategy taxonomy*

No	Age	Pro-gram	Regio-nal	Accen-t	Strategic Error	Complex-ity	Spont-aneity	Mean-ing	Total	Percent-age
1	5	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	14	3
2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	10	2
3	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	14	3
4	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	15	3
5	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	12	3
6	5	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	13	3
7	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	10	2
8	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	14	3
9	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	14	3
10	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	10	2
11	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	9	2
12	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	15	3
13	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	13	3
14	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	13	3
15	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	17	4
16	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	11	2
17	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	11	2
18	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	11	2
19	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	11	2
20	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	9	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 2 informs that out of the total number of 252 errors, the most frequent errors are verb (48 or 19%) on linguistic strategy taxonomy while the highest frequency of the categories of grammatical errors or surface strategy taxonomy is omission (103 or 41%). It indicates that grammatical errors or surface strategy taxonomy got more errors than linguistic strategy taxonomy.

The results of data analysis as exposed in Table 2 are almost the same with the report of a study that the level of the students' grammar competence in speaking skill is categorized poor because they could not make grammatical and correct sentence (Rezkita, Hamid & Ardiana , 2021). Students also made 6 aspects in their essays. They are errors in production of verb groups, errors in the distribution of verb groups, errors in the use of article, errors in the use of preposition, errors in the use of questions and miscellaneous errors. Their errors were caused by intra-lingual interference and overgeneralization (Simbolon, 2015).

The above facts indicate that both linguistic taxonomy and surface strategy taxonomy can denote to the same things but they may be expressed in different ways to describe and classify the students' errors in both oral and written expressions. The students' expressions of errors may tell their teachers of English to make many activities that attract the students' attention, involve them and make them use English in the classroom.

As mentioned earlier, this study wants to answer two main problems. The answers to those problems have been answered and presented. The answer to the first problem is that omission error is the highest frequency the students made. And the answer of the second problem is that students made the highest frequency of verb on surface strategy taxonomy or grammatical and linguistic category errors.

The results of the present study confirm with the previous ones. It is revealed that the students made grammatical errors on omission, addition, misformation, preposition, conjunction and article, and singular/plural and negation (Kamlasi & Nokas, 2017). It is also exposed that students made errors on linguistic categories covering omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Hasan & Munandar, 2018). Other study shows that omission error dominated the participants' responses, followed by misformation, addition and misordering (Dewi, Rangkuti & Supriadi, 2021).

So, it can be asserted that both the results of the present and the previous studies report the same results, that is, the students made errors on grammatical units and linguistic category.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, the students made errors on both linguistic and grammatical taxonomies. Their errors were easily found when they tried to speak in front of the class. Their errors are the pictures of their inabilities in speaking. In addition, some of them could speak well but it could not describe their whole abilities in speaking English. It just indicates that they had power to speak but it is not supported by their own ways to memorize the texts given and present them using good elements of speaking such as perfect intonation, good fluency and a received pronunciation. At last, their inabilities expressed through their errors tell us that both teachers and/or lecturers of English, including the next researchers to pay more attention on preparing certain activities that can increase the students' speaking development.

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