THE COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING NARRATIVE ESSAY OF STUDENTS AT THE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER, SAVANNAKHET

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Keywords	Abstract
	The research aimed to investigate types of common grammatical errors and dominant errors in writing narrative essays of students at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet. This study focuses on English students at the Youth Resource Center Savannakhet. The study employed a qualitative method. A sample group was 19 (12 male and 7 female) English students who learn English as an extra class. Data collection was conducted by testing writing narrative essay. The students were requested to write descript based on their stories under the theme: unforgettable moments in life. It's consisting their experiences, holidays, and else. The researcher was analyzed data by using a descriptive initially statistic, a complete program Excel to present the data. As the result revealed that: there were 6 categories of common grammatical errors in students' narrative essay writing such verb-tense there were 120 times with 28%, punctuation which came 99 times with 24%, spelling happened 63 times equal 15%, preposition came with 59 times with 14%, capital letter happened 58 times with 14%, and last was article error occurred 21 times with 5%. The most dominant type of grammatical error is verb-tense came with frequency 79. This was because of the students' lack of knowledge in grammatical writing skill.
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Kata Kunci	Abstrak
	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis kesalahan tata bahasa yang umum dan kesalahan yang dominan dalam menulis esai naratif siswa di Youth Resource Center Savannakhet. penelitian ini difokuskan pada siswa bahasa Inggris di Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Satu kelompok terdiri dari 19 (12 laki-laki dan 7 perempuan) siswa bahasa Inggris yang belajar bahasa Inggris sebagai kelas tambahan. Pengumpulan data menggunakan tes esai naratif. Para siswa diminta untuk menulis deskripsi berdasarkan cerita mereka dengan tema: momen yang tak terlupakan dalam hidup, yang terdiri dari pengalaman, liburan, dan lain-lain. Peneliti menganalisis data dengan menggunakan statistik awal deskriptif, program Excel untuk menyajikan data. Hasil penelitian diketahui bahwa terdapat 6 kategori kesalahan tata bahasa yang umum pada penulisan esai naratif siswa yaitu kata kerja terdapat 120 kali kesalahan (28%), tanda baca 99 kali kesalahan (24%), ejaan yang terjadi 63 kali (15%), preposisi dengan 59 kali kesalahan (14%), kesalahan huruf kapital sebanyak 58 kali (14%), dan terakhir Kesalahan artikel sebanyak 21

kali (5%). Jenis kesalahan yang paling dominan adalah penggunaan kata kerja dengan frekuensi 79. Hal ini disebabkan karena kurangnya pengetahuan grammar siswa.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an activity or action in which people transfer knowledge and ideas through written form. According to Byrne (1979) stated that writing is a language skill that tells the writer's ideas via the written form. In the language learning process, writing is a way to promote language acquisition since learners carry out words, and sentences to produce meaningful messages. According to Bello (1997) stated that writing is one of the productive skills (writing and speaking) in language learning. It's certainly reflected people's thoughts, imagination, and even the process of transferring writer's thinking by hand-writing (Meyer, 2005). It is not only learners who write something on the papers, but they also consider to the content exactly. Besides, the learners need to practice more on how to express their ideas smoothly and intelligently. According to Nunan (2003) stated that writing is a mental and physical act of the most basic levels. Furthermore, he also elaborated writing is not only mentioned in creating ideas but also thinking about how to express the story into paragraphs to intent the reader make sense and easy understand. Usually, writing is a process with several stages that need some times for planning and preparing (ideas, and themes), according to Boardman (2002) said that writing is a process of thinking, organizing, and rethinking. So, it's true to say that writing is the people's ability to create words and the process of arranging ideas to produce language in the learning process. Moreover, it's also one way to provide the learners with the best chance to express their creative ideas in learning a new language.

An essay is a short piece of writing that exactly comes from the author's point of view. It is a kind of writing that EFL learners prefer and interesting to do in writing subject. Normally, the essay is classified into four main types such as descriptive essay, narrative essay, expository essay, and persuasive essay. Because of the diverse types, learners can choose the best type that's easy and appropriate for them. So, the narrative essay is one of the popular type that students prefer to write in the field of writing. Because it is individual writing that elaborates the special experiences of the learners. The characteristic of the narrative is telling true stories or events. Often, it is filled with details that have carefully selected to explain, support, and decorate the stories. According to Pardyono (2007) stated that the narrative exactly tells the activities or events that happened in the past. One more, the PHCC Writing Center (2016) claimed the narrative essay is an essay that tells you stories impression faced by the author in the previous time. It conveys the problematic experiences and resolution problems that give beneficial moral lessons to the reader (Pardyono, 2007).

Since the narrative relies on people's experiences faced in their life, it often presented in the form of stories. Therefore, when we talk about narrative, it certainly refers to writing stories (Jordan, 1988; Pillai, 2001). The stories are a genre of literature that learners can be used to improve writing skills. Writing stories is facility language acquisition that provides meaningful and memorable content for interpreting new language (Lazar, 1993). Moreover, the purpose of the stories transferred about the writer's feelings, emotions, and thoughts on that stories for giving reader get knowledge, and enjoy reading (Gatez, Lynne, and Phadke, 2015), so it always touches the affections, arousing emotions of the reader (Nunan, 2003). To get the narrative perfectible, the writer needs to organize ideas and complete details of the events. According to Luthfiyati et al (2015) stated that writing narrative must have a draft and enough details about the phenomenon or activities and its scene to make the readers get to the points. In this way, the narrative needs appropriated language to transform meaning and arrange the ideas covered form coherence and discourse. Thus, the reader will get the entertainment and feeling in the stories. The narrative (story) that learners prefer to write must full of vivid and precise stories which included many moments such as interesting moments, unforgettable moments, or embarrassing moments namely (Heim and Edwards, 1986), so these moments will attract reader to read until the end.

To acquire a good writer, grammar is an important element to contribute our writing perfect and seen more professional in academic writing. However, the writer cannot avoid grammatical errors. Nobody can write perfect essays without any errors especially non-native speakers. As we know that English is included in the complexity of grammars, punctuations, and structures, so confusion and making mistakes can occur in general of EFL learners. According to Hyland (2002) stated that the writing competence is included the learner's ability in grammars, organize ideas, and punctuations. One more, vocabulary is one important component to maintain correct spelling (Kusumaningrum et al, 2020). In addition, the function of words in sentences are also important too, according to Harmer as cited in Cook (1999), EFL learners must learn some aspect functions of the words to gain competence in using new language such as noun, verb, adverb, and adjective, pronoun, etc. therefore, knowing and gaining proficiency in basic grammar is an important thing in order to complete sentences.

Grammar cannot be separated away from the writing area particularly writing essays. Without grammatical understanding, of course, students tend to make errors. Hence, the grammatical errors are some of the ordering words and tenses which are not complete or not appropriate with functions and grammatical rules. Burt and Kiparsky (1974) stated that grammatical errors are errors that do not appropriate the grammatical rules, there are some points in sentences that do not link smoothly. Similarly, Dewanti (2014) and Ellis (1995) stated that grammatical errors are something errors and do not correct the grammatical systems in sentences or paragraphs which the learners should be considered and cared. Meanwhile, Ellis

(1997) emphasized that grammar is a traditional principle that concerned the determining formation and interpretation of words, phrases, and sentences. In addition, Ur (1996), Greenbaum, and Nelson (2002) stated that grammar is putting words together for making sentence. So, it does not only mean the word units are combined in order to correct sentences but also affected their meaning. Therefore, in writing narrative, the learners need to know about grammatical rules and how to apply them to protect something wrong or error in the sentence.

The scholars tried to define the meaning of grammatical errors such as Richard (1985), the error is the way native speakers or language users use language faulty or incomplete actions. While Hus (2013) stated error is systemically deviation occurred when the learners don't comprehend grammar. Sometimes the complexity in the grammatical rules is large gaps of confusion. According to Ellis (2003) stated that the error mentions the gaps in the learners' knowledge, it happened when the learners don't know which one is correct and suitable for each situation. It could be said the error is something that cannot inevitable features in second language learning, hence the errors in writing plays important role in order to enable second language learners to better understand their problems and products written text (Darus, 2009).

In addition, Hendriwanto & Sugeng (2013) stated the interference errors are influenced by the mother tongue usage or sometimes learners understand grammatical usage but they still do committed errors. Brown (2007) stated that error is the result of one's systematic competence, it mentions a portion of the learners' competence in the target language. Besides, the error is noticeable deviations from the adult grammar of native speakers which reveals the competence of the learners in the target language. In 2000, Brown classified common errors in writing into two categories such as Interlingual error and Intralingual error. The Interlingual error is a type of error that occurs when the learners are still influenced by their first language in the process of learning second language. In contrast, the Intralingual error occurs from mother-tongue interference where the learners have lack knowledge in their second language. In short, the first language has influenced the writing process of EFL learners. While Corder (1973) classified error as a term of linguistic levels, are under the sub-class as morphology, syntax, and lexicon.

In the learning writing process, making errors are the general phenomenon and acceptable in the writing process (Kostyuk, 2015), because of the characteristic of EFL learners: they cannot learn and practice without any errors. Dullay et al. (1982) asserted that error is the flawed side of learners' writing, which means students may do some mistakes in writing. Similarly, Myles (2002) said the second or foreign language learner might produce errors. However, errors cannot be ignored in writing testing. Pongsiriwet (2001) said that learner's errors should be identified, categorized, and analyzed for investigating the causes of error and find ways to reduce errors. By the way, resolving the error problems will help the students apply the right form and more accomplish in academic writing.

There have been several studies about grammatical errors conducted by many researchers, Khumphee and Yodkamlue (2017) studied Grammatical Errors in English Essays Written by Thai EFL Undergraduate Students at Nakhon Ratchasima University. The aim of this study is to investigate the common type of grammatical errors, examine the effects of L1 (Thai language) inference on discovered grammatical errors, and provide some essential pedagogical implications for second language learning and teaching. The sample group was 83 second-year English students, the process provided two-step as first: asked students to write an English essay and second: analyzed writing essays by employing an analysis framework adapted from Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy and Richard's (1971) error categories. The result revealed there were 26 types of grammatical errors with total of 4909 times and the five most common types of all are punctuations, nouns, prepositions, verbs, and articles. There were 14 types caused by the students' L1 interference. Five of the most frequent number, these types of error fell into the use of the plural form of nouns, the omission of punctuations, error structures in complex sentences, the omission of some parts of sentences, and fragment respectively.

Maros, et al. (2007) studied Interference in learning English: Grammatical errors in English essay writing among rural Malay secondary school students in Malaysia. the purpose to examine of interference effect and to find out the factor that takes significant roles in living the acquisition of English among young Malay students in Malaysian schools. This study used 20 students to be a sample group. This study employed Norrish's (1992) approach to conduce error analysis. As the result revealed: the three most frequent errors are: 1) the use of articles, 2) subject-verb agreement, and 3) linking verb be.

Finally, Sucipto (2018) studied common grammatical errors in writing narrative essays of English students at Jambi University, Indonesia. This study aimed to reveal common grammatical errors in writing essays. The data was collected by asking students to write English essays based on the theme: unforged moment. Then, the researcher used format error identification to analyze data. The result found that there were twelve grammatical errors included verb-tense, punctuation, capital letters, word choice, Spelling, preposition, Pronoun, pluralism error, redundancy, word order error, possessive case even article errors.

The Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet is an institute where English was taught as an extra class. Students who joined learning in this institute consist of different English proficiency backgrounds. Hence, in this study, the researcher is interested to conduct on analyzing "the common grammatical errors in writing narrative essay". Regarding the problem above, the researcher provides two objectives: 1) to find out the categories of the grammatical errors and 2) to find out the dominant grammatical errors in writing narrative essays of students in Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet.

METHOD

This study was qualitative research. Applying the qualitative method is purely descriptive in the nature. So, the researcher desire to investigate the grammatical errors that happen in general of English written narrative essays. Dornyei (2008:24) in Fauziati (2016) stated that qualitative research consist of data gathering procedure that results in the initial open-ended, non-numerical data that it analyzed initially non-strategic method. Meanwhile, Creswell (1998) stated that qualitative research is an inquiry procedure of understanding based on distinct methodological transitional to explore social or human problems. The researcher focuses on 19 students (7 male and 12 female) who are study at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet province. The procedure of data collection was applied narrative writing which under the theme: unforgettable moments in your life. To analyze data was conducted after finished gathering data from the field, the researcher was following three- step of analyzing data such as data reduction, data display, and data conclusion or verification purposed by Miles and Huberman (1984) in Sugiyono (2015: 337).

RESULT

This study investigates the common grammatical errors in writing narrative essays of students at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet. This study is conducted by following the objectives: (1) to find out the main categories of grammatical error based on their frequency of occurrences in writing narrative essays of the student at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet, and (2) to find out the dominant of grammatical errors in writing narrative essay of students at the Youth Resource Center Savannakhet. The methodology of analyzing data was provided in two parts such as (a) the general information of participants include gender, and age. (b) The test: to find out the main types of grammatical errors based on the frequency of the whole errors in writing narrative and determine the most dominant of grammatical errors in writing a narrative essay of students at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet.

1. **General Information of The Respondents**

The general information in this study is to focus on gender and age as showing below:

a. **Gender**

Table 1 Percentage of the Participants Based on Gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage
Female	7	37
Male	12	63
Total	**19**	**100**

From the table1 revealed that most of the participants at this English institute were male (12 = 63%), and the rest was female (7 = 37%).

b. Age

Table 2 Percentage of the Participants Based on Age

Ages	Amount	Percentage
14	2	11
15	4	21
16	2	11
17	1	5
18	1	5
19	1	5
21	5	26
22	3	16
Total	**19**	**100**

From the table2 revealed: there were different age of participants consisting: the age 21 years old (5 = 26%), 15 years old (4 = 21%), 22 years old (3 = 16%), both of 14 and 16 years old (2 = 11%), and the age of 17, 18, 19 years old (1 = 5%).

2. Common Grammatical Errors Based on Students' Narrative Writing.

Determining grammatical errors in each paper sheets, the researcher has classified into several common error types below:

Table 3 Types of the Common Grammatical Errors Made By the Participants.

Types of error	Amount of errors	Frequency	Percentage	Average
Verb Tense	120	79	28	6.32
Punctuation	99	58	24	5.21
spelling	63	36	15	3.32
Preposition	59	32	14	3.11
Capital Letter	58	25	14	3.05
Article	21	12	5	1.11
Total	**420**	**242**	**100**	**3.68**

The result of finding on table3 above showed: there were six types of common grammatical errors include verb-tense, punctuation, spelling, preposition, capital letter, and article. All of these errors occupied 420 times in students' essay, so it broken down the detail below:
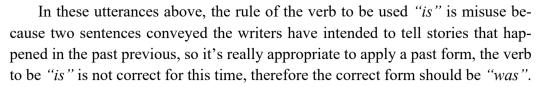
The first error found in this research was verb tense. Verb ten is a common grammatical error that showed the highest among errors in the study this time. It took 120 times with the highest percentage (28%). Because the narrative is telling stories that happened in the past (Jordan, 1988), so, participants sometimes confused about using it, and errors appeared a lot in this narrative investigation. To prove research finding will show in some example below:

Example 1:
Incorrect   : *It is a big amount of money that I could not find by myself.*
Correct   : *It was a big amount of money that I could not find by myself.*

Example 2:
Incorrect   : *It is the first time for me to work*
Correct   : *It was the first time for me to work*

In these utterances above, the rule of the verb to be used *"is"* is misuse because two sentences conveyed the writers have intended to tell stories that happened in the past previous, so it's really appropriate to apply a past form, the verb to be *"is"* is not correct for this time, therefore the correct form should be *"was"*.

The second error was punctuation. This category took 99 times with 24%. This type happened in large amounts. A full stop is the most error found in this part. For instance, the students want to connect two sentences by using a full stop, while linking two sentences should be employed a comma in order to connect it. To prove research finding will show an example below:

Example:
Incorrect : *I gained a lot of <u>knowledge. and</u> my football skill was improve.*
Correct : *I gained a lot of <u>knowledge, and</u> my football skill was improve.*

The sentence above revealed the misuse of punctuation usage. The students applied a comma mark in order to link two sentences which it's not appropriate for this grammatical rule. For this context, a full stop can apply to replace comma between *"knowledge"* and *"and"* for connecting two sentences to drive one smooth meaning.

The third was spelling error. It took about 63 times with 15%. The students did error by putting incorrect alphabets in the words since they were ignorant. Or sometimes, they were very careless to write a word with not consider true spelling. It occurred in the general writing process. To prove research finding will show an example below:

Example:
Incorrect : *My football skill was <u>inproved</u>,*
Correct : *My football skill was <u>improved</u>*

In the sentence above, the writer intended to mention his football skill was developed as well, from here the word *"improved"* is quite a lot of alphabet spelling. So, the writer may get confused or forget to write the word *"n"* replace *"m"*. Which is simply to do it.

The fourth error found in this research was preposition. It took 59 times with 14%. There were lots of prepositions misuse in English writing, the caused is learners translate the meaning of L1 to L2 language. In this case, students put an incomplete preposition on their sentences or they omitted the preposition. Follow the example below to prove research finding:

Example:
Incorrect : *I went to Champasak <u>on</u> three months.*
Correct : *I went to Champasak <u>for</u> three months.*

This sentence showed a preposition error. In sentence context, the writers intended to tell the amount of months after the trip, but it was an error in using a preposition. Word *"for"* is telling the amount or number, so using *"on"* is incorrect for this sentence. Because the writer went to Champasak for three months. Hence *"for"* is suitable with this utterance.

Fifth, it was a capital letter error. The number of errors found in capital letter using was 58 times with 14%. There were incorrect using capital letters on their papers. The learners always wrote a long sentence in a paragraph without using a full stop or comma. In this case, the sentence should not write a long sentence. It should put a full stop or comma to divide or separate sentences for more clear understanding and attract the reader to read until the end. Follow evident example bellow to this descriptive:

Example:
Incorrect : *I did not know what happened during my holiday i could not join any subjects.*
Correct : *I did not know what happened during my holiday. I could not join any subjects.*

The sentence above revealed: the error of using capital letters. This sentence presented as merely one sentence, but exactly there were two meanings in one. In this case, it should separate into two sentences. When one sentence already end, a comma should be taken place between *"holiday"* and *"I"*, and then it must begin with a capital letter since it comes after the comma.

The last grammatical error was the article. It took about 21 times with 5% of all the common grammatical errors. At this point, the article error was very low frequency and percentage. It's caused by the influence of Interlingua (L1). Sometimes, EFL learners get difficult to determine which word or phrase should be used article. Since Lao grammar, there is no grammatical rule in the article. The example below will this problem.

Example:
Incorrect : *I asked my father to buy new phone.*
Correct : *I asked my father to buy a new phone*

In the sentence above, the students mentioned just only one thing as the phone. From this, it's essential to put the article to determine the amount of thing following grammatical rule (L2). So, the student must put *"a"* between the words *"buy"* and *"new"* to make clear the amount of things mentioned by the writer.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study revealed the common grammatical errors in writing narrative essays of students at the Youth resource center, Savannakhet, among 19 participants. The finding found there were six types of grammatical error included verb tense, punctuation, spelling, preposition, capital letter, and article. This study

was supported by theories of Hyland (2002), Burt and Kiparsky (1974), Ellis (1997, and 2003), Ur (1996), Greenbaum and Nelson (2002)**,** Richard (1985), Hendriwanto, and Sugeng (2013), Pongsiriwet (2001), Brown (2007, and 2000). And this research was supported by the work of Khumphee and Yodkamlue (2017), Maros, et al. (2007), and Sucipto (2018) who studied on English grammatical error in writing.

Grammar is one component that connects each part in sentence and paragraph become related one and another. In the finding of common grammatical errors in writing a narrative essay of students at the Youth resource center, Savannakhet. Verb tense is the most error type. It occurred when students wrote their essay to transfer and/or explain their previous impression. They are lost focus on using tense or grammar structures to write the right form. Besides, the structures of the Lao and English languages are certainly different by changing the verb (V2). Because of the Interlingua transfer process, sometimes the native language taken influenced by the EFL learners.   This phenomenon is an explanation about how the term of grammar structures they used. Maybe they are not considered the past tense when it was told in the past. In short, they have faced problems with grammatical use that tends to make errors in this type.

In writing English narrative, punctuation usage is still a problem for EFL students. It is important for students who desire to achieve in EL learning. According to the research finding, there were participants who wrote mistakes based on punctuation. These phenomena occurred when the writer did not pay attention to the detail in writing. A full stop mark is necessary in the writing area, in case of writer desire to connect two sentences become one.

In addition, the research finding found spelling was the third error. It's normal, making mistakes in English spelling will occur with the EFL learners, especially the writers who are applying English as a foreign language. In their works, because the English words include a lot of alphabet spelling. So, sometimes remembering words spelling is still difficult for them. Spelling errors could be occurred due to the difference in writing systems in English and Lao (Al-Oudat, 2017). Therefore, it's possible to do errors in writing narrative.

Yet, the preposition was one writing problem for EFL learners. Since the grammatical rule of Lao and English is quite the same in some part. From here, the Intralingua error taken place, because the interference of translation first language to the second language is wrong. Sometimes the context and hypothesis of the writer between the two languages are incorrect.

Moreover, the result of research finding revealed capital letter error was still influenced by writing narratives. Based on Interlingua is the first language influenced by EL learning, this case of Lao letter and grammatical rule of Lao language does not apply capital letter into the beginning sentence, it is the point to make foreign language learners do this error. One more reason, since the carelessness of students will lead them to face errors. Students are looking over the small detail of

English grammatical used such as beginning with the first sentence must start with a capital letter or after the comma to begin a new sentence in a paragraph must start with capital letters.

Based on the principle of grammar, Lao did not determine the article in chronologic grammatical usage. So, both Interlingual and Intralingual are taken influenced in this context. Interlingual transfers word errors when the writer did not use an article with a word that must be used since in the Lao language there is no rule of using the article. In contrast, Intralingual transfer occurred when the learner applied an article to words that not appropriate with English grammatical rules. These are the reasons why article error is the sixth mistake in writing a narrative essay.

In conclusion, there were six types of grammatical errors revealed in students' narrative writing. Most grammatical errors always occurred in general when writing tests have taken place, especially at this time. Besides, doing errors are reflected in the cognitive systems and progress of EFL Learners too.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it can be concluded that grammar is one important thing in writing an essay subject. It is important for students who learn English properly. The grammatical errors occurred when the writing requested to test as same as students at the Youth Resource Center, Savannakhet. They learn English as an extra class. Besides, the condition of gender and age also has influenced in learning English perspective which tends to the result of writing narrative test.

As the result of qualitative description based on students' writing narrative papers, the researchers found that there were six types of common grammatical error include verb tense, punctuation, spelling, preposition, capital letter, and article. The dominant grammatical error was verb-tense. It came with 120 times which the highest number of errors and the lowest number of grammatical errors was article error with 21 times, as analysis number of frequently 12 with 5% and average 1.11.

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