

The Students' Common Grammatical Mistakes in Writing Argumentative Essay Through Impromptu Theme

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to discover the prevalent grammatical errors made by students in their English argumentative writing. This was done by analyzing impromptu essays written by seventh-semester students in the English language education program at the University of Muhammadiyah Sorong. The study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design. The study sample comprised 18 students in their seventh semester, recruited using purposive sampling. The research data were collected from the participants' argumentative essays, which served as the writing assessment centered around the theme, "Grades do not accurately reflect one's intelligence." The researchers employed the qualitative data analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman. This technique involved data reduction, display, and conclusion drafting through the examination of the students' essay worksheets. According to the analyzed data, it was determined that the students frequently made grammatical errors when composing an argumentative essay. The grammatical errors can be classified into three categories: primary, secondary, and functional. The main category comprised errors in nouns, verbs, determiners, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and adjectives. The secondary group encompassed errors related to numerical representation and verb form. Next, the functional category comprised errors in both the subject and predicate. According to the findings from three kinds of research, the predominant grammatical errors committed by students are related to verbs.

Keywords:

Common Grammatical Mistakes

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I. Introduction

In Indonesian schools, English is considered a compulsory subject in the national curriculum. It is taught from elementary school to university. In English, students learn four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They have to master those skills because the goal of learning English is to use it in spoken and written communication. Based on those skills, the researcher only focuses on writing skills. Since English is a foreign language, most Indonesian students struggle to learn it. The difficulties occur when they lack knowledge about vocabulary and grammar, especially in writing.

Writing skills are widely acknowledged to demand a unique set of capabilities compared to other language skills, necessitating specialized preparation [1]. The complexity of teaching and learning writing arises from the requirement for writers to possess both language proficiency and effective communication skills. Students often perceive writing as challenging, especially when tasked with academic writing such as composing paragraphs and essays [2]. The significance of teaching writing as a distinct skill is underscored by its role in reinforcing language development and learning styles [3]. Moreover, writing is considered a fundamental language skill that, unlike speaking, is typically explicitly taught and learned [4]. This deliberate instruction is essential due to the structured nature of writing, which demands adherence to various criteria such as content, organization, vocabulary, and language use [5]. Overall, writing skills are crucial for effective communication and are increasingly recognized as indispensable in navigating the demands of the modern era [6].

The process of writing is often considered easier than speaking due to the cognitive and metacognitive aspects involved. When individuals write, they engage in various self-regulation processes that aid in improving writing performance [7]. These processes include covert self-regulation, behavioural self-regulation, and environmental self-regulation, allowing individuals to plan, set goals, evaluate, and use cognitive strategies effectively. Additionally, knowledge of cognition plays a crucial role in understanding writing skills, encompassing declarative, task, procedural, and conditional knowledge [8]. This cognitive knowledge helps individuals in structuring their writing, planning, revising, and organizing their thoughts effectively. Furthermore, the cognitive processes involved in writing, such as speed fluency, pausing, and eye movements, vary across different writing tasks and stages, highlighting the complexity of the writing process [9]. Through cognitive and metacognitive strategies, individuals can enhance their writing skills by improving their cognitive abilities and employing effective writing techniques.

Studying grammar is essential as it provides a foundation for understanding sentence structure, which in turn aids in the interpretation of literature. [10] highlights that literary interpretation involves assumptions about epistemic aims, the structure of literary knowledge, and the sources of justification for knowledge. This underscores the importance of having a grasp of sentence structure to build and justify interpretations of texts. Furthermore, [11] introduce the SPINN-PI model, which integrates tree structure sentence interpretation into linear order structures, emphasizing the significance of incorporating different levels of semantics for accurate interpretation. Additionally, [12] discusses the role of cognitive studies in literary interpretation, emphasizing the cognitive approach's affordances in understanding the specificity of literary artifacts. These references collectively emphasize the critical role of grammar and sentence structure knowledge in enhancing the interpretation of literature.

In writing, they also need to master the grammatical structure of the words to avoid making mistakes. Mastering English grammatical structure is important because it can help people write easily and effectively. It is also clear that students have to learn linguistic competence to be proficient in English, and one of the linguistic competencies is grammar. Grammar is one of the sub-skills that supports writing.

It cannot be denied that students make many grammatical mistakes, such as mistakes in nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles, and so on. Therefore, it can be concluded that mastering grammar is very important for students in learning English. The mistakes happen because English as a second language differs from Indonesian because English as a foreign language. Sometimes, learning English cannot create difficulties that result from mistakes.

Proficiency in composing argumentative essays is an essential aptitude for students; nonetheless, they often encounter difficulties due to prevalent grammatical errors in their written work. Multiple research projects have explored this field to discover common mistakes and provide valuable insights to enhance students' writing skills.

A researcher [13] performed research that specifically examined grammatical errors found in students' writings. The survey revealed that subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, spellings, and punctuation were the most prevalent problems. The inaccuracies were caused by intralingual and interlingual transmission.

In their study, [14] examined grammatical faults in argumentative essays written by pre-service English instructors. The objective was to detect these problems, evaluate the students' level of awareness of their mistakes, and get insights into their grammar teaching and error repair experiences.

In addition, another researcher [15] identified specific strategies used in classroom discussions that promote the teaching of argumentative writing. This study highlights the need of incorporating these strategies into the training of literacy teachers, their professional development, and future research in the field of teaching literature and writing. Then, a team [16] conducted research examining prevalent grammatical mistakes in narrative essays. The study emphasized the significance of recognizing and rectifying these faults to improve students' writing abilities. In addition, another research team [17] conducted a study to investigate how the Arabic language affects the usage of grammatical cohesive devices in argumentative essays by Iraqi learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study highlighted the significance of linguistic rhetoric and cultural disparities in written discourse. These studies add to our awareness of the prevalent grammatical errors made by students while writing

argumentative essays. They provide significant insights for educators to build specific interventions and instructional techniques that may improve students' writing skills.

Based on the previous research, investigating the common grammatical mistakes made by the students writing an argumentative essay through the impromptu theme has not been done at University. So that, to enhance the knowledge related to this topic in University context, the recent research must be conducted. Since based on the pre research done in the seventh semester of English language students at Muhammadiyah Sorong University, it was found that, those students still made many mistakes grammatically when writing the argumentative essay. Whereas, practically the seventh semester students should be able to write English text with a minor grammatical mistake. In hence, to describe the case farther using scientific data a research related to this should be conducted. Therefore, the recent research aimed to describe the common grammatical mistakes made by the English students in writing an argumentative essay through an impromptu theme in Muhammadiyah Sorong University.

The findings of this study can inform the development of instructional materials and teaching strategies that address the most prevalent grammatical issues. Educators can design exercises and activities that specifically target these areas, thereby improving students' grammatical proficiency. In addition, the practical applications of the findings can directly benefit educators and students, leading to tangible improvements in writing instruction and student outcomes.

II. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design and was carried out at Muhammadiyah Sorong University. The researchers specifically targeted students enrolled in the seventh semester of the English language education program. The researchers identified an initial issue in their English compositions requiring further investigation to offer a precise explanation.

This study consisted of two classes in the seventh semester, namely class E and class F. Class E comprised 22 students, whereas class F comprised 32 individuals. The researchers employed purposive sampling to pick 18 students from both courses based on their A value in previous writing disciplines.

The researchers used a writing test to gather data from the students in this study. The writer used the writing exam to ascertain the prevalent grammatical errors in the students' argumentative writing, using an impromptu theme: 'Grades do not serve as an accurate assessment of intelligence.'

The researchers initially administered a writing test to the students for data collection. Subsequently, the students composed an argumentative essay centered around the provided theme. Furthermore, the researcher gathered the students' written work. Finally, the researcher examined and evaluated the students' argumentative essays.

The researchers employed Miles Huberman's data analysis technique, which involved three main steps: Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing and Verification. In the Data Reduction phase, the researcher collected the necessary data from the test and then narrowed it down by selecting and focusing on the most relevant information aligned with the research objective. In the Data Display phase, the researcher analyzed the data and presented it in written form, using an argumentative essay format to convey the results. Finally, in the Conclusion Drawing and Verification phase, the researchers drew conclusions based on the results obtained from the data analysis.

III. Results and Discussion

The researchers gave the writing test to 18 seventh-semester students of the University of Muhammadiyah Sorong to write an argumentative text about the given title, "Grades Do Not Measure How Smart You Are." After collecting the data, the researcher exposed some common grammatical mistakes made by the students.

Based on the data gathered, the researchers found that the students made common grammatical mistakes. Those common grammatical mistakes were classified into the following three categories: First, the primary category consisted of missing verb, misusing verb, verb and noun confusion,

misusing auxiliary verb, mistakes in ordinary verb form, subject-verb agreement, verbal and nominal sentence confusion and passive form of verb. Second, the secondary category consisted of mistakes in numbers and voices. Third, the functional category consisted of mistakes in subject and predicate.

A. Primary Category

The mistakes of verbs could be classified by seven kinds. They were missing verb, misusing verb, verb and noun confusion, misusing auxiliary verb, mistakes in ordinary verb form, subject-verb agreement, verbal and nominal sentence confusion and passive form of verb.

1. Mistakes in Verb

The mistakes of verbs could be classified by seven kinds. They were missing verb, misusing verb, verb and noun confusion, misusing auxiliary verb, mistakes in ordinary verb form, subject-verb agreement, verbal and nominal sentence confusion and passive form of verb.

a) Missing verb

Based on the data gathered on the students' writing essay, there were always common grammatical mistakes in college English Writing. Let's see some examples:

"because the grade or the level just formality in your education".(S1 P1)

Based on the sentence above, the student did not use verb which was to be 'is'. The student provided a mistake by not using a verb in the sentence which was to be 'is'. In English Grammatical rule, it could be called as a sentence if there was a subject and a verb. So, in this case, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"because the grade or the level is just formality in your education".

Another example that the researcher found in their writings such as:

"Because sometimes someone that low grades maybe smart than who high grades". (S5 P1)

Based on the sentence above, the student did not put verb 'have/has. The students should put the verb 'has' in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, the verb 'has' was used for subjects such as he, she, and it while the verb 'have' was used for subjects such as I, you, they, we and another plural subjects. The singular noun 'Someone' referred to he/she, so the verb 'has' was needed to be used into the sentence. So, the correct sentence should be as follows:

"Because sometimes someone who has low grades maybe is smarter than who has high grades".

b. Misusing verb 'Be'.

In English, the students sometimes misuse verb 'be' in written and spoken language. The results of the students' writing would be shown as follows:

"according to me, the grade are not one of the measurement who determine person's cleverness.(S6 P1)

Based on the sentence above, the student used verb 'are' to describe singular noun 'grade'. The student provided a mistake by using verb 'are. In English grammatical rule, the verb 'are' is used to describe plural noun. in this sentence, verb 'is' is allowed to be used. it was because the singular noun 'the grade' was singular form which needed to use verb 'is' in the sentence. The correct sentence should be as follows:

"according to me, the grade is not one of the measurement which determines person's cleverness".

c. Verb and Noun Confusion

In English, the students were sometimes confused in using the words of verb and nouns. The students also sometimes used nouns to indicate verb and verb to indicate nouns in a sentence.

*“you can **socialization** with another people after you **graduation**” (S1 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used singular noun as verb in the sentence. The student provided the mistakes in using singular noun as verb. In English grammatical rule, noun could not be as a replacement of a verb. The word ‘socialization’ should be ‘socialize’ and the word ‘graduation’ should be ‘graduate’. The correct sentence would be as follows:

‘you can socialize with another people after you graduate’.

d. Misusing auxiliary verb

In English Writing, the student often did not put auxiliary verb in the sentence when they wanted to make negative or interrogative sentence. And the students also put auxiliary verb wrongly in the sentence. Let’s see the examples:

(1) *“But the grade or level **do not** measure you are smart”. (S1 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used auxiliary verb ‘do’ for singular noun ‘the grade of level’. The student provided a mistake by using auxiliary verb ‘do’ for singular noun ‘the grade or level’. In English grammatical rule, auxiliary verb ‘do’ is used for subjects I, you, they, we, and other plural subjects and auxiliary verb ‘does’ is used for singular subjects he, she, it and other singular subjects. So, in this sentence, auxiliary ‘do’ should be changed into ‘does’. The correct sentence should be as follows:

“but the grade or level does not measure you are smart”.

(2) *“grades **not decide** how smart you are”. (S3 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student made a mistake by not adding auxiliary in the negative sentence. In English grammatical rule, the auxiliary ‘do’, does, or did’ should be used in the negative sentence. In this case, auxiliary verb ‘do’ is needed to be used in the negative sentence above. The correct sentence should be as follows:

“grades do not decide how smart you are”.

e. Mistakes in ordinary verb form

This type of mistake was quite obvious in the students’ essays. The students sometimes made some mistakes related to the verb form.

(1) *“you can **called** smart”. (S1 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the students used past participle verb in the sentence. The student provided a mistake by using past participle verb after modal auxiliary. In English grammatical rule, the present verb (V1) is used after modal auxiliary verb. And the students just used word ‘smart’ without something which referred to. So, in this case, the sentence should be adding ‘as and a’ in front of the word ‘smart’ and ‘person’ behind the word ‘smart’. And it would be a better sentence. The correct sentence should be as follows:

“you can be called as a smart person”.

(2) *“that you are able to **continued**”. (S3 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used past participle verb in ‘to infinitive verb’ form. The student provided a mistake by using past participle verb in this case. In English grammatical rule, infinitive verb is divided into two, bare and to infinitive verb. In ‘to infinitive verb form’, it should be in present verb (V1) in the sentence. So, the correct sentence should be as follows:

“That you are able to continue”.

(3) *“then we are a student, we have **to changes**”. (S4 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student made a mistake related to the use of infinitive. In English grammatical rule, in 'To Infinitive' form, there was no need in adding 's/es' for To Infinitive form. So, the correct sentence should be as follows;

"Then we are the students, we have to change".

- (4) *"Someone that **have** high grades can not **said** the smart people because sometimes also the grades get from other people's answers". (S5 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the students provided two mistakes. First, It was a misuse of verb which the students were confused in using verb have / has. In English grammatical rule, the students often made a mistake related to this. In the sentence, the students should use the verb 'has' in the sentence because 'has' was used for singular subjects such as he, she, and it while 'have' was used for plural subjects such as I, you, they, we and another plural subjects. Second, modal verb could not be followed by past verb (V2). The students should add verb 'be' in the sentence. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"Someone who has high grades cannot be said a smart person because sometimes also the grades are got from other people's answers".

- (5) *"Because the fool person can **got** a high score too with cheating". (S10 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student provided a mistake which was the students used past verb (V2) after modal verb. In English grammatical rule, after modal verb, it should be followed by present verb (V1). So, the correct sentence should be as follows:

"Because the fool person can get a high score too by cheating".

- (6) *"When to be a good employees not always rely on the grades but we **should to work** hard to develop the science that we have". (S14 P2)*

Based on that sentence, the student used 'to' after modal auxiliary verb. The student provided a mistake by using 'to' after modal auxiliary verb. In English grammatical rule, modal auxiliary verb is followed by present verb (V1). The correct sentence would be as follows:

"when to be a good employee, it does not always rely on the grades but we should work hard to develop the science that we have".

- (7) *"So, stupid person can **has** a good value by copying the smart one's homework". (S16 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used verb 'has' after modal auxiliary verb. The student provided a mistake by using verb 'has' after modal auxiliary verb in the sentence. In English Grammatical rule, in this case, the verb 'have' is allowed to be used after modal auxiliary verb. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"So, stupid person can have a good value by copying the smart one's homework".

f. Subject – Verb Agreement

Due to differences on tenses between Indonesia and English, the concept of sentence is not on the students' mind. So, when the students made a sentence, they sometimes made common grammatical mistakes in writing, it was easy to cause confusion and made mistakes in sentence. The examples would be provided as follows:

- (1) *"When someone **get** higher grades in their lesson especially in difficult lesson such as math, people will think that you are really smart than other". (S2 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the students provided a mistake by not adding 's/es' in the verb. In English grammatical rule, in simple present tense, the verbs for the subjects such as he, she, it and

other singular subjects should be adding 's/es'. So, the verb 'get' should be 'gets'. The correct sentence would be as follows:

"When someone gets higher grades in their lesson especially in difficult lesson such as math, people will think that you are really smart than other".

(2) *"but mostly people attended in cognitive aspect because the level IQ **become** the main part". (S3 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student provided a mistake. It could be seen that the verb 'become' in the sentence was not added by 's/es'. In English grammatical rule, in the simple present tense, for subjects he, she, it, and other singular subjects form should be adding 's/es' for the verb. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

*"but mostly people are attended in cognitive aspect because the level of IQ **becomes** the main part".*

(3) *"A good score only **showed** you how the way you thing". (S3 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student provided a mistake which was using past participle verb in the present sentence. In English grammatical rule, for the verbs in simple present tense, it should be adding 's/es' for singular subject form. So, the verb that should be used is present verb (V1) + s/es. It was because the word 'a good score' referred to subject of 'It'. So, the verb 'showed' should be 'shows'. The correct sentence would be as follows:

A good score only shows you how the way you think".

(4) *"The most of people always **wants** a perfect score on their exercise, exam, etc". (S11 P1)*

In this sentence, the student provided a mistake by putting 's/es' for the verb of plural subject. In English grammatical rule, the verbs of plural subjects did not need to add 's/es'. The verbs which are added by 's/es', they are only for singular subjects such as he, she, it, and another singular subject. So, the sentence would be as follows:

"The most of people always want a perfect score on their exercise, exam, etc".

g. Verbal and Nominal Sentence Confusion

In the students' writing, the students often made some mistakes which related to misuse in the context. The mistakes would be discussed as follow:

(1) *"**It is mean you are understand** about something". (S3 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student combined nominal and verbal form. The student provided a mistake by using nominal and verbal form in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, the use of nominal sentence is different with verbal sentence. In this case, the student wanted to use verbal sentence. If the students wanted to say something which indicated verbal form, the students did not need to use 'to be' in the sentence, but just used 'verb'. So, the correct answer would be as follows:

"it means you understand about something"

(2) *"I agree about that sentence because grades **is not guarantee** how smart people". (S12 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used to be 'is' with a verb. The student provided a mistake by using to be 'is' with a verb in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, to be cannot be combined with basic verb (V1) in the sentence. The word 'guarantee' was a verb word which meant this sentence was unnecessary to add 'to be'. And also the sentence should be adding an 'auxiliary' into the sentence. The correct sentence would be as follows:

"I agree about that sentence because grades do not guarantee how smart people are".

h. Passive form of the verb

The students often made mistakes regarding the passive form of the verbs in the sentences. Let's see the example:

*"If grades are the standards of how smart are you, the many college and school will lose talent students who **didn't** get a good grades their knowledge are more than people who get good grades".
(S11 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used past auxiliary 'did' for present form. The student provided a mistake by using past auxiliary 'did' for present form in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, in the present form, it uses present auxiliary such as 'do' and 'does' to indicate the present time in the sentence. The auxiliary 'did' should be changed with auxiliary 'do'. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"If grades are the standards of how smart you are, many colleges and school will lose talent students who do not get a good grade their knowledge are more than people who get good grades".

i. Mistakes in Noun

Nouns are the most common part of speech in English. It can be used as subject, object, predicative and so on. Mistakes in nouns could be identified into two forms such as singular form and plural form. It would be discussed as follow:

1) Singular form

"A good grades / score will give if someone get score match with what he / she found in all steps of learning". (S7 P2)

Based on the sentence above, the student used article 'a' for plural noun 'grades'. The student provided a mistake in using article 'a' for plural noun. In English grammatical rule, articles 'a' and 'an' are called as indefinite article. Indefinite article can be used to describe one single object or a unit. In this case, the word 'grades' would be changed with 'grade'. The correct sentence would be as follows:

"A good grade / score will be given if someone gets score matching with what he / she found in all step of learning".

2) Plural form

(1) "Many company ask not only your cognitive but also your skill". (S3 P2)

Based on the sentence above, the student used quantifier 'many' for singular noun 'company'. The student provided a mistake by using quantifier 'many' for singular noun 'company'. In English grammatical rule, quantifier 'many' indicates a large amount of something. It must be in plural noun. So, in this sentence, the singular form of 'company' should be changed with plural noun 'companies'. So, the sentence should be:

"many companies do not ask only your cognitive but also your skill".

(2) "Every peoples around the world are different each other". (S9 P1)

In this sentence, the student used the word 'every' for plural noun or plural countable noun 'peoples'. The student provided a mistake by using the word 'every' for plural noun. In English grammatical rule, 'every' is used to show the number of noun in English. 'every' is followed by singular count noun. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"every person around the world is different to each other".

(3) "I have a two opinion about this".(S17 P1)

Based on the sentence above, there were two mistakes. First, the student used article 'a' for plural noun 'two opinion' and the student didn't add 's/es' to indicate plural form of 'two opinion'. The student provided two mistakes in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, article 'a' is used to describe the singular noun and the use of quantifier is to indicate the plural noun. So, the correct sentence would be :

"I have two opinions about this".

j. Mistakes in Determiner

Based on the findings above, the students sometimes made some mistakes regarding determiner. It consisted of mistakes in article and mistakes in demonstrative adjective. It would be discussed as follows:

1) Mistakes in article

Based on the findings, the researcher found out that the students often made some mistakes regarding article in their writings.

- (1) *"If grades are the standards of how smart are you, **the** many college and school will lose talent students who didn't get a good grades their knowledge are more than people who get good grades". (S11 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used article 'the' in the sentence. The student provided a mistake by using article 'the' in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, it should not add articles if there were some demonstrative adjective behind the nouns. And also, the students did not need to put article 'a' to indicate plural form of nouns, but the students should use article 'the', it was because article 'the' could be used in plural form of nouns. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

"If grades are the standards of how smart you are, many colleges and school will lose talent students who do not get the good grades their knowledge are more than people who get good grades".

- (2) *"I have **a two opinion** about this". (S17 P1)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used two determiners. The student provided a mistake by using two determiners in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, we cannot use more than one article in the sentence. In the sentence, the word 'two' meant that there were more than one which meant the students did not need to put article 'a'. article 'a' shows a singular form of something. So, the correct answer would be as follows:

"I have two opinions about this".

- (3) *"it will be useless if **a people** has good grades". (S9 P3)*

In this sentence, the student used article 'a' for plural noun 'people'. The student provided a mistake by using article 'a' for plural noun 'people'. In English grammatical rule, the word 'people' was plural noun which meant there was a lot of people. So, article 'a' is unnecessary used in the sentence. The students should use article 'the'. And also put article 'the' in front of the words 'good grades'. The correct sentence would be as follows:

"it will be useless if the people have the good grades".

2) Mistakes in demonstrative adjective

Based on the findings above, there were some mistakes that the students made in their writings regarding demonstrative adjective. The mistakes would be discussed as follows:

“This students will be suffered in the future because they have lack of knowledge regarding the materials”. (S8 P1)

In this sentence, the student used demonstrative adjective ‘this’ which indicated singular form of noun. The student provided a mistake by using demonstrative adjective ‘this’ for plural nouns in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, the use of demonstrative adjectives ‘this’ and ‘that’ are used for singular noun while for demonstrative adjectives ‘these’ and ‘those’ are used for plural nouns. So, The student should use demonstrative adjective ‘these’ which indicated plural form of nouns. The correct sentence would be as follows:

These students will be suffered in the future because they have lack of knowledge regarding the materials”.

k. Mistakes in Pronoun

Based on the findings, some students made a lot of mistakes regarding pronoun. Here was the mistake which would be discussed as follows:

*“Teacher make a question or test for the learners to know **they** ability to answer that question and that test”. (S17 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used subject pronoun ‘they’ as a possessive adjective. The student provided a mistake by using subject pronoun ‘they’ as a possessive adjective in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, in possessive adjective shows the possession of something. So, in this case, the students should use possessive adjective ‘their’ in the sentence. So the correct sentence would be as follows:

“Teacher makes a question or test for the learners to know their abilities to answer that question and that test”.

l. Mistakes in Preposition

There were some mistakes that the students made in their writings regarding preposition. Here were the mistakes which would be discussed as follows:

(1) *“Because the fool person can got a high grade too **with** cheating”. (S10 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used preposition ‘with’ in the sentence. The student provided a mistake by using preposition ‘with’ in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, a preposition is a word governing and usually coming in front of, a noun or pronoun and expressing a relation to another word. The use of every preposition is different to each other. In this sentence, The student should use preposition ‘by’, it would be better. It was because the use of preposition ‘with’ and ‘by’ was different. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

“because the fool person can get a high score too by cheating”.

(2) *“But mostly people attended in cognitive aspect because **the level IQ** become the main part”. (S3 P1)*

In this sentence, the student did not use a preposition in the middle of the words ‘the level’ and ‘IQ’. The student provided a mistake by not using a preposition in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, a preposition is used in a sentence to make the sentence becomes more natural. The words ‘the level IQ’ should be adding preposition ‘of’ in the middle of the words. The correct sentence would be as follows:

“But mostly people are attended in cognitive aspect because the level of IQ becomes the main”.

m. Mistakes in Conjunction

Based on the findings above, there were some mistakes that the students made in their writings. Here were the mistakes which would be discussed as follows:

- (1) *“According to me, the grade are not one of the measurement **who** determine person’s cleverness”. (S6 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used conjunction ‘who’ for indicating a thing. The student provided a mistake by using conjunction ‘who’ for indicating a thing. In English grammatical rule, the use of conjunction is different. In this case, the conjunction ‘which’ is needed to be used in the sentence. Actually, conjunction ‘who’ was used to indicate the person, while conjunction ‘which, that’ was used to indicate the nouns such as things. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

“According to me, the grade is not one of the measurement which determines person’s cleverness”

- (2) *“Someone **that** have high grades can not said the smart people, because sometimes also the grades get from other people’s answers”. (S5 P2)*

Based on the sentence above, the student used conjunction ‘that’ for subject ‘someone’. The student provided a mistake by using conjunction ‘that’ for subject ‘someone’. In English grammatical rule, conjunction ‘who’ is used to refer a person in the sentence. In this case, The students should use conjunction ‘who’. It was because conjunction ‘who’ indicates the person in the sentence. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

“Someone who has high grades cannot be said as the smart people, because sometimes also the grades can be got from other people’s answers”.

n. Mistakes in Adjective

The students often made some mistakes related to mistakes in preposition. Here was the data would be discussed as follows:

*“Because they believe that good grades can make everything **more easy**”. (S11 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used comparative degree ‘more’ for one syllable. The student provided a mistake by using comparative degree ‘more’ for one syllable. In English grammatical rule, comparative degree ‘more’ is used for two or more syllables in English. So, The student should not use comparative degree ‘more’ for the word ‘easy’ but the student should use comparative degree ‘er’ for the word ‘easy’. It would be ‘easier’. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

“because they believe that good grades can make everything easier”

B. Secondary Category

Here were the mistakes that the students made in their writing. It was classified into two parts, they were mistakes in number and mistakes in voice. Here were the data would be discussed as follows:

1. Mistake in Number

There was a mistake which related to the number. Here was the data would be discussed as follows:

“Then we are a student, we have to changes”. (S4 P2)

Based on the sentence above, the student used article ‘a’ for plural subject ‘we’. The student provided a mistake by using article ‘a’ for plural subject ‘we’ in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, articles ‘a’ and ‘an’ are used for singular subjects or nouns while article ‘the’ also can be used for singular and plural subjects or nouns in English. So, the student should not put article ‘a’ in the sentence, but the student needed to put article ‘the’, and it would be better. So, correct sentence would be as follows:

“then we are the students, we have to change”

2. Mistakes in Voice

The students also made mistakes regarding voice. They were sometimes confused about it. Here were the data which would be discussed as follows:

“A good grades or score will give if someone get scored match with what he / she found in all steps of learning”. (S7 P2)

In this sentence, the student did not add ‘be’ in the sentence. The student provided a mistake by not adding ‘be’. In English grammatical rule, in this case, the sentence would be a passive voice sentence. So, the student should add verb ‘be’ into the sentence and also the verb ‘give’ changed with verb of past participle (V3) which was ‘given’. The correct sentence would be as follows:

“A good grade or score will be given if someone gets scored matching with what he / she found in all steps of learning”.

C. Functional Category

In this category, there were two kinds of mistakes that the students made regarding to this category. they were mistakes in subject and mistakes in predicate. The data would be discussed as follows:

1. Mistakes in Subject

In their writings, the students made some mistakes of subject. Let’s see the example:

a) *“**In the education** divided three level such as high level, middle level, and low level”. (S1 P1)*

In this sentence, the student did not use a subject. The student provided a mistake by not using a subject in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, it cannot be called as a sentence if there is not subject or verb in the sentence. So, the students should put the subject ‘it’ and added verb ‘is’, so the sentence would be in a right appropriate. So, the correct sentence should be as follows:

*“**in the education, it is divided into three level such as high level, middle level, and low level”.***

b) *“Its makes your cognitive is useless”. (S3 P1)*

In this sentence, the student used possessive adjective as a subject. The student provided a mistake by using possessive adjective as subject in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, possessive adjective could not be used as subject. So, the possessive adjective ‘its’ should be changed by subject ‘it’. So, the correct sentence would be as follows:

*“**it makes your cognitive useless”.***

2. Mistakes in Predicate

There were some mistakes which the students made regarding predicate. The mistakes were presented as follows:

“No matter how good their grades, it’s not measure that they are smart or don’t”. (S16 P2)

In this sentence, the student did not put to be ‘are’. The student provided a mistake by not adding to be ‘are’ in the sentence. In English grammatical rule, a sentence could be called as a sentence if it consists of a subject and a verb. So, the student should add a ‘to be’ which was ‘are’. It was because the words ‘their grades’ indicated plural form. So. The correct sentence would be as follows:

*“**no matter how good their grades are, it doesn’t measure that they are smart or aren’t”.***

Based on the analysis above, the seventh-semester students mostly made common grammatical mistakes in the primary category of verbs. Common verb mistakes include missing verbs, misusing the verb 'bee,' verb and noun confusion, misusing auxiliary verbs, mistakes in ordinary verb form, subject-verb agreement, verbal and nominal sentence confusion, and passive form of the verb. The

research results indicated that even though they were in the seventh semester, they still made common grammatical mistakes in writing an argumentative essay.

Mistakes in verbs are a common occurrence in language learning and usage. Various studies have delved into the types and reasons behind these errors. For instance, research has shown that students often struggle with verb-related mistakes, particularly in the present, past, and future tenses [18]. These errors can stem from a variety of factors, including interference from one's first language [19]. Additionally, the misuse of verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and auxiliary verbs are among the most frequent errors observed [20]. Furthermore, studies have highlighted that errors in verb inflection according to tense and number are prevalent [21]. In the realm of language education, it has been noted that students face challenges with verb consistency and verb tense, which are identified as the most common grammatical errors in English composition [22]. Moreover, the analysis of students' writing has revealed that mistakes in verb usage, such as errors in the inflection of verbs according to tense and number, are among the most frequently occurring grammatical errors [21]. These findings underscore the importance of addressing verb-related mistakes in language teaching and learning. Furthermore, studies have explored the impact of various instructional approaches on grammatical accuracy. For example, research has highlighted the significance of teacher feedback practices in improving students' academic writing skills, including correcting grammatical errors related to verbs [23]. Additionally, investigations into the effectiveness of online quiz tools have shown that verb formation is one of the common mistake categories among ESL learners [24]. These studies emphasize the role of targeted feedback and interactive learning tools in addressing verb-related errors.

IV. Conclusion

The research revealed that the students made common grammatical mistakes when writing an argumentative essay. They can be classified into the primary category, the secondary category, and the functional category. First, the primary category consists of mistakes in nouns, mistakes in verbs, mistakes in determiners, mistakes in pronouns, mistakes in prepositions, mistakes in conjunction, and mistakes in adjectives. Second, the secondary category consists of number and voice mistakes. Third, the functional category consists of mistakes in the subject and predicate. Based on the findings and the analysis, it can be concluded that the students commonly made common grammatical mistakes, which are the mistakes in verbs that the students made in their writings.

Ultimately, it is crucial to recognize the constraints of the study, which encompassed a small sample of merely 18 students who were pursuing English as a second language at the University of Muhammadiyah Sorong. This limited sample size may have compromised the accuracy and reliability of the research findings. In addition, the research was restricted to examining the data derived from the essay compositions of these individuals. The essays were composed as a reaction to the prompt, 'Grades are not a precise reflection of an individual's intellectual capacity.' Future researchers should explore the root causes of grammatical errors, as the present study only focused on the common grammatical mistakes made by students in English argumentative essays.

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