ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS' ORAL ERROR: A STUDY IN ONE-TO-ONE EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Sitti Syakira[1], Murni Mahmud[2], Sahril[3]
*sitti.syakira@unsil.ac.id
Universitas Siliwangi[1], Universitas Negeri Makassar[2,3], Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Correcting the repeated errors produced by the learners is one of the most frustrating things to do by teachers. However, it is natural for the students to commit errors while learning since it can be a sign of improving language competence and as a facilitating factor in second language learning (Atmaca, 2016). This study aims to find out the types and frequency of learners' oral error occurrence during the teaching and learning process in one-to-one EFL classroom interaction. This research applied descriptive qualitative research with case study design. Two adult learners, who had the same English proficiency level, were chosen as research participants through purposive sampling in Amsterdam Institute, an informal school applying tailor-made system in the teaching and learning process. The data were collected through observation during teaching and learning process, and analyzed based on data analysis procedures consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results revealed that all types of errors proposed in this research appeared during the observation and data analysis. Grammatical error dominated the error type, and lexical error was the least error type produced by the learners. Unsolicited use of L1 is excluded from the discussion of the result finding since it is not a part of the error type studied (Lyster, 1998). Furthermore, another finding indicates that the error committed by the learners continuously appeared in the next meeting the researcher observed. Therefore, it is suggested that the teacher should provide more triggers as an attraction for the learners' intention so that they can figure out more about their errors, and engage the learners to provide themselves self-correction or self-repair by prompting them.

Keywords: Oral Corrective Feedbacks, Oral Errors, One-to-One EFL Classroom Interaction, Error Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Using English in oral communication is one of the most common abilities for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor, but completely complex activities to be considered in teaching English as foreign language. In an EFL classroom, despite exposure to the language at various education level, students continue to experience

*Corresponding Author
Sitti Syakira
Email: sitti.syakira@unsil.ac.id

difficulties in mastering the basics of English proficiency, especially in speaking class. Lacks of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar knowledge drive the students to produce errors during their learning process. This also might be argued that the students' constant use of their primary language contributes significantly to the difficulties experienced by students in the correct usage of English. Therefore, In this sense, learners' errors do not occur just because of L1 interference (negative transfer) but also because of L2 system, that is, the causes of errors could be interlingual or intralingual (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012). Given these contexts, it is inevitable that students will continue to commit errors in their endeavors to communicate in the target language. Furthermore, according to Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005), correcting the same errors committed by the learners in times during the learning process and again is one of the most frustrating tasks for teacher, especially for foreign-language teachers.

The existence of error has been subjected for all language-teaching theories as an indicator of teaching process. It was tied to the then prevalent thinking in the fields of psychology, linguistics, and language acquisition. Lambani and Nengome (2017) states that although errors are regarded as something negative to language learning, they are useful in that they serve as a prediction of difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. Corder (1967), moreover, stresses the importance of learners' errors as a developmental stage in the learning process. For teachers and learners, errors become such a stimulus to think about why they occur during the learning process. Errors help teachers to acknowledge what the learners understand and do not understand and with this information, teachers can form a more sufficient concept and practice of a rule in the target language. Meanwhile for learners, being able to identify their errors can help them to determine learning strategies as Kamil et al. (2017) emphasize that adapting a proper and right learning strategies can assist the EFL learners to be able to better self-manage their language learning. Furthermore, Strevens (1969) supports the statement that teacher should view the learners' errors as learning strategies, not as a learning problem.

Corder (1967) defines error as incorrect utterances by English Second Language (ESL) learners that occur during the process of acquiring language as part of transitional competence. He further explains that errors made by L2 or foreign language learners refer to systematic incorrect statements, which reflect their underlying knowledge of the aspects of language acquired up to a particular point. Furthermore, Gass et al. (2013) regard errors as red flag since they give clues about the learners' internal system and L2 knowledge. Producing incorrect language pieces to convey messages whether in written or spoken while learning a language is natural to commit by the students. It is the teacher's responsibility to find the sources and take measures to provide feedback (Erdoğan, 2005) that they can process new language rules. In addition to learning foreign language, errors committed by the learners could be seen as a sign of progress in improving language competence (Farrokh, 2011; Montrul, 2011) and as a facilitating factor in language learning (Atmaca, 2016).

Drawing conclusion about the importance of errors as valuable resources for teachers to be able to tailor activities and learning strategies to assist students facing their obstacle in the learning process, an error analysis can be a guidance and answer as feedback to the EFL learners. Error Analysis (EA) is the branch of applied linguistics which is concerned with the learners' performance errors. It is an activity that involves the exposure of errors that occur when people write and speak (Lambani & Nengome, 2017). Richards (1973) further explains that error analysis is the study of errors committed by the second and foreign language learners. Basically, it is a kind of phonological or morphological

analysis which pays attention to the errors learners make. It comprises of a comparison between the errors committed in the target language and that target language itself. Additionally, Richards and Sampson (1974) concur that error analysis is a critical tool for teachers to assess learners' learning ability in order to solve learners' difficulties from the most frequent errors made. For that reason, it is imperative that errors that learners make are classified and attended to.

This study adopts four different types of oral errors that mentioned by Lyster (1998): grammatical, phonological, and lexical error, and unsolicited use of first language (L1). Grammatical errors include errors in the use of closed classes such as determination, preposition, pronouns, errors in tense and subject/verb agreement, word order, negation, question formation, and auxiliaries. Phonological errors, in this study, focuses on consonant and vowels sound, and silent letter pronunciation. Meanwhile, lexical errors cover three main categories, which are inaccurate, imprecise, or inappropriate choices of lexical items in open classes-namely, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives (e.g., adoption for adaptation); non-target derivations of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, involving incorrect use of prefixes and suffixes (e.g., unpolite for impolite); and inaccurate vocabulary use to represent the correct meaning or idea of the word. (e.g., sometime for sometimes). The latter one, unsolicited use of L1, is not included as error per se, so that this error type was excluded from this research. The three types of error adopted, are based on the context of the language studied by him, in this case French. Nevertheless, these types of error might be currently occurring in the other language learning classrooms.

Several studies have previously explored learners' errors using error analysis in different language and linguistics aspects. However, the fact that ESL/EFL error analysis studies have been conducted on writing samples (Ander & Yildirim, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Fareh, 2014; Atmaca, 2016; di Gennaro, 2016; Ondrakova, 2016; Nagata et al., 2017; Satake, 2020) can be attributed to two factors: first, collecting written ESL/EFL written samples is easier compared to collecting speaking samples. Second, it is less time consuming and relatively easier to analyze written samples.

In the speaking class context, most studies only focus on grammatical error. In Turkish context, Alahmadi and Kesseiri (2013) study language transfer speaking errors among Saudi students. They report that the participants committed the following grammatical errors: an unmarked form of verbs, third-person pronouns, misused singular and plural, articles, sentences without a verb, and sentences with pronoun copying. (Nesreen S Alahmadi, 2014) analyzes grammatical errors made by 30 Saudi students who study in the foundation year at the University of Tibah in Saudi Arabia. The author reports analyzing nine different types of errors made by the participants who were interviewed for an average of ten minutes. The nine categories are: an unmarked form of verbs, misuse of the verb tense, misuse of articles, misuse of singular and plural, misuse of prepositions, use of sentences without a verb, sentences with pronoun copy, third-person pronouns, and misuse of regular and irregular verbs.

Hojati (2013)revealed the advanced-level Iranian EFL students have some linguistic problem which is considered as error especially the ones corresponding to grammar and pronunciation. In addition, Tarawneh and Almomani (2013) indicated that most of Jordanian English students are unable to speak English accurately although many of them have learned a great deal of grammatical knowledge and vocabulary. In addition, Al-Tamari (2019) reviewed the types and classifications of speaking errors made by Saudi university freshmen. He found two types of errors are found: pronunciation errors and grammatical errors. Meanwhile, in Indonesian context, Sari (2018) in her study found out 12 kinds of

grammatical errors dominated by numbers. In Lumban Batu's et al. (2018) study, they found past tense as the dominated grammatical errors. The purpose of this study was, however, not to weight in either or for against the need focus of certain form of errors or error analysis in language learning classroom. Rather, it is necessary to take account not only grammatical errors, as well as other error forms of linguistics aspects to enrich the theories.

METHODS

This research applied descriptive qualitative method with case study design which lies on participants' viewpoints and holistic analysis on what are described in the viewpoint (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). It was undertaken in an informal institution called Amsterdam Institute. Located in Makassar, South Sulawesi, it was established in 2017 with several English and Non-English program. The English program include General English, English for Professional, In-Company Training, TOEFL and IELTS. English for Professional, consisting of adult learners and conducted using tailor made system in which the teacher taught the learners based on their needs in one-to-one classroom, was chosen to fulfill the criteria of the research. The teaching and learning process can be done anywhere and anytime based on the agreement of the teacher and learners.

Two learners were chosen purposively as the research subjects. They were, afterward, identified as learner 1 (L1) and learner 2 (L2). They were, moreover, purposively chosen due to three reasons: (1) they had the same English proficiency level; (2) they had the same numbers of meeting; and (3) they had been taught with the same material before the research was conducted.

An observation was conducted during teaching and learning process to collect the data using audio recorder. It was conducted in two one-to-one classes and each class consisted of three meetings with 8 hours 38 minutes of audio recording in total. The data gathered were analyzed through the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014). This analysis consists of four steps, which are data reduction in which the data were selected and coded based on the adopted theory, data display where the data were displayed in the form of excerpts, conclusion drawing and verification which dealt with concluding or interpreting the displayed data referring to the theory, and as the final part of this step, the conclusion was confirmed through verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This finding analysis combines data from the first and second learner taught differently in each one-to-one class interaction. It yields a total of 158 error occurrences, each initiated by a student turn containing at least one error coded as grammatical, lexical, and phonological error, and unsolicited use of L1. This findings embody the number and percentage of error found during the data analysis shown in the following table.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Error/Mistake

Type of Error	1st Learner's Error	2nd Learner's Error	Total	
			Number	**Percentage**
Grammatical	55	28	83	52.5

Phonological	10	13	23	14.6
Lexical	6	8	14	8.9
Unsolicited use of L1	26	12	38	24.1
Total	**97**	**61**	**158**	**100**

Table 1 presents the distribution of error/mistake types in the entire database of the first and the second learner: 52.5% are grammar dominated with subject/verb agreement, 14.6% are lexical, in which inappropriate choices of lexical items appeared most, 8.9% are phonological, and 24.1 % are unsolicited uses of L1. The latest one, unsolicited use of L1 is excluded from the finding discussion since it is, basically, not included as error type. The first learner produced 97 (61.3%) errors, and 61 (38.7%) were produced by the second learner of which grammatical error dominated their error. In addition, the findings above are displayed in the following form of excerpts.

1.   Grammatical Error

Grammar is one of the fundamental elements in English. This study found out most types of grammatical error mentioned by Lyster (1998), which are preposition, pronouns, errors in tense and subject/verb agreement, auxiliaries, and pronoun that he does not mention in his study. However, one of the most frequent errors/mistakes made by the learners was the subject and verb agreement. This type of grammatical error was mostly committed by the first learner. However, this finding has different result from Lumban Batu's et al. (2018) in which subject/verb agreement is the least grammatical error type committed by the learners. The term "subject–verb agreement" refers to the abstract grammatical relation between the agreeing constituents (Eberhard, 1999). An understanding of how speakers and hearers construct subject-verb agreement would clearly be an important component of any account of grammatical processing. The following excerpts show the example of it.

Excerpt 1
L$_1$: KFC, **She like it**, kalau KFC.
        (KFC, she like it. If it's KFC)
T   : Oh, **she likes KFC**

Learner 1 (L$_1$), April 25, 2018

According to Lyster (1998) the cognitive processes involved in accessing and applying the system-driven rules of grammar are more complex than those involved in the retrieval of other error items. The first excerpt displays the form of system driven-rules of grammar that is not applied in Indonesian, the adding –s' for singular subject. The learner, in this case, missed in constructing the singular verb, "like" where she should have added "-s" after "like". This error also appears in the study conducted by Al-Tamari (2019). He claims that the omission of the 3rdperson -s', on the contrary, is an intralingual error that has nothing to do with Arabic. The rule of adding a 3rd person singular -s' to the verb in the simple present when the subject is third-person singular can be difficult for learners, especially for beginners. Students tend to generalize the use of the verb without '-s' as is the case when the subject is not third-person singular. Briceño and Klein (2018) in their study about language related error analysis discovers that this error may be a result of the EL's familiarity with the verb but inability to conjugate it consistently. In addition, this type of

ending errors were consistent with the SLA research showing that '-s' inflectional ending comes last (Brown, 1973; Larsen-Freeman, 1975; Hakuta, 1976).

Distinctively, subject-verb agreement continued to occur on another occasion. Different from the excerpt above of which errors are the plural verb for singular subject, in excerpt below, the subject "it" does not agree with the verb "have". In spite of using plural subject, the learner used singular subject "it".

Excerpt 2
L2   : Yeah. **It have** different meaning?
T   : Yeah, **they have different meaning**.

Learner 2 (L2), April 21, 2018

The operations that occur during grammatical encoding typically occur rapidly and without conscious awareness. That is, speakers usually attend to the meaning of their message and not to the grammatical form it takes, including whether their subject nouns and verbs agree. With this reason, even though the learners were taught about the material previously, when speaking, they tended to make the same mistake, still.

Another category of grammatical error that Lyster (1998) does not mention in his study is pronoun. Although this type only happens once during all the observation conducted, the researcher takes account of it as the distinguishing category of the earlier one mentioned by him. The excerpt below display the example.

Excerpt 3
L$_1$: No, but.. yes he is tall than me, because **I height** … Ms. O (teacher's initial name)?
T   : No, 'I' *itu saya, kalau kepunyaan*?
       (No, I means *saya*, how about possession?)
L$_1$: Hmm
T   : Tinggi ku? Like I saya, mama ku, my mother
       (My height? Like I *saya*, *mamaku*, my mother)
L$_1$: Oh my height.
T   : Yes.
L$_1$: .. my height is one hundred forty five.

Learner 1 (L$_1$), May 11, 2018

In excerpt 3, the learner wrongly used "I" as possession in which she should have used "My". This grammatical error category can be attributed to the interference of pronoun use in Indonesian. Formally, in Indonesian, "saya" can be utilized both as subjective and possessive pronoun. Meanwhile, English literally has different form and function of their utilization. Alahmadi and Kesseiri (2013), Nesreen S Alahmadi (2014), Sari (2018), and Al-Tamari (2019) include this error category of grammatical error as intralingual errors. Intralingual error is "error which reflects the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply". (J. Richards, 1971, p. 173)

2.   Phonological Error
The next type error that produced by the learner was phonological error. English programs and teachers do not give pronunciation a priority in their curricula and classroom

activities although students often view pronunciation as a priority in their learning activities (A. Brown, 1992; Willing, 1978; Fraser, 2000; Yates, 2001). This frequently leads the learners commit error during their language learning. Research on second language (L2) acquisition has shown that adult learners have difficulties in mastering L2 sound patterns with the ability of a native speaker (Birdsong & Molis, 2001). In this study, learners mostly mispronounced certain consonant sound error. The following excerpt show the errors committed by learner 1 and 2.

Excerpt 4
L$_2$: No. Actually, my parents ee mem .. *membiarkan kami* to choose what we want, and they know I **love /lef/** fashion.
(No. Actually, my parents ee mem .. let us choose what we want, and they know I **love /lef/** fashion).
T   : **I love /lef/ or I love /lʌv/?**
L$_2$: I love /lʌv/

Learner 2 (L$_2$), April 21, 2018

Excerpt 5
L$_1$: Oh, my husband is friendly and he loves **laugh /laug/**
T   : Okay, **masih ingat bu, 'g' ketemu 'h' dibaca?**
(Okay**, do you still remember, mam, 'g' followed with 'h', we read it?**)
L$_1$: Itu yang /lɑ:f/?
(That's /lɑ:f/?)
T   : Yes.

Learner 1 (L$_1$), May 11, 2018

According to Richards (1974), the occurrence of errors, especially in pronouncing a word, is caused by three main factors. First is an interference error that occurs due to the use of element from one language while speaking another. Second is intra lingual errors" reflecting the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn the conditions of the rules applied. Third is developmental errors that occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language based on limited experience. Looking at the two excerpts above, this phonological error frequently occur due to the first factor. This finding is in line with what Ramasari (2017) found in her research. She claims that that students had difficulties in pronouncing the sound among /s/ and /z/, /f/ and /v/, or /e/ and /æ/. Al-Tamari (2019) also claims that the errors at this level of the sound can be safely referred to L1 interference since these sounds do not exist in Arabic. Students need to learn and practice pronouncing these sounds to have them correctly pronounced in words. Due to their interference errors, students of EFL did not realize that their mother tongue has affected their pronunciation of English, either accent or dialect when they spoke in speaking for general communication. In addition, Burgos et al. (2014), in the context of phonology acquisition in Spanish learners of Dutch, adds that this occurrence of errors is caused by the interference from the native language in acquiring the pronunciation of L2, which is in this study focus on English as foreign language. Based on what it has shown, learning pronunciation in practice is not straightforwardly reducible to mere quantity of correct input (Broth & Lundell, 2013).

3.   Lexical Error

The development of lexical knowledge is considered by both researchers and teachers to be central to the acquisition of a second or foreign language (Read & Chapelle, 2001). Lexical errors do not only play a relevant role in the second language vocabulary acquisition process, but also are among the most numerous type of errors in learners' performance. This type of error appeared 14 times during the teaching and learning process in both classes observed. The following excerpt is one of the examples occurred.

Excerpt 6
L₁   : He is tall, and he is big than me. I think his **tall** 180 *(satu delapan puluh).*
(One hundred and eighty)
T   : *Okay, jadi kalau kita mau bilang tingginya*, **tall** *itu kata sifat*.
(Okay, so if we want to say his height .. **tall is adjective**)
L₁   : *Iya betul*
(That's right)

Learner 1 (L₁), May 11, 2018

Excerpt 6 reflects the first type of lexical error proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997). The learner did not acknowledge that tall is an adjective, and it cannot be put after possessive adjective "his". The teacher's sentence "tall is adjective*"* was to trigger the learner finding the correct form of the word, but unfortunately, the learner did not respond as it was expected. The teacher supplied the learner with information that the word "tall" is not an adjective. It was implied that learner was expected to change the word class "tall" into a noun "height".

Ander and Yildirim (2010) categorize this error as word formation error. According to them, lexical errors in this category consist of the items where the students use the wrong form of a word in their compositions. For instance, when a student intends to use a noun in a sentence, but ends up using the adjective form of that noun. Excerpt above shows the vise versa of what Ander and Yildirım (2010) show as the example, but still has the same lexical error pattern. However, this type of lexical error did not appear on students' composition in their study. It might be related to students' avoidance of using complex words, phrases or sentences in their compositions, which could also be linked to their language proficiency.

Excerpt 7
L₂   : Oh, yeah. There in .. just **exist** in UNM
T   : **Exist?** What do you mean by exist here?
L₂   : *Ada*
(There is)
T   : Oh, okay. So, exist, in this context, we cannot use. So, you can say ee
"Vocational education is only in Makassar. There is no in Kendari"

Learner 2 (L₂), April 21, 2018

Excerpt 8
T   : Okay. So how long have you been a teacher?
L₁   : Hm *dari* 2009, 2009, **from** 2009.
T   : ***Kayaknya 'from' nya lebih cocok kalau kita ganti 'sejak'***.
(**Apprently, we better use "since" than "from"**)
L₁   : Oh..

Learner 1 (L₁), April 25, 2018

The two excerpts illustrate the third type of lexical error according to Lyster (1998) in which the learner inaccurately used the vocabulary to represent the meaning of their idea or word. However, Ander and Yildirim (2010) differentiate this type of lexical error into two, wrong word choice and literal translation error. Excerpt 7 depicts the wrong word choice error. This category consists of lexical errors where a wrong lexical item is used instead of the correct one. By having that wrong item there, the whole sentence does not meet the proper meaning. This generally occurs notably when the learner uses a wrong or inappropriate item from several L2 equivalents of the same word. In excerpt 7, the learner used "exist" to describe a place location, whilst "exist" means to be real or to live. Thus, this is not appropriate to use in the context.

In excerpt 8, in spite of using "since", the learner used "from" to answer the teacher's question. Apparently, the learner had the same idea as the teacher's. However, the learner used "from" because of two possible reasons; first, the learner translated the word literally from Indonesian since in Indonesian, "from" and "since" have similar use and interpretation, and second, the learner had no idea at all about the word. This lexical error category is in line with literal translation error pattern proposed by Ander and Yildirim (2010) that is the items that are directly translated into L2 by sticking to the literal L1 meaning. In other words, the errors in this category are made when the learner literally transfers the individual meaning of an item without knowing the set expressions in the target language. Although it may make some sense to a native speaker of L1, it sounds awkward to a native speaker of the target language (L2).

Based on the findings and discussion above, the percentage of error was calculated and discussed to know the dominant type of error. In this research, from 158 errors occurred during the teaching and learning process of the two learners, grammatical error with more subcategories of subject-verb agreement happened most frequently. This is in line with Lyster (1998) said that the cognitive processes involved in accessing and applying the system-driven rules of grammar are more complex than those involved in the retrieval of other error items. It proves that this type is one of the difficult parts to master by the EFL learners in speaking performance. Furthermore, due to the same error repetitions produced by the learners in some occasions, the teachers need more effort to provide more trigger or encouragement to reduce those errors. These error occurrences are also mostly because of the learners' absent mind of the material learnt before. It happens with the reason that they do not have enough time to constantly study due to their profession.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed learners' errors during the teaching and learning process in One-to-one EFL classroom interaction. The result found that learner 1 committed more errors than the learner 2 although they had the same level of English proficiency. This study, moreover, discovers three main types of errors appeared during the observation, namely grammatical, phonological, and lexical error, in which grammatical error dominated the error type followed by phonological and lexical error. Subject/verb agreement appears to be the dominating grammatical error category. In phonological error, consonant sound error becomes the students' difficulties to master due to the interference of L1. As for the lexical error, the second category of lexical error mentioned by Lyster (1998) did not occur in this study. Another finding that researcher can take out from this study, is that the error made by the learners continuously appeared in the second and the third meeting observed. The teacher should provide more triggers as an attraction for the learners' intention so that they

can figure out more about their errors, and engage the learners to provide themselves self-correction or self-repair by prompting them. In addition, concerning this research only focused on findings the types of error made by the learners. The researcher expects the next researchers to involve corrective feedbacks used by the teacher, the learners' uptake after the correction and the learners' self-correction before receiving feedback from the teacher with larger participants and scales.

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