



Surface Strategy Taxonomy on EFL Learners' Academic Presentation: A Study of Grammatical Error Analysis

Nurdin^{1*}, Umi Hani²

Universitas Pamulang, Indonesia

[*dosen02773@unpam.ac.id](mailto:dosen02773@unpam.ac.id)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates grammatical errors produced by EFL learners during oral academic presentations by applying the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen (1982). The objectives of this research are to identify the types of grammatical errors found in students' academic presentations, analyze the possible sources of the errors, and determine the most frequently occurring grammatical error type. This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants of this study were 20 third-semester students of the English Department at Universitas Pamulang. The data were collected through video recordings of students' oral academic presentations and were analyzed using the framework of Error Analysis proposed by Stephen Pit Corder (1967). The findings revealed that the students produced four types of grammatical errors based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. A total of 94 grammatical errors were identified in the students' presentations. Misformation errors were found to be the most dominant type with 39 occurrences (41.49%), followed by omission errors with 28 occurrences (29.79%), addition errors with 17 occurrences (18.09%), and misordering errors with 10 occurrences (10.63%). The study also revealed that the grammatical errors were mainly caused by interlingual interference and intralingual interference. Interlingual interference occurred because students transferred Indonesian grammatical patterns into English expressions, while intralingual interference resulted from incomplete understanding and overgeneralization of English grammatical rules. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that EFL learners still experience difficulties in applying correct grammatical structures during spontaneous oral academic communication. Therefore, greater emphasis on grammar application in speaking activities is necessary to improve students' grammatical accuracy and academic speaking performance

Keywords: Academic Presentation, Grammatical Errors Analysis, Surface Strategy Taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

English has become the dominant international language in various domains such as education, business, science, and technology. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) from early education to higher levels. Although many Indonesian students study English for several years, a significant number still face difficulties in using it accurately, particularly in grammar. Grammar functions as the backbone of a language because it organizes words and phrases into meaningful sentences. Without adequate grammatical competence, communication can become unclear or even misleading. Hence, mastering English grammar is essential for EFL learners to achieve effective oral and written communication.

However, many Indonesian EFL learners continue to experience grammatical difficulties, particularly in spontaneous oral communication. Although they may produce grammatically correct sentences in written tasks, they often struggle to maintain grammatical accuracy while speaking in real time, resulting in errors such as omission, misformation, and misordering. This challenge becomes more evident in academic presentations, which require learners to organize ideas, use appropriate academic language, and communicate clearly. As a result, academic presentations

provide a valuable context for examining learners' grammatical competence and identifying the linguistic challenges they face in spoken academic discourse.

Several previous studies have investigated grammatical errors produced by EFL learners in different language contexts. For instance, research conducted by Rahmawati and Nurhayati (2022) revealed that Indonesian EFL learners frequently committed errors in verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, and article usage in speaking tasks. Similarly, Putri et al. (2023) examined grammatical errors in university students' oral presentations and found that omission and misinformation errors were among the most common error types. In another study, Sari and Widodo (2024) analyzed learners' spoken production during classroom discussions and reported that grammatical inaccuracies often resulted from both first-language interference and incomplete mastery of English grammatical rules. Furthermore, international studies such as those conducted by Al-Khresheh (2022) and Ahmed (2023) have highlighted the persistent occurrence of grammatical errors in EFL learners' oral performance, particularly in academic speaking situations where learners are required to produce language spontaneously.

Although these studies have contributed significantly to the understanding of grammatical errors in EFL contexts, several research gaps remain. First, many previous studies have predominantly focused on written texts, such as essays, compositions, and academic writing, rather than spoken academic discourse. Second, studies investigating grammatical errors in oral presentations have often emphasized general speaking performance without providing a detailed classification based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). Third, limited research has specifically examined grammatical errors occurring in academic presentations delivered by Indonesian university EFL learners, despite the increasing importance of presentation skills in higher education. Consequently, there is still a need for empirical research that systematically identifies and classifies grammatical errors in EFL learners' academic presentations using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy framework. This study seeks to address these gaps by analyzing the types, sources, and frequency of grammatical errors produced by Indonesian EFL learners during academic presentations.

Considering the importance of grammatical accuracy in academic speaking activities, particularly in oral presentations, this study attempts to analyze the grammatical errors produced by Indonesian EFL learners during academic presentations. The study seeks to identify the dominant types of grammatical errors as well as the possible causes underlying the learners' inaccurate grammatical production in spoken academic contexts. Accordingly, the research questions are 1. What types of grammatical errors are found in the oral academic presentations of EFL learners based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy? 2. What are the possible causes or sources of grammatical errors produced by EFL learners during oral academic presentations? 3. Which type of grammatical error is most frequently produced by EFL learners in their oral academic presentations? This research is conducted with the purpose of investigating grammatical errors produced by EFL learners in oral academic presentations by applying the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). Specifically, the objectives of this research are 1. To identify and classify the types of grammatical errors produced by EFL learners during oral academic presentations based on the categories of Surface Strategy Taxonomy, namely omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. 2. To analyze the possible sources or causes of grammatical errors produced by EFL learners in their oral academic presentations. 3. To determine the most dominant or frequently occurring types of grammatical errors found in the oral academic presentations of EFL learners according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982).

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design by applying the framework of Error Analysis proposed by Stephen Pit Corder (1967) and the Surface Strategy Taxonomy

developed by Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen (1982). A descriptive qualitative approach is considered appropriate for this study because the research aims to identify, describe, classify, and interpret the grammatical errors produced by EFL learners during academic presentations rather than to test hypotheses or examine statistical relationships between variables. The study focuses on understanding the forms and possible sources of grammatical errors that naturally occur in students' spoken academic performance.

This research is conducted at Universitas Pamulang, specifically in the English Department of the Faculty of Letters. The participants of this study are third-semester students of the English Department. The students are selected because they have completed several English-related courses, particularly Grammar I and Grammar II, which provide them with basic knowledge of English grammatical structures.

The primary data of this study are obtained from students' oral academic presentations. Each participant is asked to deliver an academic presentation on a topic related to linguistics, education, or literature. The presentations are recorded and transcribed to facilitate the process of identifying and analyzing grammatical errors produced by the students. The recorded presentations are expected to provide authentic data reflecting the students' actual grammatical performance in spoken academic contexts.

The data in this study are collected through several procedures. First, the researcher coordinates with the lecturer and participants to schedule the academic presentation sessions. Second, the students' presentations are recorded using a video recorder to obtain authentic spoken data. During the presentations, the researcher also takes field notes to document contextual factors that may influence students' grammatical performance. After the presentations are completed, the recordings are transcribed into written form using transcription sheets. The transcriptions are then examined carefully to identify grammatical errors produced by the students. Finally, the identified errors are classified based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982).

RESULTS

1. Types of Grammatical Errors

Based on the analysis of the students' oral academic presentations, the researcher identified four types of grammatical errors according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen (1982), namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The data were obtained from the presentations delivered by 20 third-semester students of the English Department at Universitas Pamulang. After transcribing and analyzing the presentations, the researcher found a total of 94 grammatical errors. The frequency and percentage of grammatical errors are presented in the table below:

Table 1. The Frequency and Percentage of Grammatical Errors

Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	28	29.79%
Addition	17	18.09%
Misformation	39	41.49%
Misordering	10	10.63%
Total	94	100%

2. Sources of Grammatical Errors

Based on the analysis of the students' oral academic presentations, the researcher identified two major sources of grammatical errors, namely interlingual interference and intralingual interference.

3. *The Most Frequently Produced Grammatical Error*

Based on the analysis of the students' oral academic presentations, misinformation errors were identified as the most frequently produced grammatical errors. The findings revealed that misinformation errors occurred 39 times out of a total of 94 grammatical errors, representing 41.49% of all identified errors. These errors mainly involved incorrect verb forms, subject-verb agreement, auxiliary verbs, pronouns, and plural forms.

DISCUSSION

1. *Types of Grammatical Errors*

Based on the analysis, a total of 94 grammatical errors were identified in the students' academic presentations. Misinformation was the most frequent error type, accounting for 39 errors (41.49%), followed by omission with 28 errors (29.79%), addition with 17 errors (18.09%), and misordering with 10 errors (10.63%). Omission errors occurred when students omitted grammatical elements required in English sentence structures. Based on the analysis, omission errors frequently involved auxiliary verbs, articles, prepositions, plural markers, and inflectional endings. Addition errors occurred when students inserted unnecessary grammatical elements into their utterances. These errors generally involved unnecessary auxiliary verbs, double markings, and redundant grammatical forms. Misinformation errors occurred when students used incorrect grammatical forms or structures in their utterances. This type of error became the most dominant finding in the present study. Misordering errors occurred when students arranged sentence elements incorrectly. These errors commonly appeared in interrogative sentences, adverb placement, and phrase arrangement.

2. *Sources of Grammatical Errors*

The findings indicate that students frequently transferred Indonesian grammatical structures into English oral communication. Most interlingual errors involved omission of auxiliary verbs and incorrect sentence patterns because Indonesian grammar does not apply the same grammatical rules as English. Intralingual interference frequently appeared in the form of overgeneralization, incomplete application of grammatical rules, and confusion in selecting appropriate grammatical forms. The findings indicate that students were still developing their grammatical competence in English. In addition to interlingual and intralingual interference, the findings also reveal that communication strategy factors contributed to the occurrence of grammatical errors during oral academic presentations. During presentations, students were required to organize ideas, maintain fluency, and communicate information simultaneously. As a result, many students focused more on delivering content than on grammatical accuracy. Some students produced incomplete or simplified sentence structures to maintain fluency during presentations. Hesitation, nervousness, and lack of confidence also influenced students' grammatical performance. These conditions caused students to produce grammatical inaccuracies unintentionally while speaking spontaneously in front of an audience. Therefore, the findings indicate that grammatical errors in EFL learners' oral academic presentations were influenced by linguistic factors as well as communication conditions experienced during speaking activities.

3. *The Most Frequently Produced Grammatical Error*

The high frequency of misinformation errors indicates that the students still experienced difficulties in selecting and applying appropriate grammatical forms during spontaneous oral communication. Most students appeared to understand certain grammatical rules; however, they were not yet able to use those rules accurately and consistently while delivering academic presentations. In many cases, the students overgeneralized grammatical rules, particularly in the formation of past tense verbs and subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, the dominance of misinformation errors suggests that students focused more on conveying ideas and maintaining

fluency than on grammatical accuracy during presentations. This finding demonstrates that grammatical competence in spoken academic communication remains a challenge for EFL learners, especially when they are required to produce language spontaneously in formal presentation settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that EFL learners still experience considerable difficulties in applying correct grammatical structures during spontaneous oral communication. Most grammatical errors appeared in the use of verb forms, auxiliary verbs, subject-verb agreement, articles, and sentence structures. These errors demonstrate that although the students had learned English grammar formally, they still faced challenges in applying grammatical rules accurately and consistently during academic presentations.

The study revealed that grammatical errors were influenced by two major sources, namely interlingual interference and intralingual interference. Interlingual interference occurred because students transferred Indonesian grammatical patterns into English expressions. This influence was particularly visible in omission errors involving auxiliary verbs and sentence structures. Meanwhile, intralingual interference occurred because students had incomplete understanding of English grammatical rules. Errors such as overgeneralization of past tense forms and incorrect subject-verb agreement reflected learners' difficulties in mastering English grammar. In addition, communication factors also contributed to the occurrence of grammatical errors during presentations. During oral academic presentations, students were required to organize ideas, maintain fluency, and deliver information simultaneously. As a result, many students focused more on content delivery and fluency rather than grammatical accuracy. Nervousness, hesitation, and limited speaking confidence also influenced students' grammatical performance during presentations.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that grammatical competence remains an important challenge for EFL learners in spoken academic contexts. Therefore, English language teaching should provide greater emphasis on grammar application in speaking activities, particularly in academic presentation practices, in order to improve students' grammatical accuracy and oral communication skills.

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