

## Grammatical Errors of Analysis in Writing E-Mail Committed by Reservation Staff at PT. Destination Asia Bali 2015/2016

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This study aimed at (i) To analyze the compatibility of the emails written by the staffs of PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel with the format of formal email, (2) to analyze the types of errors committed by the reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel, (3) to find out the sources of errors committed by the reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel. This study was designed as a descriptive qualitative study. The data were collected by using research instruments such as analytical error analysis rubric, interview and observation sheet. The collected data were analyzed descriptively. From the data analysis it was found that (i) most of the emails have been written formally, almost all of the staff violated the element of formal email regarding to the non-contraction use in the email; (ii) all of the staff committed 16 (19%) errors of omission, 12 (14%) errors of addition, 47 (55%) errors of malformation and 10 (12%) errors of disordering; and (iii) the errors made by the staffs are caused by some factors namely staff's incomplete knowledge, absence of knowledge, forgetting, language interference, over generalization and false concept hypothesized. Based on the conclusion of this study, it was suggested to the travel agent to provide their staffs an intensive course especially to improve their competence in writing formal email.

**Keywords:** *error analysis, email, correspondence, travel agent*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is used to convey messages to the other people; however, communication will be difficult when people do not have language. At this globalization era, the most important and the well-known language in the world is English. English is powerful language that makes two or more persons from different countries enable to communicate. English is used by the all-powerful countries such as America, Australia, Canada, England itself and in the Asian countries such as Singapore, Filipina, Malaysia, Thailand and the Indonesia too. English becomes a basic function of human language that is used to communicate with the other through oral or written forms. Writing, speaking, reading and listening are the four basic skills of English. All of from the four skills are important such as writing; moreover, in this globalization era, writing is used to communicate in written form that we see on the popular social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Wechat, Line, Kakao Talk, etc.

English is one of the foreign languages that must be learnt by the students in Indonesia starting from the elementary school levels. In studying English, students will learn four basic language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides that, there are also four aspects that support those four language skills such as: grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. The aim of teaching a language is making the students be able to use a target language communicatively. From those four skills, writing plays an important role in communication as literacy skills for the learners (Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdhal, and Holliday: 2006: 337).

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. It is taught from elementary education level until tertiary education level. It is also as one of the subjects evaluated in National Examination. It means that English is considered as an important subject that should be taught to students in Indonesia. According to *Permendikbud RI No 70 2013* concerning Basic Framework and Curriculum Structure of Vocational High School, English should be taught as a primary subject A in the school. It is relevant to today's development in which English is a global communication. So, in order to be competent in this global era, all of the Indonesian should be able to communicate in English.

According to Aydogan & Akbarov (2014), language educators have long used the concepts of four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four language skills are sometimes called the "macro-skills". This is in contrast to the "micro-skills", which are things like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. These macro skills are also used as the basic concept in teaching English in Indonesia.

Writing is one of the four language skills besides speaking, listening and reading, which is considered to be a fundamental skill so that learners need to learn it (Tribble, 1996). It can also be said that writing is an important language skill because it is a productive skill that shows how skillful the learner is in using the language and discovers each individual is talented in this field. In addition, writing is a way through which a learner can express his or her ideas or thoughts on the paper (Harsyaf and Izmi, 2009:4). Writing as one of the four skills in English is considered as the most difficult and most challenging skill compared to the other skills either for most students or even for teachers. There are many cases in which both teachers and students have difficulties in producing good compositions. The difficulties lie not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are highly complex. According to Harsyaf and Izmi (2009:1) writing is the least popular language skill and most learners consider writing to be the least useful language skill. It makes second language writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice and so on. The difficulty then becomes more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak.

Gabrielatos (2002) argue that writing is a complex activity, and its development does not only focus the accurate use of grammar and a good range of vocabulary. In writing, there are a number of interrelated elements such as awareness-raising, practice and feedback. In line with Gabrielatos, Chakraverty and Gautum (2001:1) state that writing can be determined as a complex activity. In order to produce a good piece of writing, a good knowledge of grammar use, organization, syntax, and diction are needed. It requires the writer to be involved in the process of finding topic, classifying information that supports the topic, and then structuring the information in a logical sequence.

In addition, writing is a process of transferring thoughts into written form. Sokolik and Nunan (2003) argue that writing is both a physical and mental act. At the most basic level, writing is the physical act of committing words or ideas to some medium, whether it is hieroglyphics, inked onto parchment, or an e-mail message type into a computer. As a mental act, writing is a process of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that would be clear to a reader. Gunning (2010:456) said that it is very frequent that a writer feels reluctant in this process. Therefore, writer acquires the competency to transform knowledge, in which they develop and revise their thoughts as they write so that the writing becomes a way of exploring and learning. To be able to transfer thoughts well, the writer could use media or technique.

There are numbers of letters which act as a form of written communication. Correspondence letter is one of the written communications that connects two people or institution to do communication. They write this letter in doing their business. Because writing business letter is formal, so the format of the letter should be formal as well. In reality, every document in form of letter is considered as legal document and considered as the legal system communication. There are four kinds of correspondence letter, such as (1) memos, (2) letters, (3) faxes, and (4) electronic mail or email). Among the four kinds of the correspondence, email is used globally now leaving others behind although the other correspondences are still used.

As one form of correspondence letter, email could be sent and received fast. It is a product of the higher technology that human creates. Email enables computer users to send messages and data quickly through a local area network or beyond through the internet. Some components in writing email are subject header, salutation, main message, and leave-taking. Email has different format based on its situation whether it is used for formal or non-formal case; it is simply the same as writing a letter. In line with the formality of the email, formal email will be a standard in this research since the scope will be in replying guest's email. As a formal email, the language used should be written in form of Standard English.

As one kind of companies, travel agent also uses email as their formal and legal communication with their clients. It is very helpful since mostly their clients are coming from all over the world. Therefore, through email, the travel agent and the client can consolidate their planning as soon as possible. According to Mancini (2013:7), travel agent or also called travel counselors is a professional who analyzes a traveler's needs and then prices, recommends, arranges, and sells one or more components of that person's trip. For example: all reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel has responsibility in preparing all the client's needs which is usually done in e-mail correspondence using English. All of processes are more in writing and absolutely they are required to give the grammatical feedback, clear information and proper language. Nowadays, travelling around becomes high demand and the clients need to be responded as soon as possible which makes reservation staff ignores how the sentence should be structured in the aim of avoiding any misunderstanding and misinformation before travelling. The travel agent does not want if the clients send many unfortunate complain which will affect its local travel agent negatively. Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstanding and misinformation between the reservation staff of the travel agent and the clients. The travel agent should give a task trainer as well in regard to develop a hospitality between counselor (reservation) and customer (clients who want to travel around), especially how to write the service properly.

Concerning to the above case, the most important skill that should be developed is writing ability. Specifically, the writing skill that is needed is the ability to handle any inquiries or booking file through email. It might not have similar generic structure in how make a recount text or narrative text, but the way to explain something is used structurally in order to make it clearer and easy to understand. Writing is the activity when someone is producing or composing a word (Adele Ramet, 2007:19). In addition, Oshima and Hogue (2007:15) state that writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act. Furthermore, writing skill is known as rudimentary levels, which necessary condition for achieving employment (Brown, 2004:128). Hence, the travel counselor can learn how to write a warm and enthusiasm feedback to the customer properly; therefore, the process of selling the service could meet in one deal confirmation word. That is why writing skill is very important to learn by the people, especially for reservation staff who communicates more intimately with the prospective customers.

E-mail correspondence is not just a document which is usually read on the computer screen, however, email is designed to move or transact information as rapidly as possible from writer to reader (sender to receiver) (Baude, 2007 : 09). Long time ago, people used to send a letter to their family or friend through post office service. It took minimum 2 days or more depending on the location of receiver and the condition during the trip. In modern era now, people said that sending a personal letter or confidential documents around the world through post office is not efficient anymore. It is only used to send the document or logistic in larger size. Email is as fast as we send short message through mobile phone with connection of internet as a moderator, of course. The function of email is to explain as much as possible information in brief to receiver by still concerning the grammar, diction, vocabulary, punctuation and so on which is consisted in writing skill as the grand foundation for every writer.

As some of reservation staffs are not native speaker, therefore, error and ungrammatical sentence in information are found normally. Error and mistake in typing sentences through email can be happened naturally as we are a human being who has productive activities or problem and sometime cannot be focused on one section. Typo is the common word that people uses in saying that what s/he has sent previously contained with small error; usually in spelling the word. Moreover, ungrammatical, mess of structure and incoherent in email still can be found many more for non-native speaker, generally. For example: we can compare how the style in writing between Indonesian travel agent staff (non-native) with native speaker and find there are many different in how to construct an email. It is lucky if the contain of email can be understood by the receiver (native), otherwise misunderstanding can happen and the staff should arrange the sentence to be much better. According to Sanal (2007: 597), error analysis is a study to identify, to describe and systematically to explain the learners' errors by using any of the principles and techniques provided by linguistic. We could analyze how often of

reservation staff makes the error is one correspondence and find out what kind of errors that she or he does.

Concerning to the above explanation, this study addresses on whether there are any significant errors in several e-mail correspondence of reservation staffs at PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel or not. As the researcher has been working at PT. Destination Asia Tour & Travel, therefore the data collection and analysis is easier. One of the strategies to help the researcher is to provide the instrument which contains how aspect of errors which are analyzed including its points. The last result shows the quality of hospitality in giving information through writing (e-mail correspondence) made by reservation staff is significantly scored as low quality.

Based on the description above, there were two problems investigated as follows.

- 1) How is the compatibility of the emails written by the reservation staffs at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd with the format of formal email?
- 2) What is the type of error made by reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd.?
- 3) What are the sources of errors committed by reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd happen?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed in form of qualitative descriptive research. Using qualitative research is fairly recent phenomenon in an education setting (Hatch, 2002:3). Qualitative researchers also collect many specific details from the research setting and try to find relationships between them and/or patterns. In this context of research, it was tried to find out the errors made by the reservation staff PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd happen.

The subject of the study are 6 employees of PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd. who handle reservation of the tour and travel management. To collect intended data, grammatical error analysis rubric was used. In addition, interview guide was used to complete data if there was unclear thing was found.

Data of errors were classified by using Ellis (1994) theory classifying errors into: errors of omission, errors of addition, errors of malformation, and errors of disordering as suggested by Ellis (1994). Meanwhile, source of error used Richards (1971: 19-22) theory classifying errors into four, namely: 1) overgeneralization, 2) incomplete application of rules, 3) false concepts hypothesized, and 4) ignorance of rule restriction.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis concerning with the compatibility the email written by the staff at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd concerning with the format of formal email, it can be concluded that most of the emails made by the staff of the company have been written formally. However, almost all of the staff violated the non contraction use of this element of formal email.

Furthermore, it was found that all of the staffs made error. These errors varied which mean that every staff made different errors in term of quality and quantity. In general, all of the staff committed 16 (19%) errors of omission, 12 (14%) errors of addition, 47 (55%) errors of malformation and 10 (12%) errors of disordering. Therefore, the type of error made by the reservation staff at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd. was error of malformation which is followed by error of omission, error of addition and error of disordering respectively.

The errors committed by the staffs are caused by some factors, namely staff's incomplete knowledge, absence of knowledge, forgetting, language interference, over generalization and false concept hypothesized.

Overgeneralization was identified as one of the sources of error because an item was generalized by the staffs within the target language. Actually, this factor caused two kinds of errors, namely error of addition and error of malformation. This overgeneralization occurred in the use of article. The staffs tend to use *the* in front of noun or noun phrase in which not all of them are necessary.

Incomplete application of rules was emerged as the one of the source of errors since this the staff failed in using question mark correctly. The statement sentence was ended by the question mark which is intended to give mark as interrogative sentence. This source of error caused error of malformation in writing email.

False concept hypothesized refers to faulty rule learning at various levels. In this research, it was found that this factor caused error of malformation. Specifically, the errors were made in using verb forms. The staff failed in using correct past participle or present participle in the sentences. It can be caused by their concept was incorrect in identifying the context of time within their sentences.

Ignorance of rule restriction is close to the overgeneralization but it is more on the incorrect use of certain structures. In this study it was found that the ignorance was in form of incorrect use of time signal and plural form in the sentence. The time signal was not appropriate with the tense of the sentence and the plural form was not used although it was preceded by plural word. This source of error caused malformation error made by the staff.

In term of email formatting, there are some elements violated by the staff. In term of opening element, only staff 1 violated the opening and the other 5 staff wrote proper opening of formal email. In term of closing element, all of the staffs wrote proper closing email. In term of contraction in email, only staff 6 did not write contraction in her emails, and other 5 staffs wrote contractions in their emails. In term of vocabulary use, only staff 2 used less-formal vocabulary and the other staffs use formal vocabulary. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that most of the emails have been written formally, but there should be further revision on the email writing especially in term of non-contraction use in the email because almost all of the staff violated this element of formal email.

This research completed the result of the research done by Susanti (2013). If the previous research just focused on lexico grammatical error in micro scope, this research investigated grammar error in macro score. In addition this research also proves the causes of errors in email written by the staff.

The findings of this research draw three implications. *First*, teaching English especially for specific purposes should be concerned to how to write email in standard form. It is because email is mostly used for communication today since the arise of internet usage. In teaching email, it can concern on the format, standard language, salutaion, and opening of the email. Here, outlines of good email materials should be made by educators or English instructors as guidance for the students to master email.

Second, since the most errors made by the subjects are malformation error, it implies that the staffs do not have full understanding on the formation of words. Since email is formal letter and the staffs are service providers, standard language is needed. It means that good training or teaching of English should by created by the teachers. Ideally, teaching English tourism specifically for writing email should be able to make the students can write email in standard English writing.

Third, relating to the staff development skills, it implies that special training on writing email should be given to the staff. Through the training, the staff ability in writing email both in terms of format, content, and language can be improved so that the service of the travel agen also can be improved.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the reserach problems and the result of data analysis, there are two conclusions drawn. *First*, most of the emails made by the staff of the company have been written formally. However, almost all of the staff violated the non contraction use of this element of formal email. *Second*, the staffs in Reservation section at PT. Destination Asia Bali Ltd generally committed 16 (19%) errors of omission, 12 (14%) errors of addition, 47 (55%) errors of malformation and 10 (12%) errors of disordering. *Third*, the errors committed by the staffs are caused by some factors, namely staff's incomplete knowledge, absence of knowledge, forgetting, language interference, over generalization and false concept hypothesized.

Based on the findings, two suggestions are recommended. *First*, the language competence of the staff should be improved. This improvement can be achieved through intensive course. It can be organized by the company or sending them to an English course. The finding of this research can be used as a reference for the English instructor in preparing the material. Therefore, the course should be focused on the errors made by the staffs. *Second*, besides the grammatical aspect, the staffs also need comprehensive course on

writing formal email. It is because there are still many violations done by the staffs in writing formal email. It is considered important because email is a formal communication among companies around the world. If the email is presented in less-formal, there is a tendency that the company is considered less-professional.

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