



Analysis on Students' Error in Comprehending Elliptical Construction

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Abstract The purpose of this study is to analyze student errors in comprehending Elliptical Construction material and to explore the most dominant types of errors made by students. The population of this study was first semester of Constitutional Law students at STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon; it consists of two classes and 40 students. The writer takes one class as a sample, namely HTN A. Samples are taken by Random Sampling because both have the same quality and are taught by the same lecturer. Data is collected from students' answer sheets of English final test. The result of the tests then was analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods. The results showed that there were 122 errors made by students in answering the question of Elliptical Construction. 41% of these errors occur in Disordering, 32% in Misinformation, 19.67% errors in Addition and 13.11% in Omission.

Keywords: error; disordering; misinformation; addition; omission.

Abstrak Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis kesalahan siswa dalam memahami materi *Elliptical Construction* dan menggali jenis kesalahan yang paling dominan yang dilakukan mahasiswa. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Hukum Tata Negara semester pertama di STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon yang terdiri dari dua kelas dan 40 siswa. Penulis mengambil satu kelas sebagai sampel yaitu HTN A. Sampel diambil dengan Random Sampling karena keduanya memiliki kualitas yang sama dan diajarkan oleh dosen yang sama. Data dikumpulkan dari lembar jawaban siswa ujian akhir bahasa Inggris. Hasil tes kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 122 kesalahan yang dilakukan mahasiswa dalam menjawab soal *Elliptical Construction*. 41% dari kesalahan tersebut terjadi di *Disordering*, 32% di *Misinformation*, 19,67% kesalahan dalam *Addition* dan 13,11% dalam *Omission*.

Kata Kunci: error; disordering; misinformation; addition; omission.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, English has been an international language in the world. It has a big development, not only in Scandinavian country but also in Asian and Africa. Now, English not only taught in formal school, but also in non formal school, such as course. People in the world compete to master English, so that is why we can find people start to use English as their tool in communication. But it is not easy to master English; there are macro and micro skill that must be mastered by the English learners to comprehend English. Macro skill related to listening, speaking, reading and writing; this is the four skills of English. Micro skills are grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.

People cannot master English with macro skills only. Micro skills will complete and help people in comprehending English. One of the micro skills which have a great role acquisition in English is Grammar. "Grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language. Traditionally, grammar has been concerned almost exclusively with analysis at the level of sentence. Thus a grammar is a description of the rules that govern how a language's sentence is formed"¹. It can be assumed that grammar is a study about rule in making a form or structure in English sentence. If someone cannot use grammar correctly, he/she will not have a good sentence in English, it is supported by Ur. "There is no doubt that a knowledge-implicit or explicit of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of language; you cannot use words unless you know how they should put together"². The same thing also stated by Le Tourneau, "Grammar is the discipline that studies the structure of sentence in human language. English grammar then is the study of sentence of English"³. It means studying grammar will help students to make a good sentence in English. Having a good sentence in English means comprehend in English spoken and written. It is the reason why we should grammar correctly.

¹ Scott Thornburry, *How to teach Grammar*, (England: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), p; 1

² Penny Ur, *Grammar Practice Activities, A practical Guide For Teachers*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1988. p.4

³ Mark.S. Le Torneau, *.English Grammar*, (United States of America; Harcourt College Publishers, 2002). p.2

But, it is not easy to studying grammar, moreover for non native English students. Grammar has so many parts that should be comprehended by the learners; from the easy one to the difficult one such as the usage of To Be and the sixteen types of tenses. The complexity of grammar is one the reason in why students make errors. As the writer found in the Constitutional Law students when she taught them Basic English; Constitutional Law students make errors in comprehending Elliptical Construction. Elliptical Construction is the omission of elements which are precisely recoverable from the linguistic or situational context⁴. Elliptical Construction can also means a fusion of two sentences which have different subjects but have the same predicate, and use to avoid reduplication.

There are six types of Elliptical Construction, but in this research, the writer only takes the simplest one; the positive (using *too* and *so*) and negative (using *either* and *neither*). These types of elliptical constructions are selected due to the Basic English is the main competency that should be had by the Constitutional Law students in STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon.

During the learning process, the Constitutional Law students faced many difficulties. The difficulties then, can lead to some mistakes and errors made by the learners. Mistakes and errors are two different sides, as Brown states that mistakes occur because the learners know the system but they fail to use it.⁵ While, according to Cordin, error is things made by beginner of second language learners who do not have a full command of language system yet.⁶ It means that, error refers to the students' failure of understanding and mistake occurs when students lack of knowledge. Based on the background of the study above the writer is interested in conducting the research Analysis ON Students' Error in Comprehending Elliptical Construction (A Case Study on Constitutional Law Students in STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon).

⁴ Douglas Biber, *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. (England: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), p. 156

⁵ H. Douglas Brown. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*.(New York: Longman, 2000), p.226

⁶ Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, (USA:Oxford University Press, 1994), p.56

The researches about error analysis have been done by many researchers. In this study, the writer takes one of the examples of research which is conducted by Evlin Yunanda Salim, with the title "An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students' essay of Past Narration Comic"⁷. This study aimed to analyze the types of Grammatical errors found in the guided Writing students' essay of past narration comic. The data were collected from 17 essays. In analyzing the data, the writer used step proposed by (Codin, 1974) in Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). The result of the study show that English Tenses has 24.89% errors which is the most common error, followed by word choices with 17.19% error, punctuation 16.23% of error, subject-verb agreement 10,04%, preposition 9,07%, articles 7,42%, singular/plurals 6.60%, pronoun 4.81%, and spellings 3.71%.

The similarity between Elvin research and this research is both are analyzing the grammatical error. While the difference is in the material learning, Elvin analyzes students' essay's writing and this research analyze students answer in filling in a gap question. The analyzing method also has different, Elvin research elaborate the result of research into 9 aspects which proposed by Codin (1974), while this research classified the errors into four types, omission, addition, misinformation and disordering which proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982).

METHOD

The objective of this study is to know what kind of error the students do the most in learning elliptical construction and how many errors appear in each types of elliptical construction. To answer these questions, the writer applied descriptive quantitative approach.

The subject of this study is first semester students of Constitutional Law Department STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon.. There are two classes which consist of 40 students in each class, A and B. Class A becomes the sample of this study based on the random sampling technique which is taken by the writer. This technique is chosen because both of the classes have the same quality and quantity.

⁷ Elvin Yunanda Salim, *An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Students' essay of Past Narration Comic*, (Salatiga: Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, 2013). P.1

The data were collected on Thursday, 5th January 2017. The instrument of collecting data is English final test, and students' answer sheets are the data collected. In this test, there are 10 questions about elliptical constructions, in positive and negative form. While doing the test, the students were not allowed to look at the dictionary.

To test the validity of the instrument, the writer used content validity where the writer asked the experts to analyze whether the instrument was proper or not. Hartoyo states that Content Validity means in testing the content should use format familiar to the students⁸. The content should fit to the students' level such elementary school students got the lower level of difficulty than junior high school students'. While to test the reliability and to recheck the data collection result, the writer used inter-rater reliability test.

Descriptive quantitative is the technique used in analyzing the data. This technique is used to find out the most dominant error made by students in learning elliptical construction. Students' answer sheet were collected, analyzed and classified by using four types of error which is introduced by Dulay. et al⁹

- 1) Omission, in this type, there is word or some words which are disappear, for example; *he eating*, it should be *he is eating*. To be *is* is lost.
- 2) Addition. This type is the opposite of omission. In this type there is which does not fit with the sentences, such as *She is eats pineapple*. To be *is* should be omitted because it does not need to be added in the tense.
- 3) Misinformation means failure employing a form into others form. For example: *her dance with my sister*. *Her* is not kind of pronoun which is used as subject.
- 4) Disordering. This type of error means the misplacement of a morpheme in a phrase or sentence. For example; *The cat has a tail long*. *Long* is an adjective, so it should be placed before the noun; *The cat has a long tail*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After collected and identified students' answer sheet, the writer classified the errors made by the students based on the error types. The next step was counting and explaining the errors. The result of the errors in each number of answers can be seen as follow

⁸ Hartoyo. *Language Assessment*. (Semarang: Pelita Insani. 2012). P. 52

⁹ Heidi. C. Dulay. Mrina K. Burt, and Stephen D. Krashen. *Language Two*, (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1982), P.146-189.

Table 1
Question Number 1.
My friend will go camping and (I) ...

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	1	9.10
2	Addition	2	18.18
3	Misinformation	3	27.27
4	Disordering	5	45.45
Total Number		11	100

The answer of question number 1 is *I will too or So will I*. However, there are 4 omission errors in question number 1, where the students answer with *I too*. Two students write *I will do too* as the addition error. 30 % of students made error by answering with *I am too* and the most error are made in disordering where there are 5 students answer with *So I will*. There are only 9 students who answer correctly.

Table 2
Question Number 2.
Andika does not know how big the population of Africa and (I)...

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	2	16.66
2	Addition	1	8.33
3	Misinformation	3	35
4	Disordering	6	50
Total Number		12	100

In this type of question, there were only 8 students who answer correctly with *neither do I or I do not either*. There were 12 students who did error. 2 students answered by *I do either*, they omitted the negative form *not*. There was one student answered by *neither do not I*: when using *neither* the auxiliary is positive. 35% of error was done by students by answering by *I does not either*.

Subject *I* does not agree with the verb *does*, it should be *do*. The highest number of error was disordering, where there are 6 students answered by *neither I do*.

Table 3
Question Number 3.
My sister can finish her homework. (I)....

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	1	9.10
2	Addition	2	18.18
3	Misinformation	2	18.18
4	Disordering	6	54.54
Total Number		11	100

This question is positive elliptical sentence and uses modal *can* as the auxiliary. The answer should be *So can I* and *I can too*. However, the most error came from disordering, where 6 from ten students who made error: they answer by *So I can*. A same number of students made error in addition and misinformation where they answered by *So I can do* and *I do too*. There is only one student answer by *I too*.

Table 4
Question Number 4.
Mary is a doctor. Her husband...

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	3	20
2	Addition	3	20
3	Misinformation	4	26.67
4	Disordering	5	33.33
Total Number		15	100

This question actually has a simple answer but many students are trapped in its simplicity. 20 % of students answer by adding only word *too* whereas they

need auxiliary to complete the sentence. The same number of error comes from addition; students answer by *so is too*. They added 'So' which makes the sentence redundant. There are 4 students do misinformation where they write *does too*; this answer does not match with the first statement which using auxiliary 'is'. The most error comes from disordering where there are 5 students answer by *So is*; this answer would be true if the subject is not placed after full stop.

Table 5
Question Number 5.
Nayla and Ardy are not clever. Deni and Yuli

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	1	8.34
2	Addition	4	33.33
3	Misinformation	3	25
4	Disordering	4	33.33
Total Number		12	100

The answer for this question is '*neither are Deni and Yuli*' due to the negative form of the first statement. However, more than half students in the class are incorrect in answering this question. Error in addition and disordering are the highest number, where students do error by writing *neither are not Deni and Yuli*; the using '*not*' is not necessary in this form and *so are Deni and Yuli*; this answer is wrong due to the need of negative form. There are 3 students had misinformation in using auxiliary, they use *does* instead of *are*. The omission error in answering this question is omitting auxiliary "*are*".

Table 6
Question Number 6.
I won't be here tomorrow and (he)

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	0	0
2	Addition	4	30.76
3	Misinformation	3	23.07
4	Disordering	6	46.17
Total Number		13	100

There are 13 students who make error in answering question number 6. The highest number of error is in disordering where students answer by *neither he will*; the modal auxiliary *will* is misplaced, it should be put before *he*. 30 % of students are error in answering this question by adding word *not* after modal auxiliary *will*. About 23 % of errors are in misinformation where students put *are* instead of *will*.

Table 7
Question Number 7.
We went to cinema last evening. (She)....

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	1	10
2	Addition	1	10
3	Misinformation	3	30
4	Disordering	5	50
Total Number		10	100

The percentage of student's error in answering this question is highly difference. Error in omission and addition is the lowest number where there is only ten percent of error. Students omit auxiliary '*did*' (*She too*) and add another

auxiliary; 'does' (*She does too*). Another kind of error is that some students answer the question by using *went* (*She went too*) and the rest answer by disordering the word such as *So She did*.

Table 8
Question Number 8.
I do not like durians and (Faza)...

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of Error
1	Omission	2	16.66
2	Addition	2	16.66
3	Misinformation	4	33.34
4	Disordering	4	33.34
Total Number		12	100

Negative is the form of this sentence and the possible answers for it are *Neither does Faza or Faza does not either*. The using auxiliary do is quite confuse for the students, it is proven by the misinformation in matching the auxiliary with the subject where there are 4 students use auxiliary *do* for *Faza*. Disordering the form has the same number of error where students answered by *Faza does not too*. Conversely, the same number of error also occurred in omission and addition where there are 16.66 percent of students answered the question by *Faza does either* and *neither does not Faza*.

Table 9
Question Number 9.
John cannot play Piano and Mary

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of error
1	Omission	3	21.42
2	Addition	2	14.30
3	Misinformation	4	28.57
4	Disordering	5	35.71
Total Number		14	100

Question number 9 uses modal “can” as the auxiliary verb and this auxiliary must be appear in the answer. The answers for this question are *Mary cannot either and Neither can Mary*. However, many students still did errors in this question. More than 35 percent of the errors are done in disordering where students were confuse the form of answer, where the use of *neither* followed by positive auxiliary and *either* uses negative auxiliary. The second dominant error is misinformation, many students still use other auxiliary instead of ‘can’ such as *is or does*. The third and the forth error are omission and addition; 21 percent of students omitted the auxiliary and the rest added other auxiliary such as *do, does and is*.

Table 10
Question Number 10.
We must go home now and (they)...

No	Types of Error	Frequency	Percentage of error
1	Omission	2	16.66
2	Addition	3	25
3	Misinformation	3	25
4	Disordering	4	33.34
Total Number		12	100

The same number of error appears in addition and misinformation, where 25% of students answered by adding others auxiliary instead of ‘must’ and they were incorrect in matching the positive form of the sentence. Some of them answered by negative form; *they must not either and neither must they* whereas the answer should be positive form, *they must too or so must they*. The highest number of error is disordering where more than 33 percent of students still answered by *so they must*. Contrastively, the lowest error is in omission where 16 percent of students omitted the auxiliary.

The total number error in each question can be seen in the table below.

Table 11
Result of the Errors

No	Types of Error	Question Nmber										Total	Percentage of Error
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1	Omission	1	2	1	3	1	0	1	2	3	2	16	13.11
2	Addition	2	1	2	3	4	4	1	2	2	3	24	19.67
3	Misinforma tion	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	32	26.22
4	Disordering	5	6	6	5	4	6	5	4	5	4	50	41
Total Number		11	12	11	15	12	13	10	12	14	12	122	100

From the table above shows that the biggest error occurs in question number 4 with 15 errors and the easiest question for students is question number 7 where there only a half of students made error. The highest number of error is in disordering, followed by misinformation, addition and omission.

From the result of research above, it can be seen that the most dominant error in answering elliptical construction is disordering where students usually mismatch the form of answer. They are very often to use negative auxiliary in *neither* whereas in this form the auxiliary should be positive. Conversely, for type of answer which use *'either'*, students answered by error by using positive form whereas it should be in negative. This type of error also appears mostly in negative form of elliptical construction. It can be caused by the more complex of answer in negative form than in positive one. In positive form, both answers use positive auxiliary whether it uses *So* or *Too*, while in negative form of answer, *neither* should be followed by positive auxiliary and *either* is preceded by negative one. This difference might become confusion for students, especially for non English students.

The second most dominant error is misinformation. In this type of error, students usually did error in subject-verb agreement and mismatch the form.

They still confuse in using auxiliary *do*, *does* and *did*; sometimes, this kind of auxiliary is a familiar form for them where they used it in other question which does not use those auxiliary. Misinformation error also means the mismatch form of answer, for example; positive form of statement need positive form of answer and conversely.

The type of error in addition becomes the third most dominant error where some students like to add some unnecessary auxiliary. The addition '*do*' after modal auxiliary '*will*' or '*can*' and addition negative sign '*not*' in positive form or after '*neither*' exemplifies this error.

The lowest number of error occurs in omission where students usually eliminate the auxiliary in types of question. For example, in positive form, students usually only write the answer by *I too*, *So I*, *They too*, *Mary too*; they omit the auxiliary in these answers. Similarly, in negative form, the auxiliary disappear, for instance; *neither Deni and Yuli or Mary can either*. The former example should be add by '*not*'.

CONCLUSION

The total error in students' Elliptical Construction test is 122 divided into 4 types of error; omission, addition, misinformation and disordering. 41 percent of errors are in disordering the form of sentence. This type of error is about mismatching the answer of positive and negative form and misplacing the auxiliary. The second biggest of error is misinformation, it related to the error in subject-verb agreement. Addition's type of error is followed in the third place of dominant error where there are 19.67 percent of error occurs. Students usually add some unnecessary auxiliary to the sentences. The last is omission, there are 13.11 percent of students eliminate the auxiliary that should be appeared in the answer. Overall, the main error of students' answer is related to the use of auxiliary.

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