

An Error Analysis in Using Determiners in Students' Final Project Backgrounds of the English Education Study Program of PGRI University of Semarang in the Academic Year 2021-2022

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Abstract

The objectives of this study encompass identifying the types and frequency of determiner errors, determining the most dominant type of error, and exploring the underlying causes of these errors. The methodology employed in this research is descriptive qualitative, utilizing the final projects of graduated students from the academic year 2021-2022 as the primary data source. Secondary sources, such as internet sources, e-books, and journals, were also utilized to support the study. Data was collected through documentation procedures, and a thorough review and analysis were conducted to identify determiner errors in ten background sections. The findings indicate that three main types of determiner errors were observed: article, demonstrative, and possessive. The total number of determiner errors among the participants amounted to 40, comprising 34 article errors, 4 demonstrative errors, and 2 possessive errors. Further analysis revealed that the most dominant type of determiner error was related to articles. The causes of these errors were attributed to a lack of understanding and insufficient proofreading. The research findings provide valuable insights into the common errors made by students in using determiners, highlighting the areas that require attention and improvement in academic writing. These findings underscore the significance of effective instruction and guidance to enhance students' competence in using determiners accurately. By addressing the identified errors and their causes, educators can develop targeted interventions and strategies to facilitate students' proficiency in academic writing.

Keywords: Determiner errors, article, demonstrative, possessive, academic writing

Introduction

Writing is a crucial productive skill in English, and students should make it a priority to develop this ability. For those learning English as a foreign language or as a second language, it is an essential tool. According to Harmer (2006), writing is a method of communicating ideas through note-taking. Moore and Murray (2006) defined writing as the process of generating and shaping ideas, committing those ideas to paper, and then modifying and perfecting the final result. It implies that there are multiple writing processes. According to Eunson (2020), The meaning of a language is revealed and organized by its grammar, which

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is a set of rules (and the exceptions to those rules) that govern how language is used. The ability to write, read, speak, and listen well in English depends on a command of grammar. Grammar is one of the language components taught in schools because it is a fundamental skill and plays a crucial role in language comprehension.

Determiners play a crucial role in English grammar and are necessary for conveying the correct meaning of a sentence. According to Yule (2010), determiners are words that are used in front of nouns to indicate what the nouns refer to or to give more information about the nouns. As noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), articles are the most common type of determiner and include "the," "a," and "an." Demonstratives, such as "this," "that," "these," and "those," are used to point to specific nouns. Possessives, like "my," "your," and "their," indicate ownership or possession. Finally, quantifiers, such as "many," "few," and "some," are used to indicate the amount or quantity of the noun being referred to. They are used to specify or limit the reference of a noun, and they can be used to indicate things like quantity, possession, or definiteness. However, the challenge of using determiners in English grammar persists, and many students continue to struggle with writing the correct determiner in a sentence.

Error in language refers to deviations from the standard rules of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary that are considered acceptable in a particular language. Richard (2002) defined an error as the use of a word, a speech act, or grammatical items that is imperfect and indicative of insufficient learning. According to Ellis (1994), errors in language are "systematic and predictable" and can be used to gain insights into the process of language acquisition. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), errors can have both positive and negative effects on language learning. Positive effects include providing feedback to learners and encouraging them to notice and correct their errors, while negative effects include reinforcing incorrect patterns of language use and inhibiting the acquisition of correct forms. According to Brown (2000), errors in student writing can be classified into various categories, including grammatical, lexical, syntactical, and discourse errors. According to Corder (1974) and Tarigan (1988), the procedure for analyzing language errors is including choosing a language corpus, including, recognizing errors in the corpus, classifying errors, explaining the error and evaluating errors.

Analyzing errors in determiner usage has become an urgent research priority due to several reasons. Firstly, determiners are essential for conveying the correct meaning of a sentence. They provide crucial information about the number, definiteness, and specificity of a noun. Secondly, determiners are a complex aspect of English grammar. Furthermore, determiner errors can have a significant impact on language proficiency and overall communication skills. By analyzing errors in determiner usage, researchers can identify common patterns and misconceptions that students encounter. This research can inform the development of targeted instructional strategies and materials to address these challenges effectively. Understanding the specific difficulties students face with determiners can lead to improved language teaching methodologies and the creation of resources tailored to their needs.

The researcher found several previous studies related to this research. The first one is conducted by Tolentino (2018) and is entitled "Errors on the Use of Determiner 'The' in Education Students' Compositions Based on Linguistic and Surface Structure Taxonomy". This study analyzed errors in the usage of the determiner (DET) 'the' in the compositions of graduating students in the Bachelor of Secondary Education Program at the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT) Main Campus. Errors in the usage of

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DET 'the' were discovered in noun phrases (NPs) and prepositional phrases (PPs) classed under linguistic taxonomy, whilst addition and omission were mistakes described under surface structure taxonomy. Other similar study was conducted by Ramadhani (2021) entitled "An Error Analysis of Determiners Used by the Third Semester Students in Presentation at English Language Education of FKIP UIR." The purpose of this study is to examine the student mistake indicators used in the presentation. The participants in this study were 101 third-semester students, and the sample consisted of 20 students randomly selected from class B. The results showed there were errors of determiners, specifically articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, possessives, and numbers. Another study was conducted by Atibrata (2012) entitled "Indonesian Students' Error in the Use of Determiners." This study investigates errors made by Indonesian students in their usage of determiners in written English. Specifically, it is an attempt to discover and classify faults in the usage of English determiners by English Department students at Gadjah Mada University based on the categories of determiners and the structural change of determiners. The results indicate that the students had the most trouble with using articles when writing in English. Yet, they did not appear to struggle with demonstratives, possessives, or quantifiers.

While the previous studies mentioned have focused on errors in the usage of determiners, particularly articles, in various contexts, there is a research gap in terms of investigating determiner errors specifically in writing final project backgrounds. None of the previous studies have specifically examined determiner errors in this particular type of writing. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the errors students make when using determiners in writing their final project backgrounds. The previous studies conducted by Tolentino (2018), Ramadhani (2021), and Atibrata (2012) investigated determiner errors in different contexts, such as compositions, presentations, and written English in general. In contrast, this study focuses on determiner errors specifically in writing final project backgrounds. The research setting and genre of writing can influence the types of errors that occur, and therefore, the findings of this study may provide unique insights into determiner errors in this specific context. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on determiner errors in writing final project backgrounds. By addressing this specific context, the study provides valuable insights into the challenges and issues that students face when using determiners in this particular genre of academic writing. Furthermore, the inclusion of the causes of errors adds a unique dimension to the research, shedding light on the underlying factors contributing to determiner errors in the context of writing final project backgrounds. The findings of this study can potentially inform language teaching and learning practices, curriculum development, and writing instruction in academic settings, contributing to improved language proficiency and writing skills among students.

Method

The methodology employed in this research is descriptive qualitative. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is a method for developing knowledge statements that is based on either a constructive perspective (meanings derived from any experience that occurs with social or historical values with the goal of developing a particular theory or pattern of knowledge) or a participatory perspective (politics, issues, collaboration, change orientation, or both). This research utilized the final projects of graduated students from the academic year 2021-2022 as the primary data source. Secondary sources, such as internet sources, e-books, and journals, were also utilized to support the study. Data was collected through

documentation procedures, and a thorough review and analysis were conducted to identify determiner errors in ten background sections. The first step was arranging the data. After arranging the data, the researcher corrected the writing of each background of the final projects individually. Then, the researcher identified and classified the data based on the types of determiners, such as articles (definite and indefinite), possessive determiners, demonstrative determiners, and quantifiers. Then, the researcher calculated the number of errors in determiners in each previous study and totals them according to the type. The analysis also took into account the frequency and distribution of errors in the students' final projects.

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher analyzed graduated students' errors using their background of the studies. There were 10 backgrounds of the previous studies. The researcher found four types of determiners in the analysis of the background of the previous studies. After assessing the graduated students' error, the researcher counted the errors using a table and then calculated the errors using percentages. The researcher then evaluated the data after receiving the graduated students' determiner errors results. After analyzing the data, the researcher found forty kinds of determiner errors in ten research's backgrounds. The result showed that there were three kinds of determiners error. There were article, demonstrative and possessive.

Frequency and Percentage of the Errors

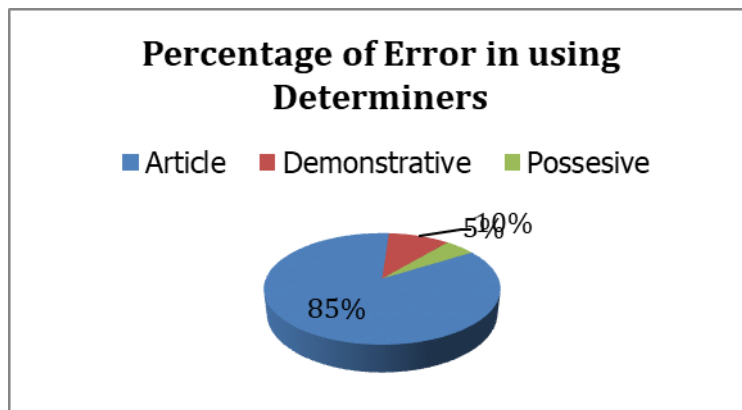
Table 1

Frequency of Error

No	Participants	Determiner Error			Total
		Article	Demonstrative	Possessive	
1	Participant 1	2	2	-	4
2	Participant 2	1	-	1	2
3	Participant 3	5	-	-	5
4	Participant 4	1	-	-	1
5	Participant 5	2	-	-	2
6	Participant 6	3	-	-	3
7	Participant 7	6	1	-	7
8	Participant 8	3	-	-	3
9	Participant 9	6	-	1	7
10	Participant 10	5	1	-	6
TOTAL		34	4	2	40

Table 2

Percentage of Determiner errors



Based on the chart above, it can be concluded that:

- a. Total errors of article of determiner in the research are 85%.
- b. Total errors of demonstrative of determiner in the research are 15%.
- c. Total errors of possessive of determiner in the research are 5%.

1. The Most Dominant Type of Determiner Error

Based on table 1 and 2, the most dominant errors in determiners are with the use of article, as there were 34 instances of article errors among the participants. The next most common error was with the use of demonstrative determiners, with 4 instances, followed by possessive determiners, with 2 instances.

Participant 7 and participant 9 did the most errors overall with a total of 7 errors for each participant, followed by participant 10 with 6 errors and participant 3 with 8 errors. However, it is important to note that the number of errors made by each participant needs to be normalized based on the number of determiners they were responsible for. This will give a more accurate representation of the participants' error rates.

2. Causes of Errors

Based on table 4.1, the findings showed that there were 34 article errors, 4 demonstrative errors, and 2 possessive errors. All 10 participants made the article errors. Meanwhile, for demonstrative errors, they were made by participant 1 (twice), participant 7, and participant 10. Lastly, for possessive errors, they were made by participant 2 and participant 9. The followings are the explanation of the determiner errors (article, demonstrative and possessive) made by the participants.

1) Article errors

- 1) Participant 1

Incorrect sentence:

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“Therefore, with the WhatsApp group media, students interact more easily with the teacher when given online learning.”

Analysis:

The error in the use of the article “the” in the original sentence could be due to a misunderstanding of the function of determiners in English grammar. Determiners are words that are used to modify and provide information about nouns. They include articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that, these, those), possessives (my, your, his, her, its, our, their), and quantifiers (some, any, many, few, several). In the original sentence, the use of the definite article “the” before “WhatsApp group media” suggests that the speaker is referring to a specific WhatsApp group that has been previously mentioned or is already known to the listener. However, since there is no such context given in the sentence, the definite article is unnecessary and incorrect. The corrected sentence eliminates the article altogether, making it more grammatically accurate.

Corrected sentence:

“Therefore, with WhatsApp group media, students interact more easily with the teacher when given online learning.”

2) Participant 2

Incorrect sentence:

“Students” factor has several problems that may be appears.”

Analysis:

The error in the sentence above is related to the missing definite article "the" before "students' factor". The definite article "the" is used to refer to a specific noun, in this case, "students' factor". It is necessary to use "the" to indicate that the speaker is referring to a specific factor that is already known or has been previously mentioned in the context. Without "the", the sentence sounds incomplete and lacks clarity. It is important to use articles correctly to avoid ambiguity in writing or speaking.

Corrected sentence:

“The students' factor has several problems that may appear.”

3) Participant 7

Incorrect sentence:

“Linguistic difficulties, low self-confidence, lack of writing practice are examples of the causes which are from the learners.”

Analysis:

Based on the sentence above, the learner made an error in using the indefinite article “a” before “lack of writing practice.” The correct usage is to use “a” before

a singular countable noun that starts with a consonant sound. In this case, “lack” is a singular noun that starts with a consonant sound, so “a” is the correct article to use. The error could have been caused by a lack of familiarity with the rules of English grammar, particularly in the use of articles. It could also be due to a lack of proofreading or editing skills, which are important in identifying errors in written work. Additionally, it is possible that the learner was not confident in their knowledge of English and did not take the time to review their work thoroughly.

Corrected sentence:

“Linguistic difficulties, low self-confidence, a lack of writing practice are examples of the causes which are from the learners.”

4) Participant 8

Incorrect sentence:

“The Walt Disney’s original sound track are an interesting thing to talk about.”

Analysis:

The error in the sentence is the use of the plural article “The” before “Walt Disney’s original soundtrack”. “The” is a definite article used to refer to a specific noun or group of nouns that are already known or have been mentioned before. In this case, “Walt Disney’s original soundtrack” is a singular noun phrase, and therefore, it requires a singular article, such as “an” or “the.”

Corrected sentence:

“Walt Disney’s original soundtrack is an interesting thing to talk about.”

b. Demonstrative

1) Participant 7

Incorrect sentence:

“According to Anderson (1997: 49) a recount is a piece of text retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened.”

Analysis:

The error in the use of the determiner “a” instead of “that” before the noun phrase “retells past events” could be due to a lack of familiarity with the appropriate use of demonstratives in English. The determiner “a” implies that “recount” is just one of many possible types of text, while “that” specifies that the text being referred to is specifically a recount.

Corrected sentence:

“According to Anderson (1997: 49), a recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened.”

2) Participant 10

Incorrect sentence:

“In senior high schools in Indonesia, there are five genres which have to be mastered by the students.”

Analysis:

Based on the sentence above, the error is in the use of “which” as a determiner instead of “that”. “Which” is used to introduce non-restrictive clauses, while “that” is used to introduce restrictive clauses. In this case, the five genres that have to be mastered by the students are essential information and limit the scope of what the sentence is referring to, making it a restrictive clause. Therefore, “that” should be used instead of “which”.

Corrected sentence:

“In senior high schools in Indonesia, there are five genres that have to be mastered by the students.”

c. **Possessive Errors**

1) Participant 2

Incorrect sentence:

“Writing is one of the English skills that must be mastered by students in learning activities.”

Analysis:

The possessive error in the sentence “Writing is one of the English skills that must be mastered by students in learning activities” is the incorrect use of “students” as a possessive noun without an apostrophe. The correct possessive form is “students’” to show that the sentence refers to the skills of multiple students.

Corrected sentence:

“Writing is one of the English skills that must be mastered by students in their learning activities.”

2) Participant 9

Incorrect sentence:

“The specific scope of the research is about students’ perceptions and challenges using Microsoft Teams to measure students’ perspectives.”

Analysis:

The error in the sentence above is in the use of the word “students” which is a possessive determiner. The word “students” implies that there is more than one

student, and it is used to indicate ownership or possession. However, in this context, the word “students” is not necessary because it does not add meaning to the sentence. The sentence can be rephrased to make it clearer and more concise.

Corrected sentence:

“The specific scope of the research is about students’ perceptions and challenges using Microsoft Teams to measure their perspectives.”

The results of the error analysis conducted on the determiner errors in the research's backgrounds reveal several interesting findings. The researcher identified three types of determiner errors: article, demonstrative, and possessive. The frequency and percentage of these errors were calculated to provide a deeper understanding of their occurrence.

Based on data analysis, this research reached 3 main conclusions. Students’ writing error in using determiners in writing the final project background, the number of errors made by students in the use of determiners in the final project background, and the most dominant type of determiner error in writing the final project background.

The first result is about Students’ writing error in using determiners in writing the final project background. The researcher analyzed students’ final project background and found students’ error in using derterminers instudents’ final project background are article, demonstrative and possessive.

The second outcome is the number of errors made by students in the use of determiners in the final project background. Based on table 2, shows from the three kinds of determiners that the researcher analyzed, the first is article determiner, with 34 errors and it is 80% of all errors made by the students, the second is demonstrative determiner which much less than compared to article determiner, it is on 15% error or there are only 4 errors, and the last is possessive determiner which is the least error made by the students, it is only 5% or there are just 2 error in the use of possessive determiner.

Finally, the researcher found the most dominant type of determiner error in students’ final project. Based on table 2, the most dominant type of determiner that has the most errors is article determiner, this type of determiner has the highest percentage of error from the other two types of determiner that is 80%.

Conclusion

In this study, an error analysis was conducted on the determiner errors found in the backgrounds of ten research papers. The three types of determiner errors identified were article, demonstrative, and possessive. The analysis revealed that article errors were the most common, accounting for 85% of the total errors. Demonstrative errors constituted 10% of the errors, while possessive errors made up 5%. These findings highlight the challenges faced by the participants in accurately using determiners in their academic writing. The errors were primarily caused by a lack of understanding of the specific functions and rules associated with articles, as well as confusion in the appropriate use of demonstratives and possessives. To address these issues, it is recommended that participants receive focused instruction and practice on determiners, including exercises and activities that target their proper usage. Thorough proofreading and editing should also be encouraged to identify and correct determiner errors before submitting written work. By improving their understanding and

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accuracy in the use of determiners, participants can enhance the clarity and coherence of their writing. This, in turn, will contribute to the overall quality of their research papers and improve communication with readers.

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