

Contrastive Study of Preposition Errors Descriptive Tex in Teaching EFL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesalahan penggunaan preposisi dalam teks deskriptif yang ditulis oleh siswa EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif dan studi kontrastif untuk mengidentifikasi kesalahan, memahami penyebabnya, dan memberikan strategi yang dapat meningkatkan pembelajaran preposisi dalam konteks pengajaran EFL. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesalahan preposisi paling sering terjadi pada pemilihan preposisi, penghilangan, dan penambahan preposisi yang tidak diperlukan. Penyebab utama kesalahan tersebut adalah kurangnya pemahaman terhadap fungsi dan konteks preposisi dalam bahasa Inggris. Dengan penerapan strategi yang tepat dalam pemilihan preposisi dalam teks deskriptif dalam pengajaran EFL untuk mengurangi kesalahan preposisi, seperti mengidentifikasi kesalahan, memberikan latihan, dan penjelasan melalui pembelajaran konstruktif.

Kata kunci: *Kesalahan Bahasa, Preposisi, EFL*

Abstract

This research aims to analyze the errors in the use of prepositions in descriptive texts written by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods and contrastive studies to identify errors, understand their causes, and provide strategies that can enhance the learning of prepositions in the context of EFL teaching. Data were collected through interviews and observations. The research results show that preposition errors most often occur in the selection of prepositions, omissions, and the addition of unnecessary prepositions. The main cause of the errors is the lack of understanding of the function and context of prepositions in English. With the implementation of appropriate strategies in the selection of prepositions in descriptive texts in EFL teaching to reduce preposition errors, such as identifying mistakes, providing exercises, and explanations through constructive study.

Keywords: *Language Errors, Prepositions, EFL*

INTRODUCTION

Mastery of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become one of the important competencies in the global education world. In English language learning, one of the main challenges faced by learners is the correct use of prepositions. English has become an important language for developing countries like Indonesia. To interact with others, Indonesian society is required to master English; that is why the Indonesian government has implemented English as one of the subjects in schools, starting from elementary school, middle school, high school, and university.

With this, English language learning in Indonesia provides another purpose that develops knowledge, technology, and culture. By knowing English, the Indonesian people can understand technology designed for use by all users worldwide. Not only that, one important aspect of the

English language is the use of prepositions. Prepositions can significantly affect the meaning of a sentence, making their accurate use better in effective communication.

Prepositions function to connect parts of a sentence so that it becomes a complete and easily understandable sentence. However, mistakes in prepositions in descriptive texts can result in the use of ineffective sentences and can cause errors between sentences and paragraphs. And prepositions are a part of grammar that often confuse learners due to the differences in language systems between the mother tongue and English. Errors in the use of prepositions can affect the accuracy and clarity of the message intended to be conveyed in written text or oral communication.

Descriptive texts, as one of the types of texts often taught in EFL learning, provide students with the opportunity to develop writing skills while also enhancing their understanding of grammar, including the use of prepositions. However, errors in the use of prepositions in descriptive texts are often found, which may reflect students' difficulties in understanding the rules and context of preposition usage in English.

Contrastive studies become a relevant approach in analyzing this error. By comparing the structure of English and the students' native language, this approach allows researchers and educators to identify differences and similarities that can affect the learning process. Through a deep understanding of the sources of errors, educators can design more effective learning strategies to help students master the correct use of prepositions. And help students improve their English language skills.

This research is related to the study by Yula Biolita Lestari, 2019, titled "Errors in the Use of Prepositions in Descriptive Essays by Seventh Grade Students of SMP Negeri I Siliragung." The results of this study also use qualitative research with a descriptive method. However, there is a difference in that this study explains that there are errors in the use of prepositions in descriptive essays, namely the lack of students' language proficiency and the lack of knowledge about the use of prepositions (Lestari, 2019).

Aiming to explore the preposition errors made by students in descriptive texts and analyze their causes using a contrastive approach. Therefore, the researcher has titled it "Contrastive Study Of Preposition Errors In Descriptive Text In Teaching EFL," which is expected to provide new insights for educators and EFL practitioners in designing more effective and contextual teaching methods to address students' difficulties in using prepositions.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen to identify and analyze prepositional errors found in descriptive texts written by EFL students, as well as to uncover the causes of these errors through a contrastive study between English and the students' mother tongue in order to provide a comprehensive and thorough overview of this issue. This research method seeks to characterize, interpret, and understand the phenomena or events occurring in the field (Sugiyono, 2017). The aim of this research is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and attitudes of the research subjects in descriptive texts written by EFL students, as well as to uncover the causes of these errors through a contrastive study between English and the students' mother tongue.

With data collection through documentation written by EFL students. Interview Digging into information about students' perceptions of prepositions in English. Observation Observing the learning process in the classroom to understand the context of preposition teaching.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Errors in Preposition Selection in Descriptive Text

The incorrect selection of prepositions is often misused by people, and here are the preposition errors that are frequently misused:

a. **Beside, beside**

means next to, whereas besides means in addition. Here are some examples:

The comb is beside the brush.

Beside planning the trip, she is also getting the tickets.

b. **Between, among**

Generally, "between" is used when there are two objects involved, while "among" is more appropriate for three or more objects. And here are some examples:

Between you and me

He is among friends.

c. **Due to**

Due to should not be used as a preposition meaning "because of," as they have different meanings. And here are the examples:

Because of (not due to) his speeding, we were all ticketed.

Nevertheless, Preposition Selection Errors Students often use prepositions that are not appropriate for the context, such as "on" replacing "in". This is caused by the influence of the mother tongue, which has different rules in the use of prepositions.

Preposition Omission, Some students omit the necessary prepositions, for example, "He sits chair" instead of "He sits on the chair." This mistake often occurs because in their native language, the use of certain prepositions is not mandatory or even non-existent.

Unnecessary Preposition Addition Unnecessary addition of prepositions, such as "He discussed about the book" instead of "He discussed the book". This error reflects the influence of negative transfer where students translate directly from their mother tongue.

The grammatical structure in the students' mother tongue often influences the way they use prepositions in English. For example, in some languages, the use of prepositions is simpler or more flexible compared to English.

Example:

a. **Error in the Use of the Preposition "di"**

Incorrect sentence: We were there for a car show near the beach.

Error: the word "disana" should be written separately as "di sana"

Correction: "We are holding a car show near the beach."

b. **Incorrect use of the preposition "ke"**

Incorrect sentence: if you are in Yogyakarta or Parangtritis Beach, make sure to buy souvenirs.

Error: the word "ke" in "Yogyakarta" should be written separately as "ke Yogyakarta".

Correction: If you go to Yogyakarta or Parangtritis Beach, make sure to buy souvenirs.

This is evident in the repeated errors in preposition selection in their descriptive texts. Prepositions are often taught in a limited way without emphasis on context or real situations, so students do not gain a deep understanding of their usage. And it was also found that students tend to make mistakes with prepositions that function to indicate place and time. For example, there are mistakes in the use of "in," "on," and "at." Students often get confused choosing the appropriate preposition according to the context of the sentence (Mutmainna, 2014).

In addition, interviews with students show that they have difficulty understanding the difference in meaning between seemingly similar prepositions. For example, they often do not understand the difference between "at the park" and "in the park". Classroom observations also show that teachers often provide explanations that are too brief or use teaching methods that are less varied. These mistakes indicate the need for a more contextual learning approach that focuses on practical exercises. Teachers need to provide examples of preposition usage in real sentences and teach the differences in meaning based on context.

Differences in the Prepositional System Between EFL in Descriptive Texts in Constructivist Studies

The difference between prepositional texts and EFL is seen in the approach of these two concepts in teaching English as a foreign language.

Preposition Text is a word that always appears in front of nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. Prepositions focus on the use of prepositions in specific sentences. Words used to indicate relationships between elements in a sentence, such as place, time, or direction. In the

preposition text, students will practice understanding and using prepositions correctly, whether to indicate location or other relationships. With that, it emphasizes the importance of active learning experiences where students build their knowledge based on their own experiences and understanding. And students will be given the opportunity to identify and use prepositions in more real contexts (Sugiarti, 2019).

For example, students can be assigned tasks to create sentences with prepositions in everyday situations, such as describing the location of objects or scheduling events. Which is to "build" their understanding of the use of prepositions gradually and in relevant situations.

Whereas EFL is English viewed as a foreign language or a language learned in addition to the first and second languages used daily (Septi Indrianty, 2023) and focuses on the process of learning English as a foreign language, where students learn English in countries that do not use English as the primary language.

EFL teaching often involves teaching language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), grammar, vocabulary, as well as the use of language in social and academic contexts. Teaching is conducted by considering the experiences, context, and background of the students. Not only that, but it emphasizes that students do not just receive information (Henry Guntur, 2011), but they are actively engaged in their learning. So, in the context of EFL, students will be encouraged to interact with English in relevant situations, such as through conversations, projects, or discussions that reflect real-world situations. EFL students will learn through authentic contexts and active practice, both individually and collaboratively, with guidance from the instructor. This makes learning more meaningful and directly applicable. (Marhaeni, 2017). Or the difference is:

1. Usage Prepositions with examples of location in Indonesian, prepositions to indicate location are relatively simpler and do not always require variation. For example, "at home," "on the table," and "in the room" consistently use the preposition "at."

Whereas in English, there are several prepositions to indicate more specific locations, such as "in," "on," and "at," which are used depending on the context. For example, "in the room," "on the table," and "at the door." Mistakes often occur when EFL students are confused about choosing the correct preposition in descriptive texts.

The mistakes that occur and EFL students might use the wrong prepositions, such as saying "in the table" (which should be "on the table") or "at the room" (which should be "in the room"). In constructivist studies, these mistakes can be corrected through experiential and reflective learning, where students are given the opportunity to examine the use of prepositions in real contexts.

2. The use of prepositions in descriptive texts where The Influence of Sentence Structure in Descriptions, Indonesian, The sentence structure in Indonesian is simpler and often does not require the use of prepositions in the description of objects or locations. For example, "The cat is sleeping under the table" is sufficient with the preposition "under." In descriptive texts, the use of prepositions is more focused on depicting objects or locations. Prepositions function to provide additional information about the position or state of the object being described.

And according to EFL, descriptive in objects or locations often requires different prepositions to describe the position or state of the object more specifically. For example, "The cat is under the table," where the preposition "under" is used to describe the location of the object. And In EFL teaching, prepositions are often taught in a broader context, including their use in everyday sentences, conversations, and formal texts. The focus is on understanding and applying prepositions in various situations.

The mistakes that occur made EFL students may use incorrect prepositions due to confusion in choosing between the prepositions available in English, such as "on" or "under," based on the patterns present in their mother tongue. In constructivist studies, contextual-based learning allows students to build an understanding of preposition usage through direct experimentation with descriptive texts.

And this shows that students often misuse prepositions due to a lack of understanding of their function and context of use. For example, the use of phrases like "di sana" which should be written separately as [di sana] can create confusion. Other

mistakes, such as combining prepositions with other words (for example, "keindahan" becoming "ke indahan"), are also common (Fitri Nurhayati, 2023).

The difference in the prepositional system between EFL and Indonesian plays an important role in the errors that occur in the learning of descriptive texts. In the context of constructive studies, an approach that emphasizes active experience, social interaction, and reflection can help students overcome these mistakes. Context-based learning, direct experimentation with descriptive sentences, and collaborative problem-solving enable students to build a better understanding of the correct use of prepositions in English or EFL.

Learning strategies applied to reduce preposition errors in Descriptive Texts in EFL teaching

In this case, the appropriate and applicable learning strategy to reduce errors in descriptive texts in EFL teaching is:

- a. By identifying mistakes, namely teaching students to see errors in the use of prepositions. By providing descriptive text exercises that already contain errors and introducing the marking of incorrect prepositions. This method can be done through discussion. And help students strengthen their understanding of prepositions (Ratminingsih, 2017).
- b. Provide an explanation about prepositions. So that the students can understand the function and use of prepositions and not be confused in understanding the text. And can increase students' confidence in using prepositions.
- c. Providing exercises, so that students can practice with the prepositions they have already learned. By providing written exercises on descriptive sentences, we can capture students' attention and give them many opportunities to practice, both in writing and orally.

With those strategies, it is hoped that students can better understand the use of prepositions in descriptive texts and reduce errors in descriptive texts (Muspita, 2008).

CONCLUSION

With this, there is education from teachers to provide in-depth explanations about the function and context of prepositions and the use of prepositions. Along with learning materials that include examples of preposition usage in real-life contexts and exercises that highlight the differences between English and the mother tongue. Therefore, this research is effective in learning strategies within a broader context, as well as exploring other factors that influence prepositional errors in EFL learning. And it is important for EFL teachers to develop learning strategies that can guide students in the correct use of prepositions in descriptive texts. So that they avoid preposition errors and improve their writing skills and overall communication skills.

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