

**STUDENTS' ABILITY IN UNDERSTANDING DANGLING MODIFIERS
AT UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

Thesis

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Education (B. Ed) in English Language Education Program*



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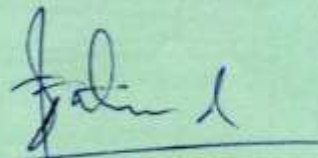
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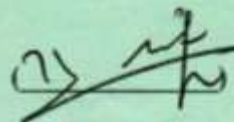
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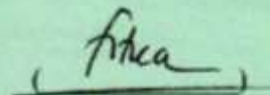
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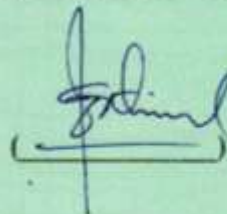
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ABSTRAK

Putri, Humaira Utami. 2020. “Students’ Ability in Understanding Dangling Modifiers at Universitas Negeri Padang”. Thesis. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Dangling modifiers merupakan sebuah kesalahan pada struktur kalimat yang dapat mengakibatkan kesalahpahaman maksud kalimat karena tidak adanya kecocokan antara ide penulis dan pembaca. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian tentang kemampuan siswa dalam memahami *dangling modifiers* yang di analisa melalui tes *grammar*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat pemahaman siswa dalam memahami *dangling modifiers* dan mengetahui jenis *dangling modifiers* yang paling banyak dijawab salah oleh siswa. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kuantitatif. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris UNP angkatan 2017 sebanyak 35 siswa. Sampel diambil dengan menggunakan metode *stratified cluster sampling*. Dalam penelitian ini, data dikumpulkan melalui tes *grammar* dan ditemukan bahwa kemampuan siswa tahun ketiga dalam memahami *dangling modifiers* adalah buruk (*poor*) karena nilai rata-rata siswa adalah 49. Untuk mengetahui tipe dari *dangling modifiers* yang paling banyak dijawab salah, setiap kesalahan jawaban pada tiap tipe *dangling modifiers* dijumlahkan dan di persentasekan sehingga ditemukan 55% kesalahan pada tipe *dangling elliptical clause*. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa perlu lebih mengetahui atau menyadari kalimat yang memiliki makna yang logis dan tidak logis.

Kata Kunci: *Dangling Modifiers, Grammar, English Language Students.*

ABSTRACT

Putri, Humaira Utami. 2020. “Students’ Ability in Understanding Dangling Modifiers at Universitas Negeri Padang”. Thesis. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Dangling modifiers is a problem in sentence structure where there is a mismatch between what the writer or speaker means and what the reader or listener means. This problem will certainly cause a misunderstanding. This study aimed to determine the ability of students to understand dangling modifiers and find out the types of dangling modifiers that were most frequently answered incorrectly by students. This research is a descriptive quantitative study. The population of this study was 35 students from K-2017 English Language Education. Samples were taken using the stratified cluster sampling method. Data were collected through grammar test. The data were given a general score and each part of the test is designed to determine students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers. It was found that the ability of third-year students to understand dangling modifiers was poor because the average score was 49. To find out the type of dangling modifiers that were most answered incorrectly, each answer error in each type of dangling modifiers would be added so that found 55% errors in dangling elliptical clause type. It can be concluded that students need to be aware of logic and illogical sentences (dangling modifiers).

Key Words *Dangling Modifiers, Grammar, English Language Students.*

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8. 2017 class of English Education Program students as a sample.

The researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect; therefore, the researcher will be very receptive to suggestions and constructive criticism for further improvement of this thesis. Finally, I hope this thesis is useful for readers in general and researchers in particular.

Padang, 31 Januari 2020

The Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Grammar is one of the language components that have to be mastered by students both in spoken and written form. It is because grammar is a fundamental thing in language learning. Thornburry (1999) stated that grammar allows us to use language to define the world in terms of how things occur, when, and where. In part, grammar is the study of acceptable forms or constructions in a language.

Grammar, for students in the English language education field, is a tough one. This can be seen in their writing tasks. Most students usually make grammar mistakes in their writing. The grammar mistakes usually occur in a simple word even to a complex sentence. As English Language Education students, they have some goals in the English language-teaching field, especially to teach and to educate, grammar becomes a subject that matters and has to be mastered by them. Therefore, the way of teacher or lecturer in teaching grammar has a considerable role in students' grammar comprehension.

According to Weaver (2008), "teaching grammar in conjunction with writing is pedagogy of possibility that is positive, productive, and practical" (p. 6-7). Grammar determines the quality of writing and how competent the writer. Through writing, a writer wants to emphasize their ideas, thoughts, and feelings by using correct use of grammar, words and sentences. Writing skills requires the writer to explain in detail the purpose of the things they are thinking. Writers,

especially students who learn this skill needs more time to think and arrange their ideas appropriately.

Indonesian university students still have problems in using correct grammar, spelling, and even various vocabulary to express their ideas in their writing. As English becomes their foreign language, they may find some difficulties in constructing good sentences in a paragraph with the right use of grammar. Broughton (2003) states that one out of four main problems confronted by ESL students in writing is English grammar and lexis. As grammar is a fundamental thing in sentences, incorrect grammar in sentences will create confusion and misinterpretation. This is a fact that ESL students are facing these problems in producing good sentences and they also tend to make errors or mistake in sentence construction.

One of the problems in making a good sentence is a misplaced modifier and dangling modifier. A misplaced modifier is incorrect modifier placement in a sentence. Meanwhile, the dangling modifier is no exact word is given a description by the modifier in a sentence so the whole sentence makes no sense. Both misplaced modifier and dangling modifiers often happened in students' piece of writing.

Dangling modifier seems to explain something that is implied, but it is not written in sentences. Dumais (1988) states that a phrase dangles when it is not attached to some word that it is meant to modify. Dangling modifiers fails to refer to any word in the sentence; sometimes the sentence can be ridiculous or confusing for anyone who read the sentence. It is because the ambiguous clause

or phrase that refers to words it modifies. Jumaa (2013) states that modifiers are important element to read, define, and assess terms to alter their meaning. Meanwhile, Bovee (2016) says that dangling modifiers is a phrase or clause that has no connection to the subject of the sentence. It creates confusion by placing modifiers close to the wrong nouns or verbs. Finally, the dangling modifier should be avoided because it can change the meaning of a sentence and makes the reader confused about the doer of the sentence. For example, Mitchell, Baugh, and Kelly (2016) show a dangling sentence: "While eating a cookie, the phone rang." This sentence does not specify who is eating a cookie. The reader may get confused because while eating a cookie phrase, there is the phone rang, the sentence suggests that the phone rang while eating a cookie. Therefore, the correct sentence might be, "While he was eating a cookie, the phone rang". To repair this type of dangling modifier, we cannot simply move it to another place in a sentence; we should add or change words so that the sentence can make sense.

Dangling modifiers commonly occur at the beginning of the sentence, with the infinitives, verbal that follows a preposition, the participial phrase, and elliptical clause, based on what types of words they describe. According to Mitchell, Baugh, and Kelly (2016), "there are four types of dangling modifiers based on variations of the modifiers being used, such as a verb ing, verb ed, or to a verb and an elliptical phrase problem". Out of those types of dangling modifiers, the participial phrase is the most common type of dangler usually found at the beginning of the sentence. Based on observation on August 2019 on

third-year students of English Education Program in academic year 2019/2020 at Universitas Negeri Padang, the researcher found that some students do not know what dangling modifier is and they produce some sentences that are dangling.

Dangling modifier has become a subject that has been taught in the 4th semester in English Language Education Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. The subject name was Grammar for TOEFL and the goal was to give students a better understanding of every aspect of TOEFL tests such as grammar, writing structure, listening, and so on. Yet students still have difficulties in understanding dangling modifiers. It can be seen from students' Academic Writing final semester tests that there are some dangling modifiers found in their writing.

Research about dangling modifiers has been conducted by some researchers. A study conducted by Soesanto (2008) at Bina Nusantara University showed that students are able to differentiate correct sentences with the sentences containing dangling modifier well. Another study conducted by Tampubolon (2014) at Universitas HKBP Nommensen showed that his students are able to avoid misplaced and dangling modifier because they were often to write paragraph in their lectures. Both of this studies showed that their students are able to differentiate and avoid dangling modifiers in their sentences.

The next study conducted by Hamid (2011) at Tikrit University showed that dangling modifiers is a descriptive phrase that implied an actor different from the sentence subject. Another study conducted by Jumaa (2013) at Diyala University in Iraq showed that dangling modifiers commonly appear at the beginning of the sentence. A study conducted by Khairiyah (2015) at State

Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Salatiga showed that from compound sentences and the types of dangling modifier that can be applied by students of the fifth semester of English Education Department of STAIN Salatiga are dangling modifier of conjunction, pronoun, adverb, subject of the sentences and object on the sentences.

The other study conducted by Egar (2014) at Universitas PGRI Semarang the study shows that last academic year students still have difficulties to create 'un-dangle' sentences. The similarities are most students in the third year of English language Education program in UNP do not know what dangling modifier is. The researcher wants to find out how is students' ability in understanding dangling modifier using grammar test, meanwhile, this research has difference that is, what is the most wrongly answered type of dangling modifier based on their grammar test. Therefore, the researcher conduct a study entitled "Students' Ability in Understanding Dangling Modifiers at Universitas Negeri Padang".

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are at least seven sentence errors according to Mitchell, Baugh, and Kelly (2016), the seven sentence errors are run-on sentences, sentence fragments, faulty parallel, misplaced modifier, dangling modifier, faulty subject-verb agreement, and also faulty pronoun agreement. While those problems in sentence construction are familiar for students, dangling modifier is the most non-familiar one. Most of the students in English Language Education Program of UNP do not

know what dangling modifier is so they do not realize that a sentence they made is not connected to the word it modifies.

Based on the background of the problem above, this study is concerned about analyzing students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers and the types of dangling modifiers that wrongly answered by students in a grammar test. The students' problems that have been identified in this research divided into three-sentence problems. The difficulty in recognizing words, phrases, even clause in the proper way from the word it modifies. The second one is that the students usually speak things in their mind and sometimes ignore the correct use of grammar when recognizing it in written form. The third one is a problem in recognizing dangling modifiers in the written form.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Because not all of the sentence problems can be analyzed, the study of this research is limited to investigate students' understanding in dangling modifiers using grammar test that focuses on dangling modifier types.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background and identification of the problem above, the problem of this study is formulated as the analysis of student's ability in understanding dangling modifiers using grammar test and the types of dangling modifiers wrongly answered by the students in their grammar test.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problem above, there are two research questions that need to be answer as follows;

1. How is students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers?
2. What is the most type of dangling modifiers wrongly answered by the students in their grammar test?

1.6 Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research are:

1. To find out students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers.
2. To find out the most types of dangling modifiers that wrongly answered by the students in their grammar test.

1.7 Significance of the Research

This study may be worth research, because the results of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and actually to the instructor, the next researcher and the researcher herself. Theoretically, the findings of this research will provide useful information to the teacher about the third year students' of English Education UNP ability in understanding dangling modifiers, especially for the other researcher who wants to conduct the data at English Language and Literature Department UNP. Through this research, the teacher and other researcher will get descriptive information about the students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers and the most type of dangling modifiers that frequently wrongly answered by the students.

Practically, the finding of this research can give significant contribution to the development of teaching grammar syllabus at an institution especially in a university.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

1. Grammar is a vital component of language that has to be mastered by students both in spoken and written. It is because of grammar is a fundamental thing in language learning.
2. Dangling modifiers is a phrase or a clause that modifies a word but do not explain its position in the sentence, it also intended a humorous and confusing meaning of the sentence, and it is an insidious one.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on 1050 items analyzed, it was found that the third year students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers at English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang is poor because the average score of the students is 49 as categorized D. The students have good ability in answering question section 1, which demands the students to recognize the dangling sentences. In contrast, they have poor ability in answering questions in section 2 and section 3, which demands the students to choose the best introductory or main clause of the sentence and to revise the dangling sentences.

It was also found that the students have some difficulties in answering the questions in section 3. It is difficult for them to revise the dangling sentences to the good or logic structure of the sentence. Besides, it is decidable for some students, which sentence, or phrase will be an introductory phrase and main clause and the use of appropriate subject or doer either in introductory phrase or in the main clause.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings, the researcher would like to propose some recommendations which would be useful for the teachers and other researchers.

1. The third year students at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang.
The students should improve their ability in understanding dangling modifiers by comprehending the types of them. As dangling modifiers is one of the

parts in the TOEFL test especially in structure and written expression that aims to test their ability to identify written English that is used in formal situations (formal written English). They also must understand the context of sentences to avoid the mistakes in using dangling modifiers.

2. The teacher. Every teacher should give students the opportunity to be more active in learning, because it has the benefit of enhancing students ' skills. Teachers should be innovative to inspire students and build a teaching method or a teaching cycle.
3. The next researcher. The results of this research are expected to be used by the next researchers as a reference to conduct similar research on dangling modifiers. It is recommended for the next researchers to check students' writing task especially in academic writing to obtain specific data on students' ability in understanding dangling modifiers.

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