



Grammatical Errors Done by Trainee Bellboys

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the grammatical errors done by trainee bellboys when handling guests at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort. The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. The data were collected through observation, audio recordings of bellboy–guest interactions, and semi-structured interviews. A total of 118 utterances produced by nine trainee bellboys were analyzed using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. which consist of omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. The findings indicate that grammatical errors frequently occurred in the trainees' spoken English. From those utterances, it was found that 88 contained grammatical errors, with omission and misformation being the most dominant, particularly in the use of auxiliary verbs, articles, and prepositions, and followed by addition and misordering. These findings suggest that continuous and focused English language training is necessary to enhance grammatical accuracy and professional communication in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Grammatical Errors; Hotel Service; Spoken English; Surface Strategy Taxonomy; Trainee Bellboys

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial component of effective communication, especially English in the modern era. As an international language, English plays a vital role in global communication, particularly in the hospitality industry. Putri and Mahardika (2024) state that English proficiency enhances communication effectiveness between hotel staff and guests. The ability to communicate in English in hospitality is a very important skill to have for staff who work in the hospitality industry who interact directly with national and international guests, including trainee bellboys. According to Hadi and Putra (2015), bellboys are one of the hotel staff who have an important role in handling guest luggage as well as being at the forefront of ensuring the safety of guest items and providing information about the hotel to guests. Furthermore, professionals in the tourism industry need to be more aware of how they use language, because it is through the way they speak that guests can assess the impression and quality of the service provided (Aprinita et al., 2025). In this sector, quality service includes assessing guest service and understanding their expectations and perceptions (Aryani et al., 2024).

In this case, to become a bellboy in a hotel, the most important thing that must be owned and mastered is being able to communicate well and effectively, especially in English because in carrying out their duties as a bellboy in a hotel very necessary to have a good understanding of English, such as grammatical accuracy. Grammar also plays a crucial role in ensuring that the expressions used are clear and accurate.

Although grammatical errors are a natural part of the language learning process (Dulay et al., 1982), it is necessary to distinguish between errors—systematic deviations from language rules—and mistakes, which are random errors in speech. This study focused on errors, which were identified and classified systematically using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy developed by (Dulay et al., 1982). Different types of errors are classified, including omissions, misformations, additions, and misordering. If bellboys do not provide information clearly, guests may be confused, receive less than satisfactory service, or even misinterpret instructions. In the long run, this can affect guest satisfaction and the hotel's professional reputation.

There were several studies conducted by some researchers related to grammar in hospitality industries. Muziatun and Jusuf (2020) found that tour guides in Gorontalo city often make grammatical errors, namely those related to verb phrases, noun phrases, and transformations, followed by errors in the use of the third person singular present, simple past tense, and past participle. Another study by Wijaya and Astawa (2024) identified that 78% of the total errors found by students majoring in travel business who acted as tour guides in English simulations were grammar errors, such as improper use of tense, errors in sentence structure, and subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, Clarah et al. (2023) said that difficulties in English communication, especially for grammar, confidence, and understanding foreign guest accents are difficulties that are still experienced by front office staff in Palembang hotels. Based on the findings of those previous studies and also the important of grammatical accuracy especially in the hospitality communication, there has been no study discussing grammatical errors, particularly in the bellboy section at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort. Therefore, this study fills the gap by identifying the types of grammatical errors done by trainee bellboys based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort, a four-star resort located in Buleleng, Bali.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Grammatical Errors

Error Analysis

Brown (2007) explains that error analysis involves the identification, analysis, and interpretation of learners' errors as part of understanding difficulties in language acquisition. It is a method used by teachers and researchers to examine learners' language use, identify common errors, describe and categorize them, and assess their causes and implications. Therefore, error analysis can be seen as a structured procedure to understand the mistakes made

by language learners (Brown, 2007). Erdogan (2005) adds that error analysis is closely related to the cognitive processes learners utilize when interpreting input in the target language.

Definition of Grammatical Error

Purpura (2004) states in his book *Assessing Grammar* that “grammar is defined as a systematic way of accounting for and predicting the ideal speaker-listener’s knowledge of the language. This is done through a set of rules or principles which can be used to generate all the well-formed or grammatical utterances in a language.” (Purpura, 2004).

Grammar is defined as a set of assumptions about how language works. Harmer (2007) explains that grammar refers to how words can change their forms and how they are arranged to form sentences in a language. The assessment of students' grammar mastery is not only based on their ability to state grammatical rules, but also on their ability to use grammar points to express ideas, emotions, or observations to others. So grammatical error is a term that is used when there is the use of an incorrect grammatical pattern in a sentence. Grammatical errors are errors in grammar where the placement of words or verbs is not correct.

Types of Grammatical Errors

In this study, grammatical errors in bellboys conversations with guests were identified using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by (Dulay et al., 1982). This framework divides errors into four main types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

Omission

Omission errors occur when elements that should appear in a sentence are left out, such as omitting to be/copular verbs, articles, or the plural marker -s. Content morphemes carry the most significant referential meaning in a sentence, such as adverbs, nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

Addition

Addition errors occur when an unnecessary component is added to a sentence. There are three types of addition errors: First is Double marking : refers to an error where a necessary item is wrongly duplicated. For example, the sentence “*He doesn’t knows her name*” should be “*He doesn’t know her name*”. Second is Regularization is the application of regular grammatical rules to irregular forms. For example, turning “*mouse*” into “*mouses*” instead of “*mice*”. The last one is Simple addition refers to addition errors that do not fall into the categories of double marking or regularization.

Misformation

Misformation refers to errors in the use of the correct form of morphemes or structures. There are three types of misformation: regularization, archi-forms, and alternating forms.

Misordering

Misordering errors involve incorrect arrangements of morphemes or groups of morphemes. For example, “*I don’t know who is he*” should be “*I don’t know who he is*” (Asni & Susanti, 2018).

Bellboys

Bellboy (porter) is a job position in the concierge section of the front office department in a hotel. According to Darsono (1992, as cited in Suardana & Sulistya, 2024), a bellboy is an employee responsible for handling guests' luggage and carrying out tasks assigned by their supervisor. The role of a bellboy is very important as this position represents the "face" of the hotel. A bellboy is the first person to greet guests upon their arrival at the hotel and also the last person to send them off creating a "last impression" before the guests leave. Therefore, a guest can judge the quality of a hotel's service simply through the service provided by the bellboy.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach and descriptive method. According to Miles et al. (2014) qualitative research is a systematic and iterative process of analyzing non-numerical data to find patterns, themes, and relationships between phenomena which is done mostly with words based on observations, documents, et cetera. Aspers and Corte (2019) also stated that qualitative research is research that has a multi-method focus which combines interpretative and naturalistic methods for the subject matter. In particular, the strength of qualitative research lay in its ability to provide textual and complex descriptions of why and how individuals experience certain phenomena (Oranga & Matere, 2023). The subjects used in this study were trainee bellboys at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort who actively used English when serving guests. Based on the verification and selection process conducted at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort, it was determined that there were nine trainee bellboys who fully met the criteria. For the object of this research was the use of grammatical errors done by trainee bellboys when serving guests at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort.

In this study, the data collection that was carried out by researchers was through observation, recording, and interview. The observation was conducted as a preliminary step to gain a general understanding of the service context. After conducting preliminary observations to identify the appropriate context, researchers recorded direct conversations between bellboys and guests as they performed their duties. After all the recordings were completed, the audio files were sent to the researcher for transcription and further analysis. After the conversation

recordings had been transcribed and analyzed, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with the bellboys participating in the study to explore the reasons of the factors causing grammatical errors that were revealed. In this study, researchers used three instruments, namely observation sheet, audio recording device, and interview guide as tools for collecting data, and the researcher in this study also used the interactive model analysis created by (Miles et al., 2014). There were four procedures that were carried out, namely data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusions.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Types of Grammatical Error by Bellboys at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort, Based on The Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al.

In this section, based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), the researcher explored various types of grammatical errors committed by trainee bellboys at New Sunari Lovina Beach Resort. According to this theory, grammatical errors could be classified into four categories, namely, omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. Based on the previous analysis of 118 utterances spoken by trainee bellboys, it was found that 88 statements contained grammatical errors and this was because one utterance could contain more than one types of error. The types of errors were described in the following table:

Table 1. Grammatical Error Types Classification Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

No	Types of grammatical error	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Omission	44	50%
2	Misformation	21	23,86%
3	Addition	15	17,05%
4	Misordering	8	9,09%
Total		88	100,0%

Based on the table above, it could be seen that the most dominant types of grammatical errors were Omission which occurring in 44 cases (50%). This error occurred when an important part of a sentence or utterance was omitted, even though that element should have been present in the correct and appropriate sentence/utterance structure, for example: the omission of auxiliary verb “*Are*”, “*Do*”, articles such as “*a*” and “*the*” and the omission of the preposition “*on*”.

Then the second was Misformation. Misformation was the second most common type of error that appeared in the speech of trainee bellboys, occurring 21 times (23, 86%). This type of error appeared in various aspects, such as prepositions, vocabulary choice, and even

unnatural expressions. For example, the trainee used “*sorry to the problem*” instead of the conventional expression “*sorry for the problem*”.

Next, the third was the Addition error, found 15 times (17,05%). This type of error occurred when an unnecessary element was added to the utterance, For example: “*Oke mam, I will tell the restaurant to bring to the water to your room*”, which could simply have been said as “*Oke mam, I will tell the restaurant to bring the water to your room*”.

Finally, the last one was the Misordering errors which was the rarest type of error. This error was found 8 times (9,09%). This type of error occurred when the order of words or phrases was incorrect, even though all the necessary elements were present. For example, “*I can help you?*” instead of the correct interrogative form “*Can I help you?*”. Based on the explanation above of 118 utterances from trainee bellboys, it was found that 88 were errors, this was because one utterance could contain more than one type of errors. The errors were classified as such because they appeared repeatedly and matched the interview results, and the trainees admitted that they did not know the correct form or could not form the correct sentence when asked.

Based on the data that has been found, it can be seen that the pattern of grammatical errors done by trainee bellboys was systematic and concentrated. There were two types of errors that appeared most frequently: first, Omission (50%) and second, Misformation (23,86%). This highlighted that the main problems among trainee bellboys were twofold: a lack of understanding of function words (which were omitted because they were considered unimportant), and incorrect grammatical forms that were repeatedly used because they were assumed to be correct. Based on the findings, language training for trainee bellboys at hotels needed to be made clearer and more structured, especially regarding the use and placement of function words such as articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs.

Discussion

Grammatical Errors in Relation to Surface Strategy Taxonomy

The research results showed that out of 118 utterances from trainee bellboys, a total of 88 grammatical errors were found. The most dominant type of error was omission, with a percentage of 50%. This finding was in line with the theory of Dulay et al. (1982), which stated that omission was indeed the most common errors made by second language learners, especially when using function words such as articles, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions.

In this study, omission-type errors were clearly seen, as in the utterances “*You check in, yes?*” and “*We have two swimming pool here.*” These utterances showed that trainee bellboys tended to omit grammatical elements that were considered less important when

speaking. This pattern suggested that in service situations, trainee bellboys focused more on conveying the meaning of their speech so that it was quickly understood by guests, rather than paying attention to grammatical accuracy. The findings of this study were also in line with previous research conducted by Thiana et al. (2018), Muziatun and Jusuf (2020), as well as Yudhayana and Juniarta (2021). In those studies, omission was also found to be the most frequent type of grammatical error, both among service staff and English learners. This similarity showed that the omission of grammatical elements was indeed a fairly common issue for non-native speakers, especially in oral communication. When interacting directly, speakers tended to focus more on ensuring that the message was quickly understood by the listener, so grammatical accuracy often became a secondary concern.

The type of misformation error became the second most common type of error that appeared in this study. This type of error was usually seen in the choice of verb forms or words that were less appropriate, for example in the utterance *"Sorry to the problem, Sir"*. This finding was similar to previous research by Wijaya and Astawa (2024) as well as Clarah et al. (2023), who also found many errors in verb forms and sentence structures used by hotel employees. This pattern indicated that misformation errors were also related to learners' understanding of English grammar rules, which had not yet fully matured.

Addition did not occur very frequently, but the pattern was still clear and aligned with the classification of Dulay et al. In this study, addition occurred when a trainee bellboy inserted or added words that were actually unnecessary in the utterance, such as in the statement *"I'm sorry, I will tell to my senior."* The findings indicated that the trainee bellboy was trying to make the utterance sound more formal, but it was grammatically incorrect and showed that they had not yet fully understood the pattern of verbs and complements in English. These results were consistent with previous studies by Thiana et al. (2018) and Yudhayana and Juniarta (2021), which also found that addition errors arose from a partial understanding of grammar, especially in oral communication.

Misordering was the type of error that was least frequently found in this study, yet its pattern could still be recognized. This error occurred when trainee bellboys used complete grammatical elements but arranged them in an incorrect order. An example was the utterance *"I can help you?"*. This error indicated that trainee bellboys were still influenced by their first language structure or had not fully understood the syntactic patterns of English. As stated by Dulay et al. (1982), misordering errors generally reflected learners' difficulties in organizing language elements according to the target language system. In addition, these findings were also in line with research conducted by Caines et al. (2020), which stated that

communication carried out orally or spontaneously could cause speakers to produce sentences with less accurate word order. In the context of hospitality, speed and clarity of communication were very important, and such errors were quite common in the hospitality industry. The findings of this study also reinforce the applicability of the Surface Strategy Taxonomy in analyzing grammatical errors in spoken English within hospitality service contexts.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the identification that has been carried out, it was found that the trainee bellboys still produced grammatical errors. From 118 data utterances that have been analysed, it was found that 88 of them still contained grammatical errors. There were four types of grammatical errors found based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy theory by Dulay, et al. namely omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. Omission was the most common type of grammatical error found in this study, and then followed by misformation errors, next was Addition error and the last one was Misordering errors. With that, it can be concluded that the error patterns that appear were consistent and indicate that the trainee bellboys still have difficulties in using certain grammatical elements, especially function words such as articles, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. In addition, other factors that also influence include their habits of imitating their seniors, the influence of their first language, as well as work situations that require them to speak quickly when attending to guests. Although these grammatical errors do not hinder the guests' understanding, the use of inappropriate language can affect the perception of professionalism in hotel service.

Based on the research findings, several suggestions are proposed. First is for trainee bellboys, the researcher suggest importance of paying attention to proper grammar patterns, especially when constructing complete sentences, particularly in the pronunciation of function words (articles, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs) which are often omitted. Second, for Hotel management, it is recommended that the hotel provide regular English training with a focus on how to communicate effectively in the workplace. Next, for future researchers, it is highly recommended to study grammatical errors in more depth, especially in the use of grammatical elements that appeared most frequently in this study, such as articles, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. For the last one is for Tourism Education Institutions, the researcher suggest provide more training in communication skills that are actually used in the field, especially English for hotel service situations. Students should not only learn theory in the classroom, but also be accustomed to practicing through work simulations

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