2.1 Understanding Grammar

Hear the word *glamour* and what comes to mind? Of course, for many of us *glamour* deals with celebrities, most likely limousines and red carpets, swarms of paparazzi and more money than sense. But, odd as it may sound, *glamour* comes directly from a decidedly less glamorous word — *grammar*. During The Middle Ages, *grammar* was often used to describe learning in general, including the magical, occult practices popularly associated with the scholars of the day. People in Scotland pronounced *grammar* as "*glam-our,*" and extended the association to mean magical beauty or enchantment. In the 19th century, the two versions of the word went their separate ways, so that our study of English grammar today may not be *quite* as glamorous as it used to be. ([www.english-language-grammar.com](http://www.english-language-grammar.com) retrieved on April 10, 2013)

Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language. It can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. And it can help everyone, not only teachers of English but also teachers of anything, for all teaching is ultimately a matter of getting to grips with meaning.

Many people think that grammar is a boring topic to discuss or learn because they often associate grammar with learning how to write ‘good English’ or speak properly. Teschner (2007:1) says:

“Grammar is the analysis of language elements that convey meaning. These elements include sounds (phonetics and phonology), individual words (the lexicon), the constituent meaningful elements of words (morphology), the arrangement of words into phrases, clauses, and sentences (syntax), accent and stress (prosody), and the
appropriate overall application of all these things in a given situation (pragmatics).”

From the definition given by Teschner, we can see that grammar is not only about how to write or speak, but also about sound, words, accent, etc.

According to Leech in Handayani (2002:3) “Grammar is a set of rules which allow us to put words together in certain ways but which do not allow others.” At some levels, speakers of a language must know these rules; otherwise they will not be able to put words together in a meaningful way. Kaplan (1995:1) states “Most familiar, grammar means the rules governing how a language is supposed to be used.” Another understanding about grammar is found in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1981:1) “Grammar (as the study and practice) of rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences.” There are two elements in this definition which are the rules of grammar and the study and practice of the rules. The rules of grammar, as the dictionary suggests, are about how words change and how they are put together into sentences.

There are so many theories which can be learned in understanding the term of grammar such as traditional grammar, transformational grammar, structural grammar, historical grammar, etc. The kind of grammatical theory that is adopted will determine the features of language which are focused upon and we can see how attitudes toward language have changed the theories of grammar over the centuries.

2.2 Verbs

A verb is a part of speech that describes an action or occurrence or indicates a state of being. Generally, it makes more sense to define a verb by what it does than by what is. Just as the same word (rain or snow, for example) can serve as either a noun or a verb, the same verb can play a number of different roles depending on how it is used. Put simply, verbs move our sentences along in a variety of ways.
Every language in the world has verbs, but they are not always used in the same ways. They also can have different properties in different languages. For example, in some other languages (e.g., Chinese & Indonesian) verbs do not change for past and present tense. On the other hand, in English, verbs are the only kind of word that changes to show past or present tense.

Verbs are any of a large class of words in a language that serve to indicate occurrence or performance of an action. Verbs are also used to indicate the existence of a state or condition, etc. Auner & Burtness in Tarigan (1999:6) state that a verb is a word which designates action or state of being. All sentences must contain one because verb is an essential part of a complete sentence. In English, such words as *run, make, do*, and the like are verbs.

Verbs form the second largest word class after nouns. The basic form of an English verb is not generally marked by any ending, although there are certain suffixes that are frequently used to form verbs, such as *-ate, -fy, and -ise/ize*. Many verbs also contain prefixes, such *un-, out-, over-, and under-. Verbs can also be formed from nouns and adjectives by conversion, as with the verbs *snare, nose*, etc.

Verbs may be divided into three types: action verbs, verbs of being, and linking verbs.

a. Action Verbs show an action either physical (*give, walk, eat*, etc) or mental (*own, understand, forget*, etc). Examples:

- Robert **catches** the ball. (*catches* shows a physical action)
- My niece often **imagines** about having a very big house. (*imagines* shows a mental action)

b. Verbs of being (forms of *be*) are a small but extremely important group of verbs which do not express any action at all. This kind of verb shows a state of existence. Examples:

- Ryan **is** a humorous person. Everybody likes him. (*is* shows a state of existence)
- Patrick and Dina had explained about the project to us. (had shows a state of existence)

c. Linking Verbs link a subject with its complement. Some of linking verbs are seem, become, look, feel, taste, etc. Examples:

- The view looks so wonderful from here.
- Your roasted chicken tastes too salty.

2.3 Tense, Aspect, Voice, and Mood

In addition to conveying the content of an action or state, verbs in English can convey tense, aspect, voice, and mood.

a. Tense refers to the grammatical expression of the time (past, present, or future) of an action or state. We can also say that tense refers to the absolute location of an event or action in time, either the present or the past. It is marked by an inflection of the verb. In order to explain and understand tense, it is useful to imagine time as a line on which past tense, present tense and future tense are positioned. Some languages have all three tenses, some have only two, and some have no tenses at all. English and Japanese for example have only two tenses: past and present. Chinese and Indonesian verbs do not show tense. Instead they use other words in the sentence to show when the verb happens. (www.wikipedia.org retrieved on April 10, 2013). Examples:

- David walks to school (present tense)
- David walked to school (past tense)

b. Aspect usually shows things like whether the action is finished or not, or if something happens regularly. English has two aspects, which are progressive and perfect. In English, aspect is usually shown by using participle verb forms. English uses the gerund-participle usually with the auxiliary be to show the progressive aspect. Examples:
- Julian is reading a novel. (present progressive)
- They were studying Math. (past progressive)

English uses the past participle usually together with the auxiliary have to show the perfect aspect. Examples:
- I have lived in this neighborhood for three years. (present perfect)
- She had intended to buy her husband a new watch but he refused. (past perfect)

c. Voice expresses the relation between the verb’s subject and the action. There are two voices in English, the active voice and the passive voice. Active voice conveys that the subject of the sentence is the one undertaking the action, while passive voice conveys that the action is being received by the subject and uses a helping verb with the passive participle; which in English is always identical to the past participle. Only transitive verbs can be used in the passive voice. What would be the direct object of the verb in the active voice becomes the subject of the verb in the passive voice. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Voice</th>
<th>Passive Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jean helps the wounded dog.</td>
<td>The wounded dog is helped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella is writing two articles.</td>
<td>Two articles are being written by Bella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have eaten the cake</td>
<td>The cake has been eaten by us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Mood shows the attitude of the speaker about the verb, whether it is a declaration or an order. Kinds of mood are indicative mood, imperative mood, and subjunctive mood. The indicative mood states a fact, asks a question, or exclaims. The imperative mood gives a command. The subjunctive mood occurs in two instances: the sentence indicates a situation contrary to fact and the sentence shows a wish, desire, or demand.
2.4 Mental Verbs

There is a group of verbs in English, which usually refer to a state (a situation which isn't in a process of change). These verbs are either unusual in the continuous form. This group of verbs is known as mental verbs. Mental verbs are verbs with a meaning related to understanding, discovering, planning, or deciding. Mental verbs describes a state of being which are static or unchanging throughout their entire duration, whereas dynamic verbs describe a process that changes over time. (www.englishleap.com/grammar/mental-verbs retrieved on April 10, 2013)

The meanings of mental verbs are propositional. When a speaker uses the verb recognize as a mental verb, e.g. in the sentence Of course I recognize your handwriting, the speaker refers only to his or her role as the experiencer of a mental process. In contrast, I hereby recognize Mr. Smith, presupposes interpersonal elements inherent to the speech act situation, such as the social relationship between the speaker and interlocutors.

Mental verbs allow a speaker to stop short of direct assertion, framing a statement as product of the mind of the speaker rather than presenting it as unfiltered fact in the world. Compare the direct statement, The sky is blue and the framed statements, The sky seems blue, or I think the sky is blue, or I swear, that sky is blue. The framed statements are said to mark uncertainty because they signal that the assertion reflects a fallible thought process. Although mental verbs have been classified by some scholars as signs of deference or powerlessness, they are ambiguous and versatile expressions. Mental verbs can represent not only uncertainty, but also an openness to negotiation in the domains in which they are used and an openness to the thoughts and opinions of a listener. (Maddox 1996:55)

Mental verbs are often divided into sub-categories, based on their semantics or syntax. Semantic divisions mainly involve verbs that express someone's state of mind. The precise categories vary by linguist. Huddleston and Pullum, for example, divide stative verbs into the
following semantic categories: verbs of perception and sensation (*see, hear*), verbs of hurting (*ache, itch*), stance verbs (*stand, sit*), and verbs of cognition, emotion, and sensation (*believe, regret*). Novakov, meanwhile, uses the slightly different categories: verbs denoting sensations (*feel, hear*), verbs denoting reasoning and mental attitude (*believe, understand*), verbs denoting positions/stance (*lie, surround*), and verbs denoting relations (*resemble, contain*). (www.tesol-direct.com retrieved on April 10, 2013). But generally mental verbs fall into four categories:

a. Mental verbs showing thought or opinion: know, believe, understand, recognize
b. Mental verbs showing possession: have, own, belong, possess, contain, etc

c. Mental verbs showing senses: hear, smell, see, feel, taste

d. Mental verbs showing emotion: love, hate, want, need, envy, dislike, etc

**2.5 Understanding Error Analysis**

**2.5.1 Error and Mistake**

In order to analyze learners’ errors in a proper perspective, it is crucial to distinguish between error and mistake. Corder (1979:168) states, “An error is lack of competence and mistake is performance deviant.” Based on the statement above, error refers to a systematic error (error of competence) while mistake refers to unsystematic error (error of performance). Next Ellis in Batubara (2009:8) states, “Error reflect gaps in learners’ knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.”

As mentioned above, a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong, as an error. For instance, a child acquiring his own language sometimes makes the same error, in the same way when a learner of English makes an error.
Systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form until he is told or until he notices that native speakers of the language that he is learning do not produce the form.

Unsystematic deviation or inconsistent deviation is known as a mistake. In this case, the learner has been taught the right form of the language. Sometimes the learner gets it right but sometimes he or she makes a mistake and uses the wrong form.

For example, an English learner says *Rachel cans sing* but on other occasions he says *Rachel can sing*. We may indicate that the learner is committing a mistake. On the other hand, if the English learners’ speech reveals such utterances as *Rachel cans sing, Rachel mays sing*; we may indicate that the learner is committing an error.

### 2.5.2 Types of Error

The definition of error can be seen through the classification of errors. This classification is very important to explain error in error analysis. In this thesis, the writer takes types of error proposed by S.P Corder and Rod Ellis.

1. **S.P. Corder**

   Corder (1979:130) classifies the errors into three types:

   a. **Transfer Errors**

   This theory states that errors are caused by the interference of the learners’ mother tongue. The interference mentioned above means the interference of native language into foreign language and it indicates the learning process; for example *Cheated by Aaron, Bridget feels the heart which breaks*. It should be *broken hearted*.

   b. **Analogical Errors**

   The learners make errors because they have not discovered yet the precise set of categories to which the rule applies. It is known as overgeneralization or analogical errors. For example, *The phone was ringing while I am taking a bath*. This sentence
contains misinformation in using *to be*. *To be am* must be changed into *was* because the tense used is past continuous.

c. **Teaching-Induced Errors**

This is a type of errors which is much more difficult to establish to any particular case, namely, errors arise from the methods or materials used in a teaching process. It is not easy to identify such errors with a close study of materials and teaching techniques.

2. **Rod Ellis**

Ellis (1997:15) classifies errors into four types:

a. **Omission**

Omission is the error of leaving out an item required for an utterance to be considered grammatical, for example *Carla's new book will published next week*. The sentence above is passive voice but it leaves out the use of *be*. So the right sentence is *Carla’s new book will be published next week*.

b. **Misinformation**

Misinformation is the error of using one grammatical form in place of another grammatical form, for example *My favorite singer comes to entertain the physically handicapped few days ago*. The sentence contains misinformation in using *to be*. Based on the time signal used above, which is *few days ago*, the sentence should be in simple past tense. So the right sentence is *My favorite singer came to entertain the physically handicapped few days ago*.

c. **Disordering**

Disordering is the error of putting words. The learners put the words into a wrong order, for example *You can wait for her in the room waiting*. Based on the meaning, it
means a room used to wait. So the right sentence is *You can wait for her in the waiting room.*

d. **Overgeneralization**

Overgeneralization is the error of using over grammatical form in an utterance, for example *The lady spends all her money on gambling, she becomes bankrupt.* If two sentences share a common subject, participial phrase can be used to join the sentences. And in participial phrases, subject in the first sentence is omitted. So the right sentence is *Spending all her money on gambling, the lady (she) becomes bankrupt.*

### 2.5.3 Error Analysis

Richards (1985:96) states, “Error analysis is the study and analysis of errors made by the second and foreign language learners.” Error analysis may be carried out in order to (a) find out how well someone knows a language, (b) find out how a person learns a language, and (c) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or the in the preparation of teaching materials. Brown in Batubara (2009:10) says, “…. the fact that the learners do make errors and that these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, led to a surge of study of learner’s error, called error analysis.”

The applied linguistic concept of error analysis is initially an application of concepts derived from linguistic theory and language acquisition research. A primary focus of error analysis is on the evidence learner error and learner performance provides to an understanding of the underlying processes of second language acquisition. As Corder (1979:167) says that a learners’ error is significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedure the learner is employing in the discovery of a language.
In order to make the error analysis quite clear, we have to know there stages in error analysis.

1. Recognition of error is thus crucially depending upon correct interpretation of the learner’s intentions. The process of recognizing and identifying errors is then one of comparing and identifying the difference.

2. Description can only begin when recognition has taken place. It is clear that the purpose of error analysis of a grammar, which aims to relate the semantic structure of a sentence to its surface structure by a set of explicit rules, is the most appropriate theoretical model for the description of error.

3. Explanation of error can be regarded as a linguistic problem that is a statement in which someone has deviated from the realization rules of the target language.