The Influencers' Language on Instagram and Twitter Captions

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Abstract

The major objective of this study is to analyze grammatical errors found on Instagram and Twitter captions. It is intended to recognize the most common grammatical errors so that we can be aware of the language that we use. The present study applies the theory of Dulay et al (1982) which divides errors into four types: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. Since all of the data are in the form of text, a method of textual analysis was applied to analyze the data. The data under analysis are taken from the captions by influencers using English on Instagram and Twitter. The result of the study showed there were 152 errors found from 100 captions and they were classified into misinformation (46%), misordering (3%), addition (16%), and omission (35%). The errors were also classified into grammatical units. Those errors in grammatical units are subject-verb agreement with a total of 16 errors, singular-plural with 15 errors, tense/verb form with 31 errors, word form with 23 errors, capitalization with 28 errors, apostrophe error with 25 errors, missing comma with six errors, article usage error with three errors, wrong/missing preposition with four errors, and word use error with two errors. The most grammatical error that frequently occurs in the Instagram caption is tense/verb with 23 (22%) occurrences and a total of 17 (30%) occurrences of apostrophe errors on Twitter.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Instagram, Twitter, Caption, influencers

Introduction

Instagram and Twitter are the largest social media that are often used by many people in the world. They are used for communication, interaction, and fun. There are 86.6% of Instagram users and 63.6% of Twitter users in Indonesia (Nurhayati, 2021). Many people become influencers by gaining attention on social media; therefore, the study took some influencers' captions from Instagram and Twitter to become data samples.

Some works have been done in analyzing the errors, but not many studies analyzed the types of grammar errors according to the theory of Dulay et al (1982). This is the novelty that we can make to contribute to the knowledge in the area of teaching English in Indonesia and other non-English speaking countries.

There are a great number of research investigating the errors and mistakes in language use. Many of them emphasized the errors, especially in writing. Sermsook, et al . (2017) investigated errors in the writing of English major students at a Thai university and they also explored the sources of the errors. Ulla (2014) analyzed the writing errors found in university students.

Abushihab (2014) analyzed grammatical errors in writing made by Turkish learners of English as a foreign language. Al-Shujairi & Tan (2017) also analyzed the errors found in the writing of Iraqi English language learners. Promsupa, et al (2017) analyzed grammatical errors in English writing made by Thai university students. They found that the three most frequently found errors were singular/plural errors (30.43%), article errors (21.51%), and preposition errors (5.23%) respectively.

The present research focused on the writing which is expressed in social media, especially Instagram and Twitter. Furthermore, the writers are the influencers which are notably celebrities or arties who are famous in Indonesia. They are not English native speakers but they often express their feelings in English.

Theoretical Framework

Some believe that there are differences between error and mistake. Lawson (2019) suggests that an error is the fault made when communicating because the speaker does not know the rule, but the mistake is made because he does not realize it. Corder (1974) even differentiates the false when communicating into three categories: error, mistake, and lapses. While error and mistake are defined as in Lawson, lapses are made because of a slip of the tongue. However, in this writing, errors and errors are regarded and used interchangeably and are treated the same. Here, error and mistake are not differentiated. They are commonly known as the faulty use of language. Dulay et al (1982) divide errors into four types: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. This will be the basis of the analysis of errors or mistakes made by influencers in Indonesia.

Method

This study used a text analysis as part of the qualitative research method because the data is in the form of descriptions in words or sentences. The qualitative research methodology is used to collect detailed information in words, pictures, or objects (MacDonald & Headlam, 1986).

Subject under investigation

The subject of this study is influencers who have more than 2000 followers on their social media. There were 53 influencers from Instagram and 11 influencers from Twitter who were taken to be the subject of this study. The name of the influencers was abbreviated into a code to protect their privacy. There were 100 captions this study collected from two social media: 56 from Instagram and 44 from Twitter users in the form of paragraphs, sentences, or just words/phrases. The number of words and percentages can be seen in Table 2. 1.

Table 1 Total Number of Captions

No.	Source	Number of Captions	Number of Words	Percentage
1.	Instagram	56	1007	53%
2.	Twitter	44	873	47%
Total		**100**	**1880**	**100%**

2.1 Data Collection

To analyze the grammatical errors, the data were collected from captions on Instagram and Twitter which appeared in 2019-2021.

2.2 Data Selection

The data showed captions and texts with English wording. If they were found in Indonesian as a mixed sentence, only English words were selected/shown. Each caption was analyzed and identified and the errors then be classified.

2.3 Data Analysis

There are some steps in analyzing the grammar errors from the captions. The steps are: Searching the caption on Instagram and Twitter; then Reading the caption and making sure the captions contain grammar errors; Putting the captions into the main data, which is put in a table; and, finally, identifying and analyzing the grammar error in the table.

Results and Discussion

Results

The analysis went through Instagram and Twitter to look for captions that contained grammar errors with some limitations. Those limitations are the subject must be an influencer on Instagram or Twitter who has more than 2000 followers. There were 153 grammar errors found in 100 captions. The details are shown in the graphic below.
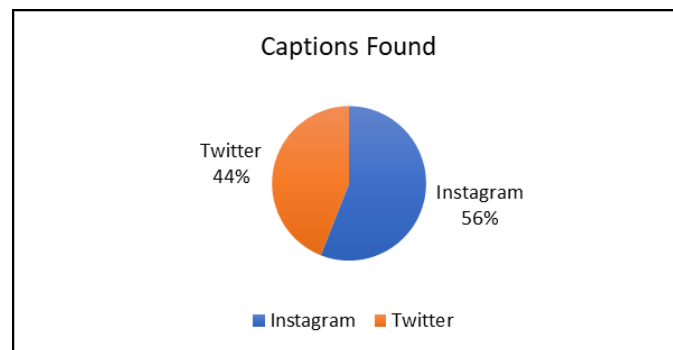

Figure 1 Captions Found

According to the data, there were 56 captions from Instagram and 44 captions from Twitter. In addition, the errors found are then classified into the types of errors according to the theory of Dulay et al (1982).

1. What grammatical errors are found in the captions?

Types of grammar errors such as tenses, subject-verb agreement, and others were found and classified into the types of errors according to the theory of Dulay et al (1982). Several findings about the grammatical errors in the captions will be explained below.

Type of Errors	Addition and Omission
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Subject-verb agreement, singular-plural.
Caption	**Keep support each others.**

This is a mistake made by Code Number 1-OL from Instagram. The word **'support'** is misspelled, it should be **supporting** because **keep** is followed by gerund, so it should be **supporting (adjective).** Then, the word **'others'** refers to the word **'each'** which is **singular**; as a result, it should be **'other'**, not **'others'**.

Type of Errors	Misinformation
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Capitalization
Caption	if you've been expecting another gaming stream from me, expect one this **saturday** on twitch. **i**'ll play something chill with the bois.

This is an example of a mistake done by Code 2-OH from Twitter. The errors are: The word **'saturday'** is a proper noun in which the first letter must be capitalized. **i'll** in the caption is misspelled, the pronoun **I** should be capitalized.

Type of Errors	Misinformation, Misordering, Omission
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Apostrophe error, Capitalization
Caption	No but so many emotional things today. **Im** fasting **i** hv to control my emotion. How not to cry.

This is another example of a mistake done by Code 77-RS from Twitter. The errors are the pronoun **"I"** must be capitalized even if it is abbreviated with **"am"** and it must be put an apostrophe between them.

Type of Errors	Misinformation, Omission
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Missing comma, Subject-verb agreement
Caption	**in fact** there is other groups who have 8,9,11 members and they just busy bringing BTS

This is also another example of a mistake done by Code 82-SM from Twitter. The errors are: after **in fact,** a comma is needed since it is one of clause connectors. The subject **groups** do not agree with the verb **is**, it should be **are**.

Type of Errors	Misinformation, Omission, Addition
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Apostrophe error, capitalization, missing preposition
Caption	Hey look people, **im** fat and **im** sometimes does not feel pretty, but **thats** me. I want to show people who i really am, no edit,no filter,no anything and celana gue keluar merek. Women should be proud for who they are! #womenintheword please listen to me you are fine,beautiful and worth it! No need anyone but yourself,love who you are so people can love you more trust me you are beautiful.

Another example of a mistake is done by Code 88-NC from Instagram. The errors are: The pronoun **"I"** must always be capitalized and we have to put an apostrophe on **"im"** since it is an acronym of **I am**. Put a space after the comma, and also put an apostrophe for **that's** because it is an acronym of **that is**. Proud [**of**] who they are, it must be added a preposition. The user also needs sort of punctuation after **"listen to me".** **You don't need anyone**, not **no need anyone.**

There are other errors which are spotted during my analysis but the list is too long to be put here. The errors found are various and involve different types of grammatical aspects.

2. Which types of grammatical errors are frequently found in the captions?

The table below will show each type of grammar error found and the occurrences on Instagram and Twitter.

Table 2 the Occurrences of Errors in the Captions

No.	Types of Errors	Number of Occurrences	Occurrences Percentage
1.	Misinformation	70	46%
2.	Misordering	4	3%
3.	Addition	24	16%
4.	Omission	54	35%
Total		**152**	**100%**

In addition, the graphic below will display the occurrences in detail from both subjects. The graph shows the comparison of errors made in Instagram and Twitter captions.
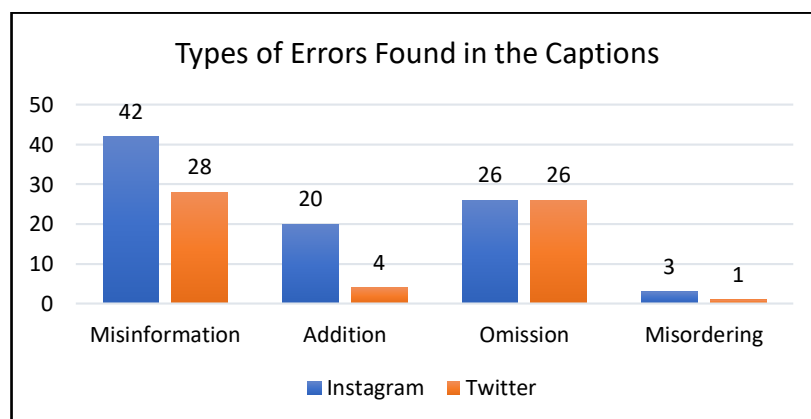

Figure 2 Types of Errors Found in the Captions

It can be seen from the graph that more errors are found in Instagram captions than in Twitter. The most frequent error found in the captions for Misinformation is on Instagram with a total of 42 occurrences. It is followed by Omission with an equal result for both Instagram and Twitter. Furthermore, it is also followed by an Addition with a total of 20 errors from Instagram and four

errors from Twitter, and the last type of mistake is Mis-ordering with a total of three errors found on Instagram and one from Twitter.

In terms of units of grammar, the most common errors that can be found in the captions is Subject-verb agreement and followed by Capitalization. This can be seen in the following table.

Table 3 the Occurrences of Errors in Grammar Types

No.	Types of Grammar Errors were Made	Number of Occurrences	Occurrences Percentage
1.	Subject-verb agreement	16	10%
2.	Singular-plural	15	10%
3.	Tense/Verb form	31	20%
4.	Word form	23	15%
5.	Capitalization	28	18%
6.	Apostrophe error	25	16%
7.	Missing comma	6	4%
8.	Article usage error	3	2%
9.	Wrong/missing preposition	4	3%
10.	Word use error	2	1%
	Total	**153**	**100%**

As can be seen from the table above, the most common type of grammar in which errors are made in captions is the Verb/Tenses form with a total of 31 occurrences. This is followed by Capitalization with a total of 28 occurrences. Then, it was followed by Apostrophe error with a total of 25 occurrences and 23 occurrences of word form. Moreover, it was also followed by Subject-verb agreement with 16 occurrences and 15 occurrences of singular plural. Furthermore, it is followed by a Missing comma with six occurrences, the Wrong/Missing preposition with four occurrences, and the last type of grammar mistake is a word use error with a total of two occurrences.

We can see the types of errors that can be made in different types of grammar. Omission, for example, can be made in subject-verb agreement and singular plural. The following are examples from the captions in which the errors were found.

Type of Errors	Misordering, Misinformation, Addition
Types of Grammatical/ Language Errors	Verb/tense form, capitalization, article usage error
Caption	**Enjoy** my staycation at @meliaxxxx's **Junior** suite room, **the only one hotel** in Jogja that **have** two **floor room**. Heavenly bed, perfect breakfast and dinner, and **a** great service. Thank you for having **me** !

This is a mistake is made by Code 68-GW from Instagram. It must be "**Enjoying**" or "**enjoyed**", depends on whether the user was still staying in that hotel when she/he posted this. We have to capitalize "**Junior Suite**" or "**Junior Suite Room**", to avoid the readers from misunderstanding since the room name is called only "**Junior**". Also, the user should choose either "**the only hotel**" or "**the one hotel**". Furthermore, it must be that has two floor rooms. It is not necessary for the

user to add an article "a" before "**great**", and put a period or pull-stop after "**service**". Moreover, we do not have to put a space before punctuation marks such as "**!**" or "**?**".

Table 4 Errors Found on Instagram

No.	Types of Grammar Errors were Made	Number of Occurrences	Occurrences Percentage
1.	Subject-verb agreement	11	10%
2.	Singular-plural	14	13%
3.	Tense/Verb form	23	22%
4.	Word form	19	18%
5.	Capitalization	12	11%
6.	Apostrophe error	10	10%
7.	Missing comma	4	4%
8.	Article usage error	3	3%
9.	Wrong/missing preposition	5	5%
10.	Word use error	3	3%
Total		**104**	**100%**

The table below depicts the errors found on Twitter. As can be seen from the table, the most frequent mistake made is apostrophe error followed by capitalization and tense/verb form. The least frequent errors are about word order, article, and singular/plural as well as a wrong missing preposition.

Table 5 Errors Found on Twitter

No.	Types of Grammar Errors were Made	Number of Occurrences	Occurrences Percentage
1.	Subject-verb agreement	6	10%
2.	Singular-plural	1	2%
3.	Tense/Verb form	10	17%
4.	Word form	5	9%
5.	Capitalization	15	26%
6.	Apostrophe error	17	30%
7.	Missing comma	2	3%
8.	Article usage error	0	0%
9.	Wrong/missing preposition	1	2%
10.	Word use error	0	0%
Total		**57**	**100%**

To sum up, it can be seen from the tables above that the grammar errors that frequently occur on Instagram are Tense/Verb with 23 occurrences and a total of 17 occurrences of Apostrophe errors on Twitter.

Conclusion

This study is conducted to analyze grammatical errors that occurred on social media captions; Instagram and Twitter. For the present study, there are 100 captions found to be analyzed, and then identified the errors. After analyzing the data from two social media, which consist of 56 captions from Instagram and 44 captions from Twitter, it shows there are 153 grammar errors found from 100 captions. Types of grammar errors such as verb/tense, subject-verb agreement, singular-plural, and others were found and classified into the types of errors according to the theory of Dulay et al (1982). The most common grammatical error that frequently occurs on Instagram is tense/verb form with 23 (22%) occurrences and a total of 17 (30%) occurrences of Apostrophe errors on Twitter.

The data of this study was taken from two social media captions. There are still lots of social media users who have lots of errors in their captions, especially when they use English to write the caption. The reader should be aware that having a good understanding of English, especially in grammar is very important, such as in writing. Through this study, the readers can get a deeper understanding of grammar. This study focuses on analyzing grammatical errors found on social media, but there are still many grammar aspects that can be used as a topic to be analyzed such as punctuation, parallelism, parts of speech, and so on. This topic can be deeply analyzed in further research with kinds of subjects such as books or novels, articles, magazines, movies, etc.

It is interesting to see how influencers use the language especially English which is not their language. Influencers are not ordinary people; they are celebrities or artists who have good reputations and have a role in society that can change the views of common people. Still, in terms of language use, they are as communal as average people.

For future research, the social media under analysis can be extended to wider applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, or others that have become public.

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