

## **An Analysis of Students' Grammatical Error in Impromptu Speaking**

Kissisina Umahdi\*

M. Ridho Kholid\*

UIN Raden Intan Lampung  
Indonesia

UIN Raden Intan Lampung  
Indonesia

---

### **Article Info**

#### **Article history:**

Received: February 12, 2025

Revised: March 02, 2025

Accepted: March 10, 2025

---

#### **Keywords:**

Grammatical Error

Impromptu

Speaking

Speaking for Tourism

---

### **Abstract**

This study aimed to analyze the types of grammatical errors in students' impromptu speaking and identify the causes of these errors. The research employed a descriptive-qualitative method. The population consisted of fourth-semester English Education students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, with a sample of 20 students selected through purposive sampling. Data collection involved observing and recording students' impromptu speaking. The recordings were analyzed to identify grammatical errors based on Carl James' classification, which includes morphological and syntactical errors. This study specifically focused on errors related to tense. Additionally, a focus group interview was conducted to determine the causes of these errors using Norrish's framework, which categorizes causes into carelessness, first language interference, and translation. The findings revealed that 19 out of 20 students made grammatical errors related to tense. The errors were classified into morphological and syntactical errors. In terms of morphology, 101 verb morphology errors were identified. In syntax, 33 clause errors were found. The most frequent tense-related errors involved incorrect forms of the simple present and past tense. Furthermore, the interview results indicated that students' grammatical errors were primarily caused by carelessness, first language interference, and translation.

---

**To cite this article:** Umahdi, Kissisina., Kholid, M., Ridho. (2025). An Analysis of Students' Grammatical Error in Impromptu Speaking. *Journal of Linguistics and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 09-16

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

English language skills comprise four key areas: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Among these, speaking serves as a crucial tool for effective communication in various contexts. Dhona elucidates that speaking is defined as the production of speech, forming an essential component of daily activities and thereby facilitating interpersonal interactions (Dhona, 2020). The challenges associated with speaking are more pronounced than in other skills for two primary reasons: firstly, speaking occurs in real time, necessitating immediate responses as opposed to the more deliberative processes of reading or writing; secondly, unlike writing, speaking generally does not afford opportunities for editing or revision, which adds to the pressure of instant articulation (Xu, 2024). These factors underline the complexity inherent in speaking proficiency, intertwining rapid cognitive processes with language production.

At UIN Raden Intan Lampung, the English Education program systematically integrates four speaking courses from the first to the fourth semester: Speaking for General Purposes, Public Speaking, Speaking in a Professional Context, and Speaking for Tourism. Public speaking, specifically, encompasses various methods to effectively convey information, ideas, and emotions to an audience. Mulyana identifies four distinct methods of public speaking: impromptu speaking, extemporaneous speaking, manuscript speaking, and memorized speech (Pan, 2024). Impromptu speaking entails delivering a speech with little or no prior preparation, thereby challenging speakers to articulate their thoughts spontaneously and effectively (Siregar et al., 2019). This skill

#### **Corresponding author:**

**M. Ridho Kholid**, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia. ✉ email: [ridhokholid@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:ridhokholid@radenintan.ac.id)

© 2025 The Author(s). **Open Access.** This article is under the CC BY SA license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

is crucial, as it showcases an individual's ability to construct coherent ideas in real-time scenarios, an essential competence in multiple professional environments.

Speaking proficiency is generally assessed through five key aspects: fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension. Notably, grammar plays a critical role in ensuring clarity and coherence during spoken communication. Grammar encompasses "a description of the structure of a language and how language units, such as words and phrases, are formed into sentences" (Li, 2022). Furthermore, grammar is a theoretical framework that governs language use (Blything et al., 2018). This framework, is instrumental in determining the appropriate form and context for the use of words, thereby impacting overall communication effectiveness (I Made Agung Rai Antara & Anggreni, 2024).

The significance of grammar in language learning cannot be understated. Grammar stands as one of the most crucial aspects of language acquisition, as proficiency in grammatical rules underpins effective communication (Chen et al., 2020). Research conducted by Brimo et al. highlights the beneficial outcomes of an explicit focus on grammar in language teaching, indicating that it markedly enhances the effectiveness of instructional strategies (Brimo et al., 2023). In light of this understanding, the English Education program at UIN Raden Intan Lampung is designed to progressively address grammatical concepts, advancing from Basic Structure in the second semester to Intermediate Structure in the third semester, culminating in Advanced Structure by the fourth semester (Baxter et al., 2022).

In the realm of spoken communication, grammatical accuracy emerges as a vital criterion. The consistent application of correct grammar not only enhances the clarity of speech but also facilitates effective interaction among speakers. Despite its importance, a significant number of students continue to grapple with grammatical errors in their speech production. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen distinguish between "errors" and "mistakes," defining errors as imperfections arising from a lack of knowledge, while mistakes are attributed to lapses in attention or carelessness (Pokrivčáková, 2019). Errors signify an incomplete understanding of grammatical structures, whereas mistakes are often the result of temporary performance lapses.

This study is centered on examining the grammatical errors prevalent in impromptu speaking within the Speaking for Tourism course at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. The focus on grammatical errors—particularly in tense usage—is motivated by the exigencies of real-world communication within the tourism sector. Effective and spontaneous verbal interactions are imperative for professionals tasked with providing quality service, guiding tourists, and imparting accurate information. Given that impromptu speaking frequently arises in contexts such as responding to tourist inquiries, giving directions, and explaining cultural and historical nuances, the importance of clarity and fluency in these interactions is paramount. Grammatical inaccuracies, particularly those related to tense usage, can significantly impede communication effectiveness and lead to misunderstandings (Jubran & Khrais, 2023).

Investigating grammatical errors in impromptu speaking within the tourism context directly addresses the practical needs of students preparing for careers in this dynamic field. Tourism professionals often find themselves engaged in impromptu conversations, where accurate tense usage is critical—whether they are recounting past events, describing ongoing activities, or outlining future plans. Through analyzing grammatical errors in impromptu speech, this study aims to identify common tense-related mistakes and propose strategies to enhance students' proficiency in real-time communication (Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013).

Preliminary research suggests that fourth-semester students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung frequently exhibit grammatical errors during impromptu speaking exercises. Data collection through interviews with a lecturer from the Speaking for Tourism course revealed that impromptu speaking is utilized regularly in class as a technique to bolster students' confidence and fluency (Nakata & Suzuki, 2019). While most students recognize the utility of this approach, they report challenges in producing grammatically accurate speech under the constraints of time. Common errors observed among students include mispronunciation, incorrect vocabulary usage, and grammatical mistakes, with tense-related errors being particularly prominent.

Specifically, many students struggle with maintaining consistent tense usage. For instance, when recounting past experiences, they often begin in the past tense but subsequently shift to the present tense unintentionally. Additionally, errors in verbal and nominal sentence structures are

frequently noted, exemplified by constructions such as “I am understand” or “I can forget” (Jubran et al., 2023). These findings resonate with the researcher’s personal experiences in the Speaking for Tourism course and underline the pervasive challenges faced by students in mastering grammatical forms.

In light of the observations made, this study aims to analyze students' grammatical errors in the domain of impromptu speaking using Carl James' classification system, which differentiates between morphological errors and syntactic errors (Richards & Reppen, 2014). The research will specifically target tense-related errors in spontaneous speech, providing an in-depth understanding of the grammatical challenges students encounter in real-time communication contexts (Manokaran et al., 2013). This approach aligns with current research advocating for a robust understanding of grammar as foundational to successful language use.

Integrating findings from various studies and frameworks on language acquisition underlines the necessity of targeted grammar instruction in developing students' speaking proficiency. For instance, scholars have emphasized that a nuanced understanding of tense morphology is essential for acquiring fluency in the target language (Hafsah, 2020). Moreover, employing error analysis not only helps to illuminate systematic issues but also facilitates targeted interventions that can enhance the quality of language education (Fitria, 2020).

Overall, fostering grammatical competency in spoken language is crucial for enhancing fluency and communicative effectiveness among EFL learners. Possessing grammatical competence enables speakers to use and comprehend language structures accurately and promptly, consequently supporting their fluency (Nurussa'adah et al., 2024). Thus, the incorporation of focused grammatical instruction and targeted speaking practices within English language education can yield significant benefits for students, ultimately equipping them with the necessary skills for effective communication in their professional engagements.

In summary, this extensive investigation of grammatical errors, particularly in the context of impromptu speaking within the tourism sector, offers valuable insights into the pedagogical strategies that can be employed to improve students' proficiency in real-time communication. Through this tangible focus on the intersection of grammar and practical speaking scenarios, educators can better prepare students for the dynamic challenges faced within the tourism industry and beyond (Spencer & Petersen, 2020).

## METHOD

This study used a qualitative research method, which describes participants' experiences in-depth (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research involves non-numerical data, focusing on narratives. It helps explore issues deeply and generate solutions. Descriptive qualitative research was used to analyze students' grammatical errors in impromptu speaking. Errors were identified based on the classification: carelessness, first language interference, and translation.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument, collecting data through documents, observations, or interviews. The researcher chose the focus, selected informants, gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data. Secondary instruments included observation and interviews.

According to Ary, a population consists of all research subjects, while a sample represents the population (Ary et al., 2009). This study focused on fourth-semester English Education students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. Using purposive sampling, 20 students from class H were selected based on these criteria: respondents were enrolled in the Speaking for Tourism course, performed impromptu speaking, and made grammatical errors.

To ensure data accuracy, multiple techniques were used. Qualitative data is collected through participation, observation, interviews, and document review. This study used observation and interview techniques. The researcher recorded and analyzed grammatical errors during students' impromptu speaking based on James' theory. Interviews were conducted in focus groups to determine the causes of errors.

To ensure valid findings, the study followed Sugiyono's criteria. Credibility was strengthened by extended observation, persistent research, triangulation (cross-validation), negative case

analysis, reference materials, and member checking (Sugiyono, 2014). Transferability was ensured by detailed descriptions so findings could be applied in other contexts. Dependability was verified through an audit of the entire research process. Confirmability ensured that findings were based on research methods, maintaining objectivity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the analysis of student speech. The research aimed to identify students' speaking errors and their causes. The study found that errors mainly fall into two types: verb morphology errors and clause errors. Most students made these mistakes due to carelessness, first language interference, and translation issues.

### *Verb Morphology Errors*

Students made the most errors in verb morphology, with a total of 101 mistakes. These errors involved incorrect verb forms in different tenses, mainly simple present and simple past. This shows that students struggle with tense rules and verb agreement. Carl James, in *Errors in Language Learning and Use*, explains that verb morphology errors happen when students do not fully learn or apply grammar rules. The most common mistakes include:

1. Forgetting to add -s/-es for third-person singular in the simple present tense. Example: "The tribe live\* in Banten." (Correct: "The tribe lives in Banten.")
2. Using base forms instead of past tense forms. Example: "I visit\* hotel." (Correct: "I visited the hotel.")
3. Making mistakes in passive voice. Example: "Visitors will be treat\*" (Correct: "Visitors will be treated.")
4. Using the wrong verb form after "will." Example: "I will recommended\*" (Correct: "I will recommend.")

### *Clause Errors*

There were 32 clause errors in the students' speech. Carl James defines clause errors as mistakes in how phrases function in sentences. The most common errors included:

1. Omitting necessary words. Example: "This mountain Ø the most beautiful." (Correct: "This mountain is the most beautiful.")
2. Adding unnecessary words. Example: "It will consume a lot of money if you will\* go there." (Correct: "It will consume a lot of money if you go there.")
3. Misordering words. Example: "About what is tourist destination." (Correct: "What is the tourist destination about?")
4. Choosing the wrong word form. Example: "I have two friends is\* originally from here." (Correct: "I have two friends who are originally from here.")
5. Mixing different grammar structures. Example: "That I will have been visit." (Correct: "That I will have visited.")

### *Causes of Errors*

**Carelessness** Many students made errors due to carelessness. This happened because they were nervous, spoke too quickly, or overthought their responses. Based on interviews, students admitted that they were careless, especially with grammar. Some students also lacked motivation, which made them less careful. For example, one student said she was nervous because of social anxiety, which affected her speaking. Another said she was careless with verb forms like verb 1, 2, and 3.

**First Language Interference** Errors also happened because students' first language influenced their English. Many students translated directly from Indonesian, which caused mistakes in word order and tense use. For example, one student said that in Indonesian, "buku biru" ("blue book") comes in a different order than in English, making it hard to adjust. Another student said that grammar rules from their native language affected their English sentence structure.

**Translation** Some students translated word by word from Indonesian when they were unsure. This slowed down their speech and made their grammar incorrect. When students didn't

know how to express something, they either used simpler words, wrote their thoughts in Indonesian first, or paused to think. Many students said they thought in Indonesian first before speaking English, which caused errors in sentence construction. However, not all students relied on translation, and a few said they rarely faced this problem.

Overall, the study found that students struggled most with verb and clause errors, often due to carelessness, first language interference, and translation. By understanding these challenges, teachers can help students improve their impromptu speaking skills.

This study supports and builds on past research about grammar mistakes in speaking. The most common mistake was omission errors, especially with verbs. This matches what (Mortaji, 2018) found that students often leave out important words when speaking without preparation. These mistakes can make public speaking harder for English learners.

This study also found many mistakes with verb tenses, especially in simple present and past tenses, which are important for clear communication. Speaking tasks require a lot of thinking, which can cause more mistakes, especially with verb forms and tenses. This shows that speaking under pressure can be difficult for learners.

Another common mistake was using the verb "be" incorrectly. This issue has also been found in other studies about sentence structure (Choi et al., 2020). Sentence structure depends a lot on correct auxiliary verbs. Mistakes in tense markers, like adding or leaving out words, show the need for better grammar lessons that focus on both understanding and speaking skills.

Similar problems appear in different learning situations. students' ability to understand word forms affects both writing and speaking. This study focused on impromptu speaking, where students must use grammar correctly in real time. Because of time limits and thinking pressure, mistakes are more likely to happen (Nghia et al., 2016).

One interesting finding was about a student who made no grammar mistakes. At first, this seemed to show strong language skills. However, after analyzing her voice and speaking style, it was clear that she was using a memorized script. Her speech sounded flat and unnatural. This supports research by Babu and Mutukuru, who said that natural speech needs both correct grammar and good rhythm (Babu & Mutukuru, 2020).

This finding highlights that evaluating impromptu speaking is complex. Grammar is important, but natural and fluent delivery also matters. Research shows that anxiety in speaking can make students end their speeches too soon. Teachers should help students practice speaking naturally and confidently (Huijuan et al., 2023). This is especially important for careers like tourism, where both accuracy and fluency help professionals communicate well with clients (Gumartifa & Syahri, 2022).

Overall, this study shows that both grammar and natural speaking skills are important. Teachers should help students find a balance between using correct grammar and speaking fluently. This balance will help students become better speakers, especially in professional situations where they need to communicate clearly and confidently (Daniluk & Pietrzak, 2024).

## CONCLUSION

This study looked at students' grammar mistakes when speaking without preparation. The results showed that many students made mistakes with verb forms, especially in the simple present and past tense. They also had problems with sentence structure, like missing words or putting words in the wrong order. These mistakes happened because students were not careful, their first language influenced their English, or they translated from their own language.

The findings show that students need more practice with grammar, especially with verb tenses and sentence structure. Teachers can help by giving clear explanations and exercises to fix these mistakes. Also, helping students feel more confident can make them speak better and with fewer errors. This study helps teachers understand the problems students have in speaking English. In the future, more research can find the best ways to help students improve their speaking skills.

Based on the analysis the researchers suggest students to actively practice grammar, particularly verb tenses and sentence structure, by engaging in regular speaking exercises and self-correction strategies. Lecturers can support this by providing clear explanations, targeted exercises, and interactive activities that encourage students to use correct grammar in spontaneous

speech while also building their confidence. Future researchers should explore effective teaching methods and intervention strategies to reduce grammar mistakes in speaking, including the impact of different instructional approaches and the role of students' first language influence on their spoken English.

## REFERENCES

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. K. (2009). *Introduction to Research in Education*. Cengage Learning. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=FqF7n0zGJm0C>
- Babu, B. K., & Mutukuru, R. (2020). A Novel Speech Recognition System Using Fuzzy Neural Network. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (Turcomat)*, 11(3), 2853–2864. <https://doi.org/10.61841/turcomat.v11i3.14608>
- Baxter, R., Rees, R., Perovic, A., & Hulme, C. (2022). The Nature and Causes of Children's Grammatical Difficulties: Evidence From an Intervention to Improve Past Tense Marking in Children With Down Syndrome. *Developmental Science*, 25(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13220>
- Blything, R., Ambridge, B., & Lieven, E. (2018). Children's Acquisition of the English Past-Tense: Evidence for a Single-Route Account From Novel Verb Production Data. *Cognitive Science*, 42(S2), 621–639. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12581>
- Brimo, D., Nallamala, K., & Werfel, K. L. (2023). Writing Errors of Children With Developmental Language Disorder. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 43(4), 302–316. <https://doi.org/10.1097/tld.0000000000000326>
- Chen, L., Chen, P., & Lin, Z. (2020). Artificial Intelligence in Education: A Review. *Ieee Access*, 8, 75264–75278. <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2020.2988510>
- Choi, N., Kiaer, J., Jun, E., & Kim, T. (2020). Effects of Listening/Reading Comprehension and Morphological Awareness on First Graders' Writing to Dictation: A Comparison of the Effect of Memorization. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(2), 278–288. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2020.82.278.288>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Daniluk, M., & Pietrzak, A. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Natural and Synthesized Polish Speech. *International Journal of Electronics and Telecommunications*, 361–366. <https://doi.org/10.24425/ijet.2024.149553>
- Dhona, N. (2020). Common Error in Using English Tenses by Efl Students. *Idebahasa*, 1(2), 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.37296/idebahasa.v1i2.18>
- Fitria, T. N. (2020). Error Analysis Found in Students' Writing Composition in Simple Past Tense of Recount Text. *English Franca Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 4(2), 141. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v4i2.1154>

- Gumartifa, A., & Syahri, I. (2022). How Undergraduate Students Capture English Impromptu Speech Challenge. *Veles Voice of English Language Education Society*, 6(2), 477–487.  
<https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v6i2.6601>
- Hafsah, H. (2020). The Present Tense Usage in Speaking Skill: An Analysis of Students' Short Speech Texts. *Utamax Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 2(3), 127–132.  
<https://doi.org/10.31849/utamax.v2i3.5575>
- Huijuan, Z., Ye, N., & Wang, R. (2023). Improved Cross-Corpus Speech Emotion Recognition Using Deep Local Domain Adaptation. *Chinese Journal of Electronics*, 32(3), 640–646.  
<https://doi.org/10.23919/cje.2021.00.196>
- I Made Agung Rai Antara, & Anggreni, N. P. Y. (2024). Utilizing Artificial Intelligence to Evaluate Students' Competency in Writing Simple Past Tense. *Stilistika Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Seni*, 12(2), 126–140. <https://doi.org/10.59672/stilistika.v12i2.3691>
- Jubran, S. M., Fayez, M. Q. A., & Abueita, J. D. (2023). Teachers' Perspectives of the Sudden Shift Towards Online Learning: Challenges and Future Lessons. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(1), 239–248. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1401.25>
- Jubran, S. M., & Khrais, S. M. (2023). The Dilemma of Utilising the Present Perfect Tense in English Writing by Arab English Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(5), 1430–1437. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1405.32>
- Li, W. (2022). The Use of Inflection Morphology of Tense and Agreement in English Among Chinese Second Language Learners in College. *BCP Business & Management*, 20, 673–679.  
<https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpbm.v20i.1046>
- Manokaran, J., Ramalingam, C., & Adriana, K. (2013). A Corpus-Based Study on the Use of Past Tense Auxiliary 'Be' in Argumentative Essays of Malaysian ESL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 6(10). <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n10p111>
- Mortaji, L. E. (2018). Effects of Sustained Impromptu Speaking and Goal Setting on Public Speaking Competency Development: A Case Study of EFL College Students in Morocco. *English Language Teaching*, 11(2), 82. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n2p82>
- Muftah, M., & Rafik-Galea, S. (2013). Error Analysis of Present Simple Tense in the Interlanguage of Adult Arab English Language Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 6(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n2p146>
- Nakata, T., & Suzuki, Y. (2019). Mixing Grammar Exercises Facilitates Long-Term Retention: Effects of Blocking, Interleaving, and Increasing Practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 103(3), 629–647. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12581>
- Nghia, P. T., Tào, N. V., Huong, P. T. M., Diep, N. T. B., & Hien, P. T. T. (2016). A Measure of Smoothness in Synthesized Speech. *Rev Journal on Electronics and Communications*.  
<https://doi.org/10.21553/rev-jec.106>

- Nurussa'adah, E., Lestari, S., & Yosephin, M. (2024). An Analysis of Students' Errors in Changing Active Voice to Passive Voice: A Case of the Eleventh Grade Students of Sma Negeri 1 Gubug in Academic Year 2023/2024. *Edelweiss*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.62462/edelweiss.v2i2.30>
- Pan, S. C. (2024). Pan, Rodriguez-Flores, Kaku, &amp; Lai (2024) Interleaving Enhances Romance Language Grammar Learning. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/bnky8>
- Pokrivčáková, S. (2019). Preparing Teachers for the Application of AI-powered Technologies in Foreign Language Education. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 7(3), 135–153. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2019-0025>
- Richards, J. C., & Reppen, R. (2014). Towards a Pedagogy of Grammar Instruction. *Relc Journal*, 45(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214522622>
- Siregar, Y. S. P., Tarigan, N. W. P., Mawarni, C. I., Simanjuntak, C. W. B., & Tanjung, A. (2019). Grammatical Errors on Students' Writing of Recount Text. *Linguistic English Education and Art (Leea) Journal*, 3(1), 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.31539/leea.v3i1.995>
- Spencer, T. D., & Petersen, D. B. (2020). Narrative Intervention: Principles to Practice. *Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 51(4), 1081–1096. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2020\\_lshss-20-00015](https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_lshss-20-00015)
- Sugiyono. (2014). *Metode Penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R & D*. Alfabeta.
- Xu, X. (2024). Childrens Acquisition of Past Tense Verbs. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 37(1), 106–110. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/37/20240515>