ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE WRITTEN ENGLISH ESSAY AT THE THIRD SEMESTER OF ENGLISH DEPARTEMENT

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ABTRACT

This study examiners error in a corpus 25 essay written by 25 participant. The participants are the third semester of who are studying at the English department; 4 male and 21 females. The have experienced approximately for one semester in subject writing. All participants are come form non-English education background and hardly communicate in English out the college. The instruments used for this study was participants' written essay. All of error in the essays were identified and classified into various categorizations. The result of the study show that six common errors committed by the participants were singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement and word order. These aspects of writing in English pose the most difficult problems to participants. This study has shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language, which is English. Such an insight into language learning problems is useful to teachers because it provides information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in the preparation of effective teaching materials.

Keywords: error analysis, writing, essay

INTRODUCTION

This research conducted on the error analysis of English writing of the third semester students at English department. This area holds significant importance to English language teachers for providing students learning feedback along with the learning complexities that manifest the developmental process of foreign language. Therefore, the study examines the common errors that students commit in their English writing. Writing is a highly complex task and writing in foreign language makes the task further complicated as it requires sufficient command over the foreign language to fulfill all the formalities; composing, developing logical ideas, which are essential for a written text to be comprehensible. While writing, a writer engages into the cognitive process of formulating ideas into target language.

DISCUSSION
The Definition of Writing

Writing might be said as putting ideas into writing form. According to Hornby (2003) writing is 'the process of expressing ideas'. However, it is not simple process for it because it requires mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental by element. It requires various skills such as the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, the ability to use special convention to the written language. The ability to creatively and exclude all irrelevant information, the ability to write

in appropriate manner for particular purpose.

Those requirements are importance in the process of writing sequence of sentences. This sequences of sentence linked by using transition signals and conjunctions such as ideas i*n addition, however, although*, etc. this implies that writing is seen as activity to produce a group of sentences that are logically arranged.

Writing is an activity of creating a text or writing discourse deals with how humans use language to communicate through the written language and, in particular, how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees and how addressees work on linguistic messages in order to interpret it. Brown and Yale (1994). Thus, in the process of writing the learners are not only required to have idea and to be able to write but they are also required to know how they express those ideas using good grammar, appropriate diction, and rhetoric. As a form of communication, writing, like speaking, has audience. The audience is the readers. In the classroom context, the audience is either the teacher or student's peer. Through writing, the students try to communicate their ideas, thoughts or intentions to their friends. Eric and Helen (1996) stated that good writing involves not only the accurate use language but also the effective organization of information. This information brings with it purposes such as to describe a place or person, to explain something to the readers, and to persuade the readers to do something. Although writing shares some important similarities with speaking, it should not be considered be the

same. Brown (2001) stated, the process of writing requires an entirely different set of competencies and is fundamentally different for speaking. In speaking, the speaker gets immediate feedback from his interlocutor but in writing, the writer does not. Writing has its own characteristics. According to Brown (2001), writing covers many sub skills such as producing grapheme and orthographic pattern of English, using acceptable grammatical system (e.g tense, agreement, pluralization), expressing a particular meaning in different grammatical form, using cohesive devices in written discourse, etc.

These characteristics make writing useful. It is a tool for learning that is learning to communicate their ideas. It also helps students reflect how much they already know about a topic, encourages student to assess how well they understand new information and allow them to integrate new information with their prior knowledge

Paragraph Writing
The Nature of Paragraph

A paragraph is a unit of information unified by a central, controlling idea of them. This central idea is expressed at some points in the paragraph by a sentence. This sentence is most frequently found at the beginning of the paragraph but can come at the end or in the middle of the paragraph. Paragraph consists of related sentences that work together to develop the main idea. It is a completed unit since it expresses an idea. The idea is expressed through the use of sentences that are closely connected one to another. These sentences

explain opinion or contain facts. These are connected by using transition signals.

A paragraph can stand alone on its own and tell what the writers intend to tell in a whole. Besides, it can also function as a part of an essay that develops each idea of the essay. In this sentence, the use of paragraph is beneficial both for the writer and the readers. For the writers, the paragraph helps them to organize and present ideas in manageable segment of prose. For the readers, the paragraph helps them follow the writer's reasoning more readily, grasp the key points and avoid boredom.

Regarding to its kinds, paragraph can be divided into two: Special and topical paragraph. Special paragraph is the one that function as an introduction of an essay. Besides, special paragraph also function as the one that concludes the essay. Thus it is usually at the beginning or at the end of an essay.

Different from special paragraph, topical paragraph is the one those elements work together to carry out certain purpose in a given a piece of writing. A topical paragraph is said good and effective if it fulfils the following criteria:

1. **Topic sentences**

A good an effective paragraph should have one main idea formulated in the form of topic sentences. Topic sentence is a statement that summarizes the idea being developed in a paragraph. It is usually expressed in single sentences either in the beginning or at the end of paragraph.

2. **Unity**

A paragraph is considered in unity if it has a focus. It means that the development of the paragraph consists of and points at the main idea, that is, the topic sentence. Thus, a paragraph that has unity possesses sentences that focus on the topic sentences of the paragraph.

3. **Completeness**

Completeness is another criterion for a good and effective paragraph. A paragraph is complete if it covers necessary ideas and facts. These ideas are called supporting details. Such details may be explanatory, descriptive, narrative or persuasive. Beside supporting details, examples and comparison and contrast can be use to reach completeness.

4. **Coherence**

A paragraph is coherent if the sentences are interwoven together in such a way that the readers can move easily from one sentence to the next sentence and read the paragraph an integrated whole. Several ways can be conducted in order to achieve coherence within paragraph. Firstly, coherence can be obtained through the use of proper order or organization. The order can be divided into four namely general to particular, particular to general, whole to parts, and question to answer or effect to cause.

- In the order of general to particular, the function of the paragraph is to make the readers clear the meaning of the general statements. As the readers are in the progress reading the paragraph, the meaning of the general statement is clarified.

- The whole to parts order does not function to explain an idea. However, it is only intended to show the parts of division of the topic.
- Question to answer or effect to cause paragraph begin with either question or effect and ends with the answer or the cause.

The Process of Paragraph Writing.

In writing a paragraph requires a lot of the same composition process as a whole essay through in similar scope. An essay requires the writer to do some stages to produce a good piece of writing; so does a paragraph. However, the process of writing a paragraph especially in making an outline is shorter than that of writing an essay. There are five steps in writing paragraph namely prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing.

- **Free writing** is getting ready to write stages, it is closely related with series of strategies designed to find, gather and produce information about a certain topic in writing. To most experiences writers, pre writing or planning means jotting all ideas that come up into their mind

- **Drafting** is the time to poor out with the little concern about spelling \, punctuation, and other mechanical errors. It is process for determining whether information the students discovered during planning ca n be planned into a successful piece of writing. In other word during the initial version, students do the exercises of examining the information, arranging and rearranging it so that they can shape it into a coherent draft.

- **Revision** is the time for students to add, to delete, and/or change the ideas in their writing.

It is a process of re-vision or seeing again of discovering a new vision produced during planning and during. It does not take place one or the end of writing activity, but it takes place by the time the students write.

According to Mc Crimmon (1984), revision is an intuitive process because the writers sometime feel a sudden impulse to realign the parts of sentence. Revision is also a recursive process because it requires the writers to steps back from the writing to see their writing. By this process, the writers sometimes find many things need revising. The things that need revising range from the difficult to the simple problems.

- **Editing** is the time it put the piece into its final from (Tompkins and Kenneth,1991) editing is carried out the basis of suggestion made is revising process. it is a process of polishing before the draft is submitted. The activity that precedes editing is proofreading. The students proofread each other to identify, analyze and correct their mistakes on punctuation, spelling and grammar. In order word, the students will make a list of errors and put them in categories according to error stimulate thinking and to produce an extended answer.

Types of Paragraph Development

Paragraph Development by Example

Example paragraph is a paragraph of which supporting sentences consist of examples to support the topic sentences; Examples can be the names of the people, place, etc. Like other paragraph, example paragraph should be coherent. There are two ways to achieve coherence. The first way is using transitional signals (such as for example,

another example and furthermore) to show how one idea is related to the next. The second way is to arrange the sentences in logical order. In this sense, some common patterns such as order of importance and order of time are used to list supporting sentences.

Paragraph Development by Time

Paragraph development by time commonly called chronological paragraph is organized according to sequence of event. The logical arrangement of ideas and sentences is chronological, that is according to time order. For example when describing learning teaching process, it is started by explaining what to do first and finished by explaining what to do last.

Paragraph Development by Space (Spatial Paragraph)

The word 'spatial' come from the word 'space'. Spatial development means listing the things to be written in the order in which they appear in space. Sentences are arranged according to where the subjects being described are located. For example in describing a room, it is not necessary to begin with one area and then produced to another one. Nevertheless, the sentence should not be randomly arranged. The description must be organized so that the reader can vividly arrange the sentence. This kind of paragraph should have topic sentences with strong controlling ideas to describe what is included and how the object is described.

This paragraph belong to descriptive paragraph. Detail in descriptive paragraph are organized to make the reader a clear of the

scene being described. Clarifying the spatial relationship helps to achieve coherence. These spatial expressions are called adverbs of place, most of them are relating to phrase. Such expressions *as on the second floor, under the window, and above the bookcase* are used to clarify space relationship.

The detail in descriptive paragraph should not only be logically arranged but vivid as well. To make the detail more vivid, modification is needed. Nouns can be modified in three ways; by adding adjectives, by adding adjective and prepositional phrases, and by adding clauses.

Paragraph Development by Comparison and Contrast

Comparison and contrast paragraph is one of common writing patterns. Comparing and contrasting means showing that two similar things are in fact quite different in important ways showing that two dissimilar things are quite similar in significant ways. This pattern is also used to show something or someone has changed such as 'Aceh' before and after to the Tsunami.

Dealing with the type, comparison is divided into three types; comparison is kind, comparison is degree, and comparison in relationship. In first type, subject compared in kind must be on the same level of generalization for example ballpoint pen is compare to the quill. In comparison in degree, similar but non identical corresponding parts (aspects, classes, steps, and periods of time) are compared because they are different in degree is larger or more efficient. The central idea in a comparison based on differences on

degree consist of two types of generalizations, as does the comparison based of differences in kind, but the types of generalizations used in these comparison differ. For example subject A has a certain characteristic while subject B does not. The last is comparison of relationship or analogy. Analogy is defined as a comparison of two whole subjects, unlike in kind, which have parts related in the same way.

Information in comparison is organized systematically. There are two basic ways in which information in comparison and contrast paragraph is organized. The first one is point approach and the second is the block approach. When using the point approach, the writer makes a point about topic A, then immediately compares or contrast, those points with topic B. The writer then makes another point about topic A and compares it with topic B. The pattern is followed until the writer compares and contrasts one by one, all the points about topic A and topic B. When using the block approach, in contrasts, the writer explains all the points about topic A and then explains all the point about topic B. In other word, the writer gives blocks of information about each item. Like in other paragraph, comparison and contrasts paragraph use transitional expression to help to smoothly from ideas to the next. These transitional are varied such as transitions in phrases (similar to, like, different from) transitional expression between sentence (moreover, in addition) and coordinating conjunctions as transition (but, yet).

Paragraph Development by Cause and Effect

The cause and effect paragraph tries to explain why something happened (cause) or what the consequences were of something happening (effect). Causal analysis is well suited for writing about scientific subjects. But it usefulness as a mode of development extend far beyond the science classroom into every area of expository composition.

The cause and effect idea can be organized into four basic ways. Firstly, one cause and effect in used in a paragraph. Second, there can be many causes lead so many effects.

Error Analysis

The field of error analysis in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) may be defined as dealing with the differences between the people learning a language speak and the way adult native speaker of the language use the language (Richard 1971:33). A key finding of error analysis is found by the learners who were produced the language with misunderstanding the rules of the new target language. Error analysis is a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in target language and within that target language itself. Corder is the father of error analysis. It was showed in his article entitled "The significance of learner errors" that error analysis took a new turn. Errors in language used need to be eradicated. systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. Error analysis emphasizes "the significance of errors in learners' interlanguages system" (Brown 1994: 204). The term interlanguages introduced by Selinker (1972), refers to the systematic knowledge of an second language which is independent on both the learner's first language and target language. Nemser (1974: 55) referred to it as the Approximate System, and Corder (1967) as the Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence. According to Corder (1967), Error analysis has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object is to understand what and how a learner learns when he studies an second language. The applied object is the way to enable the learner the knowledge more efficiently for pedagogical purposes. At the same time, the investigation of errors can serve two purposes, diagnostic (to in-point the problem) and prognostic (to make plans to solve a problem). Corder (1967) said that it is diagnostic because it can tell us the learner's grasp of a language at any given point during the learning process. It is also prognostic because it can tell the teacher to modify learning materials to meet the learners' problems. Error anlysis has limitations of providing only a partial picture of learner language; and having a substantive nature in that it does not take into account avoidance strategy in second language acquisition, since error analysis only investigates what learners do. Learners who avoided the sentence structures which they found difficult due to the differences between their native language and target language may be viewed to have no difficulty. This was pointed out by Brown

(1994) and Ellis (1996).

RESEARCH METHOD

Setting and Subjects

The location of this study was the third semester of English department at STKIP Bina Bangsa Getsempena Banda Aceh which is approximately two kilometers away from the Banda Aceh city. The subjects of this study were 4 male and 21 female students of the third semester at English Department in academic years 2012-2013.

PROCEDURES

All of the 25 subjects were administrated a writing assignment that involved essay writing. The were required to write an essay writing entitled "The unity room " within a period of 80 minutes and minimum of 250-300 words. This essay follow the English format of academic writing. in which every student will have to take when they are in writing I. In writing they were asked to include specific details in their responses. All 25 essays were typed using Microsoft Word 2007 so that they were computer readable. After that, the three steps of error analysis specified by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2009) for conducting error analysis taking into Corder (1974) : collection of sample errors, identification of errors and description of errors, explanation error and error evaluation.

DATA ANALYSIS

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the analysis of errors based on type of error, number of errors, and percentage committed by the participants.

Table 2: Analysis of Errors

Item	Type of Error	Number of Errors	Percentage (%)
1.	Singular /Plural	401	12.5
	Word Choice	350	10.7
3.	Verb Tense	300	10.2
4.	Preposition	285	8.7
5.	Word Form	270	8.5
6.	Subject/ Verb Agreement	204	7.5
7.	Missing Space	195	6.5
8.	Spelling	195	6.5
9.	Word Order	190	6.3
10.	Article	160	5
11.	Verb Form	160	4.9
12.	Missing word	156	4.5
13.	Redundancy	148	4.2
14.	Capitalization	124	4
Total		2387	100.0

Taking the mean values of errors, the results show that six most common errors that the participants made were in Singular/Plural Form (12.5%), Word Choice (10.7), Verb Tense (10.2%), Preposition (8.7%), Word Form (8.5%), Subject-Verb Agreement (7.5%). The six most common errors and examples of errors from the corpus are shown in Table 2. The next noticeable error was missing space (6.5%) Spelling (6.5%) , word order (6.3%), article (5%), Verb Form (4.9%) Missing Word (4.5%) Redundancy (4.2). and Capitalization (4%)

Table 3: Most Common Errors and Examples of Errors

Definition and Error classification	Identification of errors	Correct sentences and explanation of rule
Singular/Plural A mistake with number (singular and plural)	We can see many thing $^{sing/plu}$ that messiness There are tables, carts, and rubbish bin $^{sing/pl}$	We can see many things that messiness There are tables, carts, and rubbish bins
2. Verb Tense a) A mistake with the verb tense	I will making ^{Vtense} the owner of this room clean it up The cupboard's door is open ^{Vtense} by the owner	I will make the owner of this room clean it up The cupboard's door is opened by the owner
Verb Tense b) Inappropriate verb construction	.They are owning $^{V\ tense}$ on us a good service 2.The cupboard is hungging $^{V.tense}$ four pull over.	.They are owe on us a good service .The cupboard is hunging four pull over.
3. Word Choice	1. Not washing and sweeping the flour ^{Wchoice} everyday makes the floor dirty 2. The owners should keep the room clean and healthy. ^{WChoice}	1. Not washing and sweeping the floor everyday makes the floor dirty 2. The owners should keep the room clean and safe
4. Preposition	there are lamps, clothes, hats at ^{preposition} a messiness. the books should put on ^{preposition} the room	There are lamps, clothes, hats in a messiness the books should put in the room
5. Subject-Verb Agreement Wrong combination of subject and verb	A large of the number students is $^{SV\ agreement}$ absent These is $^{SV\ agreement}$ the room of messy person	A large of the number students are absent These are the room of messy person
6. Word Order Disordering/Inversion of subject and verb	The owner don't know why are students facing these problem Although in the room, the rubbish bins are not enough	The owner don't know why students are facing these problem Although the rubbish bins in the room, are not enough

Most Common Errors

Singular and Plural Form

Some of the participants did not know that the plural form using the suffix 's' must be applied to the countable plural noun. A possible reason for the failure to construct plural noun forms probably because in Indonesia language, there is no plural marker for a noun. However, for some participants, they have already hypothesized that English nouns have plural and singular forms. However, they were not sure when they should apply the plural form. When the subject was in the singular form they applied the plural form to the noun as shown in the examples below:

1. We can see many thing $^{\text{sing/plu}}$ that messiness
2. There are tables, carts, and rubbish bin $^{\text{sing/pl}}$

Verb Tense

Wrong application of verb tense can be seen when the students did not put the correct tense to the verb in the sentences. In this case, It can be assumed that some of the students are not aware of the different rules for tenses application. Using some suffixes like 'ing' and past tense forms showed that these students are aware of the rules on different tenses application and they have already hypothesized that these verbs needed to be used with different tense forms and should not be used in the basic form. This is because some verbs written using different tenses forms are not written in the basic form of the verb. For example, the sentence "I will making the owner of this room clean it up" could be written in the basic form 'I will make the owner of this room clean it up'. This shows that they acknowledged the 'ing' form but they

were not sure of the complete future tense forms and application in the English sentence. The suffix 'ing' applied is not relevant to the context given because the context required verb to be written in the future tense form instead. This information revealed that the different tenses rules application was not formed but they have already hypothesized that these tenses forms exists in English grammar. Examples of wrong application of verb tense are shown below.

1. I will making$^{\text{Vtense}}$ the owner of this room clean it up
2. The cupboard's door is open$^{\text{Vtense}}$ by the owner

Word Choice

Participants lack appropriate vocabulary. One participant used the word 'flour' instead of 'floor' in sentence no. 1. Another participant uses the word 'healthy' instead of 'safe' in sentence no. 2.

1. Not washing and sweeping the flour ^{Wchoice} everyday makes the floor dirty
2. The owners should keep the room clean and healthy.^{WChoice}

Preposition

The participants demonstrated confusion for correct usage of preposition. In sentence no. 1 the correct preposition is 'around' rather than 'at'. In sentence no. 2, the preposition 'for' should have been used.

1. there are lamps, clothes, hats at$^{\text{preposition}}$ a messiness.
2. the books should put on$^{\text{preposition}}$ the room

Subject-Verb Agreement

'A large number' refers to more than one person, i.e. plural subject and requires plural verb 'are'. However, one participant uses 'is'

instead as shown in sentence no. 1. In sentence no. 2, the correct word should be 'are' also because the subject these (plural) .

1. A large of the number students $\underline{is}^{SV\ agreement}$ absent

2. These is$^{SV\ agreement}$ the room of messy person

Word order

The act or process of writing, word order is one of the problem in writing. For instance In sentence no.1, "are students" should used in correct sentence "students are". While in the should arrange into correct sentences namely" Although <u>the rubbish bins in the room</u>, are not enough"

1. the owner don't know why are students facing these problem

2. Although <u>in the room</u>, <u>the rubbish bins</u> are not enough

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that errors that participants conducted were basically grammatical. The participants also had a relatively weak vocabulary and their sentences were sometimes incomprehensible. They committed errors in applying sentence structure rules in the English language. Hence, we can conclude that these participants have problems in acquiring normal grammatical rules in English especially in academic writing. This study has shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language. It further shows that error analysis can help the lecture to identify in a systematic manner the specific and common language problems students have, so that they can focus more attention on these types of errors. Such an insight into language learning problems is useful to lecture because it provides information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in the preparation of effective teaching materials. Also, by being able to predict errors to a certain extent, lecture can be well-equipped to help students minimize or overcome their learning problems especially in academic writing.

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