

## ANALYSIS OF THE TERTIARY STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING ERRORS; WHAT ERRORS ARE AND WHAT LEVELS ARE

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Received: March 3, 2022

Revised: April 22, 2022

Accepted: May 23, 2022

### ABSTRACT

*Writing, the language skill three, is a part of the productive skill of the four intergrated language skills. Error Analysis as the language learning approach to study about the problematic English written product. It is the mostly-complected skill than the others. This current study aims at analyzing the grammatical errors made of and investigating the levels of English grammatical errors produced. This study was carried out by using a descriptive quantitative research method by using a test, a guided writing test by letting the students write the patterned texts by answering the questions given, as the instrument to obtain the data on the error types made and the levels of English grammatical errors produced. This study shows that the non-syntactical errors found are spellings (44%), punctuations (19%), Capitalizations & LCL (14%), and the selection of words (23%). Whereas the syntactical errors are the use of articles (5.5%), parts of speech (8%), subject-verbs agreement (11%), using regular and Irregular verbs (8%), making phrases (9%), subjunctives (4.5%), reported speech (6%), compound sentences (15), complex sentences (16%), modal usages (7%), and using tenses (10%). There are three levels of English grammatical errors produced; basic grammar errors (43%), intermediate grammar errors (16%), and the intermediate grammar errors (41%).*

**Keywords:** *English Error Analysis, Types or Errors, English Grammar Levels*

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English has increasingly been considered as lingua franca in terms of as a media of social interactions with the world inhabitants. Language can be divided into four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Eventually language skills can be productive skills and receptive skills. Writing skill is a part of the productive one which must be increased because it can be utilized to express what is heard and read. Thus, the four language skills must be integrated one another in the purpose of attaining the objective of language learning. Writing is the most-complicated skill among the others. It would be avoidable to have any errors in learners' composition (Sermsook, et.al., 2017). Many studies having taken their concern on error analysis of written texts made by the language learners let the other researchers analyze the errors made by the non-English department students,

technical engineering students by writing English texts with patterned texts by following the structures of the organization of the texts. But no research studies about the levels of English grammatical errors made by the university students.

As Sermsook revealed a number of scientific studies have focussed on and attempted to examine the writing problems being faced by and to help EFL learners cope with the errors made. And also a writing describes the existence of a writer. It is worthy cited from Abderraouf (2016), he reveals that Flower and Hayes (1981) identified the cognitive process of writing as a distinctive thinking process that writers orchestrate and organize during the activity of writing; nonetheless the aspect of linguistic skills must be fulfilled. Most of the English writers found difficulties hence they lack of linguistic competence including; grammar, spelling, and the types of writing. So writing English as a foreign language is mostly influenced by their experience in writing mother tongue (L1) to the target language (L2). It is caused by the limited linguistic knowledge that can hamper the use of metacognitive knowledge and writing experience (Abderraouf, 2016).

In this study, the researcher aimed to identify the non-syntactical errors, the syntactical errors made and levels of EFL learners' errors. Then the contribution which has been obtained through this study is to correct and to identify the writing errors in purpose of fostering the tertiary students' writing skill in many types of writing. As a result, writing is a part of the advanced obstacle for every learner but they must well be guided in the form of an effective writing instruction. Errors could have been found in various kinds of writing; phrases, sentences, paragraphes, essays, and thesis abstracts. These can effectively be corrected by doing any scientific investigation to cope with the problems. Furthermore, examining the causes of writing errors lead to make an salient way to reduce the errors (Penny, et.al., in Sermsook, et.al., 2017).

Error is inevitably experienced in learning a language. The study of error mostly stated by Dullay (1996), a flawed side of learners' speech and wtriting, so the compositions of writing which degresses from the firmly-established rules of language (islamiyah, 2012).The discourse of error analysis (EA) has been the subject of controversy for a long time. On the contrary it is a part of the growing

interest in scientific studies by analyzing language learners' errors. To carry out a scientific reasearch for the analysis of language error is intended to identify a better understanding of errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing. As a result, these can be utilized as the sources of coping with the problems of language learning in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including; administering an English curriculum and designing an appropriate teaching strategies. Error Analysis (EA) is the fundamental in language teaching in order to reorganize as well as help language teachers to refrain their points of view in teaching process in favour of finding and fixing the gaps of students in a foreign language learning (Heydari, 2012). According to Corder (1967; Heydari, 2012), error analysis as a procedure exetted for collecting samples, describing students' errors, classifying the errors according to the nature and causes, and evaluating the seriousness of the target language learning that is carried out the language learners. Error is inevitably experienced in learning a language. The study of error are mostly flawed by the learners' speech and writing, so the compositions of writing depend from the firmly-established rules of language (islamiyah, 2012).

The discourse of error analysis (EA) has been the subject of controversy for a long time. On the contrary it is a part of the growing interest in scientific studies by analyzing language learners' errors. To carry out a scientific reasearch for the analysis of language error is intended to identify a better understanding of errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing. As a result, these can be utilized as the sources of coping with the problems of language learning in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including; administering an English curriculum and designing appropriate teaching strategies. There are some studies conducted under similar research on language writing problems which was conducted by Kanyakorn Sermsook at.al. He aimed to examine the University students' language errors in a writing of major students and explore the sources of errors. That mainly focuses on the EFL learners' sentence construction errors. The errors found in major learners may lead to miscommunication. As a result, he showed the most-frequently errors found are punctuation, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization, and fragment. Furthermore, the limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, and the carelessness of the students

were the major sources of the errors in English writing activity. It is related to the types of Errors made by the students in which Hourani (2008) investigated the Emirati secondary male students' writing that there are eight major errors; passive voice, verb tenses and forms, subject-verb agreement, words-order, prepositions, articles, plurality and auxiliary verbs. Then he investigated the two factors of Errors; interlinguality and intralinguality.

Error Analysis (EA) is fundamental in language teaching in order to reorganize as well as help language teachers to regain their points of view in the teaching process in favour of finding and fixing the gaps of students in a foreign language learning (Heydari, 2012). According to Corder (1967; Heydari, 2012), error analysis as a procedure utilized for collecting samples, describing students' errors, classifying the errors according to the nature and causes, and evaluating the seriousness of the target language learning that is carried out by the language learners. Error is inevitably experienced in learning a language. The study of error mostly stated by Dullay (1996), a flawed side of learners' speech and writing, so the compositions of writing which degrees from the firmly-established rules of language (islamiyah, 2012). Actually the discourse of error analysis (EA) has been the subject of controversy for a long time. On the contrary it is a part of the growing interest in scientific studies by analyzing language learners' errors. To carry out scientific research for the analysis of language error is intended to identify a better understanding of errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing. As a result, these can be utilized as the sources of coping with the problems of language learning in the contexts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including; administering an English curriculum and designing appropriate teaching strategies.

In line with the case of interference errors in language products are mostly affected by the interlingual errors, interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference are so-called as interlingual language error. Lado mentioned this kind error as the negative transfer by influencing the target language (L2) with mother tongue (L1), thus it is called as a negative transfer on the performance toward the target language (Sari, 2016). According to Coder,1981; Sari, 2016); the interference occurs when the learner's habits (patterns, rules, and systems) go and prevent the listener to acquire the patterns as well as the systems of second

language. Sari (2016) cited from Al-Khresheh's study (2010), in which errors were committed by the literal translation, that is the literal translation, the translation of mother tongue (L1) to the target language (L2). Thus, the division of errors can be shown, as in: transfer error that is, the error made by the interference from mother tongue to a target language; mother tongue interference is errors which are produced in learner's trials to overcome the structures of L2 rather than transferring the structures of the L1; and the last, literal translation, the translation of L1 to the target language L2 in form of word by word in translating sentences and idiomatic expressions.

Afterwards intralingual errors are made by language learners in writing a target language. Richard explains that the intralingual errors made in form of the interference produced by the language learner does not reflect the structure of mother tongue, but the generalization of the partial exposure of the target language (Sari, 2016). Richard (1971), the classifications of the intralingual language errors made by the foreign / second language learners, namely; overgeneralization error that is, the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of the other structures in the target language; Ignorance of the rule restrictions is the learners attempt to apply the rules of the target language to the context in which they can be not applied as well as possible; and the last classification is incomplete application of rules which the language learners failed to utilize a fully developed language structures; False hypothesis; the learners do not fully understand a distinction in the target language.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The current study was carried out under the quantitative descriptive method. The participants of the study are the tertiary students of the non-English departments, Technical Engineering, Bumigora university consisting of 44 students as sample of 78 whole numbers of the three different classes through by determining the number of sample through Slovin ( $N = n \frac{N}{N \pm d^2 + 1}$ ). Data collection was carried out through guided writing activities; by getting the students to compose their own writings under four both different topics and different patterns of the writing organizations, namely listing, times-order, cause-effect, and comparison styles. The topics which were given were formulated in the form of questions. Thus the

instrument used is a test by advising the students to write based on the instructions given.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

In this part, the researcher presents the results of research conducted using a test instrument, writing test by asking the research participants to compose the three different topics with the standardized patterns of writing styles. It is urgent to know that based on the results of this study taken from the writings of the respondents; there are several categories of errors made by them when compiling phrases and sentences in paragraphs.

### **The Grammatical Errors-Made**

Patterned writing activities were initiated to facilitate English language learners to be able to regularly write by having to be limited as well as guided by some patterned rules or regulations in paragraph writing. It should be noted that in writing scientific or non-scientific works, several patterns are the basis for developing the main idea or sentence in a paragraph. Organizational patterns of written text in paragraphs, such as listing, time-orders, cause-effect, and comparison. So in this study, the researcher used a test instrument in the form of a patterned writing test by getting and encouraging the respondents to write in guided ways to express ideas along with the ability to develop the ideas presented. The four patterns of the written text organization had properly been developed in the form of four questions also, namely how to install a *Corel Draw* Apps. (listing), telling the student's activity schedules (times-order), the differences between being school students and being university students, and having more nutritious foods make us much more healthy and resilient.

In this study, the focus of research is not on the writing styles, the genres of text used, and the selection of topics developed but on investigation of the types of errors made in composing phrases and sentences based on the correct English grammars. The following description suggests manifold English grammar errors produced in writing texts in various kinds of writing styles, text-genres, and topics. Based on the collected data then those which were analyzed reveals that the presence of three levels of English grammar errors made is basic grammars, intermediate, and upper intermediate grammars.

The basic English grammar errors produced included into basic English grammars are spellings, the use of punctuations, capitalization, the use of definite and indefinite articles, determiners, some parts of speech, subject-verb agreement. Then the intermediate grammatical errors which produced are regular and irregular verbs, types of phrase, and subjunctives (verbs), and the upper intermediate grammar errors are sentence types, as in compound sentence and complex sentences, the appropriate usages of English tenses, and modals. Those grammatical errors are always over in some parts of the writing. Thus grammatical errors led by the natural errors belong to the students. The students' errors can be very significant indicators to predict what proper English grammars must be learnt in the classroom, then that can be traced to the use of learning methods to learn English grammars. There are some pieces of data collected on the students' writings, as in:

*Tabel 1. Data collected on the students' writings*

Basic Level		
Types	Fragments of sentence errors	Description
Spellings	<i>after that open the corel <b>raw</b> file and <b>than</b> please just next at 6,30 I ...</i>	The erroneous writings might occupy at spellings in which those spelling errors could unconsciously or consciously made.
The use of punctuations	<i>first of all my friend must have the corel draw apliction  At school teachers may ask to read draft of your assignments</i>	Many errors occupy on the usages of punctuations as well as the writers cannot use them properly in their writings.
Capitalization / Lower Case Letters (LCL)	<i>..usually people call me <b>galih</b> "What <b>Are Differences Of Being School Students Between University Student At university</b>"</i>	The capitalization as well as the use of lower case letters is appropriately not utilized.
Dictions (Words-selection)	<i>"time and palace of <b>study</b> on campus are usually more <b>depend</b> on situation , <b>socializing</b> on campus can be more happy <b>clothes</b> or every day <b>clothes</b> on campus are <b>free rules</b> on</i>	The selection of words has a strong effect to the meaning of word used to write the a phrase or a sentence. Most of the EFL learners made errors in choosing the appropriate words to use.

	<i>campus are usually <b>looser</b> than high school</i>	
The use of definite and indefinite articles	<i>..to take <b>an</b> responsibility for your own learning</i>	The usage of <i>a, an &amp; the</i> articles; are mostly complicated to determine the use of indefinite ones ( <i>a &amp; an</i> ).
Parts of Speech	<i>after that wait until <b>its</b> finished “another problem <b>in at</b> the website you must <b>fill</b> the key word at the column <b>find write</b> corel draw I am very busy <b>at</b> there I always motivated <b>myself</b> with <b>word’s</b> my mom</i>	Errors might occupy on the use of parts of speech (noun, pronouns, adjective, verbs, etc.). the students occasionally cannot differentiate or know between the word as noun or a verb.
Subject-verb agreement	<i><b>all does</b> click button for download <b>this app and corel draw is</b> start for download”</i>	

## Intermediate Level

Types	Fragments of sentence errors	Description
Regular and irregular verbs	<i>till I thinked to gone my self at there but my mom allways motivated me to stay...</i>	The erroneous sentences could be in the form of the misuse of both regular verbs and irregular verbs
English phrases	<i>...and step by step <b>thinking for gone</b> from boarding school is <b>gone</b></i>	Many sentences constructed by several phrases structures are incorrect composition.
Subjunctives (verbs)	<i>That is very important you have to follow the directions..” “a teacher recommend me to school in Bumigora university..”</i>	The EFL learners unconsciously made the subjunctive structures by using the subjunctive adjectives and verbs but failed to compose by omitting the anticipatory <i>it</i> and the conjunction <i>that</i> .

## Upper-intermediate Level

Types	Fragments of sentence errors	Description
Reported Speech	<i>“but my mom allways motivated me to stay in boarding school</i>	Errors made in the form of the use of reported speech.



	<i>because that is for your future she said for that”</i>	Conversely those used the direct sentences.
Compound sentence	<i>I awoke up at 4 am and I help my parents to prepare breakfast, etc, and then pray.</i>	This type of sentence are often disused in the writing production. The coordinative conjunction must coordinate the two main sentences; tenses, form of verbs, etc.
Complex sentences	<i>After arriving at the campus I study after finishing studying or coming home from campus I go home and study at home</i>	Of all the structures used, compound sentences are dominantly produced by the learners. They are unable to use the conjunctions, to differentiate the main clause and its sub-clause.
Modal auxiliary verbs	<i>Firstly you must find the website for install the app (corel draw) such us kuyhaa website for example another problem in...”</i>	Misuse of modal auxiliary verbs. Those must be used to the appropriate functions (obligation, ability, possibility, etc.
Tenses	<i>Three years a go, I am stay in islamic boarding school past year 2019 I am first class of technical school I whises out form that school quickly because...”</i>	EFL learners tend to use the particular tenses by attaching with the inappropriate adverbs (time signals). The misuse of additional verb type with the personal pronouns

The presented data above show that English learners produced several types of erroneous sentences which can be divided into three levels of English grammar competency, as in basic grammars, intermediate grammars, and upper-intermediate grammars. Of the three levels of grammars, the researcher found two types of errors which are consciously produced, namely non-syntactical errors as well as syntactical errors. The non-syntactical errors are found 105 erroneous sentences while the syntactical errors are 330 sentences in the students' writing production. Thus the number of the students' errors are 435 erroneous sentences.

### The Non-Syntactical Errors

The non-syntactical errors are mostly made in the forms of lexical errors, miss-spelled words, miss-selected words, miss-interchangeable words. All those non-syntactical errors include into the basic English grammars. As a result, the non-

syntactical erroneous sentences which are produced by the students in the form of the patterned writing, as in:

*Tabel 2. The students in the form of the patterned writing*

No.	Categories	Numbers	Percent (%)
1.	Spellings	46	44 %
2.	Punctuations	20	19 %
3.	Capitalizations & LCL	15	14 %
4.	Dictions	24	23 %
Total			100 %

Based on the numerical data obtained from the students' four patterned writings; listing, times-order, cause-effect, and comparison. The non-syntactical erroneous sentences can be presented in the table above. There are four categories of English grammar errors found, as in spelling errors (44%), punctuation usage errors (19%), capitalization and its lower case letter usages (14%), and words-selection (23%). Thus lowest numbers of erroneous sentences are the frequent usage of capitalization and its lower case letters with 15 errors found. Moreover the highest errors are the frequent usage of spelling cases with 46 errors. Based on the collected data that was analyzed that the spelling errors were made of the use of English words having the identical sounds, having too different meanings. In addition, the problematic errors related to the spellings are due to the students' writing frequency in writing practice.

### **The Syntactical Errors**

The syntactic written English errors which were made in the form of the main English structures in the composition of English sentences. The important errors made in the form of using articles, parts of speech, subject-verb agreement, compound sentences, complex sentences, and others. Based on the three levels of grammar in this study, the grammatical errors in writing sentences had been identified at the intermediate level and the upper-intermediate level. Based on the results of data analysis from the writings of the respondents, syntactic errors were made are 330 errors. The number of non-syntactic errors is 105. The number of syntactic errors was more dominant because syntactic grammatical categories were

used more in the sentence composition. Thus the following data is about the categories of syntactic errors made, as in:

*Tabel 3. Categories of syntactic errors made*

No.	Categories	Numbers	Percents (%)
1.	Articles	18	5.5 %
2.	Parts of speech	28	8 %
3.	Subject-verbs agreement	35	11 %
4.	Regular and Irregular verbs	28	8 %
5.	Phrases	29	9 %
6.	Subjunctives	15	4.5 %
7.	Reported speech	20	6 %
8.	Compound sentences	50	15 %
9.	Complex sentences	53	16 %
10.	Modals	22	7 %
11.	Tenses	32	10 %
Total			100 %

From the data above, it can be concluded that from the total number of syntactical errors produced by the respondents from 330 errors, the most frequent errors were errors in the use of complex sentences (16%). Then the error with the second highest frequency is writing compound sentences (15%). The frequency of errors often done is writing sentences with a subject-verb agreement structure (11%). Then the least errors made were writing sentence structure using the subjunctive pattern with 15 errors (4.5%).

### **Levels of English Grammatical Errors**

Of the three levels of English grammar competence, namely basic grammars, intermediate grammars, and upper-intermediate grammars, the most frequent error categories found of the both non-syntactic and syntactic errors occur at the basic grammar level. The data shows that 186 (43%) errors occurred in the basic grammars. Next, the error frequency in the use of upper-intermediate grammars is 177 (41%). And the last is errors that occur in the use of grammars at the intermediate level with 72 errors (16%). The data is shown as follows:

Tabel 4. Levels of English grammatical errors

No.	Levels of Grammar Competency	Numbers of Errors	Percents (%)
1.	Basic Grammars	186 errors	43%
2.	Intermediate Grammars	72 errors	16%
3.	Upper-intermediate Grammars	177 errors	41%
Total		435 errors	100%

## CONCLUSION

This study suggest that there are two error types found, non-syntactical errors and the syntactical errors, show the non-syntactical errors are 105 (24%) and the syntactical errors are 330 (76%). The analysis shown there are 435 errors made the university students through their patterned English writing. Those of non syntactical grammars are spellings, punctuations, Capitalizations & LCL and dictions. The syntactical errors found are the use of articles, parts of speech, regular and irregular verbs, phrases, subjunctives, reported speech, compound sentences, the use of English modals, and English tenses. Furthermore levels of English grammatical errors made are basic level (43%), intermediate (16%), and upper intermediate English grammar (41%). Thus the grammatical errors belonging to the EFL learners of this current study produced more the syntactical errors than the lexical errors. The syntactical errors are dominated because their the components much more wide than it is. Then of the syntactical and non-syntactical errors shown that the basic English grammars are more dominantly produced by the learners.

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***How to Cite (APA style):***

Aprianto, Dedi. (2022,May). Analysis of the Tertiary Students' English Writing Errors; What Errors Are and What Levels Are. *Exposure: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 11(2), 52-64. <https://journal.unismuh.ac.id/index.php/exposure/article/view/7156>