

The Impact of Inter-language Related Errors among Non-English Majors at Tertiary Level Students in Bangladesh

Tanzin Ara Ashraf

M.A. in English Literature, Department of Languages and Translation
King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia
tanzen@kku.edu.sa

Tasleem Ara Ashraf

M.A. in English Literature, MA in ELT, Department of English
Stamford University, Bangladesh
tasleem1702@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The study focuses on the influence of inter-language related errors on EFL learning among tertiary level students. In Bangladesh, the non-English majors studying in different private universities learn English language through different English language courses, however, a huge number of students struggle to learn English language and receive failing grades in their EFL courses due to the interferences of inter-language or the influence from their L1. This study aims at identifying the common inter-language related errors learners make and thus discover possible solutions to improve EFL learning at tertiary level. A total of 106 students and 15 teachers currently practicing at the private universities were randomly chosen as respondents from three private universities of Bangladesh. Interviews, content analysis and sample study were the instruments to collect data for the study. The analysis revealed that tertiary level students face much difficulty for the interference from their L1 i.e., Bangla language and has come up with very important recommendations and suggestions that may help to improve EFL learning at tertiary level in Bangladesh.

Keywords: error analysis, exposure to English, EFL learners, writing skill, teaching strategies

Introduction and Background

At present, English language, the most widely used lingua franca and an unavoidable communication technology in the globalized world, is now being learned and taught at all the levels of education in Bangladesh. But, in tertiary level, most of the students face problems and also make errors in writing composition. To examine student's error in their composition writing, error analysis is highly needed. Error analysis is a systematic method that focuses on the errors that learners make. It also helps teachers to find out the sources of errors and the importance of these errors. So, the analysis of the student's error has become a crucial part to overcome the errors and therefore suggests some solutions regarding the problem.

The researchers feel that students at tertiary level must know why they repeatedly make the same type of errors while using English language both academically and globally and find out how their L1 effects L2 learning to avoid common errors in EFL learning. The researchers assume that, this kind of research will help particularly the students, teachers and the curriculum designers to enhance the student's skills and to take pedagogical precautions.

Error has been analyzed by many researchers in several different ways. Many researchers focused on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) to identify error every second language learners. In CAH the researchers mainly discovered that the differences between L1 and L2 are the major factors of making errors. Bloomfield (1933) suggested "The differences (among language) are great enough to present our setting up any system of classification that would fit all language." Wardhough(1970) proposed a distinction between a strong version and weak version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis. The strong version involved producing errors in second language learning based upon a contrastive analysis of the L1 and L2, namely error analysis. According to Corder (1967) learning errors are invaluable to the study of the language learning process. By classifying the errors that learners made, Corder submitted researchers could learn a great deal about the SLA process by CAH. Corder (1967) also differentiated between mistakes and errors.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 24:1 January 2024

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In Bangladesh, a large number of students study in private universities. In these private universities, most admitted students do not have good English skills. English as a second language is very difficult because when starting to write a sentence or a paragraph, students must consider the main and secondary ideas of each paragraph, including the unity between paragraphs. Next, students should imagine different descriptions depending on the situation. In fact, the problem students often encounter is having to think in their mother tongue and then translate it into English. Moreover, they lack the required knowledge of vocabulary and structures. Therefore, this study will help students (especially advanced students) find out the significance of their mistakes and the most common errors as well as the causes of their mistakes. This will also help teachers understand why and how errors occur and how they can be resolved.

Research Questions

1. What are common the errors that tertiary level students of Bangladesh among non-English majors frequently commit while writing essay /paragraph/compositions?
2. How does inter-language related errors impact on students' anxiety?

Literature Review

Aydin and Turnuk (2020) investigated the errors of EFL learners due to the influence of Inter-language and identified learners with more inter-language errors experience writing anxiety at higher levels. Now-a-days Error Analysis (EA) has become a preferred tool of second or foreign language learning. Error Analysis (EA) is one of the best tools of linguistics studies that concentrate on the learner's errors. In recent years, there has been an emphasis in analyzing errors of the language learners. According to Brown (2000), a "mistake" refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. While an "error" is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner. In Bangladesh in the private universities, the non-departmental majors need to learn English in various language courses. Even after completion of several language (writing) courses their proficiency level is far from satisfactory. Here in this research, the researchers have hypothesized that error analysis can be a great help to identify the roots of students' error.

Error analysis is a very important area of applied linguistics as well as of second and foreign language learning. It is also a systematic method to analyze learners' errors. Errors are not always bad; rather they are crucial parts and aspects in the process of learning a language. Error analysis in SLA was established in the 1960s by Stephen Pit Corder and colleagues. Error analysis (EA) was an alternative to contrastive analysis, an approach influenced by behaviorism through which applied linguists sought to use the formal distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict errors. Error analysis showed that contrastive analysis was unable to predict a great majority of errors, although it's more valuable aspects have been incorporated into the study of language transfer.

Stephen Pit Corder is regarded as the father of Error analysis. Pit Corder (1974) has made an in-depth study of errors in the learning of second language. Corder (1967:19-27) was the first to advocate the importance of studying errors in student writing. He suggests that an analysis of errors is significant because of various reasons. Corder (1981:35) states that learners' errors are a major element in the feedback system of the process which is called language teaching and learning. Therefore, the study of errors is also a fundamental part of applied linguistics. On the other hand, Ellis 1994 defines error as deviation from the norms of the target language.

It is to be remembered that a learner cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors. Therefore, making errors is an inevitable part of learning. Therefore, Error analysis (EA) examines errors made by L2 learners and Richards and Schmidt (2002:184) define it as "The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners." According to Corder (1967:19-27), learner's errors are important in and of themselves. For learners themselves, errors are indispensable, since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. Gass and Selinker (2001:67) define errors as "red flags", that means they are warning signals, that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the L2.

James (2007) proposes that Error Analysis (EA) is the analysis of learners' errors by comparing what the learners have learned with what they lack. It also deals with giving the explanation of the errors in order to accurately reduce them. Another definition of Error Analysis

(EA) given by Crystal (2016) is the study of language learners' language forms which deviate from those of the target language. Norrish (1983: 11) proposes that errors are not only an inevitable part of the learners' output but they are also quite possibly a necessary part because they provide useful information for teachers and help them to plot the learning activity as it takes place. Ellis (1994: 301-302) states that "errors occurred as a result of the negative transfer of mother tongue patterns into the learner's L2" while Stevens (1969) theorized that, "errors should not be seen as mere problems to be overcome". Rather they should be taken as normal and inevitable features that signify the criteria that learners employ while acquiring the target language. He held that if one had examined a regular pattern of errors in the performances of all learners in a particular setting and if some of them had shown their progress through this pattern, one could have taken their errors to be proof of accomplishment in the target language learning rather than proof of failure.

Sources of Errors

It is noted that the native language plays a crucial role in learning second language fluently. A number of scholars propose about the sources of errors made by language learners as follows: Richards (1974), for instance, states that two major sources of errors are interlingual errors and intralingual errors. The first one refers to errors caused when learners wrongly use the rules of their first language when they produce sentences of the target language. The second errors are caused during learners' language learning process. The errors include overgeneralization, false analogy, etc. James (1998) states that there are four sources of errors which are interlingual errors, intralingual errors, communication strategy-based errors, and induced errors. Based on her study, Penny (2001) concludes that there are two major sources of errors: interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Likewise, Heydari and Bagheri (2012) also state that interlingual interference and intralingual interference are the two sources of errors committed by EFL and ESL learners.

Types of Errors

If we consider the theoretical framework of error analysis, then first of all, errors should be identified and then they should be described. A number of categories are suggested for the error analysis. Corder (1967, 1971 & 1974) classifies the errors into four different categories.

The categories are given below:

- a. Addition
- b. Omission
- c. Selection
- d. Ordering

Addition refers to the addition of any grammatical item or unnecessary word(s) in the sentence, such as, adding a “do” auxiliary in the sentence, “Does can he play?” or “The pigeons is flying”, here is the addition of morpheme “s” with pigeon that is not required. The real construction is: The pigeon is flying. **Omission** occurs when the linguistic item that is required in the sentence is omitted. For example, “Alif play football in the field”, here the morpheme “s” is omitted that was required for the correct construction of the sentence. **Selection** refers to the problem of wrong selection of certain forms. For example, “Fahim is biggest than Alif”, here, the superlative degree is used instead of the comparative degree and it is the example of wrong selection of the degree of adjective. **Ordering** refers to the wrong order of the words in the sentence or confusion with the word order in the target language. For example, “I to the bridge Padma went”, instead of saying “I went to the Padma Bridge”. Here the order of the sentence is incorrect and is becoming the reason of errors.

Burt and Kiparsky (1972 quoted in Serebenjapol 2003: 27) concluded that learner’ errors can be classified into two categories as follows: 1) **Global errors** occur in sentences with more than one clause, errors in overall organization which confuse the relations among the constituent clauses, or errors which cause a reader to misunderstand a message, such as “Babu like taxi but his friend said so not that we should be late for school”. 2) **Local errors** mean minor errors within clauses or errors which do not significantly hinder communication of a sentences message such as, “If I heard the news from him, I will let you know”. On the other hand, Touchier (1986) talks about two types of errors: **performance errors** and **competence errors**. Performance errors are made by learner when they are speaking fast. Competence errors are reflected in a learner’s competence. Moreover, Corder (1974) talks about three types of errors such as: **Pre –systematic error** (learner

does not know a rule of the target language), **Systematic error** (learner applies the incorrect rule) and **Post-systematic error** (similar to the mistake).

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CPH)

Error Analysis (EA) is the development of Contrastive Analysis (CA) created in an attempt to understand the nature of student's errors and the contrastive analysis was formed for understanding the errors committed by the learners in the light of the rules of both languages. In the past, teachers and linguists focused on contrastively analyzing two languages. And the errors of the learners were taken into account based on contrastive analysis of languages. Later on, the contrastive analysis could not provide the sufficient grounds for the errors of the learners. However, the contrastive analysis could not define all the causes of the errors and it was realized that the process is not as simple as elaborated by contrastive analysis; rather there are various underlying processes that are working behind the language learning. Language learning is a very complicated and complex phenomenon and error analysis is basically the linguistic analysis and these shortcomings led to birth of Error Analysis (EA). In terms of this, Rustipa (2011) comments that EA proves the inability of CA in predicting vast number of errors as in CA errors are only viewed as a result of language interference.

Contrastive Analysis is not only a way of comparing language, but also a way to focus on errors for the purpose of knowing what needs to be learned and what is not need to be learned in a second language learning situation. (Lado,1957, p.241-247). In Contrastive Analysis, when students of L1 learn L2, two kinds of transfer happen, such as: Negative Transfer and Positive Transfer. According to Brown (1941) a learner can simply transfer lexical items from native language to the target language (p.250). There are two positions that develop with regard to Contrastive Analysis- Strong and Weak versions. Strong version is important for L2 language learning. Strong version offered by Whitman and Jackson in 1972.Strong version is important for L2 language learning. Strong versions focus on meaning, help to grow vocabulary knowledge and to develop communicative confidence. The weak version starts with an analysis of learners recurring errors. It has explanatory power, helping the teacher of foreign language understand their students" source of error. Weak version has been advocated by Wardhaugh in 1970s. This version

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 24:1 January 2024

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has later been developed into Error Analysis (EA). CA follows deductive approach on the other hand EA adopts an inductive one. Whitman and Jackson (1972) pointed out that number of errors related to L1 interference (p.253). According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), all L2 errors are not reasoned from L1 interference.

So, we can say that in contrastive analysis, lessons were prepared in such a way that there was hardly any chance of making a mistake. Errors were considered as sign of failure. But in Error analysis, it was taken as a natural occurrence in learning. The approach towards errors totally changed. They were taken as an essential part of language learning and as an indication of the extent of progress made by the learner and of what was left unlearned.

Fossilization

Fossilization refers to the process in which incorrect language becomes a habit and cannot easily be corrected. For example, many advanced level learners who have Spanish as an L1 do not distinguish between 'he' and 'she'. This could be a fossilized error. Brown (1998) referred to fossilization as “permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into person’s second language competence” (P: 217). Brown (1998) also states that, “learners with fossilized items have acquired them through the same positive feedback and reinforcement with which they acquired correct items”. Therefore, fossilization plays a crucial role in analyzing language learning as well as in analyzing Error Analysis.

Procedures of Error Analysis (EA)

Actually, error analysis is a complicated process consisting of several procedures. For error analysis research Corder has suggested the following steps:

1. Collection of a sample learner language
2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Explanation of errors
5. Evaluation of errors

In the first steps of error analysis, it is needed to decide what samples of learner language will be used for analysis and how to collect these samples. Once a corpus of learner language has been collected, the errors in the corpus have to be identified. It is also necessary to establish a procedure to recognize errors. The description of errors requires attention to the surface properties of the learners' written and utterance based on linguistic categories. After identifying and describing errors, the next step is to explain them which are concerned with the sources of the error that is accounting for why it is made. It involves an attempt to establish the process responsible for fossilizing L2 acquisition. The final step, error evaluation involves a consideration of the effect that errors have on the person(s) addressed either in terms of the addressee's comprehension of the learners' meaning or in terms of the addressee's affective response to the errors. In this way, the evaluation of learner error poses a number of problems. Thus, error evaluation can be influenced by the context in which the error occurs. The evaluations also vary from person to person depending on who made it, and where, when, how it is made. Finally, on the basis of analysis the evaluator gives some recommendation from his/her point of view so that the errors could be avoided.

The most troublesome problem in the area of grammatical errors was determiners. Thai has no definite and indefinite articles while English has a large number of articles. Students often omit articles or make the wrong choice. The second highest numbers of errors were errors in the use of verbs. Wrong choice of verbs and omission of verbs were the main errors in this regard. The third most frequent errors were the use of agreements. Subject-verb agreements are the major errors in this research. In the area of lexical errors, most students used the wrong choice of words when they wrote compositions because they had inadequate vocabulary to explain such topics when they wrote a sentence such as "The father sets up instead of decorates a door with flowers."

Saara Sirkka Mungungu, a South African researcher has presented research, namely (Error Analysis: Investigating the Writing of ESL NAMIBIAN Learners). In this study, there were three groups: Oshiwambo students, Silozi students, and Afrikaans students. This study investigated common English language errors made by Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and Silozi First Language speakers. The four most common errors committed by the participants were tenses, prepositions,

articles and spelling. Oshiwambo students recorded the highest number of errors (656) followed by Silozi students that recorded (630) errors and Afrikaans recorded the lowest number (588) errors. The remarkable part of this study is that, the Afrikaans, who wrote the highest number of words, produced the least number of errors. This shows that the length of the essay does not necessarily determine the number of errors. This research also focused on finding out the frequency of occurrence of the identified errors in the learner's L2 written work. In this study, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo compositions recorded almost the same rate of occurrence of errors that is 292 and 278 respectively. In contrast, Silozi students recorded the lowest rate of frequency of error types occurrence, that is 193. However, the results of the study reveal that there was no big difference in the type of errors recorded from each group. The total numbers of errors recorded were almost the same (Oshiwambo 656, Silozi 630 and Afrikaans 588 errors). The only difference that occurred was in the rate of frequency of occurrence.

Md. Didar Hossain & Md. Tareque Uddin (2015), for instance, analyzed the errors committed by First Year under Graduates in the Department of English at Jahangirnagar University. They showed that the students are committing errors frequently in prepositions, articles, auxiliary verbs and pronunciation. These errors are due to the less involvement in writing and speaking activities.

Another study entitled "An Analysis of the Common Grammatical Errors in the English Writing made by 3rd Secondary Male Students in the Eastern Coast of the UAE" by Taiseer Mohammed Y. Hourani, has explored that the common types of grammatical errors made by Emirati secondary male students in their English essay writing. This study showed the most common and salient grammatical errors which were found in the students essays included: passivization, verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions, articles, plurality and auxiliaries. After analyzing the errors, it has been found out that the students make grammatical errors due to two main reasons: Interlingual and intralingual reasons. This research clearly showed that the lack of basic English grammar was the main reason of their errors. The findings of this study support the claim that Arabic-speaking students commit many grammatical

errors when writing essays in English. It is clear that the errors in grammar require more attention because grammatical proficiency is the foundation of better writing ability.

Research on Error Analysis in Bangladesh

If we consider Bangladesh perspective then we can say, Bangladeshi learner's face many difficulties because English as their second language. An analysis of student's "mistakes and errors in English writing", Akther and Khan (2017) talked about the condition of English writing ability of Bangladesh tertiary level students. Although they get twelve years of education and learn English as a compulsory subject, still they could not write confident, competent and error free writings. They also observe that teachers hardly provide any constructive comments for accurate writing.

According to Akhter and Khan (2010), Bangladesh education system mainly has 3 stages which are primary, secondary and higher education that is undergraduate and graduate program. English is introduced as a mandatory subject (from class 1 to higher secondary level) but they cannot write properly and their standard of English is not satisfactory. However, Heydari and Begheri (2012) found that maximum number of errors in writing made by adults while learning the L2. For instance, he said learners have difficulties to write English if they do not get enough facilities to free handwriting practice in class.

Methodology and Research Design

The main purpose of this research is to investigate, examine and identify the types and frequency of writing errors committed by the non-English major students at tertiary level. Along with these, it also concerns to find out the importance of those errors and their probable solutions. This study adopts a mixed method as it has used both quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers examined the samples collected from the student participants and analyzed their common errors through statistical graphs and tables. Qualitative data was collected through participants' interview. Quantitative methods are research techniques that are used to gather information dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable (Nunan, 2001:87-92), also known as quantitative data.

Rationale for Choosing Error Analysis (EA)

English is one of the most dominant languages in the world. It is widely used in many fields. However, the students of Bangladesh, are still facing numerous problems while writing English sentences. Therefore, writing skill is rated to be a hard task for most students. A study of the various kinds of errors made by the students would guide teachers not only to identify program and materials but also would lead them to find strategies that could be beneficial for teaching and learning. Therefore, in addition to helping the teachers to find out and categorizing the errors through the student's output, the researchers believe that Error Analysis (EA) helps them to interpret the learning / teaching strategies of students. In addition, Error Analysis (EA) may be helpful to speculate the amount of interest learners /students in acquiring the language. Thus, Error Analysis (EA) has been beneficial in many ways in the domain of language teaching.

Instruments

The study employs a mixed method design which includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Such a method integrates both approaches to provide a much more detailed and comprehensive picture of that which is being investigated. In this study the qualitative data (interview) was conducted after the quantitative data collection to foster understanding and interpretation of the results.

The researchers conducted this study by using the following tools for data collection:

(1) Sample

The corpus on which this study is based includes 25 exam scripts. The purpose of collecting the samples was to analyze the most common grammatical errors made by the non-English major students at tertiary level.

(2) Interview

Interview was taken for each of the 25 students of the three universities. The interviews of the students were also recorded for later analysis by the researchers. The researchers collected the data through the interviews and writing samples from Stamford University Bangladesh and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and Daffodil International University.

Procedure and Timeline

The participants of this study were the non-English majors at tertiary level. The study includes 25 students writing samples to identify the categories of mistakes and errors that the students made. The study was mainly conducted in Stamford University Bangladesh and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and Daffodil International University of Bangladesh where the medium of instruction was English. For this study, the researchers investigated 25 student's paragraph samples from writing courses. The course teacher had been taking this course for 4 months. It was a fundamental and mandatory course for all the students from different departments. This course was aimed at developing student's basic language skills. The collected answer scripts have already been checked by the responsible teachers.

Limitations

The researchers could cover only three private universities for the survey. This study deals with a limited number of students due to the limitations of time. The researchers faced difficulty to collect the views of the students on time because of their busy schedules. In addition, collecting the answer scripts from different teachers were also troublesome. This is a very small scale study because the researchers failed to cover all possible areas for the limited timeline of the research.

Data Analysis and Findings

The researchers conducted univariate analysis and mean differences among the participants to identify errors. The results were shown through graphical presentation and chart of the samples.

Population and Sampling

In this study the researchers selected 25 students from 3 private universities of Bangladesh. All students are non-department majors. They are basically learning English language through different language courses. The researchers specifically selected those students who have undertaken writing courses. The age of participants ranges from (19-25) years. All these students have also learnt English through their compulsory courses in secondary and higher secondary level. The number of students according to the departments are given below:

Table 1: Number of Student Participants

Sl. No.	Name of University	Name of the Departments	No. of students
1	Stamford University Bangladesh	Journalism	5
2	Stamford University Bangladesh	Architecture	5
3	Stamford University Bangladesh	Economics	5
4	University of Liberal Arts	BBA	5
5	Daffodil International University	CSE	5
Total			25

The table above shows the randomly chosen participants from three renowned universities in Bangladesh

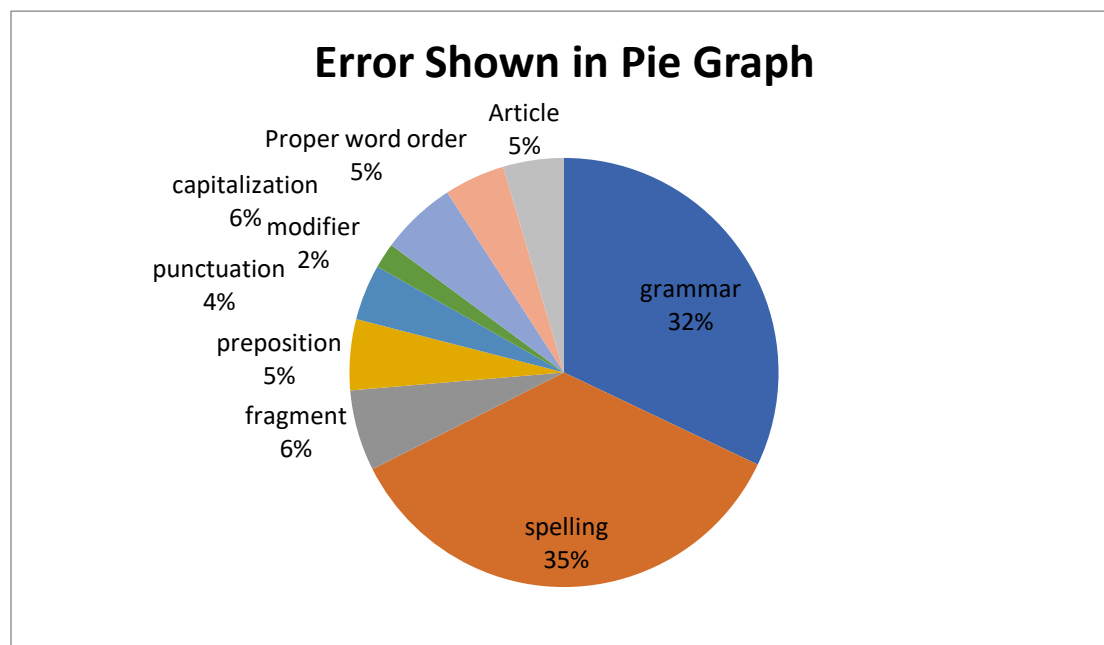
Table 2: Error Chart in Table

Departments	No. of Students	Grammar	Spelling	Fragment	Preposition	Punctuation	Modifier	Capitalization	Proper word order	Article
ARC	5	22	18	5	2	2	1	1	2	2
JRN	5	15	31	5	4	2	1	2	3	3
BBA	5	15	11	3	3	4	1	4	2	2
ECO	5	21	19	2	2	1	1	4	3	3
CSE	5	11	14	1	3	2	1	4	2	2
Total	25	84	93	16	14	11	5	15	12	12

Brief Description and the Error Chart

Here, at first different types of errors have been identified and categorized from the samples according to their types. To investigate the error analysis, collection of samples of student's scripts and then identification of errors are very important steps. According to the aim this study/research

will be obtained through the collection of samples, identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of the errors which are the essential part of error analysis. Then the samples will be classified into different categories like grammatical errors, spelling errors, fragment errors, preposition errors, punctuation errors, modifier errors, capitalization errors, proper word order errors and article errors.



Graph 1: Error chart shown by pie graph

The pie graph above shows the percentage of errors non-dept majors have done while writing a paragraph on different topics. The paragraph samples have been collected from the five different departments from 3 different private universities. Here the researcher has discovered that students made 35% errors in spelling, 32% in grammar which included the general errors like 3rd person singular number, gender errors, incomplete sentence etc. other grammar errors are categorized separately where they made 6% errors in fragment, 6% in capitalization, 5% in preposition, 5% in article, 5% in proper word order, 4% in punctuation and 2% errors in modifier.

Spelling Errors

After the grammatical errors, spelling errors are the most frequent errors that students commit. Spelling error occurred as the students did not receive enough help from the teachers to learn spelling in the proper way. They also were unaware about the phonetic structure of words. The error chart above shows that the student made 35% errors in spelling. It shows their unawareness to the spelling sector. Most of the spelling errors occurred as they don't know the exact spelling of the word. Sometimes this kind of spelling error occurred because of L1 interference or it indicates that the students may get confused with a word with another word that sounds alike. Result showed that they made some sample spelling errors in their exam scripts. Some examples identified from the scripts like-beleive (believe), batter (better), collage (college), madical (medical), cource(course). After analyzing the spelling error it can be said that the students also did not get proper help while learning pronunciations of English words.

Punctuation Error

In English writing, punctuation is a very important part of language. Many students make numerous errors while using punctuation, which indicates their performance in composition is very poor. From the scripts the researcher has identified that most of the students made this error. In many scripts it was found that students did not use comma, semi colon while they wrote long sentence. Without proper punctuation it became meaningless sentence. The students also used incorrect punctuation in their exam and some students did not use any punctuation where it required.

Fragment Error

Fragment is also an essential part of language. In the scripts, the students made fragmental error, where they wrote incomplete sentences and used full stop. These kinds of errors are very common in their scripts. They have lack of knowledge in using comma or they misused the comma. It shows that students are unaware of the proper use of comma in sentences.

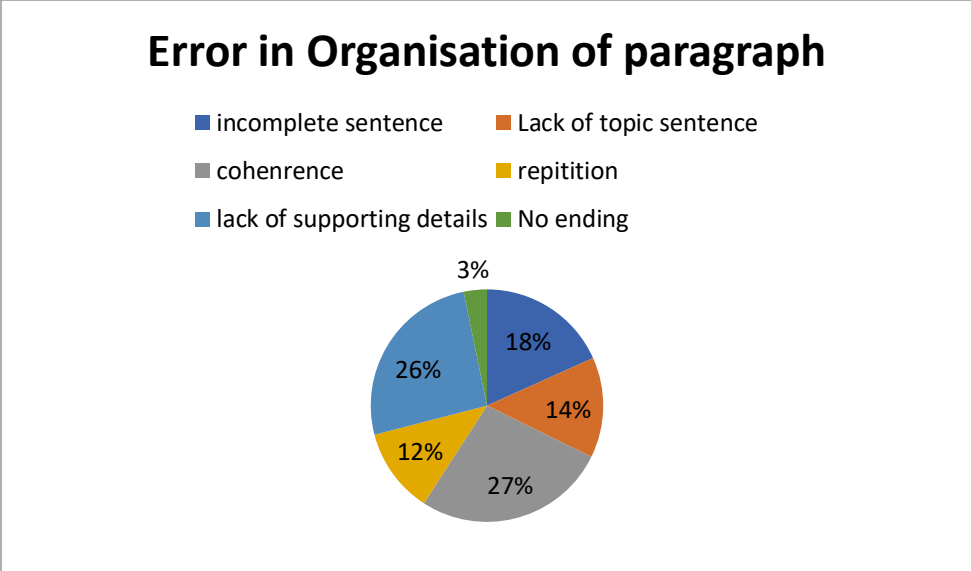
Error Chart regarding Organization of Paragraph

Departments	No. of Students	Incomplete Sentences	Lack of topic sentence	Lack of coherence	Repetition	Not proper supporting details	No ending
ARC	5	5	4	4	2	6	1
JRN	5	5	3	7	1	5	1
BBA	5	3	1	5	3	5	0
ECO	5	2	3	4	2	3	0
CSE	5	2	2	5	3	5	1
Total	25	17	13	25	11	24	3

Students made lots of error in structure of paragraph writing. They could not write proper topic sentences, did not use suitable transitional words and could not write proper closing sentences.

Table 3: Error Chart regarding Organization of Paragraph

At tertiary level, the organization of the paragraph or composition is very important. In paragraph or composition writing, there should be a general specific sequence to write a paragraph or composition. There should be a standard rules and regulation to write a paragraph or composition and also proper unity among sentences that relate to the topic. Supporting details should be developed in a way that supports the topic sentence.



Graph 2: Errors in composition writing

The above graph shows common errors students make while writing composition

Lack of Topic Sentence

Topic sentence introduces the main idea of the paragraph or composition. It is very important because it introduces the topic and also states what the students attempt to write or argue in the paragraph. Topic sentence should be the first sentence in a paragraph. It is a kind of statement that introduces the paragraph that followed by specific details that explain or illustrate the topic sentence. The pie chart above shows that most of the paragraphs do not have proper topic sentence. The students have lack of knowledge to use proper topic sentence. The chart shows that students made 14 % errors in writing the proper topic sentence. It shows their lacking regarding the topic sentence.

Lack of Supporting Details

Supporting details is very essential parts of a paragraph. It consists of sentences that support/develop/generate or explain the main idea of the paragraph. In supporting details, the students write enough evidence that supports the student’s argument. Here, the students should develop the ides in detail with enough examples. The pie graph above shows that the majority of

the students failed to develop the supporting details properly. The pie graph shows that students made 26 % errors in writing the supporting details properly. It means they did not even know the general structure of a paragraph or composition. Among 25 scripts, the researcher has found that, few students tried to develop the composition with evidence that supports the topic sentence. Some students tried to develop the supporting details within 3 or 4 paragraphs. Very few students developed the paragraph in a single paragraph.

Incomplete Sentences

The pie graph above shows that the students made 18 % errors regarding the incompetency in writing English sentence. It shows their lack of knowledge to write in English as they fail to express their thoughts properly. Very few students tried to complete the sentences properly.

Lack of Coherence

In paragraph writing coherence is very important because students get confused after writing some sentences because of their mother interference. It means the quality of being logical and consistent in the writing.

The pie graph shows that the students made 27% of errors regarding the lack of coherence. Students failed to be a consistent writing in their paragraphs. Very few students tried write body paragraphs but those sentences lack coherence in supporting detail.

Repetition Error

The pie graph shows that the students made 12% errors in repetition. In paragraph writing repetition is totally prohibited. Especially at tertiary level it is not acceptable to write the same thing again. But, there is a tendency that students try to write the paragraph broadly by using repeated words continuously. It shows their incompetency as well as inability to express their thoughts in English. It shows their negative attitude towards the paragraph writing.

No Ending

In paragraph, the ending part regarded as the conclusion part. In this part, the students should summarize the main points of the paragraph. The pie graph above shows that the students made 3% errors regarding the no ending error. It means very few students made this error. Most of the students tried to write more or less some sentences in their paragraph.

Analysis and Findings of Qualitative Data

The researchers interviewed the participants and collected qualitative data.

Q.1: Do you think error free writing is very important for your career? If yes explain why?

All the students do understand the fact that writing error free sentences is a crucial part to develop their career. They added that after completion of their graduation they will apply in different companies or banks or other institutions. “Every institution will give more priority to the students who know English well”, expressed one student.

Q.2: What type of errors do you mostly do while writing? Give some examples?

Most of the students answered that they made mostly grammatical errors followed by spelling errors. The students added that inadequate vocabulary further challenges them to express their thoughts. “Tense” and “Sentence construction” are two of their major flaws.

Q.3: Do you think that maximum number of students are aware of their errors in writing?

All the students negatively answered that they are not aware of their errors in writing and that is why they make mistakes. The students do believe that they should be more concerned about the errors. They also believe that individual student counseling is the most effective way for the students to understand their errors.

Q.4: Do you think teachers can help students to do less error in writing? If yes, how?

All the students positively answered, “Yes! teachers can help us to do less error in writing.” The students added that the teachers can check their copies in front of them, identify their errors and make them understand.

Q.5: Do you like to use error free writing in Social networking sites?

Most of the students answered, ‘Yes! Absolutely’ while answering this question. They do realize the fact that writing error free sentences can help them look smarter in social media.

Q.6: Do you think the writing courses are helping you in avoiding errors to write in English?

Each and every student positively answered that ‘Yes!’ the writing courses are helping them in avoiding errors in English writing. They realize that they lack in academic writing skills.

Conclusion

The study was aimed at investigating the impact of error analysis as well as the most frequent errors that the tertiary level students made in writing the paragraph. Therefore, a number of different grammatical errors, spelling errors, fragment errors, preposition errors, punctuation errors, modifier errors, capitalization errors, proper word order errors and article errors were found in their English paragraph. The researchers have found that, the errors made by the students in writing mostly are spelling errors (35%) followed by grammatical errors (32%). It has been noticed that, they commit errors because they are not careful and they have lack of knowledge as well as mother tongue interference. Lack of writing practices, do make the students forget the proper rules of academic writing. To reduce the errors, more English writing courses should be introduced in the universities along with the school level. Furthermore, our education method should be changed according to the student’s need.

The research highlights the fact that, the non-English majors frequently commit errors in several areas of writing. Therefore, it hampers their academic life in universities because at this level it is not acceptable. They make silly spelling errors which can be considered unacceptable at tertiary level. In fact, they are learning English from the very beginning of their school lives. As students of non-English majors, they do not take it seriously. If proper steps are taken to reduce the errors then the concerned students will benefit.

Therefore, further research may be undertaken for finding out how to reduce the errors in writing the English paragraphs properly. Bangladesh is a monolingual country but there is no

denying the fact that English has occupied a significant position as a means of communication in any sector. In Private Universities of Bangladesh, English is extensively used for all the activities. Error free English is also required to communicate with the world abroad. The students need good English writing skills wherever they go, especially when they go for higher education in different countries. So, remedial action must be taken.

The researchers hope that this research will help the students (especially non-English majors), teachers, curriculum designers to develop the teaching method, teaching aid and material as per the student's need. Error analysis is very useful for the non-English majors because this will help the students to find the problem areas. It will be beneficial for the teachers to design remedial exercises for the students paying more attention to the trouble spots.

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Tanzin Ara Ashraf

M.A. in English Literature

tanzen@kku.edu.sa

Department of Languages and Translation

King Khalid University, Abha, Saudi Arabia



Tasleem Ara Ashraf

M.A. in English Literature, M.A. in ELT

tasleem1702@yahoo.com

Department of English

Stamford University Bangladesh

