

**ERROR ANALYSIS OF MECHANICS IN WRITING COMPOSITION  
PRODUCED BY EFL ACADEMIC STUDENTS OF STKIP PGRI JOMBANG 2019/2020**

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**Abstract**

This research investigates category of mechanics writing error that is commonly made by the first semester of EFL academic students of STKIP PGRI Jombang. Mechanics of writing is any component in writing or convention of print that only exists in the written language and do not exist in the spoken language, and it has function to support writing has its readability and intelligibility. This research is case study research, and it uses descriptive qualitative as the research method. The finding of the research reveals the common errors of mechanics in students' writing from highest to the lowest are punctuation (comma, period, apostrophe, semicolon, and quotation mark), capitalization, spelling, pronoun, numbers and numeral, and abbreviation. About the cause of error, the result of this research support and enhance the theory of Richards about cause of error. Based on the research finding, it suggested the students to practice more in using appropriate use of mechanics in their writing. This research might also helpful to give insight of current problem occurred by the students and suggests the lecturer to concern in fixing the errors and not ignoring the importance of correct mechanics in student's writing.

**Keywords:** error, error analysis, mechanics, writing, EFL.

**Introduction**

Learning English in EFL or English as foreign Language has a common problem in the global life. Nowadays, a lot of people tries to learn English. It is because English is been the language of the world which is mostly used by almost people in the worldwide to relate each other. By understanding English well, people will capable to connect, communicate, earn wider job chance, obtain sufficient knowledge from unlimited sources, etc. Consider the importance of English as explained above, people in the world learn English, especially Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is categorized as foreign language, and as foreign language learners, errors will be common problem while the process of learning the target language, including errors in writing, another productive skill besides speaking.

In order to make a complete communication, there are four fundamental skills in language, they are: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. As productive skill, writing is regarded by most second language learners as the most difficult skill to learn. According to Allen and Corder in Pescantee (2017), writing is the most difficult of the language ability to acquire, and it was further observed that errors still exist even for those students in tertiary level, despite they already took language study in academic level.

According to Raimes, there are three reasons why students get the difficulty in writing. First, writing needs integrated abilities which involve grammatical structure. Second, writing has many aspects that should be mastered by the students. Third, students

become involved with the new language; they have effort to express ideas into their non mother language. As one of medium of communication, a good writing must be delivered clearly to avoid confusion and misunderstanding among readers. In this case, writer must pay more attention to construct good sentence structure with the proper use of its components. The one most important component in writing sentence is named as mechanics of writing. Mechanic of writing is any aspect or convention of print in writing that only exists in the written language and does not exist in the spoken language, and it supports the writing to has its readability and intelligibility.

Lasaten (2014) conducted research about common linguistic errors in English writing of teacher education students. The most common errors with its range from higher to lower were as follows: verb tenses, sentence structure, punctuations, word choice, spelling, preposition, and articles. From this research, we know that mechanics writing errors are still often committed by students of second language learners. Further, based on researcher's personal observation, almost people ignore, unaware, and lack of knowledge about the rules in how to use mechanics properly. Almost of them apply it arbitrarily, and it sometimes make the sentence has ambiguity meaning, confusing structured sentence, cause misunderstanding, etc.

From the consideration as explained above, so that the researcher interested to conduct the research about error in mechanics of writing application, and it is conducted in the early stage students. Hopefully, the error can be found or analyzed early so that the students will recognize about mechanic writing rules, and they get use to apply it in their writing correctly.

## **Research Design**

### **Method**

This research uses descriptive qualitative as the method of this research and uses case study as the approach of the research. The researcher uses this method because it can systematically explain about the facts and characteristic of the data. The researcher also consider to choose this method based on purpose and character of this research which is descriptive and analysis.

### **Source of Data and Data**

the data were students' writing tasks those are given by their English writing teacher, and the writing is in the subject study of writing Intensive Course or IC writing. Intensive Course is a particular course that is given to the first semester student or in the early level of course before continue to next level. In this research, the researcher took text about introduction text, recount text, descriptive text, and personal letter.

### **Subject of Research**

The subject of this research is students in STKIP PGRI Jombang specifically the first semester students of English department program in academic year 2019/2020.

## The procedures of data analysis

The procedures of data analysis in this research is based on Theory of Ellis' in analyzing error analysis, the steps are:

### 1) Collection of a sample of learner language

In this step, the researcher decides about students language problem that will be analyzed and consider about how to collect the samples. In this research, the researcher uses writing sheets or documentation, and to collect the sample, the researcher uses purposive sampling which means a technique to take sample by selecting the sample which is relevant to the research questions, such as specific people and specific case.

### 2) Identifying

In identifying, the researcher analyzes and identifies each of students writing error in the term of mechanic writing. In this step, the researcher underlined the word or sentence error and coding the error then calculate the errors.

### 3) Describing

In describing, the researcher provides table for each of the students, put the sentence errors into the table, then she determines the errors category in the term of mechanics writing lists and give explanation. After that, the researcher also provides table of error frequency produced by the students. The table view is as follow:

### 4) Explaining

In explaining, the researcher explains about the errors that is produced by students in the research finding. The researcher writes explanation about kind of mechanics errors, what are the most common errors produced by the students, and also the cause of they made the error by using theory of Richard.

To analyze the total error, the researcher uses the following formula:

$$\textit{The frequency of errors} = \frac{\textit{The number of each error}}{\textit{Total error}} \times 100\%$$

## Result

### Finding

The finding of this research is explanation of data analysis result. The aim of the explanation is to answer the research questions, those are: what kind of mechanics errors produced by the students, what are the most common errors produced by the students, and the cause of they made the error. In this research, the result showed that there were six errors made by the students in the term of mechanics errors, they are: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, numbers and numeral, and abbreviation. Below is the table number of error

Table 1. Number of error

No.	Error types	Frequency	Percentage of total error
1.	Capitalization	10	7%
2.	Punctuation		
	a. periods	20	14%
	b. comma	97	68.5%
	c. semicolon	2	1.4%
	d. apostrophe	2	1.4%
	e. quotation mark	1	0.7%
3.	Spelling	5	3.5%
4.	Gerund and participle	0	0%
5.	Numbers and numerals	2	1.4%
6.	Pronouns	2	1.4%
7.	Acronyms	0	0%
8.	Abbreviation	1	0.7
9.	Contraction	0	0%
	Total Error	142	100%

### Error 1 Capitalization

Capitalization is the form uppercased word that is used to indicates specific word, proper noun, or beginning of sentence. The result of this research shows that there are some errors in the students writing of capitalization especially in writing title, proper noun, and to start sentence after period in abbreviation. Students who made error of capitalization are student 1, student 6, student 7, student 8, and student 9.

Student 1 and student 6 made error in writing title but in different case. Below are the example of each error:

(St.1) Celebrating Graduation To Jogja (incorrect)

Celebrating Graduation to Jogja (correct)

(St.6) MY DAILY ACTIVITIES (incorrect)

My Daily Activities (correct)

From the example of error above, student 1 made error because she capitalizes the first letter of preposition *to*. In capitalization rules, capitalize only the first letter of the words excluding article, short preposition, and conjunction. It means that do not capitalize the first word of any little words within the titles including ***a, an, the, to, as, and, etc.*** While, student 6 made error of capitalization because all the letters are uppercased. In capitalization rules, do not uppercase all the letter, but only the first letter of each words. Based on interview, the cause of error made by student 1 is ignoring rule restriction because the student know the rule, but he/she ignore it and keep to capitalizes the preposition.

Further, based on researcher analysis from the interview, student 1 still could not differentiate between preposition and conjunction because he/she addresses *to* as conjunction. Whereas, the cause of error made by student 6 is inadequate learning because he/ she said that he/ she didn't know how is the correct form of the error he/ she has made.

Besides error of capitalization in writing title, another errors of capitalization are made by student 1 and student 7. The error is in the way how the student capitalize the first word to start new sentence after abbreviation of a.m. and p.m. Below are the example of the error:

(St.1) We arrived at school at 4.00 p.m. after that we immediately went home.

(incorrect)

We arrived at school at 4.00 p.m. After that, we immediately went home.

(correct)

(St.7) The PKKMB event on the last started at 7.30 a.m. and ended 4.30 p.m.

Which begins an explanation of the vision and mission of STKIP PGRI Jombang. (incorrect)

The PKKMB event on the last started at 7.30 a.m. and ended 4.30 p.m.

which begins an explanation of the vision and mission of STKIP PGRI Jombang. (correct)

From the example above, student 1 do not capitalize the first letter of new sentence. While, student 7 capitalize the first letter of the sentence which is not new sentence after the abbreviation of p.m. In the capitalization rules in a sentence, only every first letter of new sentence should be capitalized. In this error, the students said that the errors they made is because they do not understand or doesn't have enough knowledge about it. It could be concluded that the students problem is inadequate knowledge or inadequate learning.

Next, another error in capitalization is in the way how students capitalize proper noun in a sentence. The students who made this error are student 6 and student 8. Further, example of the error are explained below.

(St.6) after praying i watched television for a while.

(St.8) Up to the time of environment of new students throughout indonesia.

As shown in the example above, student 6 do not capitalize pronoun I in his/ her sentences. Student 6 made the same error 2 times in his/her writing, and based on interview, he/she made the error because he/she ignore the rules; he/she thought that it is not a problem when he/she do not capitalize the letter. Then, student 8 made error in capitalizing the first letter of Indonesia. It is important to capitalize proper words or specific person, place, or things so that the writer can show the readers the emphasized important words. Based on interview, student 8 made the error because the student make ignorance of rule restriction.

## **Error 2 Punctuation**

### **Comma**

Based on researcher's analysis, punctuation has highest total of errors, with the total of error is 122 or 86%. There are a lot period and comma errors in this study, another errors are in the use of apostrophe and semicolon. The researcher found the total error of comma is 100 or 70.5%, period is 17 or 12%, apostrophe is 2 or 1.4%, and semicolon is 2 or 1.4%. In this study, the comma errors those are commonly made by all students are omit to put comma to connect two or more sentences, to separate main sentence with introductory words, or sometimes misuse in using comma.

The first is error of using introductory comma to separate its main sentence with the introductory words, phrase, or clauses. Below are the example of the error:

(St.2) Honestly I'm afraid to tell you about this but I have to tell you. (Incorrect)

Honestly, I'm afraid to tell you about this but I have to tell you. (correct)

(St.2) I promise when you come home later I will replace it with any pet ....

I promise when you come home later, I will replace it with any pet ....

(St.1) After the 3 beaches we continue the journey to Malioboro. (Incorrect)

After the 3 beaches, we continue the journey to Malioboro. (Correct)

From the example above, the students do not put comma to separate the main sentence with its introducer words, phrase, or clause. Based on researcher's analysis, all students made the same error; they do not put introducer comma to separate the main sentence with its introductory words, phrase, or clause.

Besides, students also made comma error in connecting two or more sentences or in compound sentence. In sentence, there are namely simple sentence, compound sentence, and complex sentence. Compound sentence is two or more independent sentence that joins together, and it requires a comma to connect the sentences. Below are the example of the error:

(St.4) I once give Roxi the head of the fish but Roxi did not touch the food.

(Incorrect)

I once give Roxi the head of the fish, but Roxi did not touch the food.

(correct)

(St.1) On the way there we were very happy on the bus we sang together.

(Incorrect)

On the way there we were very happy on the bus we sang together.

(correct)

From the example of student 4, the student do not put comma to connect two independent clause in compound sentence. While, student 1 do not put coordinating conjunction and comma so that the sentence has confusing meaning. From this case, all students made the same error in almost their writing. the student do not know what is correct, they made the error because they haven't had enough knowledge about it.

The next error of comma is the use of comma in words, phrase, or sentence in series; the students do not put comma in words series. The student who made this error is student 3 and student 5. Below are the example:

(St.3) We there talked a lot about our activities after we graduated from senior

high school we also exchanged ideas and opinion about many things throughout all night. (Incorrect)

We there talked a lot about our activities after we graduated from senior high school, we also exchanged ideas and opinion about many things throughout all night. (Correct)

(St.5) I really like reading, especially reading books, story books, novels and much more. (Incorrect)

I really like reading, especially reading books, story books, novels, and much more. (Correct)

Then, the next error of comma is the use of comma after salutation and closing of letter. The standard rules is both formal and informal letter requires a comma after the salutation and the closing words of the letter. Below are the example of the error:

(St.3) a. Dear Amylia (Incorrect)

Dear Amylia, (Correct)

b. Sincerely (Incorrect)

Sincerely (Correct)

From the example above, the researcher found that student 3 made the error because ignoring rule restriction of comma use. The student thought that a comma in salutation and closing of letter is optional, so he/ she thought that it is no problem when he/ she do not give a comma after it.

### **Period**

Period is the highest error after comma. The researcher found that the common error of period made by the students are misuse in using period, omission of period, and error of period in abbreviation of time. Below are the example of the error:

(St.5) My father worked as a builder. And my mother is a housewife. (Incorrect)

My father worked as a builder, and my mother is a housewife. (Correct)

*Or*

My father worked as a builder and my mother is a housewife. (Correct)

(St.6) At 9 p.m (Incorrect)

At 9 p.m. (Correct)

(St.9) a. Up to the time of environment of new students throughout indonesia \_I made the decision for the list. (Incorrect)

Up to the time of environment of new students throughout Indonesia, I made the decision for the list. (Correct)

b. Finally, when I compared my past and present life \_I feel like I am dreaming. (Incorrect)

Finally, when I compared my past and present life, I feel like I am dreaming. (Correct)

### **Apostrophe**

The result of this research shows that apostrophe error is made 3 times, and it is made by student 3 and student 5.

(St.3) It was at my friends house, Ryana house. (Incorrect)

It was at my friend's house, Ryana. (Correct)

(St.3) The other guest were friends from Ryana and also come from extended family of Ryana parent. (Incorrect)

The other guest were friends from Ryana and also come from extended family of Ryana's parent. (Correct)

(St.5) My name is Anggik Siputri Sukma ,but usually my friend's usually call me Anggik. (Incorrect)

My name is Anggik Siputri Sukma ,but usually my friends usually call me Anggik. (Correct)

From the example above, the sentences made by student 3 do not have apostrophe to show possession. In apostrophe rules, every possessive noun uses an apostrophe to show possessive of the noun. The student omit the apostrophe because he/ she still confused and hesitate to apply apostrophe use in his/ her writing. Whereas, from the example of error made by student 5, the student made addition of apostrophe because the student has inadequate knowledge about apostrophe use. For addition, student 3 and student 5 made this error because they are still confused about possessive noun.

### **Error 3 Spelling**

In this research, the researcher detects error of spelling 5 times from all the 10 students' writing. Below are the example of the error

(St.5) a. my self (incorrect)

myself (correct)

b. My name is Anggik Siputri Sukma but usually my friend's usually call me Anggik.

My name is Anggik Siputri Sukma, but usually my friends usually call me Anggik.

(St.8) a. My other sacrifice was when I had to leave my habbit. (Incorrect)

My other sacrifice was when I had to leave my habit. (Correct)

b. My mother always encouraged not letting ourself down. (Incorrect)

My mother always encouraged not letting our self down. (Correct)

c. Everybody around as watched, laughed and some showed symphaty. (incorrect)

Everybody around as watched, laughed and some showed sympathy. (correct)

From the example above, student 5 made error of spelling because he/ she separated the words of *my* and *self*. It should be myself, not my self. From the interview, the



researcher found that student 5 cause of error is inadequate knowledge. In example a, student 5 did not understand that the correct spelling is *myself*, and he/ she did not understand that between my self and myself has different meaning. While, in the example b, student 5 put apostrophe to spell plural form of friend. In this case, the student less knowledge about the function of apostrophe, so he/ she made overgeneralization error in spelling *friends* into *friend's*. Next, from the example of student 8 errors above, the researcher finds that the cause of the student's error is inadequate knowledge because the student did not know where was his/ her fault, and he/ she thought that those words were correctly spelled.

#### **Error 4 Number and Numeral**

From all the collected data, number and numeral error is only made by student 10. The total error of number and numeral is 2 times or equivalent to 1.4%. Below are the example of the error:

(St.10) a. This year because I am still in semester one of course.

b. 5 years from now I have many desires too.

In the first example above, the student is better to uses the common form to addresses semester level. It can be first semester, semester 1, or 1<sup>st</sup> semester. Then in the second example, the student uses number to start sentence. The APA rule for numbers and numeral is that do not use number to start sentence or in the beginning of sentence, so it should be spelled out into word. From the example of error above, the researcher finds that the cause of the student error is inadequate knowledge.

#### **Error 5 Pronoun**

In this research, the researcher detects pronoun of error for 2 times or equivalent to 1.4%. In the example below, student 1 made pronoun especially object pronoun. The object of the sentence refers to *we*, so the object should be *us*, not *them*. While, student 2 also made error of object pronoun because the sentence do not have object.

(St.1) we immediately went home because our parents had picked up each of them. (incorrect)

we immediately went home because our parents had picked up each of us. (correct)

(St.2) I feed and drink ... on time. (incorrect)

I feed and gave him drink on time. (correct)

From the example above, the cause of error made by student 1 is ignorance of rule restriction.

#### **Error 6 Abbreviation**

From all the collected data, the researcher found 1 error of abbreviation especially initialism. Initialism is abbreviation that stands for words by taking the initial letter of each word, and they are pronounced individually. Below is the example of the error:

(St.7) PKKMB (New Student's Orientation Program) it is a program that college is setting up for new students

From the example above, the information of the initial letter uses bracket or parentheses, so the initial should be spelled out into its original word, then add the explanation after the bracket. The student made the error because he/ she didn't understand or didn't have knowledge about it.

### **Discussion**

From the data finding above, the researcher found that this research support the theory of Richard about cause of error, they are overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesis; and it also enhance the theory, those are caused by students incomplete knowledge or inadequate learning.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the result that had explained in the previous chapter, the result of this research found that the mechanics of writing error made by the students are capitalization, periods, comma, semicolon, apostrophe, quotation mark, spelling, numbers and numeral, pronouns, and abbreviation. The range of the common errors of mechanics writing made by the students from highest to the lowest are punctuation with total errors is 122 or 86%, capitalization with total error is 10 or 7%, spelling with total error is 5 or 3.5%, pronoun is 2 or 1.4%, numbers& numeral is 2 or 1.4%, and abbreviation is 1 or 0.7%. From all the errors above, it is found that the error of comma and period are the highest error with the total error is 97 or 68.5 for comma and 20 or 14% for period.

Then, the causes of errors identified in this research are: The students knew the rules, but they ignore it because they thought that it is not a serious problem, so they do not pay serious attention on it; the student do not know the restriction rules or lack of knowledge; and the students over generalize the restriction of rules.

Last, making error is unavoidable especially for second language learners. So, every learners need feedback and evaluation so that they will not make such repetition errors.

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