

EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' SUBSTANCE ERROR ON DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY (Case Study at STBA Prayoga)

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Abstract: This study reports on a research that analyzed substance errors in the writings of third semester English major, such as punctuation errors, typographic errors, dyslexic errors, and confusable. The technique used to collect data is a documentary technique and then the data were analyzed by using a descriptive qualitative method. By detecting punctuation errors through the four types of errors proposed by James (2013), educators can see the difficulties experienced by students and help overcome these obstacles by choosing strategies and innovative teaching methods that are appropriate to solve the problems of spelling errors faced by students. It was found that the most mistakes made by students were punctuation errors, while the least common was dyslexia. The results of this study are then recommended as input to make it easier for Indonesian learners to understand the target language, which in this study is English, especially in improving writing skill.

Keywords: error analysis, punctuation, typography, dyslexic, confusable.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini melaporkan penelitian yang menganalisis kesalahan substansi dalam tulisan-tulisan jurusan bahasa Inggris semester tiga, seperti kesalahan tanda baca, kesalahan ketik, kesalahan disleksia, dan konfusif. Teknik yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah teknik dokumenter dan kemudian data dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Dengan mendeteksi kesalahan tanda baca melalui empat jenis kesalahan yang dikemukakan oleh James (2013), pendidik dapat melihat kesulitan yang dialami oleh siswa dan membantu mengatasi hambatan tersebut dengan memilih strategi dan metode pengajaran inovatif yang tepat untuk memecahkan masalah kesalahan ejaan yang dihadapi oleh siswa. Ditemukan bahwa kesalahan yang paling banyak dilakukan oleh siswa adalah kesalahan tanda baca, sedangkan yang paling tidak umum adalah disleksia. Hasil penelitian ini kemudian direkomendasikan sebagai masukan untuk memudahkan peserta didik Indonesia memahami bahasa target, yang dalam penelitian ini adalah bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis.

Kata kunci: analisis kesalahan, tanda baca, tipografi, disleksia, konfusif.

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INTRODUCTION

Realizing the importance of being able to master English for the future, the government has started to introduce English curriculum to learners from elementary school.

Even in some places of early childhood education (PAUD) have also provided children under the age of 5 with the ability to speak English. This early introduction to English is done so that children can understand and use English better in the future.

Even so, there are still many mistakes made by students in using English. Errors can be seen in productive skills, namely speaking and writing. The number of errors made by students will definitely affect their learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the success of the learning process of students can be seen from the learning outcomes marked by an increase in changes in behavior and an increase in changes in knowledge in individuals who study (Hasanah & Nursalam: 2020). In other words, when a student makes many errors then his score will also be unsatisfied.

However, the most prominent errors can be seen from the writings made by the students. Even students majoring in English are not free from errors, both in substance errors, grammatical errors, lexical errors, and discourse errors in the writings they produce. Furthermore, James (2013:137-138) said that writing errors occurred due to two causes, namely: Inter-lingual and Intra-lingual. Inter-language errors are caused by interference of the first language which leads to a negative influence on the target language. The first language is sometimes something that interferes with learning the target language. This is usually due to learners who often transfer or divert from the first language that has been previously studied. The influence of the first language on the target language can be seen from the sentence structure formed by the learner. In transfer theory, the learner tends to transfer the structural and cultural patterns of the language being studied.

Meanwhile, Intra-lingual errors are made by learners at the stage of development of target language acquisition that lead to the general characteristics or complexity of the rules of the target language being studied. As explained by Richards (1974:173), intra-lingual errors usually appear in the form of errors due to over-generalization, ignoring the limitations of the target language rules, imperfect application of rules, and the formulation of the concept of rules incorrectly.

Besides the factors causing errors above, knowing students' mistake is important in the process of teaching and learning. Corder in Hamzah (2012) proposed that students' errors have positive incentive for educators, understudy and specialists. Mistakes can give

the sign for the educator of how far the student has come and what he actually should realize. In the meantime, in the piece of understudy mistake is an instrument used to try out theory concerning the language being learn. The idea above is also in line with what is being proposed by Zawahreh (2012) that knowing students' error is a great tool to tell teacher in three various ways; how far the students have achieved the goals of the study, what appropriate strategies to discover the language, and how succeed the hypotheses about the nature of language being learned. Therefore, studying Error Analysis may give beneficial input for the educators.

In this article, the discussion is focused on spelling errors which are classified as errors in substance or content. This substance error is one of three types of errors in writing besides text errors and discourse errors. This substance error consists of spelling errors and pronunciation errors. Spelling errors are seen in the results of writing, while pronunciation errors occur when speaking. Furthermore, the research was limited to spelling errors by taking samples in the form of English essays by third semester students majoring English at STBA Prayoga.

Spelling is a rule in describing the sound of words in written form and the use of punctuation marks. This is also reinforced by Tarigan (2009: 2) who says that spelling is a way or rules for writing words with letters according to linguistic disciplines. The study of spelling is very important in everyday life. Good spelling skills are needed by students, especially to master writing skills. Tarigan (2009: 3-4) also conveys several reasons regarding the importance of spelling skills, as follows:

1. Spelling errors can cause readers to misunderstand the meaning of a word, such as: washing for the sacred (has a different meaning).
2. Correct spelling is required to make a distinction in meaning, such as: immigration or emigration.
3. Learners who know how to spell can understand dictionaries better so they don't waste time studying.
4. The ability to spell is closely related to educational ability.
5. The ability to spell is related to the ability to pronounce words.
6. Low spelling ability eliminates the ability of learners to express their thoughts fully.

Realizing the importance of the spelling above, every learner should have good spelling skills. Spelling errors can result in ineffective communication. These errors not only occur in Indonesian essays, but also in English writings made by English students. Spelling errors are also known as 'mechanical' errors. These errors consist of four types which will be discussed further as follows;

1. Punctuation error

Punctuation marks are symbols that are not related to the phonemes of a language, but serve to show the structure and organization of a piece of writing, as well as intonation and pauses that can be observed during reading. Punctuation is needed so that the meaning to be conveyed is in accordance with the meaning received by others. Punctuation marks consist of periods, commas, semicolons, colons, hyphens, dashes, ellipsis marks, question marks, exclamation points, brackets, square brackets, quotation marks, single quotation marks, repeat marks, slashes, and apostrophes (James: 2013,131).

2. Typographical errors

Typography or typesetting is a science in selecting and arranging letters by setting their distribution in the available space, to create a certain impression so that it can help readers to get as comfortable reading as possible. Currently, typography has developed from the creation phase by hand to experiencing computerization. The computerization phase makes using typography easier and faster with a large number of font choices. Typographical errors are often made by writers, such as errors in spatial use which consist of three types, namely horizontal, vertical and diagonal-depending on the location of the letters that are related to each other (James: 2013,132).

Horizontal errors can be exemplified in letters that are located parallel, such as: writing the letter <t> in One *tear ago which should be the letter <y>, namely year. Vertical errors can occur in the letters <o> and <l> in the following examples: Sonia always has *loatmeal for breakfast which should be written as *oatmeal. While diagonal errors occur in the letters <x> with <d>. Other typographical errors can also be temporary errors (such as: upside-down letters (<ts> should be <st> in the first

word), omissions (sm*le should be a smile), and anticipation (<con*kluded> where <-k- > anticipates the sixth letter <concluded>).

3. Dyslexic Error

Dyslexia is a disorder that occurs in students' vision and hearing caused by neurological disorders in the brain so that students have difficulty reading and writing. The condition of learning disabilities in someone who suffers from dyslexia is not limited to the development of other standard abilities, such as intelligence, analytical skills and also sensory power in the sense of taste. The experts found this dysfunction caused by unstable brain biochemical conditions and also in some cases inherited from parents. Even so, the characteristics of people with dyslexia are not physically visible.

Some examples of dyslexic errors are: *<paje> for <page> which is an error in choosing two letters that can represent the same sound [dj] in English, and *<vow> for <vwo> for example of a sequence error. Dyslexia also produces errors that are not included in spelling errors. One of them is *<bed> for <deb> and *<adowt> for <about> which involves reversing the letter to <d> or what is known as strephosymbolia.

4. Confusable Error

According to James (2013:133), confusion can occur because of the presence of morphemes that sound similar. However, there are situations where two lexically different words have the same homophone in accent, such as *<course> for <coarse> as in course*/\coarse in fishing season, *<chords> for <cords> as in vowel chords */\cords. This error does not fall under lexical confusion because the speaker knows the two words in each case, but fails to distinguish the spelling of the words.

An example of lexical confusion in word passages is the case with <conson*ent> for <conson\ant>, <d*escriminate> for <d\iscriminate> (James:2013, 134). In this case, the writer does not confuse the two words, but the graphemic representation of the syllable or morpheme-forming parts of a word. This confusion has much in common with grapheme selection errors where more than one candidate is available, for example choosing <ff> instead of <gh> to represent the phoneme /f/ in

the word <draught>. All of this indicates that there is a clear demarcation line between lexical and spelling errors.

Method

In this study, researcher used case study method to describe and analyze data regarding spelling errors contained in the students' writing at STBA Prayoga. Case study empowers a researcher to look at the information inside a particular setting intently (Zainal, 2007). Thus, The researcher attempted to get profound information about the item by giving point of interest data. In doing this research, the researcher followed procedures to analyze error by Ellis in Troike (2010: 41). First, the researcher collected the sample of learner language by using documentary technique. Then, the researcher took 18 writings that were compiled as final semester test done in writing class. Second, the researcher identified the error in the sentences produced by students in their writings. Third, the researcher categorized the errors into four types; punctuation, typographical dyslexic, confusion. Fourth, the researcher explained the result of the analysis to get meaningful data. The last is the researcher evaluated the errors by constructing how serious the errors that may affect intelligibility. There were some indicators used to find out the errors made based on theory of James (2013). The following table is the indicators used related to students' substance error in writing.

Table 1. The Indicators of Students' Substance Error in Writing.

Types of Errors	Identification
Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Periods• Commas• Semicolons• Colons• Hyphens• Dashes• Ellipsis marks• Question marks• Exclamation points• Brackets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Square brackets• Quotation marks• Single quotation marks• Repeat marks• Slashes• Apostrophes• Capitalization
Typographical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horizontal• Vertical• Diagonal
Dyslexic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• choosing two letters that can represent the same sound• sequence error• Strephosymbolia
Confusable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grapheme selection errors

The data, then, were identified for any errors made in students' writings. After that, the researcher proved the errors by correcting them. Next, the researcher classified the errors and evaluated them. This step may give consideration that different errors are being weighed in order to distinguish which error should get more attention and be taught in classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data which were gotten in this part dealt with the students' substance errors in writing descriptive text. Skill in writing was needed to be possessed by the students since it was used to make the ideas understandable. In fact, by having accurate language, the result of students' writing would be good. Spelling errors in the descriptive essays of third semester students at STBA Prayoga were investigated from four aspects, namely punctuation errors, typographical errors, dyslexia, and confusion. There were eighteen (18) essays being compiled as data. It was proved that the students had different problems in using appropriate spelling on their writing. Those problems were described based on the

indicators which were used based on the theories. Those indicators were divided into some sub-indicators so that the researcher got detailed information about errors they made in writing descriptive text.

There are at least four types of punctuation errors contained in the 18 essays of third semester students submitted. These errors include excessive use of lowercase letters, excessive and inappropriate use of comma, and lack of use of apostrophes. Total of punctuation errors found was 63 times with the most frequent errors found in the ninth essay which was 13 errors.

The incorrect lowercase letters errors were usually found at the beginning of sentences that should be uppercase. For this rule, Indonesian has similarity with English. Capital letters are used as the first letter at the beginning of the sentence. There are at least eight rules of using capitalization according to Wyrick (1987: 325). Beside capitalize the first word of every sentence, there are capitalize proper names, name of days, weeks, month and holiday, titles when accompanied by proper names and when referring to particular person, principal words, first of in direct quotation, and points of compass. Some examples of this error are presented below:

(Essay 2) There are many activities that can be done at night. **one** of which is **Playing** games.

(Essay 4) In the day time, we are **Very** busy to each other.

(Essay 7) Next, **Because** I do a lot of things at the day time, I become so tired at night.

Based on the samples of error above, those are dominated with misuse of capital letters instead of lowercase letter. The word **Playing**, **Very**, and **Because** do not state the proper name. They also do not appear at the beginning of the sentence. Therefore, the use of capital letters there are incorrect. Differently with the word **one** in essay 2 is a kind of error in using lowercase. Since the word is at the beginning of the sentence, then the first letter should use capital letter. This kind of punctuation error occurred 29 times.

Meanwhile the next frequent error found in punctuation error is inappropriate use of comma which appeared 19 times. Use of comma is sometimes troublesome to English students because they are not used the same way in Indonesia. There are four main

categories of using commas in English explained by Oshima & Hague (2006: 281-282); introducers (comes in front of the first independent clauses), coordinator (links coordinate elements in sentence), inserter (used before and after any element that is inserted into middle of independent clause), and tag (adds certain elements to the end of sentence). In addition, comma can also be used to set off nonessential phrases and clauses, direct address, addresses and dates, degree or title, dialogue from speakers, and weak exclamation (Wyrrick:1987,309). In this research, there are at least 10 mistakes that are done by the third semester students at STBA Prayoga in using comma and 9 others in not using comma. The examples are as followed:

(Essay 8) I belong to day person. Because, my activities more in the morning
and the afternoon.

(Essay 9) I am a night person, for me at night I can do activities that I cannot
do during the day.

(Essay 15) I can focus on my study, watching Youtube, drawing and playing
games at night.

There are three different errors made on the samples above. In essay 8, the student does not need to use comma after *because* since it does not join two clauses. Actually the student should join the two clauses so that the sentence be: *I belong to day person because my activities more in the morning and the afternoon*. Therefore, comma use excessively since the connector *because* appears in the middle of the sentence not at the beginning. Meanwhile in essay 9, the student does misuse of comma because it does not combine two clauses. The use of period is more appropriate since it has two different ideas. Besides that, the mistake does in essay 15 is lack of comma used due to one function of comma as inserter. Comma should be used after *drawing* because it still additional information in the same sentence and also not the last detail added.

The next type of punctuation error did by the students is the use of apostrophe. Apostrophe is a punctuation that looks like upper comma. The function of this punctuation is varied; there are to indicate a contraction, to show possession, and also to form plural letters, figures, and words (Wyrrick: 1987,315-316). The researcher found 2 mistakes in using apostrophe, as followed:

(Essay 4) Because of **Im** a person who like more relaxed atmosphere to do activities.

(Essay 10) I **dont** like noise pollution because disturbing when I sleep.

Both in essay 4 and 10 above, the use of apostrophe are not being fulfilled. When a writer use contraction, the word should use apostrophe as *I'm* from *I am* and *I don't* from *I do not*. There are no other mistakes in showing possession or plural letters found in this research.

The last type of punctuation errors made is the use of periods. A period or full stop is used at the end of the sentence and the next sentence begins with a capital letter. It is also used with abbreviation and acronym (Abdulkhaled:2019). The researcher found 3 mistakes in using full stop as below:

(Essay 7) First, because I do a lot of thing in my day time. like study, exercise, and work.

(Essay 13) A few reason I choose a day person

(Essay 11) I don't like to do something in the noise because noise can disturb. and make my focus gone.

In the samples above, essay 7 contains misuse of full stop in showing example. The correct punctuation can be used in semicolon to tell example. Differently in essay 13, the student does not put full stop to end the sentence. Whereas in essay 11, the student also use full stop in appropriate because the sentence has not finished yet. The next clause is still the continuation of the previous sentence.

The next type of substance errors found is typographical error. This error was only found in the ninth and eleventh essays. The number of typographical errors that occurred was 6 errors, all of which were dominated by vertical errors which letter 'l' in the some words was used "i". Another letter that was known as horizontal error was the letter "r" that should be "t" in the word "at". The examples are as below:

(Essay 9) There is **aiso** time when I'm going to listen to music.

(Essay 11) There are so many things that make me become productive **ar** the night time.

Vertical errors are made in the word *aiso* that should be *also* means there is a result of premature selection of a later-occurring letter in the word. Meanwhile the production of *ar* is the result of selecting a letter after required since t and r is almost similar. Since there are no meaning of *aiso* and *ar* in English, of course it will impact to the understanding of meaning made. For readers who do not know that those words are typos, they may not understand the meaning being delivered by the writer.

Furthermore, based on the judgment made by looking at the frequency of the occurrence of errors which the students made, there were only 2 errors in spelling caused by dyslexia. Both of the errors were in the sixth essay. This dyslexia error is caused by an error in the order of letters. This error in sorting the letters occurs in the word *jast* which should be *just* and *vascinating* which should be *fascinating*. It means that most of the students did not face difficulty in reversing letters. Here are the samples sentences that contain dyslexic error.

(Essay 6) Not **jast** me, a lot of people in this world also more active in daytime.

(Essay 6) Like found brilliant ideas, make **vascinating** picture and lot of them.

The samples above show a misselection of two letters that represent the same sound. It is as /a/ with /u/ in English. The same mistakes also happen at the sound of /f/ and /v/ in the second example. However, there is no strephosymbolia occurring in this essay since there is now reversal letter.

In addition, confusion errors can be seen occurred in essay 4, 5, and 11. In essay 3, there were 2 errors due to confusion. This confusion error was identified due to the use of inappropriate letters due to the same homophone namely *affective* for *effective* in the sentence: *That's why the night time are more **affective** with family*. Another mistake is the improper use of the letter 't' in the word *starts* which should be *stars* in sentence *In the summer time, it would appear that they sky would be filled with **starts** , cezy* which should be *cozy* in the sentence *I prefer at night because of beautiful café, problem of myself, and **cezy**, move* which should be *more* in the sentence *I **move** interested in doing something at night*. The errors made may change the meaning of the sentences.

By having the findings of this research, it can be stated that the errors on the level of substance had happened in the process of writing made by the third semester English

majored students at STBA Prayoga. Related to the phenomenon found in the field, this research tried to analyze the most frequent errors made by the students. It was found that the punctuation errors was the first error appearing and turned out to occur most often. The mistakes in using punctuation may lead to confusion in sentences because it was used to clarify writer's thought to be understandable by the writer. Therefore, students must be familiar with punctuation rules.

The problems faced by the students in using appropriate punctuation are due to several reasons. One of the most possible factors is lack of practice. It can happen when the students are not used to using punctuation rules since younger school. Even though the material about this has been taught since childhood, if students do not get used to using it, the result of writing the students made will definitely have problems in punctuation. In addition, the lack of motivation to learn, responses and attitudes of students in the learning process are also connected to error forming factors.

CONCLUSION

Substance errors can form a different understanding because it can reduce the information to be conveyed. These errors can occur not only in Indonesian, but also in the use of English as foreign language in Indonesia. This type of error in English can be seen clearly in the results of writing in the form of essays from four kinds namely punctuation errors, typographical errors, dyslexia, and confusion. Based on the analysis data, the most mistakes made by students were punctuation errors, while the least common was dyslexia. By detecting spelling errors through these four types of errors, teachers can see the difficulties experienced by students and help overcome these obstacles by choosing new English teaching strategies and methods that are appropriate to solve the problem of errors faced by students especially in writing process. The results of this study are expected to provide good benefits for the development of learning English as foreign language in Indonesia.

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