

## Error Analysis of College Students' Paragraph Writing

Astried Damayanti<sup>1</sup>, Sri Utami Dewi<sup>2</sup>, Wawan Prasetyo<sup>3</sup>

[astried.damayanti@yahoo.co.id](mailto:astried.damayanti@yahoo.co.id), [dewisriutami@gmail.com](mailto:dewisriutami@gmail.com), [wawprasetyo23@gmail.com](mailto:wawprasetyo23@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP PGRI Trenggalek, Jl. Supriyadi 22 Trenggalek, Jawa Timur, 66319, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP PGRI Trenggalek, Jl. Supriyadi 22 Trenggalek, Jawa Timur, 66319, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP PGRI Trenggalek, Jl. Supriyadi 22 Trenggalek, Jawa Timur, 66319, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author: Astried Damayanti** ([astried.damayanti@yahoo.co.id](mailto:astried.damayanti@yahoo.co.id))

### Abstract

Errors in writing are often made by the writers. It is commonly occurred to the learners of second language. The research aims to know the college students' error in writing a paragraph. The researcher focused on finding the errors category and cause of the errors made by the students. The subjects investigated were the students of English Education Study Program of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek who joined Paragraph Writing subject. The design utilized in the research was qualitative research. It was included into content analysis during the data analyzed was the document of students' writing work. The result of analyzing showed that the errors made by the students could be classified into four categories: omission, additions, misformation and misordering. Meanwhile, the students' errors were caused both of inter-lingual and intra-lingual. Based on the result of the research, it is recommended to the teacher for learning more about L1 and L2. It is also suggested that the other researcher to conduct research with different design of error analysis.

**Keywords:** cause of error, content analysis, error categories

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, writing becomes one of essential skills to be learnt. Not only learnt by the students as the first language (L1), but it is also learnt by the students of second language (L2). Zhiyong et al., (2020) state rapid development influences the improvement of teaching and learning quality of English as Foreign Language. Therefore, Brown, (2007) argued there were some distinctions between L1 and L2 learners. L2 writers did not have good planning, and that they used fewer words (less fluent), made more errors (not accurate) and not effective in stating goals as well as organizing the material. Consequently, some appropriate approaches are needed to L2 writing; they are: (1) it is essential to decide the appropriate approach for L2 writer related with the instruction of writing in different contexts; (2) it is needed that the writing teachers are completed to deal effectively with differences of sociocultural and

linguistic of L2 students; and (3) the evaluation of L2 writing result should need to consider the primary differences between the L1 and L2 writing. In conclusion, the writing teacher should prepare the good planning to teach L2 students. Some approaches may be considered to teach L2 students with good knowledge about the difference between L1 and L2 students. Meanwhile, Basuki et al.,(2018) argue that the learner should choose selective vocabulary to obtain general target in language learning.

According to Brown (2007), several process approaches in writing can be classified as follows: (1) focusing to writing process that guides to the final product of writing; (2) assisting the students to know well the process of their composing process; (3) helping them to construct strategies for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting; (4) giving them enough time to write and rewrite; (5) placing the central importance of the process in revising; (6) giving the students chance to discover what they want to write; (7) giving students feedbacks during the process of composing; (8) encouraging the feedbacks from the instructor as well as the peers; (9) including the individual communication between teachers and students during the composition is processed.

Wilson & Glazier (2003) explain that writing begins with words connecting to form of phrases, then clauses and sentences. Paragraphs are formed from connected sentences and essays are constructed from connected paragraphs. In short, paragraph consists of several sentences that connected each other.

The research is focused on constructing a paragraph and aimed to know the students' error in writing a paragraph. The errors investigated are the categories of errors made by the students and the source of the errors. The researcher conducted the research to the second semester students of English Education Department of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek who join Paragraph Writing subject. The researcher uses the students' works of paragraph writing to be analyzed and investigated

Paragraph is formed from the words connected about a single main idea. Oshima. & Hogue (2007) state that a paragraph is a group of connected sentence that develops one main idea as the topic in the paragraph. It consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding paragraph. Topic sentence states the topic of the paragraph. It tells what the writer wants to discuss in the paragraph. Meanwhile, the supporting sentences explain the topic of the paragraph. The supporting sentences consist of several statements to give detail explanation of the

topic. The concluding sentence is summarization of the main points of the paragraph. It restates the topic sentences with different words. The paragraph can be classified into some types as follows: (1) narrative paragraph tells about events in the order that they occur; (2) descriptive paragraph describes an object and appeals about the sense, related with how it looks, tastes, smells and sounds; (3) logical division of ideas is related with an organization pattern which is divided the topic into some points and explain each point separately; (4) process paragraph describes how to do or make something clearly and is explained into several steps sequentially; (5) comparison/contrast paragraph explains about the comparison about two (more) objects or things and describes the similarities and differences of those objects or things; (6) definition paragraph defines or explain something for special purpose.

Zemach, D & Rumisek (2003) add some strategies how to choose a good topic to write a paragraph. The first strategy is not choosing too narrow topic. With too narrow topic, the writer does not have enough ideas to write. And the second strategy is not choosing too broad (general) topic. The writer will have too many ideas for a paragraph with too broad topic. To sum up, the writer should consider deciding the topic for his or her paragraph. Ahmed & Elnour, (2018) also argue that paragraph writing becomes one of the most essential parts in writing. The paragraph presents as a container of the ideas from an essay or other work of writing.

Some techniques are needed to produce a good writing. Harmer (2007) classifies the techniques as follows: (1) checking the language use (such as grammar, vocabulary, linkers); (2) checking the punctuation and layout; (3) checking the spelling' (4) checking the unnecessary repetition of the words or information; (5) deciding the information of each paragraph; (6) noting down the various ideas; (7) selecting the best ideas; (8) writing the a clean copy for corrected version; (9) writing out the rough version. Further, Blanchard. & Root (2004) describe the three steps of writing process. They are (1) prewriting to generate ideas, plan, and connect the ideas; (2) writing the first draft; and (3) revising and editing to improve what the writer has written.

Scoring rubric of writing is needed to evaluate or assess the learners' work. Oshima and Hogue (2007) categorize the scoring rubric of paragraph into five elements. The elements are related with format, punctuatio and mechanics, content, organization, and grammar and sentence. Format evaluates: (1) there is a title, (2) the title is centered. (3) the first line is indented, (4) there are margins of both sides,

and (5) the paragraph is double-spaced. Punctuation and mechanics are related with (1) there is a period after every sentence, (2) capital letters are used correctly, (3) the spelling is correct, and (4) commas are used correctly. Meanwhile, contents focuses on: (1) the paragraph fits the assignment, (2) the paragraph is interesting to read, and (3) the paragraph shows that the writer used care and thought. Organization examines: (1) the paragraph begins with a topic sentence that has both a topic and a controlling idea, (2) the paragraph contains several specific and factual supporting sentence that explain or the topic sentence, including at least one example, and (3) the paragraph ends with an appropriate concluding sentence. Grammar and structure estimates a grammar and sentence structure score. With the scoring rubric, the learners' work can be assessed and evaluated in detail.

An error of writing is frequently made by the writers. (Dulay, et al. (1982) state that errors occur to learners' writing or speech. It becomes the flawed part of their work. Further, Irawansyah (2017) adds that we can observe, analyze and classify the learners' errors to express something related with system operating of the learners. Kalee et al., (2018) explain that error analysis is a kind of linguistic analysis which focuses on learners errors made. the error analysis highlights the significance of the errors made by the learners of second language. Karim et al. (2018) also define error analysis as the technique to identify, classify, and interpret systematically of unacceptable forms which are produced by learner of foreign language. To sum up, error analysis is a process of observing, analyzing and classifying the errors made by the learners of second language (L2).

Some categories of errors are needed to know the types of errors made by the students. Dulay et al (1982) classifies the errors into four categories; namely omission, additions, misformation, and misordering. Omission is error made by the disappearance of an item that must be formed in utterance. On the other hand, additions are the errors made by the appearance of an item that must not be formed in utterance. Additions are the opposite of omission. Meanwhile, misformation occurs because the structure is constructed with the wrong form. Misordering errors occur because the wrong place of a word or group of words to form utterance.

The errors are occurred because of particular causes. According to (Andrian, 2015) there are two majors of errors causes: inter-lingual errors and intra-lingual errors. Inter-lingual errors occur when the learners use their native language and the habit of their culture into learning and practicing target language. It other words, the

errors are influenced of the learners' mother tongue. Further, Dulay et al (1982) explain that interlingual errors are alike in structure to an equivalent phrase semantically or sentence of the learners' native language. Meanwhile, intra-lingual errors are related to the learners' misunderstanding the rules of target language. The learners are easily influenced by intra-lingual errors because of the limitation of their target language knowledge.

Error analysis can be conducted with some steps. Sihombing et al, (2015) classify some steps of conducting error analysis as follows: (1) collecting data both written or oral data, (2) identifying errors by comparing the learners' sentences with the correct sentences in target language, (3) describing errors such as classifying errors from grammatical category, (4) explaining why the errors occur, and (5) evaluating error.

This research emphasizes on investigating the type and causes of errors made by the students. The types of errors are analyzed based on the four categories of errors. Meanwhile, the causes of errors investigated are related to inter-lingual errors and intra-lingual errors.

The researches of error analysis have been conducted by several researchers. The first research was conducted by Altameemy & Daradkeh (2019). They investigated the errors of paragraph writing made by EFL students of Saudi. The research emphasized to rubric of writing (grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization) and paragraph level (paragraph development, paragraph coherence, paragraph unity and inconsistency of point of view). The second research was conducted by Karim et al. (2018) who investigated the errors of writing classroom made by EFL learners of Bangladesh. The result of the research showed that the common errors made by the learners were related to grammar, misordering, misinformation and overgeneralization. The research of error analysis was also conducted by Sihombing et al (2015). The research aimed to investigate the errors made by adult learners of their English writing work. The result of the research revealed that syntax errors are more often occurred than morphology errors. The errors were frequently found in verb phrase. Andrian (2015) also conducted the research to find the errors category made by EFL students in their writing work. The findings of the research indicated that the highest percentage was occurred from the tenses category and the lowest category was related to clauses and phrases category.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is employed in the research. Ary, D., et al., (2002) explains that qualitative researchers search of understanding of a phenomenon by emphasizing on the picture rather than breaking it down into two or more variables. Meanwhile, document or content analysis is used in the research. Ary et al (2002) describes content analysis as activity to analyze and interpret the recorded material of its own context. The material can be textbooks, public records, films, letters, diaries, reports, theme, and so on. The documents analyzed in the research are the students' works of writing a paragraph. The paragraph constructed is descriptive paragraph.

The subjects of the research are the second semester students of English Language Education Department of STKIP PGRI Trenggalek. The research is conducted to the students of class A consisting of 25 students who take Paragraph Writing subject. The instrument used in the research is the writing test. The students are assigned to construct a paragraph about Learning From Home (LFH) During Pandemic Era. The researchers employ some steps to analyze the errors. First, The collect the students' writing work as data. The writing focuses on paragraph form. Then they identifies the errors made by the students. From the errors made, the researchers classify the errors into four categories: omission, addition, selection, and misordering. Third, they describe the errors made by the students by classifying them. The next step is explaining the cause of errors related with inter-lingual errors and intra-lingual errors. The last step is evaluating errors that have been investigated.

## FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The researchers analyzed the students' error with the following steps. First, they collected the students' works. They got 25 paragraphs as the data to be investigated. Then they checked the works and identified the errors made by the student in writing their paragraph. The researchers classified the errors into four categories of error: omission, addition, selection, and misordering.

The finding of analysis shows that the errors occurred to four categories of errors. The several errors of each category are presented in the following table.



**Table 1.** The Errors Made by the students based on The Four Categories

Categories of Errors	Students' Error
Omission	1. We <u>can while</u> lying down, listening to music and eating snacks.
	2. And about LFH, I don't think it's too bad because I <u>can relax</u> as much as I can
	3. But the <u>condition not</u> possible to do all that
	4. ... <u>but can't</u> meet with school friends,.....
	5. There are some <u>lecturers explain</u> the material first and after that give the assignments.
	6. ...both with the guidance of lecturers or independently.
Additions	1. We <u>who</u> must still hold the gadget makes our eyes tired
	2. But with the current situation, during the covid-19 pandemic, <u>so that</u> the teaching and learning process is not delayed
	3. I had the choice to <u>the study</u>
	4. The good side at home is <u>that</u> I often meet with family
Misformation	1. .... the <u>class start</u> don't have to look neat.
	2. ....especially <u>when told</u> to do assignments by the Lecturer.
	3. ... if there <u>is no</u> very important need.
	4. At first I was happy because I was able <u>to went</u> home
	5. .... in my opinion, <u>is good or not</u> , because I get more assignments
Misordering	1. With a <u>system online learning</u> , interaction between lecturers and students .....
	2. When learning from home, I can utilize various <u>media online learning</u> .
	3. ....students are also not too concentrated in following the <u>activities teaching and learning</u> .
	4. Learning from home is something new and maybe <u>for some people it is fun</u>
	5. ....even though they're doing <u>learning online</u>
	6. My <u>connection internet</u> at home really doesn't support,

After describing and classifying the errors into four categories, the researchers investigated the cause of errors made by the students. The inter-lingual errors were occurred as well as intra-lingual error. The table below presents the cause of errors and the explanation of them.

**Table 2.** The Cause of Errors Made by The Students

No	The Errors	Cause of Errors	Explanation
1.	We <u>can while</u> lying down, listening to music and eating snacks.	Intra-lingual	The learner left the important item between can and while. Verb 1 must be added between them, e.g. study
2.	And about LFH, I don't think it's too bad because I <u>can relax</u> as much as I can	Inter-lingual	The error occurred because the influence of the learner's native language. In his native language, the sentence is correct; but in target language, it is not correct grammatically. "be" must be added between can and relax
3.	But the condition <u>not possible</u> to do all that	Intra-lingual	The learner didn't insert to be before not. "is" must be added between condition and not.
4.	... but <u>can't meet</u> with school friends,.....	Inter-lingual	The error occurred because the influence of the learner's native

5.	There are some <u>lecturers explain</u> the material first and after that give the assignments.	Intra-lingual	language, In target language, the subject is needed before can't meet. The learner didn't insert connector between lecturers and explain. The connector "who" is needed to be inserted between lecturers and explain.
6.	...both with the guidance of lecturers <u>or independently</u> .	Intra-lingual	In native language, the sentence is correct. But for target language, it is not correct. The learner must add verb before independently e.g. study.
7.	We <u>who</u> must still hold the gadget and makes our eyes tired	Intra-lingual	"who" is not needed for the sentence. It must be "We must still hold the gadget and makes our eyes tired"
8.	But with the current situation, during the covid-19 pandemic, <u>so that</u> the teaching and learning process is not delayed	Intra-lingual	The learner didn't need to add "so that". Without "so that", the meaning is clear as well as the grammar.
9.	I had the choice to <u>the study</u>	Intra-lingual	"the" is not needed to insert before study. The correct sentence is "I had the choice to study".
10.	The good side at home is <u>that</u> I often meet with family	Intra-lingual	The learner didn't need to add "that" before I. The sentence must be "The good side at home is I often meet with family".
11.	.... the class <u>start</u> don't have to look neat. .... the class start <u>don't have to look neat</u> .	Intra-lingual Inter-lingual	Grammatically, the sentence is not correct. It must be "starts". The error also occurred because the influence of native language. But in target language, the sentence is confusing. It must be "the class starts and I don't have to look neat".
12.	....especially <u>when told</u> to do assignments by the lecturer.	Inter-lingual	The sentence is influenced by the learners' native language. In target language, the correct sentence is by adding the subject. The sentence must be "...especially when we are told to do assignments by the lecturer."
13.	... if there is no very important need.	Intra-lingual	"no" in sentence should be changed by "not".
14.	At first I was happy because I was able <u>to went</u> home.	Intra-lingual	The use of "went" in sentence is not correct. The learner must insert Verb 1 after to. The correct sentence is "At first I was happy because I was able to go home."
15.	..... in my opinion, <u>is good or not</u> , because I get more assignments	Intra-lingual	The sentence is constructed with confusing form. The error occurred because the limitation of the learner's knowledge in constructing a sentence.
16.	With a <u>system online learning</u> , interaction between lecturers and students .....	Intra-lingual	The error occurred because the misunderstanding the rules of target language. The learner couldn't arrange the words to be sentence orderly. "system online learning" must be "online learning system".
17.	When learning from home, I can utilize various <u>media online learning</u> .	Intra-lingual	The sentence is not arranged in good order. "media online learning: must be "online learning media".



18.	.....students are also not too concentrated in following the <u>activities teaching and learning</u> .	Intra-lingual	“activities teaching learning” is not a correct order of phrase. It must be “teaching and learning activities”.
19.	Learning from home is something new and maybe for <u>some people it is fun</u> .	Inter-lingual	The sentence is constructed with the influence of native language. In target language, the correct sentence is “Learning from home is something new and maybe it is fun for some people.
20.	....even though they're doing <u>learning online</u>	Inter-lingual	The phrase “learning online” is arranged with the influence of native language. It is the result of native language translation to target language without following the rules. The correct phrase is “online learning”.
21.	My <u>connection internet</u> at home really doesn't support	Inter-lingual	The learner translated the native words into target language without the good order. “connection internet” must be “internet connection”.

From the analysis conducted by the researchers, the findings can be presented as follows. First, the errors occurred based on four categories (omission, additions, misformation and misordering). Omission errors occurred because the learners left the important item in their sentences, for instance in sentence “We can while lying down, listening to music and eating snacks.” The learner didn't insert Verb after “can” and it makes the sentence meaningless with incorrect grammatical. Additions errors showed that the learners appeared unnecessary item in their sentences. In sentence “We who must still hold the gadget and makes our eyes tired”, the learner didn't need to add “who” between “we” and “must”. The example of misformation errors occurred in sentence “.... the class start don't have to look neat.” The sentence was constructed with the incorrect form. The learner should add some items to make the sentence meaningful and the “start” must be “starts”. The sentence can be “.....the class starts and I don't have to look neat.” Misordering errors were also made by the learners. The errors occurred because the learners put the wrong order of a word or group of words to construct the sentence; for instance in sentence “With a system online learning, interaction between lecturers and students .....

The second finding of the analysis is the errors made by the learners were caused by inter-lingual as well as intra-lingual. Intra-lingual errors were caused by the influence of the learners' native language. They translated the words or sentences without following the rules of the target language; for instance in the following sentence: “And about LFH, I don't think it's too bad because I can relax as

much as I can.” In the learners’ native language, the sentence was meaningful. But in target language, it is not correct grammatically. The learner must insert “be” between “can” and “relax”. The example of intra-lingual errors can be seen from sentence “There are some lecturers explain the material first and after that give the assignments.” The error occurred because the learner had limitation knowledge about relative pronoun. The learner must insert “who” between “lecturers” and “explain”.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings indicate two main results of analyzing the students’ errors in writing a paragraph. First, the four error categories (omission, additions, misformation and misordering) were found in the students’ works. Omission errors were made because the disappeared important item or word in a sentence. Meanwhile, the learner made additions errors because the appeared unnecessary word or item a sentence. Misformation errors were made because the wrong form of constructing a sentence. Misordering errors were found because of the wrong order of a word or words in a sentence. Second, the errors occurred because of two causes; inter-lingual and intra-lingual. Inter-lingual cause was related with the interference of the learners’ native language to construct the sentence. Therefore, intra-lingual cause occurred because the limitation of the students’ knowledge in target language to construct a meaningful sentence and correct grammatically.

. Based on the findings above, it is recommended that the teachers should learn more about the distinction between L1 and L2 students. Different approaches can be applied in teaching L2 students. The other researchers are also suggested to conduct the research about error analysis with different design. It will add the knowledge and insight especially about error analysis in writing work.

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