

**Error Analysis of Students' Free Writing  
(A Descriptive Study at the English Department of STKIP Bina Bangsa)**

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**Abstract**

This study was conducted to identify the types of errors that made by the second year students of English Department of STKIP Getsempena Bina Bangsa in their writing-I and to analyze what factor causes the students make errors in their writing. There are about 16 students who have taken the writing class. This qualitative study was conducted by document analysis and interview. The document analysis was done by collecting students' writing papers; it was taken from the lecturer who taught academic writing class. The paper became the primary source supported by related references as the secondary sources. The whole primary data were classified based on the types of errors, and then they were explained. The writer also used interview protocol to cross check the data got from document analysis. This was important technique to gather the information about the factor causes the students make errors in their academic writing. The research finding shows the type of error that the students often made many errors in tenses. These errors occurred due to their lack of understanding about tenses and their usage. The other minor errors are considered mistakes because they know the rules, especially in using capital, punctuation, and determiners. Based on the interview protocol, the errors were made because of the influence of the first language; the students often think in Indonesian then write in English. The process of transferring the language infected the errors. This also was influenced by the students' habit that seldom read the writing product after they write it. Actually, the errors can be revised if the students can pay much more attention to their writing product. From this evidence, the writer suggested that teachers teach and train their students in constructing sentences in many forms of tenses as prewriting activity. Other suggestion for the teachers is that they remind students about minor mistakes to prevent repeated mistakes. The teacher also has to plan valuable and effective feedback in order to enhance students' development in writing skill.

**Key words:** *Error Analysis, Free Writing*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is one of a productive skills that is expressed in written mode. People enjoy reading the writing product everyday in form of articles in newspapers, magazines, novels, and others. It is shown that the product of writing is an important thing in human life. Nowadays, writing becomes other form of communication. Therefore, it is also important to learn writing so that the students master the written communication as well as spoken communication. Writing is the highest as well as the last form of communication to be mastered in which people actually transfer their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Unlike speaking, writing can help people consider more carefully the proper words to transmit a message or an utterance. Writing gives us more opportunity to go back and think again what we have written (Hammil 1975: 107).

Basically, the goal of teaching English is to bring the students to be able to communicate and use their English in real life by developing students' communicative competence, the complementary abilities to transmit meaning through talking and writing and the ability to comprehend meaning through listening and reading. As mentioned by Doff 'the ultimate aim of all English teaching is for students to 'know English', or at least know enough English for whatever purpose they have in learning the language' (Doff, 1994).

The purpose of writing task is related to the type of written format and the need of potential audience. Language learners will

have a great advantage if they know some possible purposes for writing, such as providing factual information, convincing the audience of validity of a point, persuading someone to act or think in a certain way, entertaining the audience, making the readers feel an emotion deeply, or evoking a certain mood (Oxford, 1990).

The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing instructors should take into account both strategy development and language skill development when working with students. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience. Writing or composing implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. Perhaps it is best viewed as a continuum of activities from the more mechanical or formal aspects to the more complex act of composing (Hadley, 1993).

Formulating new ideas can be difficult because it involves transforming or reworking information, which is much more complex than writing as telling. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the researcher engages in "a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Indeed, writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Compared to

students' writing in their native language, L1, however, students writing in their L2 have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. Although a certain amount of consciousness-raising on the part of the readers may be warranted, students want to write close to error-free texts and they enter language courses with the expectations of becoming more proficient writers in the L2.

It is true that grammar is not the only aspect that the teacher focuses on when grading student's writing, but basic grammar is the most important thing to check before other aspects such as diction or relation between paragraphs. Teachers' feedback on students' grammatical and lexical errors resulted in a significant improvement in both accuracy and fluency in subsequent writing of the same type over the same semester (Chandler, 2003). In order to make student's writing exercises better than the previous one, the teacher should remind them simultaneously about the mistakes they have made and tell them how to avoid their mistakes in order to make next writing better than before. Nevertheless, the result is not always satisfied.

However, many students regard writing as a very difficult subject to learn. Organizing sentences into paragraphs and joining paragraphs together are the most common problems for the students. Some experts, who are involved in language teaching, assume that a student who really wants to learn will succeed whatever the circumstances he/she studies. It is because writing is not only

focused on a product, but also on a process to produce a product which is much more important than the product itself. Moreover, Students are bored when they find writing as a difficult subject. That can be a very big problem in the teaching and learning processes.

Moreover, success in mastering writing does not wholly depend on the teachers, but students also play the main role of the teaching-learning processes. It is a usual thing in the processes of learning, especially that of a foreign language. Students frequently make errors during the teaching-learning process because errors are common features of the language learners' life. Lexically, the word "error" in the speech or writing of a second or a foreign language learner (Richard, 1985: 95) means the use of a linguistic item such as a word, a grammatical item, a speech act and others in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. It is inferred that students often make errors caused by lack of knowledge. It is different from the meaning of "mistake"; generally error is resulted from incomplete knowledge, while mistake (1985) is made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect of performance.

The researcher had tested the second semester students to order them to write about anything freely and find out that the students repeated their mistakes. At their level of second semester, they have studied some basic grammar such as using article, possessive

adjective, question tag, word order, adjective clause and phrase, etc. They also have studied the use of period, comma, capital letter and some other basic punctuation. Nevertheless, in their writing, the researcher found errors or probably mistakes in using those basic grammar and punctuation. Those experiences encourage the researcher conduct the error analysis of students' writing assignment. In language teaching, error analysis studies the types and causes of language errors.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. Teaching Writing**

The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be involved personally in order to make the process of learning experience affect their skill improvement. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a certain pragmatic approach. The teacher should be clear on what skills he/she is trying to develop. He/she also needs to decide on which type of exercise facilitate learning of the target area. Once the target skill areas and means of implementations are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure students' participation. By combining these objectives, the teacher can expect both students' motivation and effective learning.

Choosing the target area depends on many factors i.e. students' level, students' age, students' reason to learn English, and students' specific intention in the future. Other important information that should be known

by the teacher before choosing the target is what the students should be able to produce at the end of the exercise, and what the focus of the exercise is (structure, tense usage, creative writing). Once these factors are clear in the mind of the teacher, he can begin to focus on how to involve the students in the activity that promoting a positive, long-term learning experience.

After deciding the target area, the teacher can focus on the means to achieve this type of learning. As in correction, the teacher must choose the most appropriate manner for the specified writing area. If formal business letter English is required, it is of little use to employ a free expression type of exercise. Likewise, when working on descriptive language writing skills, a formal letter is equally out of place. With both the target area and means of production, clear in the teachers mind, the teacher can begin to consider how to involve the students by considering what type of activities are interesting to the students; Are they preparing for something specific such as a holiday or test?, Will they need any of the skills pragmatically? What has been effective in the past? A good way to approach this is by class feedback, or brainstorming sessions. By choosing a topic that involves the students, the teacher is providing a context within which effective learning on the target area can be undertaken.

Finally, the question of which type of correction will facilitate a useful writing exercise is of utmost importance. Here the teacher needs to think once again about the overall target area of the exercise. If there is an

immediate task at hand, such as taking a test, perhaps teacher guided correction is the most effective solution. However, if the task is more general (for example developing informal letter writing skills), maybe the best approach would be to have the students work in groups thereby learning from each other. Most importantly, by choosing the correct means of correction the teacher can encourage rather discourage student.

#### B. Error Analysis

Making errors is the most natural thing in the world and it is evidently attached to the human being. But, how do we define an error? There are different definitions of the word and as Ellis explains "learners make errors in both comprehension and production, the first being rather scantily investigated. Children learning their first language (L1), adult native speakers, and second language learners; they all make errors which have a different name according to the group committing the errors. Children's errors have been seen as "transitional forms", the native speakers' ones are called "slips of the tongue" and the second language (L2) errors are considered "unwanted forms" (George, 1972)".

According to Lennon (1991) an error is "a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers' counterparts". In the second language teaching learning process the error has always been regarded as something negative which must be avoided. As a consequence, teachers have always adopted a

repressive attitude towards it.

The study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) can be said to have passed through a series of phases defined by the modes of inquiry researchers have utilized in their work: *contrastive analysis*, *error analysis*, *performance analysis*, and *discourse analysis*. As we look into the roots and development of error analysis, we can first overview contrastive analysis to gain better insight into how error analysis became more popular among SLA researchers.

Corder (1967) went on to say that in first language acquisition, we interpret child's 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language. This evidence is also for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development; it is the 'errors', which provide the important evidence. In second language acquisition, Corder (1967) proposed as a working hypothesis that some of the strategies adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired.

For classifying the errors that learners made, researchers could learn a great deal about the second language acquisition process by inferring the strategies that second language learners were adopting. For learners themselves, errors are 'indispensable,' since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

Selinker (1992) pointed out the two highly significant contributions that Corder made: "that the errors of a learner, whether adult or child, are (a) not random, but are in

fact systematic, and are (b) not 'negative' or 'interfering' in any way with learning a target language but are, on the contrary, a necessary positive factor, indicative of testing hypotheses. Corder (1967) began to provide a framework for the study of adult learner language. Along with the influence of studies in first language acquisition and concepts provided by Contrastive Analysis (especially language transfer) and by the interlanguage hypothesis (e.g. fossilization, backsliding, and language transfer, communication and learning strategies).

In language teaching, error analysis studies the types and causes of language errors. Errors are generally classified into:

- modality (i.e. level of proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, listening)
- linguistic levels (i.e. pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, style)
- form (e.g. omission, insertion, substitution)
- type (systematic errors/errors in competence vs. occasional errors/errors in performance)
- cause (e.g. interference, interlanguage)
- norm vs. system  
[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Error\\_analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Error_analysis)]

A number of different categories for describing errors have been identified. Firstly, Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories: omission of some required elements; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements; selection of

an incorrect element; and misordering of the elements. Nevertheless, Corder himself adds that this classification is not enough to describe errors. That is why he includes the linguistic level of the errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon (Corder, 1973).

Ellis (1997) maintains that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time." This categorization can be exemplified as follows:

a. Omission:

- Morphological omission \*A strange thing happen to me yesterday.
- Syntactical omission \* Must say also the names?

b. Addition:

- In morphology \* The books is here.
- In syntax \* The London
- In lexicon \* I stayed there during five years ago.

c. Selection:

- In morphology \* My friend is oldest than me.
- In syntax \* I want that he comes here.

d. Ordering:

- In pronunciation \* fignisicant for 'significant'; \*prulal for 'plural'
- In morphology \* get upping for 'getting up'

- In syntax \* He is a dear to me friend.

From those classifications, the researcher reformulated another classification which is considered appropriate for the students of Al-Manar senior high school and also suitable for this study.

- **Error Analysis (EA): its roots and development**

The study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) can be said to have passed through a series of phases defined by the modes of inquiry researchers have utilized in their work: contrastive analysis, error analysis, performance analysis, and discourse analysis. As we look into the roots and development of error analysis, we can first overview contrastive analysis to gain better insight into how error analysis became more popular among SLA researchers.

1. Contrastive Analysis

Before the SLA field was established, from the 1940s to the 1960s, contrastive analyses were conducted, in which two languages were systematically compared. Researchers at that time were motivated by the prospect of being able to identify points of similarity and difference between native languages (NLs) and target languages (TLs). There was a strong belief that a more effective pedagogy would result when these were taken into consideration. Fries (1945), one of the leading applied linguists of the day, stated that the most efficient materials were those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared

with a parallel description of the native language of the learner.

Lado (1957), Fries' colleague at the University of Michigan, also expressed the importance of contrastive analysis in language teaching material design. He said that Individuals tend to transfer the forms, meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. It is done both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives. This claim is still quite appealing to anyone who has attempted to learn or teach a foreign language.

Lado (1957) went on to say a more controversial position, however, when he claimed that those elements that are similar to someone's native language will be simple for him/her, and those elements that are different will be difficult. This conviction that linguistic differences could be used to predict learning difficulty produced the notion of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH). The notion is that if two languages were similar, positive transfer would occur and on the contrary, negative transfer or interference would result if they were different.

2. Introduction of the Concept 'Error Analysis'

Stephen Pit Corder is the first linguist who advocated the importance of errors in language learning process toward applied linguistics community. Corder (1967) mentioned the paradigm shift in linguistics

from a behaviouristic view of language to a more rationalistic view. He emphasizes great potential for applying new hypotheses about how languages are learned in L1 to the learning of a second language.

Corder (1967) went on to say that in L1 acquisition, we interpret child's 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language. This evidence is also for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development; it is the 'errors', which provide the important evidence. In second language acquisition, Corder (1967) proposed as a working hypothesis that some of the strategies adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired. It does not mean, however, the course or sequence of learning is the same in L1 and L2.

By classifying the errors that learners made, researchers could learn a great deal about the SLA process by inferring the strategies that second language learners were adopting. For learners themselves, errors are 'indispensable,' since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

Selinker (1992) pointed out the two highly significant contributions that Corder made: "that the errors of a learner, whether adult or child, are (a) not random, but are in fact systematic, and are (b) not 'negative' or 'interfering' in any way with learning a TL but are, on the contrary, a necessary positive factor, indicative of testing hypotheses. Corder (1967) began to provide a framework for the

study of adult learner language. Along with the influence of studies in L1 acquisition and concepts provided by Contrastive Analysis (especially language transfer) and by the interlanguage hypothesis (e.g. fossilization, backsliding, language transfer, communication and learning strategies).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Based on the problems of the study, the writer needs to identify the types of errors made by the second year students of English Department of STKIP Getsempena Bina Bangsa in their writing-I and find out the causes why the students make errors in their writing. To answer the two problems, the writer has designed instruments of research namely:

### **1) Students' Writing Paper**

The primary data were from document of students writing products. The writer collected the students' writing task as the product of writing. In this case, the writer collected the students' writing papers in the classroom as the results of assignments given by the lecturers. Then the writing sheets were read, identified, labeled and categorized based on the errors done in the writing product. The data were categorized based on the kinds of errors made by the students. The same data was also used to count how often the students make certain errors and what factor causes the errors done repeatedly. This technique has been done during the research was conducted after the primary data are collected twice.

After collecting the students' writing exercises, the researcher identified the errors that had been categorized into five



classifications of errors. The researcher suggested these categorizations in order to suit the students' level of ability. Those classification or categories are:

1. spelling, capital and punctuation mark
2. article, possessive adjective and other determiner
3. tenses, including subject verb agreement
4. word order (Noun and its adjectives) and word form, derivative
5. Clauses and phrases (Conditional, wish, reported/quoted speech).

To ease the researcher's work of counting the errors of the students' writing, the researcher coded every category with the number. The researcher put number '1' for the errors in the first category, number '2' for the second category, number '3' for the third category, number '4' for the fourth category, and number '5' for the fifth category.

## 2) Interview Questions Sheet

After identifying some errors and classifying them into specific error table and explain the finding data, then the writer interviewed the students and lecturer based on her analysis finding. The writer prepared some questions based on her findings so that she got the specific results from the research subjects' answers. The lists of interview questions are designed in form of *interview protocol* so that the writer develops her questions according to the data she had got during the interview processes. Therefore, the writer should have some participants chose purposively from the research sample. Of course it was hard to remember every single statement of the

interviewee; therefore the writer used a tape recorder. So in this case, the interview transcripts were the important research instrument.

## FINDINGS

Getting information about the English Department's students of STKIP Getsempena Bina Bangsa ability in writing shows that they still have difficulties in exploring ideas so that the content of their writings are narrow to develop details of supporting paragraph. Lack of ideas also bordered them organize the paragraphs.

The simple things that the lecturer needs to consider are about the silly but repeated errors such as the use of capital letters as seen in the following classification:

Before checking the errors that include the five categories, the researcher counted first the number of word in each writings to know how long their writing is. This step is necessary according to the researcher because the students were asked to write the composition around 250 words and not more than 300 words. Therefore, the researcher wanted to know whether they could do like what was instructed or not.

In accepting the students' writing exercises, the researcher instantaneously observed the length of the composition and felt that some composition are too short. The researcher, then, counted them and found that the longest composition reached 312 words in length and the shortest one is only 174-word long. The average of their composition length is 193-word. However, the length is not the focus in this research.

Having finished counting the words of every portfolio, the researcher began checking those compositions for the occurrences of every category and the errors in it, so the researcher would divide the errors into five categories. The first category is about spelling, capital, and punctuation mark. The second one

is about article, possessive adjective and other determiner. The third one is about tenses, including subject verb agreement. Next category is about word order (Noun and its adjectives) and word form. The last category is about Clauses and phrases (Conditional, wish, reported/quoted speech).

Table 1. The summary of the percentage of the students' error in each category

	Category I (%)	Category II (%)	Category III (%)	Category IV (%)	Category V (%)	Average
Highest	24	64	89	60	50	45
Lowest	2	0	17	0	0	11
Average	9	30	53	19	16	26
Median	8	25	58	13	11	25
Standard deviation	6	19	20	19	13	9

Note:

Category

1. spelling, capital and punctuation mark
2. article, possessive adjective and other determiner
3. tenses, including subject verb agreement
4. word order (Noun and its adjectives) and word form, derivative
5. Clauses and phrases (Conditional, wish, reported/quoted speech).

The researcher began exposing the data of errors from the longest composition that can be looked at how many word they made. Instead of exposing the name of every student who owns the composition, the researcher named every portfolio with the alphabet A, B, C and so on.

To know who made error the most in every category, the researcher counted first the

frequency of each rules in every category then the errors of the rules. For example, student A had 312 words in his composition, which means that there should be 312 correct spelling of every word. There are 20 sentences, 7 words in the title and 13 proper nouns in the student's composition, which means that there should be 30 words beginning with capital. The student also had to use 19 periods at the

end of every sentence and there are 13 places in his composition that should use comma to separate adverb when placing before subject in a sentence and when the student mentioned something. There should be 29 correct punctuations, then, in his composition. Therefore, for the first category, there are 343 frequencies of grammar rule's occurrences. From those frequencies, student A made 18 errors.

The researcher thought that grading the students' ability in using grammar rules by looking at the accumulation of errors they made would not be accurate considering that the frequency of grammar rule's occurrences in every category was different in every composition. That is why the researcher thought that it is necessary to count the percentage of every category. The result of percentage will describe the students' ability more accurately.

For example, student A and student G who possess the same percentage of the first category, around 5%. Student A has 18 errors from 343 frequencies of spelling, capital, and punctuation whereas student G only has 11 error but from 201 frequencies. Therefore, in this category, the researcher considered both of them in the same level because the percentage of error is same.

The researcher needs to state here that the percentage counted using no decimal. As the result, the percentage of student A in first category, for example, rounded to 5 % from the real result 5.25%. The percentage of student G in the first category is also 5% from the real result 5.47%. The different considered

too light to differentiate students in his ability of writing. After counting the percentage of all data, the researcher found out the highest error, the lowest one, the average of those errors, the median result, and the standard deviation of errors in every category like what have been described in the previous table.

After counting the error in every category, the researcher recapitulated it as it is shown in Table 1 to find the percentage. From the table, we know that the most error made by the students is in the third category. The category is about using the correct type of tenses including its subject-verb agreement. The second position is category 2, which is about article, possessive adjective, and determiner. The category of word order occupies the third position in error modus. Category 5 and category 1 follow the fourth and fifth position in a row.

The result of counting shows us as well that the average of all errors is 26% where the median is 25%. This result is normal and acceptable for their level as Corder (1973) said that error is the evidence that the students are in the process of acquiring language. Nevertheless, the teacher should always try to enhance their students' skill to obtain the maximum ability of students to write in English.

Knowing the result that tenses is the major problem for second semester students, the researcher concluded that most of the students could not make correct tenses either using wrong subject-verb agreement or choosing the wrong tense when they expressed the ideas. The researcher assumes that there

must be the influence of their first language, Acehnese and Indonesian that has no tenses form. This is an interlingual error, which is the first language influences the target language and this is the result of language transfer. Error analysis studies, actually, does not regard these error as the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is internalizing and investigating the system of the new language. It is need to analyze why the aspects of interlingua error often made by the students. Not only to cross check the data got about the frequency of errors made by the students in writing, but also to answer the problems of the study number 2, the writer conducted interview protocol. Based on the interview technique, she found that most students have common behavior that influence the writing product such as not to write guiding by outline of ideas, think in Indonesian but write in English, not reading after writing.

From the interview, the researcher knows that the teacher is communicative enough in teaching. She can motivate her students to love English as an international language. The method used in his teaching is mostly direct method with communicative approach. The teacher usually asked the students to write something freely related to the text studied. It seemed that usually, there was no specific instruction to write in specific type of text such as narrative, descriptive or recount.

The teacher should be clear on what skills he/she is trying to develop. He/she also needs to decide on which type of exercise facilitate learning of the target area. Once the

target skill areas and means of implementations are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure students' participation. By combining these objectives, the teacher can expect both students' motivation and effective learning.

Based on the interview protocol, the errors above made because of the first language influence or interference, the students often think in Bahasa then write in English. The process of transferring the language infected the errors. This also was influenced by the students' habit; they seldom read their writing product after they write it. Actually the errors can be minimized if they can pay much more attention to the writing product.

Besides interviewing the teacher, the researcher also interviews the students to know how they feel in the process of teaching learning of English especially when they were instructed to write a composition. When the teacher questioned about that, their responses were little bit different. Nevertheless, the average answers were that they like English but do not like writing very much.

According to them, writing is difficult not only because their lack of knowledge about constructing sentences but also because of their difficulty of collecting ideas in order to put it in a composition. There are some persons, though, who like to write and they expressed that into their composition although the sentences still contained error. If learners perceive writing tasks to be useless, they may approach them in a careless manner.

Consequently, it is likely that they will be inattentive to errors, monitoring, and rhetorical concerns. However, if students are highly motivated, then any sort of writing task, expressive or otherwise, is welcomed.

The students also stated that when they write a composition they should at least prepare a dictionary of Indonesian-English or both English-Indonesian and Indonesian-English dictionary. That is because most of them do not know the words needed to express their ideas. For some students who do not own yet the dictionary needed will have a little problem in doing the task of composition. They should borrow from other students. Consequently, it took more time for them to accomplish the task.

The researcher also presumed that the other problem faced by second semester students of STKIP Getsempena BBG in writing is their carelessness in writing. The researcher noticed that the students still made mistake in the first category, which is about spelling, capital, and punctuation. The researcher considered it a mistake because they know the rules. They know that to begin a sentence they should use capital and end a sentence with a period. They also know that the proper noun should begin with capital. The teacher should remain them not to be careless and it needs more practice.

Moreover, the researcher also would like to emphasize the fifth category, which is about clause and phrase. Even though this category had less error, from the students' composition the researcher notice that the use of clauses is very rare. The researcher assumed

that they do not understand well the clauses and if there were more clauses in their sentences, most of sentences would not be correct.

The rarely use of clauses and phrases can be influenced as well by their native language. As they use clauses infrequently in their Acehnese or their Indonesian language, they hardly ever do it in their composition. This phenomenon can be considered an interlingua. The teacher, as what have been suggested above, should have clear target skill area. In this case, the students should be trained specifically about how to use clauses.

One of the most valuable perspectives in teaching writing is that students are introduced to invention techniques to help them discover and engage a topic. Rather than being expected to turn in a finished product right away, students are asked for multiple drafts of a work and taught that rewriting and revision are integral to writing, and that editing is an ongoing, multi-level process, not merely a hasty check for correct grammar.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

After doing the research about the error analysis of students' academic writing or students' composition, the researcher concluded some points as the following:

- The types of errors frequently made by the second year students of English Department of STKIP Getsempena Bina Bangsa were errors that interfere with meaning. The teacher should notice these errors more. They are as follows: Verb tense, Word order, Confusing word choice and Confusing spelling.

- There are also the errors that are less likely to interfere with meaning. These are considered mistakes, not errors. Students who did it usually know the rules but they are careless. In this case, the teacher should remind their students to be more careful and do the checking before submitting the task. Such mistakes are as the following: Article mistakes, Preposition mistakes, Pronoun agreement, Comma splices and Minor spelling mistakes.

The errors were made because of the influence or interference of the first language, the students often think in Bahasa then write in English. The process of transferring the language infected the errors. This is also influenced by the students' habit; the seldom read their writing product after they write it. Actually such errors can be minimized if the students can pay much more attention to their writing product.

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