

## COMMON SENTENCE ERRORS FOUND ON ONLINE DIARY OF 8<sup>TH</sup> BATCH SEA TEACHER BLOG WRITING

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**Abstract.** This study aimed to identify the common sentence errors that found on online diary of 8th batch SEA Teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines, to identify the most dominant errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines, and to describe the problems faced by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines in writing online diary. The research design of this study was descriptive qualitative. For collecting data, the writer used non-interactive techniques by analyzing nine online diaries and distributing questionnaire. Moreover, the writer employed three steps for analyzing the data, namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. The writer analyzed nine online diaries. The writer found the common sentence errors on nine online diaries written by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. The most dominant error was fragment (45%) followed by run-on sentence (31%), and dangling modifier (24%). Whereas, problems faced by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines were the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing, the lack of time management, the lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog and the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one.

**Keywords:** *Common Sentence Errors, Fragment, Run-on Sentence, Dangling Modifier, Online Diary, Blog Writing*

### 1. Introduction

In this modern life, English is adjusting in our everyday life. We can see that the website's information is updating in English nowadays. English becomes the most language used in internet transmission (Al-Kadi, 2018). For instance: if we want to travel abroad, we will look for the review of some places in internet. Our searching will come to related sources absolutely. The common information is served in English, so we need to master it in order to get the information. It shows that English is dominating the internet language today. Thus, the most consumed content on our daily life uses English (Curry & Lillis, 2015).

At the same time, internet has provided many features to help people. Those features give them the opportunity to create their creativity. Forexample, people use internet to create weblog. Blog becomes popular internet publishing that is used by people to express their experience, knowledge, information and etc. According to Wright-Porto(2011:5), a blog is a kind of web site which contains about everything and needs to be updated periodically. Currently, blog is not only used to share information, but also as a business tool to earn money from internet. In educational field, blog has been functioned as an alternative way for teaching tool. Some contents of blog can be used as learning references. Moreover, blog becomes a great collaboration between technology and writing practice inside or outside class (Awada&Ghaith, 2014). The format of blog's content is similar to a personal diary telling past events and experiences. It means that blog is being self-expression and innovation for many people.

One of the SEA teacher project requirements is writing online diary. It was written into two forms of diary: formal and informal online diary. The formal online diary contains general

information of school, academic administration, pedagogical content, observation on teacher, plan, and teaching practice. On the other hand, the informal diary shows all the activities that have done during 30 days. Those contents must be uploaded in personal participant's blog. So, everyone can get the information from there. The participants have tried to arrange a good writing, however there are still many common sentence errors found on online diary of SEA Teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. It happens because English is not the first language in Indonesia.

Currently, the ability to write has become an absolute skill in global literate community (Brown, 2003). We understood the uniqueness of writing as a skill with its own features. We also fully realized the difficulty of learning to write well in any opportunity. Writing is complicated because writing is one of cognitive process that needs such as, planning and outlining, generating ideas, writing several drafts, rereading text, revising, restructuring and editing (Llach, 2011:43). Thus, grammatical and lexical errors are considered assigns of 'bad' writing skill on the part of the learner.

The writing errors happen because of some inappropriate things. It is contradictive with some rules in writing, such as ungrammatically. There are many causes of errors that can occur in writing, it will be happen when the students face on the grammar, these include: choice of article, word order, sentence errors, and etc (Coffin, at al, 2003:32). Moreover, Rosenwasser (2016:305) stated that the error correction is overwhelming; we get a paper back, and the paper is a sea of red ink. Rosenwasser (2016:306) stated that the most basic writing errors are sentence fragments, comma splices and fused or run-on sentences, and errors in subject-verb agreement.

Sentence fragment are the group of words punctuated like a complete sentence but lacking the appropriate structure (Rosenwasser, 2016:307). Fragments are only part of a sentence. Typically, the sentence fragments occur when the group of words in question (1) lacks of subject, (2) lacks of predicate, or (3) is subordinate (or dependent) clause. To fix the sentence fragments, either turn it into an independent clause by providing whatever is missing a subject or a predicate. Comma splices consist of two independent clauses connected "spliced" with a comma. Then a fused (or run-on) sentence combines two such clauses with no punctuation or conjunction (David Rosenwasser, 2016:309). The solutions for both comma splices and fused sentences actually are the same. The subject and the verb must agree in number, the singular subject taking the singular verb and a plural subject taking a plural verb. Errors in subject-verb agreement happen when a writer fails to identify the subject or verb of a clause (Rosenwasser, 2016:312).

While according to Eggenschwiler & Biggs (2001:56), the common sentence problems are run-on sentences, sentence fragments, subject predicate agreement, misplaced modifiers, and parallel structure. To avoid the problems like run-on sentences and fragments, we needed to recognize how complete sentences are put together. On the other hand, the errors such as lack of subject-predicate agreement, misplaced modifiers and faulty parallelism require careful attention to the way words function within a sentence. In addition, Langan (2011) states that error sentences have three types such as fragment, run on sentence & dangling modifier. According to Langan (2011:535), fragment is like a phrase or a dependent clause. It is not an unfinished sentence. A fragment expresses an incomplete thought; a fragment cannot function nor stand alone as a simple sentence. Sentence fragments are lack some elements, such as lack of subject, predicate or partial verb, and complete thought. Run on sentence is a long sentence that has two or more clauses which are improperly gathered. It does not have any sign where it starts or end. In run-on sentence, two or more independent clauses follow each other without

any punctuation. The run-on sentences do not tell the readers where the sentences start or end. Langan (2011:465) stated a modifier that opens a sentence must be followed immediately by the word it is meant to describe. Otherwise, the modifier is said to be dangling, and the sentence takes on an unintended meaning.

In this study, the writer investigated the common sentence errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. By doing this study, the writer hopes that it can maximize students' ability to avoid the common sentence errors in writing

### **Method**

This study used descriptive qualitative research method. The object of this study was nine formal online diaries of 8<sup>th</sup> batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. There are 10 participants of 8<sup>th</sup> SEA teacher program. In this case, the writer did not include his online diary as the object of the research, so there were only nine objects. Unit analysis of this study was sentences made by 8<sup>th</sup> batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. Besides that, the questionnaires were distributed to 8<sup>th</sup> batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines who wrote the online diary to identify the problems faced by them in writing online diary.

For collecting data, the writer used the non-interactive technique. Source of the data in this study was from formal online diary of 8<sup>th</sup> batch SEA Teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. The data was the common sentence errors in online diaries of 8<sup>th</sup> batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. The data were then identified and analyzed based on John Langan's theory to reveal kinds of error emerged in the diary. Then, the writer used open-ended question to get some information from the participants. The questionnaires gave the opportunity to answer whatever they liked, without limiting them with predefined answers.

## 2. Findings and Discussion

This study has some goals to achieve in relation to know the common sentence error found on online diaries, to know the level of occurrence of the error found on the diaries, and last to know the problems encountered by the participants when they wrote the online diaries. Therefore, the results are elaborated as follows:

### a. Common sentence errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines

The source of the data in this study was collected from formal online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines and questionnaires. The writer analyzed nine online diaries. From nine online diaries, the writer found the common sentence errors. The classifications of common sentence errors were based on the theories of John Langan. These types were calculated and the number of each was converted into percentage. The table below described the findings of the analysis of types of common sentence errors.

Table 1

Common sentence errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines

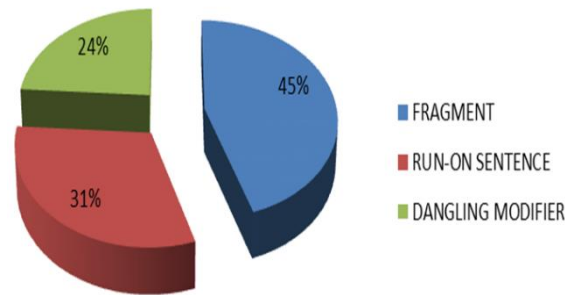
No	Participants' Code	Types of Sentence Errors			Total
		Fragment	Run-on Sentence	Dangling Modifier	
1	P-I	15	3	6	24
2	P-II	1	3	5	9
3	P-III	1	1	2	4
4	P-IV	21	6	3	30
5	P-V	8	6	2	16
6	P-VI	2	1	2	5
7	P-VII	2	13	3	18
8	P-VIII	4	5	5	14
9	P-IX	6	3	4	13
<b>Total</b>		60	41	32	133
<b>Percentage</b>		45%	31%	24%	100%

From the further description of the table, it can be seen that fragment has the highest percentage, namely 45%. Then, run-on sentence (31%) and followed by dangling modifier (24%).

- b. The most dominant error found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines

The description of table above described that there were 60 fragments found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. Run-on sentence had 41 total errors and it was followed by dangling modifier with 32 total errors.

Figure 1  
The percentage of common sentence errors



This chart showed the percentage of common sentence errors from the highest number to the lowest one of common sentence errors namely fragment (45%), run-on sentence (31%), and dangling modifier (24%). So, the most dominant errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines is fragment. It means that fragment won the first rank of its occurrence, followed by run-on sentence on the second rank and the third rank went to dangling modifier.

Fragment was the most dominant error found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines (*see table 4.1*). The participants made this error for many times. The participants sensed that they had made a complete sentence, but actually it was an incomplete sentence. There were several fragment types found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines namely missing subject fragment, missing verb fragment, added detail fragment, and -ing fragment. Fragment caused lack of readability and coherence. So, the participants need to be focus on arranging a good sentence structure.

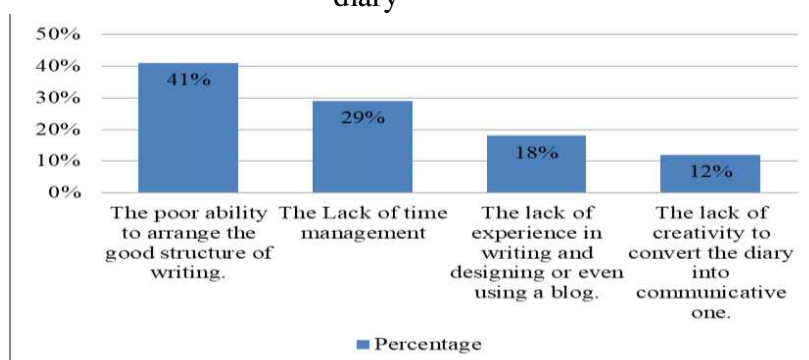
Run-on sentence became the second common error on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. The participants sensed that sentences are closely related and they divided them with a period. Another cause of run-on sentence was mistaking adverbial conjunctions. This error also happened because they thought that the parts seemed too short to need any vision. There were two types of run-on sentences found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines namely comma splice and fused sentence. The participants need to look at each part of every sentence carefully to avoid this kind of errors.

Thus, dangling modifier was the last common error on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines. The participants wrote a dangling modifier because of some reasons. The first reason was due to the modifying word or phrase was being placed too far from the word that it's meant to modify. The second reason happened when the sentence did not include a logical subject to modify. This kind of errors made the meaning of sentence unclear. So, the participants need to identify the subject that they want to modify. Then, they can place a modifier before or after subject in sentence.

- c. The problems faced by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines in writing online diary

Another data source of this study was questionnaire which included five questions. It consisted of open-ended questions covering the research question as well as subject related. There are nine respondents who were given the questionnaires. The questions in questionnaire set to obtain information about participants’ problem faced when writing online diary.

Figure 2  
Participants’ response related to problems were faced  
by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines in writing online diary



Based on the graphic above, the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing was the highest problem faced by the participants when writing online diary (41%). Then, the second most problem faced by the participants was the lack of time management (29%). The participants also still lacked of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog (18%), then followed by the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one (12%). This table below also supports a statistical summary of the problem faced by participants. The order was stated from the hardest to the easiest.

Table 2  
The frequency of problem in writing online diary

No	Problems in writing online diary	Frequency	Percentage
1.	The poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing.	7	41%
2.	The lack of time management	5	29%
3.	The lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog.	3	18%
4.	The lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one.	2	12%
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>

The table shows that the problems faced by 8th batch SEA teacher in University of Santo Tomas Philippines in writing online diary from the hardest to the easiest problems are the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing, the lack of time management, the lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog, and the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one.

From the result of questionnaires, the writer found that there were seven participants who had problem on arranging sentence structure. The poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing became the biggest problem for the participants when writing online diary. To make a good writing, the participant needed to master about grammar. I also argued that grammar and writing are in special “cooperation” in which writing skill needs formal language patterns, standard grammar, and mechanics of writing. Moreover, it was a problem that made them making the common sentence error, such as fragments, run-on sentences, and dangling modifiers. In this case, the participants did not understand more about the way how to make their writing well-structured. It was showed by the participants’ responses. One of the participants said *“The most difficult thing to write my online diary was about the structure on writing. I was difficult to connect one sentence to the others when writing my online diary”*. Unstructured writing might link unrelated points, an illogical or confusing argument and lack a real focus.

The second problem was about time management. Time for writing became crucial problem as well for the participants when writing online diary. The participants felt lacked of time for writing online diary. Beside they had to write all their activities since their first day there until the last day as well, University of Santo Tomas Philippines was the last fleet for SEA teacher program batch 8<sup>th</sup>. SEA teacher batch 8<sup>th</sup> was held by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) at 1 August-30 September 2019. University of Santo Tomas Philippines as the receiving university held SEA teacher program at 1<sup>st</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The participants were given time for writing online diary not more than 30 days. It was showed by the participants’ responses. One of the participants said *“It is difficult to choose the time to write on my blog during the program. So, I wrote most of the content after I went back to Bandung.”* It was lucky for them who remembered all the activities during 30 days there. In contrast, if they forgot it, they had to call on their memories again. Of course, it spent much more time.

The next problem was the lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog. In this case, the duty was not only writing online diary but also the participants should make blog for posting the document. It was lucky for the participant who had mastered the way how to make blog, use it, edit it, and upload it. However, many of them still did not know about this matter, so they had to learn it first. The time had given did not run out for writing online diary, but it run out for learning how to make and use blog as well. This problem is showed from the participants’ responses. One of the participants said *“I’m having lack experience in designing or even using a blog. It was my first time on writing online blog.”* Actually, SEAMEO had given online orientation regarded to writing the online diary and guideline for writing it. Although they had given the guideline for writing it, the participants were still confused as there were many points of requirement which were same with the previous points. The participants browsed and learned the references from the previous batch, but it did not help so much as between one participant and others were different.

The last problem was the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one. According to Kaun (2010), online diary is the great way to express yourself and share your thoughts with twin souls. A good diary must have ability to tell everything to the readers. One of the participants said *“Especially on creating communicative diary, it needs more practices. I wanted the readers can feel my beautiful memories.”* They participants had many ideas in their mind, but it was hard to execute it well. They

wanted the readers to feel the emotion of the stories, but it was not easy to execute it well.

From the explanation above, the writer stated that the common sentence errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines were fragment, run-on sentence, and dangling modifier. It caused lack of readability and coherence. If the sentence was lack of readability and coherence, it would cause misinterpreting for the readers to catch what the writer meant. Especially for fragment, it was the most dominant error from the online diary. The participants also got some problem when writing online diary such as: the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing, time management, the lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog and the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one. Moreover, the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing was the biggest problem. Unstructured writing would link to unrelated points, an illogical or confused argument and lack a real focus.

The writer did not find any other study that analyzed the common sentence errors on online diary. Also, there is no researcher who used the object of the study that the writer used in this study. But, the writer found many studies that the topic is in writing problems, and the writer choose three among them to be put in the previous studies such as: the study from Al-khasawneh (2015), Afrin(2016) and Ho (2015). The result obtained in this study is in line with Afrin (2016) which reported that the main reason behind the weakness of students in writing is grammatical ability. To overcome the problem, students need the proper guidelines. Then they should develop their grammatical ability. At the same time, they have to find out their own writing problems to become a good writer.

### **3. Conclusion and Suggestion**

From the study above, several conclusions can be formulated as follows:

There were the common sentence errors found on online diary of 8th batch SEA teacher blog writing in University of Santo Tomas Philippines namely fragment, run-on sentence, and dangling modifier. Fragment became the most dominant error (45%). Then, run-on sentence (31%) and followed by dangling modifier (24%). The common sentence errors appeared in the formal online diary because of many problems, such as: the poor ability to arrange the good structure of writing, time management, the lack of experience in writing and designing or even using a blog and the lack of creativity to convert the diary into communicative one.

Based on the analysis and explanation in the previous chapter, the writer would like to give some suggestions to the participants, the institution which held SEA teacher program, and the next researcher. For the participants, they should increase their writing skill. The common sentence errors especially fragments, run-on sentence and dangling modifier must be avoided in order to make the composition had good organization, comprehensible, and easy to understand. For the institution (SEAMEO), SEAMEO should kindly be clear with guideline, and parameter with the report (formal online diary), because the participants found out that there were some point of requirement which were same with the previous points. The guideline can be the reference for writing formal online diary, so it should be the clear one. Then for the next researcher, the writer hopes that this study can be reference for the next researcher who conducts a research related to sentence error. They can develop this study more. The writer also suggests some topics that are important enough to be



analyzed related to writing skill. Here are some topics: Analyzing Writing Structure Found in a Text, Analyzing Error Capitalization in a Text and Analyzing Grammatical Errors in a Text

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