

# **Error Analysis in Intermediate Students of English First (EF) Delta Plaza Surabaya Writing Test**

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## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of error analysis in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Although errors are bad things in learning English as a foreign language, error analysis is advantageous for both learners and teachers. For learners, error analysis is needed to show them in what aspect in grammar which is difficult for them, whereas for teachers, it is required to evaluate them whether they are successful or not in teaching English. In this article, the writer presented some English sentences containing grammatical errors. These grammatical errors were analyzed based on the theories presented by the linguists. This analysis aimed at showing the students the causes and kinds of the grammatical errors. By this way, the students are expected to increase their knowledge on the English grammar.*

**Key Words:** *errors, mistake, omission, transfer, overgeneralization*

## **Introduction**

In foreign language learning, error correction has become one of the important teaching processes. But actually, few teachers know a lot about error analysis and some related theories. They often take so negative attitudes toward errors that they could not tolerate any errors and tend to correct them as soon as they could find any. As a result, although they think they have been working hard enough and spend much time and energy working on error correction, their effort is not effective and the students do not believe they have benefited a lot. On the contrary, the students often feel upset, for they have found that there is a great gap between themselves and their teachers in dealing with errors and understanding of error correction.

Errors in foreign language teaching especially in English are the cases which are difficult enough to avoid. Many aspects that can cause the learners of English as a foreign language make errors. These aspects are interference, overgeneralization, and markers of transitional competence, strategies of communication and assimilation and teacher-induced errors. As teachers of English as a foreign language, we should improve the way we teach to reduce errors which are always made by the learners. Further, it is necessary to state that although errors are bad things in learning English as a foreign language, error analysis is advantageous for both learners and teachers. For learners, error analysis is needed to show them in what aspect in grammar which is difficult for them, whereas for teachers, it is required to evaluate. So we find it necessary to have a theoretical foundation about error analysis. In the next section, the development of the theory error analysis would be briefly reviewed.

Several researchers have conducted research in the same field, error analysis. One of them is Fang & Zue Mei (2007). In their analysis, they focused more on giving a

systematic review of the concepts and theories concerning EA (Error Analysis) and the various reasons causing errors. They analyzed error analysis using theory of Brown (2000). Another researcher is Hasyim (2002) who conducted a research in the same field explaining some English sentences containing grammatical errors. These grammatical errors were analyzed based on the theories presented by the linguists. The theory used for their research is Richard et.al (1985:96) and Brown (2000). The previous researchers studied all concerned with the error analysis focusing on 'source of error', 'cause of error' and 'types of error'. Some of researchers focused on why error analysis happened. However, none of them takes more focuses on what error most occurs in English sentences. Therefore, the writer conducted a study of the most occurs of error analysis produced by the intermediate students of English First (EF) Surabaya.

In this research, the writer presented some English sentences containing grammatical errors in English First (EF) Delta Plaza Surabaya. These grammatical errors were analyzed based on the theories presented by the linguists. This analysis aimed at showing the students the causes and kinds of the grammatical errors. By this way, the students are expected to increase their knowledge on the English grammar. This kind of study related to error analysis had been conducted by other researchers.

## Review of Literature

### Theory of Error Analysis

#### ✓ Identifying errors

The first step in analyzing learner errors is to identifying them. According to Ellis (1997), before analyzing grammatical error, it is crucial to distinguish 'errors' and 'mistakes'. Error reflects gaps in learner's knowledge. They occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. It is also supported by Brown (2000) who stated that a "mistake" refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an "error" is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner.

To identify errors we have to compare the sentences learners produce with what seem to be the normal or 'correct' sentences in the target language which correspond with them. For example in the sentence, '*A man and a little boy was watching him*'. It is not difficult to see that the correct sentence should be: '*A man and a little boy were watching him*'.

#### ✓ Describing Error

Brown (2000) stated further that on a rather global level, errors can be described as errors of addition, omission, substitution, and ordering, following standard mathematical categories. This brief theory is also supported by Ellis (1997) stated that there are several ways of doing classify errors into grammatical categories. They are "ommission means leaving out an item that is required for an utterance to be considered grammatical". Another way is by identifying 'miisinformation' which tend to using one grammatical form in place of another grammatical form, and 'misordering' which focuses on putting the words in an utterance in the wrong order. In English a "do" auxiliary might be added (*Does can he hinge?*), a definite article omitted (*I went to movie*), an item substituted (*I lost my road*), or a word order confused (*I to the store went*). But such categories are clearly much

generalized. Within each category, levels of language can be considered: phonology or orthography, lexicon, grammar, and discourse.

In another article “A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis”, Ellis (1997) classifies causes of error into 1) overgeneralization, 2) transfer, 3) omission. According to Ellis (1997), learners commit errors of ‘**omission**’. For example, they leave out the articles ‘a’ and ‘the’ and leave the –s off plural nouns. The learners also sometimes doing overgeneralize forms that they find easy to learn and process. The use of ‘eated’ in place of ‘ate’ is an example of an ‘**overgeneralization**’ error. Other errors, however, reflect learners’ attempts to make use of their L1 knowledge. These are known as **transfer** errors.

## **Methodology**

This study uses qualitative approach in order to identify error analysis by the intermediate students of English First (EF) in Delta Plaza Surabaya. Statistical data is not considered to be included, so the writer relied on some theories from library research for her interpretation of this study. According to Dörnyei (2007), qualitative approach adopts assumption about emergent nature, which means that the research just focuses on the concepts or processes and avoids the test of hypothesis. This idea is appropriate to this research as the research does not concern with the test of hypothesis as in quantitative research.

Moreover, the data of qualitative research were taken from the natural setting without any manipulation. Dörnyei (2007) states that qualitative research works with a wide range of data, for instance various types of texts, images, recorded interviews or videos, and is done with words. The data of this study were taken from the production of English writing done by the intermediate students of English First (EF) Delta Surabaya. Therefore, qualitative approach is appropriate to be used to analyze the features of error analysis used by the students of EF. The setting is also natural since the activities of learning English is done in class lively; so the writer cannot manipulate the situation. The writer gets the data from the teacher herself in English First (EF) Surabaya. From the statement, it is clear that the study deals with the characteristics of qualitative approach and becomes a part of qualitative research.

## **Source of Data**

The source of data of this study was taken from the intermediate students of English First (EF) Delta Plaza Surabaya. The subject of the data is the production of English writing by analyzing focused on error analysis. The samples of the data are five randomly chosen intermediate students which were taken on December, 10, 2016 until December, 15, 2016. This research analyzes the three randomly chosen episodes of intermediate students because the writer wanted to know the pattern regularly used by the students in applying English in the sentences. Although there were five samples taken, the writer believes all of them could fulfill the analysis requirements.

## **Techniques of Data Collection**

There were many steps that were used in collecting the data. First, the writer makes a permission to take the data of the intermediate students in English First (EF) Delta Plaza Surabaya. Second, the writer observes the teacher in teaching English in class without

disturbing the English learning process itself. This random technique was chosen by the writer because the writer wanted to look for the natural way of writing in English produced by the intermediate students. Random technique was also used to collect the data because the writer wanted to know the pattern regularly used by the intermediate students of EF in applying English skill in writing production. Third, the writer got the data from their teacher (the five randomly chosen from the students of EF). Last, the writer identifies and analyzes the collected data.

### Techniques of Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the writer analyzed the data of the five randomly chosen production of English writing by intermediate students of EF. Then, the writer is identifying and classifying which error analysis occurred by students. To analyze grammatical error, the writer used based on Ellis's theory. Furthermore, in brief, the steps of the data analysis are as follows:

1. Identifying the error analysis which is uttered by the intermediated students of English First (EF) Surabaya.
2. Classifying which types of error analysis which the most occurred in the text.
3. Describing what error analysis happens in the sentences.
4. Making the interpretation or discussing the findings.
5. Making the conclusion.

### Point of ideas related to the topics

Based on the background of the study, there are two statements of the problem which are addressed in this study especially in the case of error analysis.

1. What are the features of the error analysis occurs by the intermediate students of English First (EF) in Delta Plaza Surabaya?
2. What is the feature of error analysis which the most occurred?

Based on the statements of the problem, this study is aimed at describing the features of error analysis used by the intermediate students of English First (EF) in Delta Plaza Surabaya.

## Results and discussion

### Findings

Based on the data, the writer has already analyzed four intermediate students of English First (EF) in Delta Plaza Surabaya. They are Kanita Kairina, Nanditya Anggraeni, Carya, and Liya. They are students in class intermediate of English First Courses Surabaya. The writer finds much error analysis which occurs by many students.

Ellis (1997) classifies causes of error into 1) overgeneralization, 2) transfer, 3) omission. According to Ellis (1997), learners commit errors of '**omission**'. For example, they leave out the articles 'a' and 'the' and leave the -s off plural nouns. The learners also sometimes doing overgeneralize forms that they find easy to learn and process. The use of 'eated' in place of 'ate' is an example of an '**overgeneralization**' error. Other errors, however, reflect learners' attempts to make use of their L1 knowledge. These are known as '**transfer**' errors.

Based on the data, the writer finds in the production of English writing by one of students named 'Karita Kairina'. The theory can be representative in analyzing the utterances poof the student as listed below:

**Table 1. Finding of Student's writing (1)**

No	Transfer	Overgeneralization	Omission
1	(in) Day one, I want to go hiking	-	It's rain (it rains)
2	(in) Day 3, I want to go to rock climbing	-	It's not rain (it's not raining)
3	I can't go (there) because it rains	-	I want to go hiking because (of) the first day
4		-	It's rain (it rains)
Total	3	-	4

It can be seen that from the example given above, the error analysis occurs in many sentences. As stated in the sentence, number (1) 'Day one, I want to go hiking'. It can be seen that there is error analysis in the type of 'transfer'. That sentence should be (1) *In* day one, I want to go hiking. It also happened in the sentence 'I can't go because it rains'. The sentence should be I can't go (*there*) because it rains. This sentence lack of incorrect grammatical sentence although the meaning of that sentence is still understood by the listeners. The students tend to reflect learners' attempts to make use of their L1 knowledge that is why transfer is always occurs many times. The other sentence which reflect error analysis, in the sentence 'it's rain', 'it's not rain' reflects that there is an omission because the grammatical error still occurs. The sentence should be 'it rains', 'it's not raining'. Besides, in the sentence 'I want to go hiking because the first day...' The sentence should be "I want to go hiking because (of) the first day..."

The other result of the other students is for Nanditya Anggraeni K. The theory can be representative in analyzing the utterances poof the student as listed below:

**Table 2. Finding of Student's writing (2)**

No	Transfer	Overgeneralization	Omission
1	I don't like being in cities	-	Cause -> because
2	-	-	Everybody say
3	-	-	Switzerland have a many mountain
4	-	-	And there we can do many activities
5	-	-	It's happen
6	-	-	It's sound
7	-	-	It's can be happen
Total	1	0	7

It also can be seen that from the example given above, the error analysis occurs in many sentences. As stated in the sentence, number (1) "*I don't like being in cities*". It can be seen that there is error analysis in the type of 'transfer'. That sentence should be "*I don't like being on cities*". The other sentence which reflects error analysis, in the sentence, "*Everybody say*". This sentence seems correct grammatical pattern because people who hear this sentence still understand what the speaker means. But, in this case actually there is error analysis in the type of omission. This sentence should be "*everybody says*". The other examples in the sentences "*Switzerland have a many mountain*", the sentence should be "*Switzerland has many mountains*". In sentences "It's happen", "it's sound", "It's can be happen" also lack of correct grammatical sentence, the sentence should be "It happens", "It sounds", "It can happen".

The third student is Carya A. When he tries to write about his summer holiday's story, he tend to make an error analysis too. The theory can be representative in analyzing the utterances poof the student as listed below:

**Table 3. Finding of Student's writing (3)**

No	Transfer	Overgeneralization	Omission
1	-	Quite	I decided
2	-	Im	I was planning to go mountain
3	-	-	Usually granpa always win
4	-	-	On the last day I'll probably just relax by the lake.
Total	0	2	4

From the table above, we can see that there are many error analysis occurs. For example in the sentence “*I decided*”, this sentence seems in correct one, but the grammatical pattern is incorrect because in this case, the writer wants to tell about his or her summer holiday plans, so the tenses which is used should be in present tense not in past tense, “*I decide*”. The other example is, in the sentence, “*I was planning to go mountain*” should be “*I am planning to go mountain*”, “*Usually granpa always win*” there is an omission in this sentence because less of in correct grammatical pattern. The sentence should be “*Usually grandpa always wins*”, “*On the last day I’ll probably just relax by the lake*” should be “*On the last day I’ll probably just relax at the lake*”. The other error analysis also occurs in the table above, named, overgeneralization. For example, the word “*Quite*”. The student, Carya, wants to write “*it’s just peace and quite*”. The sentence should be “*it’s just peace and quiet*”. The other example which reflects overgeneralization is “*Im*”, the writer actually wants to write “*I’m*” but he makes incorrect spelling. So, in this case, the writer makes overgeneralization grammar.

Last, the student named Liya. The theory can be representative in analyzing the utterances poof the student as listed below:

**Table 4. Finding of Student’s writing (4)**

No	Transfer	Overgeneralization	Omission
1	I can’t wait it!	-	Unless the foods are cheap, I’ll go there
2	-	-	I want to fishing too
3	-	-	Unless the wave good enough , I’ll try surfing
4	-	-	-
Total	1	0	3

From the table above, the sentence “*I can’t wait it!*” describes an error analysis of type transfer. According to Ellis (1997), transfer errors reflect learners’ attempts to make use of their L1 knowledge. If we see that sentence, we can think that that sentence is correct, but for the grammatical pattern, that sentence is not in correct sentence. That sentence should be “*I can’t wait for it!*” The other example which reflects error analysis is “*Unless the foods are cheap, I’ll go there*”. From that sentence, it can be seen that the writer has misunderstanding about the meaning of “unless”. This sentence has “omission” of the other type of error analysis. The sentence should be “*Unless the foods are expensive, I’ll go there*”. The same case is also happens in the sentence “*Unless the wave good enough, I’ll try surfing*”, the sentence has contrast meaning and understanding. That is why the sentence should be “*Unless the wave is bad enough, I’ll try surfing*”. Last, in the sentence “*I want to fishing too*”, this sentence is lack of appropriate grammar although the listener still understand what the speaker means. He sentence should be “*I want to go fishing too*”.

## Interpretation

The findings show that there are an error analysis written by the intermediated students of English First (EF) Surabaya. Ellis (1997) classifies causes of error into 1) overgeneralization, 2) transfer, 3) omission. Based on the data, it can be seen that there is an error analysis included all of these three types of error analysis. For example in the sentence “*I want to go fishing too*” reflect “omission”, the other sentence “*I can’t wait it!*” reflects “transfer” and in the word “*quite*” describes “overgeneralization”.

From the data, the writer finds that the “omission” is the most mistake of error analysis appeared in the sentence which is uttered by the intermediate student of English First (EF) Kayun Surabaya. The proof can be representative in the listed below:

Transfer	Overgeneralization	Omission
5	2	18

It can be seen from the table above that, the omission is the most type of error analysis which is occurs in English sentence because it may be English is our foreign language. People of Indonesia put carelessness in the article or conjunction in English’s sentence because they might think that all people still understand with those sentences. Unfortunately, the sentence which lack of article or having an “omission” in English lesson is still incorrect grammatical pattern cannot be accepted.

## Conclusion

After talking much about error analysis in language learning, the writer then conclude that error analysis is required in developing or increasing the techniques in teaching English. By doing the error analysis, a teacher can concentrate on the materials in which most learners made error; a teacher can also evaluate himself whether he or she succeeds in teaching or not; and finally he or she can improve his or her techniques in teaching by preparing systematic materials.

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