

## **Error Analysis: The Case of Engineering Students of Jashore University of Science and Technology**

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### **Abstract**

Writing correct and appropriate English is the demand of time disregarding the program and level. But errors in writing always hinder the progress of the learners learning English as a second language. The main purpose of this study was to investigate Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common errors in academic writing through instant freehand writing test. This study aimed to reveal the types of error and the amount of errors committed by the students of the undergraduate Engineering students of Jashore University of Science and Technology. This study came up with the findings that the students were vulnerable mostly to grammatical errors. Their writings almost equally suffered from interference, overgeneralization and lexical errors. They committed both interlingual and intralingual errors.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The inborn quality of human being is that they learn through errors and mistakes. This trial and error approach has got firm ground in teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language. "The use of a linguistic item in a way which affluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete action" is called an error (Richard, 1985, 95). When the correct process is revealed to the learners who commit errors, they can make themselves correct. Error opens new windows before both students and the teachers to find out the problems of learning any new language. Actually, error analysis is the best way that can help teachers to make the students correct by giving some fruitful feedback. Again, dealing with corrective feedback, writing skill is the best approach. The Engineering students of Jashore University of Science and Technology have English as their medium of instruction. As the medium of education is in English, it is important that they gain a workable competence in written English. Unfortunately, the tertiary level students have been found committing different types of errors and as a result, their academic writings are replete with different types of errors (Khan, 2018).

Rani (2015) found that the students of private universities have problem with grammatical aspects of English and also of constructing sentences, ignorance of using right choice of words, weak vocabulary, over use of be verb etc. Very few of the participants have the problem of article, punctuation, capitalization, missing space and so on. But to know about the errors committed by public university students, no separate study was done.

To understand the type and amount of errors the tertiary students commit in their writing, this research on error analysis was done surveying the Engineering faculty students of Jashore University of Science and Technology. Through this research, if the future engineers of Jashore University of Science and Technology can be aware of their errors and thereby increase the quality of their writing that will have immense positive effect in their academic and future professional sectors. Thus, this study wanted to

- A. reveal the types of errors committed by the Engineering students in their written production.
- B. find out the amount of errors committed by the Engineering students in their written production.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Error means dislodgement from the fixed rules of a language which occurs when a learner starts learning any foreign language besides his or her mother tongue. In other words, an error can be defined as the detachment from the selected norms and a set of norms of a language. It is a natural phenomenon and a part and parcel of learning any second language by any speaker. As English is a targeted second language for the students of Bangladesh, they often commit errors in academic writing at different levels of their student life. The tertiary level students, make errors indiscreetly (Mallik, 2013). Students commit errors of different types.

**A. Interlingual Error**

Interlingual error is caused by the interference of the native language. While learning the second language, the learners try to learn that second language to keep pace with their mother tongue. They always want to make parallelism between the native language and the target language. They also bring about the features of their mother tongue and always try to relate to the second language.

**B. Intralingual error**

Intralingual error occurs due to a particular misuse of a particular rule of the second language. These errors are classified in two types, these are-

**1. Overgeneralizations**

If the second language learners use a grammatical rule in a case where it cannot be applied or used, it is called overgeneralization.

**2. Simplifications**

When learners start to learn any second language, they want to produce a simple linguistic form of that language rather than the exact form. They want to be linguistically creative and make sentences or utterances using their self-formed structures.

**C. Induced Errors**

This type of error is caused by misleading teaching. Sometimes, teachers explain some rule or structure of a sentence without highlighting the exceptions and any special meaning of his message. This type of error happens basically in use of phrase or group preposition.

**D. Errors of Avoidance**

This type of error occurs when the learners think that some specific rules and words are too much difficult to use and for this, they fail to apply.

**E. Development Errors**

Development error occurs when the learners start learning a second language but fail to reproduce the rules of that language what they have learned in practical situations.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

Error analysis is a very prominent quantitative research in the field of applied linguistics. This study followed a mixed approach. Quantitative data was collected and used for qualitative inferences. A writing test was conducted, which was piloted to test the validity. One hundred students participated in the test. The data was analyzed through following the theory of Corder (1967) and the result has been presented through charts and tables.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After analyzing their scripts, it was found that the EF students committed different types of errors in a huge number. For analysis, the errors were divided in several categories following Corder (1981) or Ellis (1996)

**Grammatical Error**

Grammatical error was a very severe issue in the scripts of the EF students. They committed at least five or six errors in their scripts. The problem with different grammatical items and sentence structure were very common to them to commit errors.

**Table 1:** Grammatical Errors

	Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Problems with Preposition	72	18.56 %
2	Problems with Article	63	16.24 %
3	Problems with Spelling	85	21.91 %
4	Problems with Number	13	3.35%
5	Incorrect Verb Form	58	14.95 %
6	Problem with Subject-Verb Agreement	61	15.72%
7	Problems with Connectors	36	9.28%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Error in the use of Preposition**

While dealing with preposition, the students did not follow the correct rules. They used preposition using overgeneralization. They also used the wrong and unnecessary prepositions. Their writing showed:

1. One preposition was used in the place of another. This type of error is found in forty-three cases in those scripts of EF students.  
Example: The headmaster said that I knew goodon English
2. In twenty-two places, unnecessary prepositions were used.  
Example: Father was taking me of carefully to the Headmaster’s room.
3. Preposition was not used where it should be used.  
Example: Learning English is very necessary to communicate different nations.

**Error in Using Article**

While using articles in the writings, students were found committing article related errors. In sixty- three cases, the students were found to commit errors.

Table: Error in Using Articles

Examples of Errors in Using Articles	Comments
We are better than a M.A. student. I am an university student. In JUST, though we have an language lab, we don’t use it.	Mistaken and unnecessary use of the indefinite articles
Our campus is the beautiful premises. After completing my graduation, I can apply for job the all over the world.	Mistaken use of the definite article

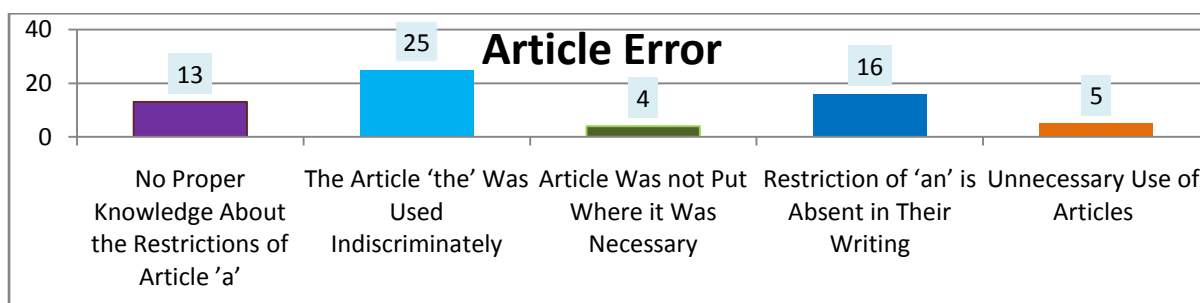


Figure 2: Error in Using Articles

The above five items of error in article were formed due to the lack of grammatical knowledge of the learners.

**Spelling Errors**

Students committed errors in terms of spelling on a huge scale. It was a very serious error field as eighty-five spelling errors were found. Following are some of the examples of the spelling errors.

- a) English develops our communication *scile*.
- b) In engineering courses we are learning other *langue* well.
- c) Bearing *ejucational* expenses is hard for Bangladeshi people.
- d) Bengali is our mother *tungue*.

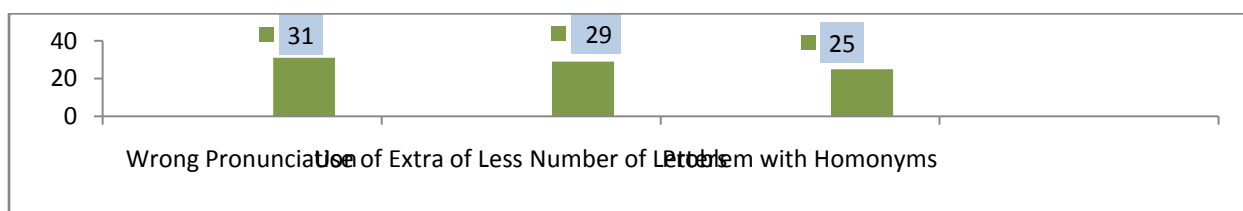


Figure 3: Spelling Errors

**Errors in using number**

There were thirteen cases where number problem was found.

Example:

I have collected the necessary *datas* and documents before entering into this university. Despite all *this disadvantages*, Bangladesh is developing day by day.

**Incorrect Verb Form**

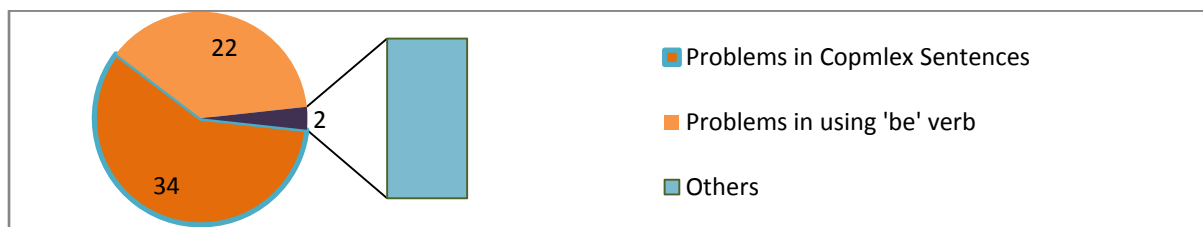
Students of EF failed to produce correct sentence using correct verb form. In fifty-eight places they committed errors to form sentences with correct verb forms.

**Example:**

1) After getting chance in this University the way of my *haschange*.

**Example:**

To save time it can be *useful* by everyone.

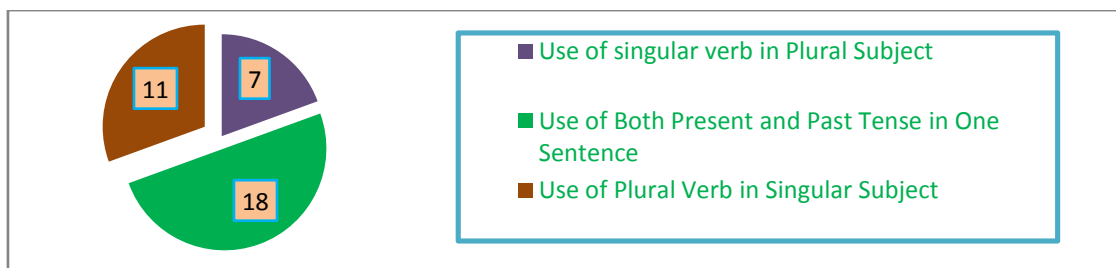


**Figure 4:** Error in Using Verb

**Subject -Verb Agreement**

In thirty-one cases, the students committed errors regarding subject-verb agreement **Example:**

- 1) The Teachers of my department *has* great affection towards me.
- 2) When my mother came to my campus, I *feel* happy.
- 3) Three *friend* of me do the work.



**Figure 5:** Problems with Subject –Verb Agreement

**Incorrect Use of Connectors**

Students used wrong connectors in thirty-six scripts.

I entered the classroom *but* get my money bag. (‘but’ is used in the place of ‘and’)

When I get the result of 1<sup>st</sup> semester I feel happy.( no connector was used but the sentence required a comma to differentiate the clauses)



**Figure 6:** Errors in Connectors

**Lexical errors**

The students of EF committed a lot of lexical errors. They produced different types of words according to their own accord and used the words in their writings without being aware of the lexical value of those words. In thirty-six places, they were found having lexical errors. Some of the examples that are taken from their scripts were-

- 1) In leisure, I want to watch English *natok* (instead of drama)
- 2) My father cannot take his idea *goodly*.
- 3) English is taught by most of the people all *even* the world, (instead of over)
- 4) Without good command in English, a person cannot do *something* better in our life.

**Interference errors**

When any learner tried to learn his or her second language he or she tries to apply the knowledge of both his or her L1 and L2. If the transfer of linguistic features between L1 and L2 happens we call it Language interference. While learning any second language, language interference's very important. American linguist Larry Selinker described Language interference as a separate linguistic system which is based on the observable output that results from a learner's attempted production of any target language (Selinker1972:214). The error of Interference was found in the following way in the scripts of EF students.

1) Bangladesh day after day progress doing.

Probable cause: Students commit this error for their L1 interference. They do direct translation in English from Bengali.

2) My bro helps me.

Here the interference error is found in the use of vocabulary. They consider bro as an English word.

**Over Generalization Errors**

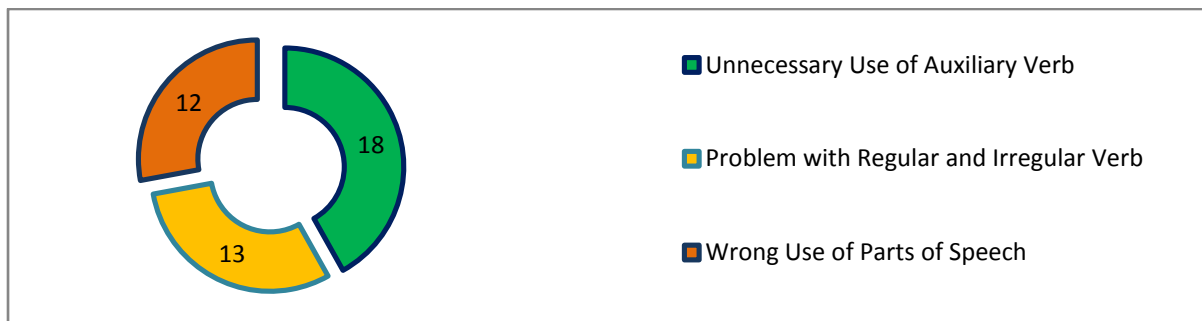
Overgeneralization is a type of error which refers to the fact that any rule of grammar is applied by the learner of L2 where the rule does not suit. Some of such errors were:

a) The man is *agreewith* the proposal

b) When I was born, I was *cried*.

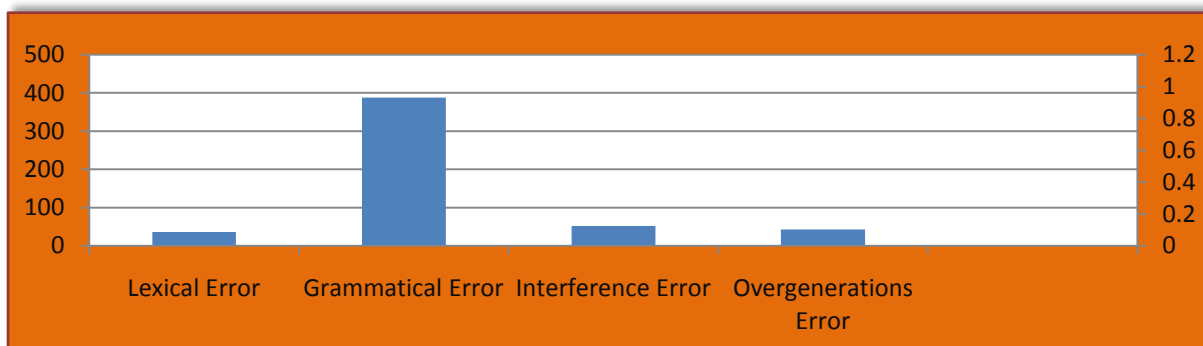
Mothertakedmy the new school.

Without communicate with country people welly. ( they try to indicate 'properly' and try to make it adverb a deviant form of word insertion)



**Figure 7: Overgeneralization Error**

The following figure shows an overall picture of errors.



**Figure 8: Overall Countenance of Error Analysis**

**IV. CONCLUSION**

The EF students committed the above four types of error in their writing. Among the four, grammatical error was found more than other three types. Again, within grammatical error, problem with preposition was found in most of the scripts of the students. Apart from grammatical errors, interference error was found in most of the scripts. In terms of number of errors, grammatical and interference errors were followed by overgeneralization error and lexical error. The results implicate that the students should be more careful of such

errors in order to produce quality writing and the teachers should create opportunities for them to practice more and more to develop insights into such errors.

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