ERROR ANALYSIS IN ESL WRITING

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Author’s Biography

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Research Highlights
Although writing is an important skill, it is not easy to be acquired (Fareed et al., 2016; Raimes, 1983; Sa ’diyah, 2017). Therefore, if pupils were proficient in grammatical rules, they should be able to write better. This quantitative study aims to identify grammatical errors based on a short guided essay written by 77 Year 6 primary pupils from a suburban school in one of the states of Malaysia. The focus is on four word classes: noun, verb, preposition and article which have a higher frequency of errors. Findings showed these pupils made the most errors in the usage of verbs. This study suggests teachers to plan an intervention to help improve their pupils’ learning of the language based on a deep understanding of the problem areas.

Research Objectives
Teachers can come up with practical and effective interventions to help their pupils learn the English language after reflecting on their teaching methods (Ho Peng, 1976). Error analysis is a useful way because it provides teachers with essential information on the types of errors committed by their pupils when they write, and teachers can use this information to select suitable teaching techniques to make pupils’ learning more effective (Talif and Edwin, 2015). This study focuses on the types of errors made by Year 6 ESL pupils who will be sitting for the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) this year. This study aims to identify the types of errors that these pupils frequently make when they attempted to write a short essay in English. Teachers can plan for interventions to overcome these errors and to improve their pupils’ writing skill when they know the areas of weaknesses of their pupils.

Methodology
This study is a quantitative study and subjects are based on purposive sampling. They are 77 Year 6 pupils from one of the suburban schools in one of the states in Malaysia. They are grouped according to two groups: advanced and lower-intermediate. By doing this, the differences in the frequency of errors made by these two groups can be clearly seen. These two groups were asked to complete a writing task which was a guided essay during their English language class within the limit of one hour. The writing task was similar to the essay question in Section C of the UPSR English Language paper. The essay should be between 80 to 100 words. The essays will then be marked and analysed by the researcher. The findings are presented using three tables followed by a discussion of data. The researcher only focused on four word class: noun, verb, preposition and article. Examples of errors taken from the pupils’ essays are provided and discussed in the discussion of findings section.

Results
Results showed that both Group 1 and Group 2 has an equal number of frequency of errors of thirty in the usage of nouns in their essays. Most of the pupils made errors in plurality and pronouns. As for errors in the usage of verbs, Group 1 has a total of thirty-seven pupils compared to Group 2 which has only thirty-six pupils. Most of the pupils made errors when using tenses to write. They also made errors when using auxiliary verbs and modal verbs. Some pupils misused participle tense. In the usage of prepositions, Group 2 tends to make more errors compared to Group 1. Group 2 has nine compared to Group 1 which has only three pupils. It could be due to Group 2 pupils tend to write longer sentences. In the usage of articles, Group 1 unexpectedly made fewer errors compared to Group 2. Group 1 only have six pupils
meanwhile Group 2 has thirteen pupils. Some of the pupils use the wrong article and some of them did not add an article before the nouns.

**Findings**

Findings show that the percentage of errors made by the pupils in the four word class is 79 per cent and 77 per cent for nouns, 97.4 per cent and 92.3 per cent for verbs, 23.7 per cent and 7.7 per cent for prepositions, and 15.8 per cent and 33.3 per cent for articles. From the findings, it is obvious that verbs is a problem for these pupils especially in the use of tenses. It shows that pupils’ knowledge in the use of tenses needs to be reinforced. Teachers should plan an intervention to overcome this problem.

**References**


