

STRUCTURAL ERRORS IN LITERARY ANALYSIS WRITE-UPS AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: *Error Analysis (EA) of learners' written output is a tool that can bridge the learning gaps and the teaching direction of every English teacher. EA enables teachers to identify and analyze sentence errors, and its results will lead the teacher to understand and address the causes of errors committed. This descriptive-qualitative study analyzed learners' structural errors in their literary write-ups. Corder's Stages in error analysis was employed in analyzing the errors committed by Senior High School student participants. The evidence of the structural errors indicated that at the sentential level, the prevalent errors are Disagreement of Verb and Subject, Incorrect Verb Tense, and Missing Punctuation. The most dominant errors committed for the word level are Incorrect Articles, Incorrect Spelling, and Incorrect Prepositions. From these findings, the errors committed by the learners are associated with their first language or mother tongue. Errors manifested are also caused by learners' carelessness in writing, and limited knowledge in the rules of English grammar. Moreover, these results call for teachers to value such research findings, for it can be a basis to upscale teaching pedagogies, create and innovate contextualized learning materials, and recalibrate assessment and evaluation tools to improve the written grammatical competence of learners. Furthermore, teachers are also encouraged to conduct error analysis of their learners' outputs, for the results will reflect the learning gaps in grammar that need to be addressed.*

Keywords: *Error Analysis, common sentence error, literary analysis essay, sentence structure,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Committing errors is an inevitable aspect of the learning process- "to err is human." In learning English as a Second Language (ESL), learners and even teachers commit many errors both in syntax and semantics. As one of the four macro skills, writing is the most complex skill to learn because it takes so much time to master the intricacy of grammar rules. Heaton (1988) asserted that "*The writing skills are complex and certainly difficult to teach, requiring not only of grammatical and theoretical devices but also conceptual and judgmental elements.*"

Along this, Kusumawardhani (2018) asserts that some factors make English writing difficult, such as spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. There are rules that learners need to master in sentence construction. Moreover, it becomes difficult to relate to some factors, such as suffixes, prefixes, infixes, ablaut, and reduplication. Aside from these rules on grammar, Temporal (2016) emphasizes the need of Filipino learners to improve the logical organization of ideas in writing paragraphs.

Moreover, Al-Khresheh (2010) reiterates that teachers need to identify the errors and understand the linguistic reasons for their occurrences. Given this, studying learners' errors could be the first goal to bridge second language teachers to the knowledge of learners' language. Corder (1967) claims that errors committed by learners are beneficial to teachers-

researchers, and learners. For teachers, errors are evidences of learners' progress in second language learning. Teachers can make use of error analysis to help improve learners' writing skills. For learners, errors can serve as a basis for their language learning. Moreover, errors provide evidence to researchers on how learners learn and acquire the language.

In addition, Esmalde (2019) emphasizes that the main problems of Filipinos as Foreign Language Learners are confusion and insufficient background knowledge about language acquisition of the rules of tense verb system. He asserts that in the Philippine educational setting, there is growing concern about students' grammatical competence. If sentence errors are left unchecked, it could result in poor quality English education and lead the country into losing its competitiveness which is contrary to the mandates of the constitution to provide an education system that will achieve the needs of all people and develop their potential and skills.

Today, the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges in our education system, such as the delivery of instruction, submission of outputs, and evaluation of learning progress. The Department of Education (DepEd) strategized cope-up mechanisms to ensure learning continuity in the blended distance learning- Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BELCP). The DepEd identified the most essential learning competencies (MELCs) of all subjects and the crafted self-paced learning modules used in the blended distance learning of students. One of the core subjects included in the Senior High School curriculum is the 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. This subject focuses on the appreciation of literary works, which include writing literary analysis. The Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) of 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World, for Quarter 1, Module 1- Lesson 2 are: (1) write a close analysis and critical interpretation of literary texts (EN12Lit-Ie-27, EN12Lit-Ie-30) and (2) show a sense of adaptability of the Philippine Literary History (EN12Lit-Ie-31.2).

Based on the literary analysis submitted by learners, including the Pre-Pandemic semesters, it was apparent that in the educational setting, most students nowadays are not particular with correct grammar; thus, they commit common errors in sentence structure. The following statements are some of the ungrammatical sentences committed by the learners:

“Pur lofe span are shorten.” “This poem ought to give awareness and allows us to reflect on what we can do for the environment.” “There are many ways we can do to help in preserving our nature.” “Nature deserved to be protected but most of us are not protecting it nor destroying this nature.” “This lines of the poem is our dilemma that the world facing it.”

The researcher believes that Error Analysis is an approach to improve the English writing competency of learners. When common sentence errors are identified, teachers can integrate interventions or programs to help learners master grammar rules as they write sentences. Hence, the researcher analyzed common sentence errors in sentence structures of literary analysis among Grade 11 students in the subject of 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World. The study focused on the syntax of sentences because they are the small, comprehensible units of language forms.

Moreover, the findings of this study shall be an input for crafting and designing innovations and programs to address the learners' needs in writing. It could also be used to revise lesson plans, upskilling of teaching pedagogies, and more effective teaching materials. More importantly, it is desired that the findings from this study will help both teachers and students in other writing activities or endeavors.

Research Objectives

This study analyzed the common errors in sentence structure committed by Grade 11 students in their Literary Analysis using the Corder (1974) Five Stages of Error Analysis Research. In identifying the errors, the categories utilized by Runkati (2013) were used; it includes two types, sentential level and word level.

This study aimed to give answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the common errors in the sentence structure of Literary Analysis among Grade 11 students?
2. What is the frequency of common errors in sentence structure among the Grade 11 students?

Literature Review

Numerous studies were conducted on error analysis, specifically in second language acquisition. Error analysis in sentence structure plays a vital role in developing the teaching pedagogies to improve the teacher and students' language competence. This approach recognizes the learning difficulties of students in sentence structure.

Richards (1971) classifies errors observed in the acquisition of English as a second language as follows:

- a) Overgeneralization, covering instances where the learners create a deviant structure based on his experience of other structures of the target language;
- b) Ignorance of rule restriction, occurring as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures;
- c) Incomplete application of rules, arising when the learners fail to develop a particular structure required to produce acceptable sentences fully; and
- d) False concepts hypothesized, deriving from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language.

Grammar and Its Importance

Chung and Pullum (2015) emphasize that there is a set of rules that govern how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: one may say that a learner who knows grammar has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in the acceptability of the language forms.

Canale and Swain (1980) claim that English education aims to develop learners' communicative competence, including grammatical or linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is essential in developing learners' ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to meet communication goals. Skehan (1996) argues that grammar-appropriate grammar instruction tends to cause fossilization, classroom pidgins, and a low level of accuracy.

Sermsook (2017) reiterates that teachers should consider the differences between vocabulary and grammar knowledge of English and those of students' first language.

Ur (2009) describes grammar as how a language operates and combines words to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone.

Literary Analysis Write-Up

Manyak & Manyak (2021) describe Literary Analysis and Writing as an integrated instructional routine developed through a formative experiment research project that prompts students to uncover the deeper meanings of literary texts. The routine weaves together brief

pre-teaching of carefully selected vocabulary words, whole-class assisted text, close reading and discussion guided by high-level text-based questions, and analytical response writing.

McCrocklin & Slater (2017) further notes that learning to uncover what is essential in a literary text and then argue one's opinions using explicit evidence can be challenging tasks no matter what student's level of English proficiency. However, learning to do this text analysis is essential, particularly as students prepare to move to high school and beyond.

According to Marlatt (2017) claims that new and innovative analyses of literature are possible when a proper curricular and pedagogical alignment has been made by teachers and learners that includes essential unit questions, overarching course goals of student understanding, implementation of conducive technology, and complimentary literacy practices.

The authors mentioned above explain the role and importance of the learners to be involved in writing literary analysis essays. The authors believed that the writing activity develops the learners' critical-thinking ability to analyze and interpret the elements of a given literary work. Moreover, such written activity encourages learners to craft outputs that demonstrate grammatical competence.

Error Analysis and Its Importance

Connolly (2020) claims that an error occurs due to a lack of knowledge or incompetence and is usually not being able to be self-corrected by a learner without further learning. According to Corder (1967) and Brown (2000), language learners' errors are essential to study because they show the levels of the learners' knowledge. Corder (1967) states that errors are not just something to be eradicated, but instead can be crucial in and of themselves. He indicates that errors are significant in three different ways. First, the teachers tell them how far the learners have advanced and what remains for them to learn. Second, they provide the researchers' evidence of how language is learned or acquired and what strategies or procedures the learners employ to discover the language. Lastly, they are indispensable to the learners themselves because we can regard errors as devices the learners use to learn.

Telaumbanua (2020) asserts that the level of practice or application of the systematized sets of structural rules governing the composition are consciously or unconsciously ignored. The ignorance or avoidance of these structural rules blur the gaps between sentence-level accuracy and the meaning communicated. The blurriness is termed as 'Sentence Errors.'

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) emphasize that the analysis of errors is an approach to analyzing errors committed by EFL and ESL learners as they learn a language.

According to Ellis (1997), language learning involves committing errors or mistakes like other learning processes in education. In language teaching and learning, the evaluation of learner's error is a progressive technique for identifying, describing, and systematically explaining the errors made by a learner, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics. A person could not automatically grasp said language unless he has made a series of trials and errors in English as a second language.

Nuruzzaman et al. (2018) accentuate that students need to recognize the significance of errors in their writing to grasp and understand the nature of the errors made entirely. Thus, it requires English language teachers to be better equipped, more sensitive, and aware of students' difficulties with grammar, lexis, semantics, and mechanics.

Based on the mentioned authors, it can be derived that error analysis can help teachers improve grammar instruction, which can directly develop learners' grammar fluency.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive-qualitative research method was employed in this study. Qualitative research requires reaching research results based on codes, categories, and themes by going through the data in detail Merriam (1998). This study is qualitative in nature, where content analysis will be used to gather the research results. Content analysis is commonly used in social sciences research. This method is used for analyzing the contents of any texts and the texts with errors committed by the participants Nuruzzaman et al. (2018).

The identified errors were classified based on the two categories by Runkati (2013); sentential level includes; Disagreement of Verb and Subject, Incorrect Verb Tense, Missing Punctuation, Sentence Fragment, Incorrect Capitalization, and Incorrect Word order. Moreover, word-level includes; Incorrect Articles, Incorrect Spelling, Incorrect Prepositions, Missing determiners, Incorrect Word choice, Incorrect Noun Usage, Incorrect Pronoun Usage, and Incorrect Transition words.

Sources of Data

The sampling procedure of this qualitative study is purposive, and participants were 30 Grade 11 students of a school in Quirino. They are enrolled during the 2nd semester of the school year 2020-2021 with the subject 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and World.

Instrumentation

Literary analyses of a contextualized poem were gathered to identify the errors in sentence structure frequently made by the participants. The literary piece they wrote about is a contextualized poem written by the researcher. The poem 'Now You Hear Me' is a free verse that contains allegorical lines that form imagery on environmental problems that we face today. It presents a cause-and-effect relationship of the abusiveness of humans to our environment. The contextualized symbolisms found in the poem are Bugkalots, Ludong, Sierra Madre, Cagayan River, and Quirino. The literary work underwent Learning Resource Quality Assurance review from the Schools Division Office Quirino- Learning Resources Management and Development System, conforming the literary work as a Contextualized Free Verse poem on February 23, 2021. This learning resource contains guide questions in writing the literary analysis.

Data Gathering

This study followed Corder's Five steps of Error Analysis; a collection of a sample of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors. After collecting data, the following steps of error analysis specified by Corder (1974) will be followed.

First, each literary analysis essay was examined word by word and sentence by sentence to ascertain the types and number of errors.

Second, they were put under different categories Runkati (2013), and they were converted into a percentage to examine the frequency. After analyzing the errors, the researcher compared the categories and number of errors committed by the students.

Data Analysis

The collected errors were analyzed and labeled based on the types of errors to get the frequency and the percentage. Afterwhich, each error type was classified into two main groups: the sentential level errors and the word level.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are some errors found in the literary analysis write-ups of students; they committed errors both in the sentential level and word level. For sentential level, they committed Disagreement of Verb and Subject, Incorrect Verb Tense, Missing Punctuation, Sentence Fragment, Incorrect Capitalization, and Incorrect Word order. They also committed errors in the word level; Incorrect Articles, Incorrect Spelling, Incorrect Prepositions, Missing Determiner, Incorrect Word Choice, Incorrect Noun Usage, Incorrect Pronoun Usage, and Incorrect Transition words.

Table 1. The results of structural errors that fall under the sentential level

Category	Error Committed	Frequency	Percentage
sentential level	Disagreement of Verb and Subject	75	23.89%
	Incorrect Verb Tense	65	20.70%
	Missing Punctuation	62	19.75%
	Sentence Fragment	40	12.74%
	Incorrect Capitalization	39	12.42%
	Incorrect Word order	33	10.51%
	Total	314	100%

Data from Table 1 indicated that the most frequent error in sentential level is Disagreement of Verb and Subject (23.89%), followed by Incorrect Verb Tense (20.70%), Missing Punctuation (19.75%), Sentence Fragment (12.74%), Incorrect Capitalization (12.42%), and Incorrect Word order (10.51%) respectively.

STRUCTURAL ERROR: SENTENTIAL LEVEL

Disagreement of Verb and Subject

Based on table 1, the most dominant error committed by learners in their literary analysis write-ups for the sentential level is Subject-Verb Agreement with 23.89%. SVA has the trickiest rules in English grammar. SVA means that the number of the verb must match the number of the subject of the statement, Lester and Beason (2013). Thus, the result of this study is aligned to the findings of Sarasua (2018), where their study showed that Grade 7 learners' mean percentage score in a summative test in SVA was found to be critically low. The succeeding examples reveal the students' misunderstanding about the rules of the subject-verb agreement.

*Example 1: **This lines** of the poem is our dilemma.**

Corrected form: These lines of the poem present our dilemma.

*Example 2: The **author describe** Mother Nature what it looked like in the past.**

Corrected form: The author describes mother nature on what it looked like in the past.

*Example 3: The **mountain were** painted black with burning brushes.**

Corrected form: The mountain was painted black with burning brushes.

Incorrect Verb Tense

Based on the analysis of data gathered, 20.70% of errors committed at the sentential level fall under the incorrect use of verb tense. The result of the study was supported by Sarasua and Tadije (2019) when they claimed that teaching the tenses of the verb is one of the most challenging competencies required in learning the rules of English grammar. The following examples illustrate the error committed by the learners in the verb tense.

*Example 1: Back before everything was peaceful and humans and nature **are** living harmoniously.**

Corrected form: Back before, everything was peaceful when humans harmoniously lived with nature.

*Example 2: They **are not thinking** of the possible consequences.**

Corrected form: They do not think of the possible consequences.

*Example 3: Nature **deserved** to be protected.**

Corrected form: Nature deserves to be protected.

Missing Punctuation

Based on the data collected and the analysis shown in Table 1, learners committed 19.75% errors in the punctuation for the sentential level. The result confirms the findings of the study of Sermsook (2017) that in learning English, errors were frequently committed in the use of punctuation marks. The following examples are the errors committed by learners in the proper use of punctuation. The researcher believes that the cause of this committed error is the carelessness of learners, and the punctuation marks which were found to be the most problematic were comma (,), hyphen (-), and period (.).

*Example 1: In writing this **heart touching** poem, the **authors purpose** is to let us be aware on what we our doing to our Mother Earth.**

Corrected Form: In writing this heart-touching poem, the author aims to raise awareness of our abusive actions towards mother Earth.

*Example 2: Let us open our eyes and see our Mother Earth's **brokenness****

Corrected Form: Let us open our eyes and see our mother Earth's brokenness.

*Example 3: If we want to save the **environment** then we should stop the exploitation of natural resources.**

Corrected Form: If we want to save the environment, we should stop exploiting natural resources.

Table 2. The results of structural errors that fall under word level

Category	Error Committed	Frequency	Percentage
word-level	Incorrect Articles	113	28.39%
	Incorrect Spelling	69	17.34%
	Incorrect Prepositions	63	15.83%
	Missing Determiner	55	13.82%
	Incorrect Word choice	38	9.55%

Incorrect Noun Usage	34	8.54%
Incorrect Pronoun Usage	23	5.78%
Incorrect Transition words	3	0.75%
Total	398	100%

Data from Table 2 indicated that the most frequent error in word-level is Incorrect Articles (28.39%), followed by Incorrect Spelling (17.34%), Incorrect Prepositions (15.83%), Missing Determiner (13.82%), Incorrect Word choice (9.55%), Incorrect Noun Usage (8.54%), Incorrect Pronoun Usage (5.78%), and Incorrect Transition words (0.75%) respectively.

WORD LEVEL COMMON ERRORS

Incorrect Articles

Based on the data gathered and analyzed, the ^{first} rank in the word level error is the improper use of articles with 28.39%. Manik (2017) emphasized that some proper nouns require the article "the" in English grammar. These proper nouns include names of large regions, family names, rivers, oceans, names of mountain ranges, names of companies that contain the words "company," "corporation," or "foundation," or that include "the" as part of the registered or official name, and names of theories, effects, devices, scales. In this study, students were confused on the use of a, an, and the.

*Example 1: Nature is **the** essential gift from God.**

Corrected Form: Nature is an essential gift from God

*Example 2: In conclusion **author** employs the use of imagery in most parts of the poem to trigger the emotions of the readers.**

Corrected Form: In conclusion, the author employs imagery in most parts of the poem to trigger the readers' emotions.

*Example 3: Mining can usually cause **earthquake**.**

Corrected Form: Mining can usually cause an earthquake

Incorrect Spelling

As indicated in table 2, incorrect spelling has 17.34% in the word level category. The majority of spelling errors committed by the students are the usage of incorrect letters, as shown in the sample sentences below. The findings of this study are aligned with the claim of Kusumawardhani (2018) that spelling is one of the factors that makes English writing difficult to learn.

*Example 1: We need to practice the 3Rs- Reuse, **Reduse**, Recycle.**

Corrected Form: We need to practice the 3Rs Reuse, Reduce and Recycle

*Example 2: I think the quote symbolizes **wrong doings** done by people to nature.**

Corrected form: I think the quote symbolizes the wrongdoings of people to nature.

*Example 3: Preventing **pullution** provides cleaner air and water.**

Corrected Form: Preventing pollution provides cleaner air and water.

Incorrect Prepositions

From the tabular data, errors in prepositions indicated 15.83% in the word level category. The results align with Gvarishvili's (2012) findings, where it was asserted that the usage of prepositions is one of the most challenging competency to master in English. In this study, the samples below revealed the learners' confusion in using appropriate prepositions to be used in sentence construction.

*Example 1: It describes the beauty of nature **in** the beginning and how it was slowly shattered.**

*Corrected Form: It describes the beauty of nature **at** the beginning and how it was slowly shattered.*

*Example 2: Humans became greedy and abusive to nature not thinking **the** consequences of their activities.**

Corrected Form: Humans became greedy and abusive to nature, not thinking about the consequences of their actions.

*Example 3: The purpose of the author in writing the poem is to wake us up **what** our Mother Nature is experiencing.**

Corrected Form: The author's purpose in writing the poem is to wake us up to what our mother nature is experiencing.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results above show that there are 14 structural errors committed by the participants in their literary analysis write-ups. Six of these errors are under sentential errors: Disagreement of Verb and Subject, Incorrect Verb Tense, Missing Punctuation, Sentence Fragment, Incorrect Capitalization, and Incorrect Word order. Eight errors are categorized under word level: Incorrect Articles, Incorrect Spelling, Incorrect Prepositions, Missing Determiner, Incorrect Word Choice, Incorrect Noun Usage, Incorrect Pronoun Usage, and Incorrect Transition words. The evidence of the structural errors indicated that at the sentential level, the prevalent errors are Disagreement of Verb and Subject, Incorrect Verb Tense, and Missing Punctuation. The most dominant errors committed for the word level are Incorrect Articles, Incorrect Spelling, and Incorrect Prepositions. From these findings, the errors committed by the learners are associated with their first language or mother tongue. Errors manifested are also caused by learners' carelessness in writing, and limited knowledge in the rules of English grammar. Moreover, these results call for teachers to value such research findings, for it can be a basis to upscale teaching pedagogies, create and innovate contextualized learning materials, and recalibrate assessment and evaluation tools to improve the written grammatical competence of learners. Furthermore, teachers are also encouraged to conduct error analysis of their learners' outputs, for the results will reflect the learning gaps in grammar that need to be addressed.

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