

**Bangladeshi Tertiary Level Students' Common Errors
In
Academic Writing**

Thesis

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study is to investigate Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common errors in academic writing. It will also reveal the writing problems through error analysis in students' academic essay writing. In this paper, error analysis includes identification, classification, and systematic interpretation of the errors which are produced by the ESL/EFL learners. I have focused on the tertiary level students from different private universities of Bangladesh. My research says that making repetitive and common errors in academic writing is a very regular phenomenon. But in this stage of learning, incorporation of errors in students' academic writing is completely undesirable. My research helped me in finding out the reasons hidden behind their mistakes. The questionnaire part in my research would reveal both the perspectives of teachers and students regarding this issue. My research will help out the teachers in figuring out why and how the errors are occurred and can be resolved. This study wants to accompany the teachers while designing syllabus and material as per the students' need. On the other hand this study can work as need analysis for the students as well. This study tends to find out some effective and necessary solution of this problem, so that both the teachers and the students can be benefited to achieve their goal regarding writing skill development consecutively.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODCUTION

"Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind."

- Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

It is indeed true. Amongst all creations only humankind is blessed with the power of expressions and only words can express the magic of thought process. People have made the best use of this unique technique. Therefore, this world is now enriched with a great deal of excellent works produced by the best creation of God named 'people'. As words are valuable, it is important that people use them correctly, appropriate and effectively. Misuse leads to mistakes and errors which complicate or destroy meaning.

1.1 Background of the study

It was a serious concern of the government of Bangladesh to improve the level of English proficiency in all education levels. When students join the university level they fail to show their expected competency in English. Students particularly face problems in academic writing. In tertiary level, academic writing has always given more importance. At this stage of learning, error in academic writing is totally intolerable. To investigate students' common errors in academic writing, error analysis is highly needed. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. Error analysis enables teachers to find out the sources of errors and take pedagogical precautions towards them. Thus, the analysis of learner language has become an essential need to overcome some questions and propose solutions regarding different aspects. This kind of research will help learners, teachers and syllabus designers to develop skills, provide materials and design syllabus according to the students' need. From the experimentations of error analysis, teachers and syllabus designers will get the clear idea about students' common error.

In Bangladesh essay writing is considered as academic writing at the tertiary level. This study wants to have a keen look at the error analysis with an intention to find out about the common errors made by Bangladeshi tertiary level students' in academic essay writing.

1.2 Significance of the study

There are some reasons why I have chosen this topic as my research. In Bangladesh the number of private universities is increasing day by day. Every year a huge number of students are passing H.S.C level or A-level. After completion of their H.S.C or A- level they try to enroll in a university for higher study. A huge number of students can not get chance in public universities. So, a vast number of students try to get admission in different private universities. In these private universities a major number of students get admission who does not have sound knowledge in English. Here in Bangladesh there are more than 50 private universities where students from different academic backgrounds get admissions. Most of the students think that they have great problem in writing and speaking in English. In private universities the medium of study is fully English. So the students, who are from bangle medium, face many difficulties while producing any sentence in English. Students' admit this that they cannot express properly in English while doing any academic writing in English. While doing different academic writing, students commit different types of errors. Some students believe that they know the grammar rules but cannot apply those properly while they need to express in English in written form for their academic purpose. At the primary level most of the students are taught English in GTM (grammar translation method). It makes them memorize the grammar rules only. There is no practice of detailed understanding in this way of learning. Recently few years back a new method has been introduced called CLT (communicative language teaching) at the secondary level of learning. Still we can see

the reflection of GTM in their use of language. This is because, they have already experienced GTM method at their early stage of learning, so it is quite hard for them to acquire something new at their advance stage of learning. We have seen that these students can easily come up with the rules if they asked any but they cannot apply those in academic writing. As these students become totally dependent on those rules they just memorize those rules without understand properly. We can say that the deductive way of teaching makes them dependent on the rules learning first rather observing the use of those grammatical rules. As the way of teaching English was not that much effective for the students, they face problem while they need to produce any sentence orally and in written form. It becomes difficult for them to comprehend anything while they are asked to read or listen anything in English. As they cannot comprehend properly they face difficulties to express it in their writing. So, these students need proper guidance to develop their writing ability. Now-a-days most of the private universities are offering fundamental or functional English course to improve the skills for all mixed ability students. This research will help me to find out the effectiveness of those fundamental courses through identifying students' common errors in essay writing.

The goal of the study is to investigate Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common errors in academic writing. It will also reveal the writing problems through error analysis in students' academic essay writing. In this paper, error analysis includes identification, classification, and systematic interpretation of the errors which are produced by the ESL/EFL learners. I have focused on the tertiary level students from different private universities of Bangladesh. My research says that making repetitive and common errors in academic writing is a very regular phenomenon. But in this stage of learning, incorporation of errors in students' academic writing is completely undesirable. My research helped me in finding out the reasons hidden behind their mistakes. The

questionnaire part in my research would reveal both the perspectives of teachers and students regarding this issue. My research will help out the teachers in figuring out why and how the errors are occurred and can be resolved. This study wants to accompany the teachers while designing syllabus and material as per the students' need. On the other hand this study can work as need analysis for the students as well. This study tends to find out some effective and necessary solution of this problem, so that both the teachers and the students can be benefited to achieve their goal regarding writing skill development consecutively.

1.3 Research Aim:

The aim of my research is to investigate the common errors that the tertiary level students of Bangladesh frequently commit while they write academic essay or paragraph.

1.4 Research question:

- What are the common errors that tertiary level students of Bangladesh frequently commit while writing academic essay or paragraph?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of academic writing, Error analysis and error correction have been widely discussed by many researchers and linguists. This chapter begins by defining error, learners' error, relationship between writing and error, academic essay writing, and other terms which are interrelated to error analysis.

2.1 Error:

In ELT, 'error' can be defined as deviation form of language, which is apart from accuracy or correctness. Concerning identification of errors, Ellis (1994) defines error as a deviation from the norms of the target language. On the other hand Corder (1967) considers error as a way of investigating learning process. According to behaviourist learning theory, Ellis (1985: 21) believes that "old habits get in the way of learning new habits." It indicates that where the L1 and L2 share a meaning but express it in different ways, an error is likely to arise in the L2 because the learner will transfer the realization device from his first language into the second. (Ellis, 1985:22)

2.2 Difference between error and mistake:

Corder (1967) makes the useful distinction between errors and mistakes. He reveals that 'an error takes place when the deviation arises as result of lack of knowledge'. It represents a lack of competence.

On the other hand, he explains that 'a mistake occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. Corder thinks that errors of performance are the result of mistakes in language use. It indicates we are immediately aware of them when they occur and can correct them. He treats them as unsystematic errors and thinks that they should not be taken seriously. Errors of competence, on the other hand, are regarded as systematic and persistent. According to Corder, "errors of competence are the result of the application of

rules by the L2 learner which do not correspond to L2 norms". According to Corder these types of errors represent "transitional competence" and these need careful attention. Edge (1989) divided mistakes into three broad categories: 'Slips', 'Errors' and 'Attempts'. He defined 'slips' as mistakes that students can correct themselves once the mistake has been pointed out to them. 'Errors' are one kind of mistakes which students cannot correct themselves and which therefore need explanation and 'attempts' is that when a student tries to say something but does not yet know the correct way of saying it (Edge 1989: Chapter 2). According to Brown (1993), "A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a "slip," in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Dulay and Burt (1972) referred to errors as "goof," according to them an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner.

2.2.1 How do we decide whether the student has made an error or a mistake?

From the above discussion we have come to know that mistake can be a slip of the tongue or the pen. The student is able to correct it himself, when they make a mistake. Sometimes they do it either completely unprompted or with the guidance of the teacher and other students.

Gower and Walter (1983) believe that an error is much more deeply ingrained. When a student makes an error he might:

- believe what he is saying or writing is correct. This indicates the student is unaware of his making error.
- not know what the correct form should be. Until the teacher gives feedback the student is unaware of the correct form.
- know the correct form but can not get it right.

Gower and Walter (1983) consider that errors are usually produced regularly and systematically. They also think that, very little time is needed to be spent on mistakes but errors will need proper attention at certain stages of the lesson.

To distinguish between an error and mistake, Ellis (1997) suggests if the learner sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he always uses it incorrectly, it is then an error. Ellis (1997) added that if a learner can correct his own deviations, then they are mistakes but if he is unable to correct it then the deviations are errors.

2.3 Learners' error:

Concerning learners' error, Corder (1967) reveals that in the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought. Firstly the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred.

Concerning identification of errors, Ellis (1994) defines error as a deviation from the norms of the target language. On the other hand Corder (1967) considers error as a way of investigating learning process. According to Corder, the study of learner errors showed that though many errors were caused by transferring L1 'habits', many more were not; learners often contributed creatively to the process of learning. They also indicated that learners appeared to go through stages of acquisition, as the nature of the errors they made varied according to their level of development.

Sinha (1997) believes that making errors is inevitable in FL/SL language learning. But she also believes that analyzing a student's errors can be a very useful way of showing what students have learnt, and have not learnt. So instead of interpreting errors negatively as a sign of failure we can view them positively as an indication of what still needs to be learned. In Sinha's (1997) article, she also mentioned that in many developed countries, errors are no longer considered 'crimes' but are analyzed carefully and sympathetically since they can play a major role in the success of a language teaching program.

2.3.1 Relationship between learner and error:

In second language learning, learners' error is one of the most common discussions among all other aspects of ESL environment. If we want to define the relation between learner and error then we will see that it has very close relation. There are different levels of learners who make different types of errors in their language learning process. Many researchers have worked on learners' error. According to the learners' level, they make different types of errors.

Commonly we can see that learners make error while they are developing their language skills. As we are dealing with ESL learner, it is a vital issue to find out the relation between learner and error. My target learners are at tertiary level, where errors in academic writing are intolerable. In this level it is expected that in academic writing students' writing will be error free in terms of in language. In reality we can see that though students are in tertiary level, they still face difficulties in writing. We can find the evidence through their production of comprehensive essay writing where we can discover some common existence of errors.

My paper is on Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common error in academic writing where relation between target learners' and their common errors is one of the major

issue. Our learners' target language is English, which is considered as second language or foreign language in Bangladesh. If we accept it as second language then we can say that in our country, second language learning became a complex process as the Bangla medium students' English learning environment is not cooperative at all. For the development of country and to compete with the people around the world, Bangladeshi people are realizing the importance of this international language, English. People are now giving more importance to make it as second language.

2.4 AGE: tertiary level students

Learner's age plays a vital role in the rate of the success of SLA. Most research suggests that older learners are better. On the other hand some empirical research also suggests that, children are better language learner than adults. In the field of SLA, we can see the reflection of the complexity of the age issue. In my research, my target learners are at the tertiary level. We can consider these tertiary level learners as adult learners as their age group is 20-21. Ellis (1985), believes that rate and success of SLA are strongly influenced by the age of the learner. He explains the effects of age in the light of the summary of the empirical results. The number of years of exposure and starting age affect the level of success while learning a language. When the question is about second language learning, exposure of target language is a big issue. If the learner gets proper exposure of the target language for a long time then it becomes easier for the learner to learn the target language.

Considering the age issue, there is a famous hypothesis known as the critical period hypothesis (CPH). CPH states that, there is a period when language acquisition takes place naturally. Penfield and Roberts (1959) argued that language acquisition falls within first ten years of life. During this period brain retracts plasticity, but after puberty this

plasticity begins to disappear (1985, p. 107). If we focus on this hypothesis, then I can say that as my target learners are adults, they have passed their puberty many years before. Most alarmingly, before their puberty they did not have enough exposure of the target language which may have become a major hindrance to achieve accuracy in target language.

2.5 Fossilized learner:

Some learners become fossilized learner as their learning environment may reinforce an incorrect form of language. Brown (1998) referred to fossilization as “permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into person’s second language competence” (p. 217). Here the question may arise how some ungrammatical or incorrect items get fossilized in learners’ learning process.

Brown (1998) states that, “learners’ with fossilized items have acquired them through the same positive feedback and reinforcement with which they acquired correct items” (p.218).

So, we can say that sometimes it happens because of the interaction gap between the teacher and student in a classroom setting.

2.6 Learners’ choice:

2.6.1 Interaction gap:

In Bangladesh, it is found that 86% students are of Bengoli medium background (Jahan and Jahan, 2008:162; cited in Abedin, 2010). So, it becomes difficult for those students of private universities, where the medium of instruction is English. When teachers deliver their lectures all through in English, it becomes struggle for students to comprehend properly. There are some students who are introverted and feel shy to ask the teachers if they face any problem in understanding. Sometimes these students may

misinterpret and learn the incorrect form of language. It happens because of the interaction gap between the teacher and student.

2.6.2 Lack of inner motivation:

To a large extent, a student's success or failure largely depends on his/her motivation towards the learning. Motivation can be defined as, an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action (Brown1994:152). According to the variety of motivation, learners' motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Harmer points out, 'some students have a clear goal, fed by a strong extrinsic motivation to achieve it. Others have an internal intrinsic drive which has fired them up.' (2001:52).

In learning something new motivation is obviously important. When students learn a language they should have inner motivation to learn the language. Lack of inner motivation, diminishes the learning process. Students who do not have inner motivation to learn the target language, they fail to be a successful learner. At first students must have inner motivation to learn the language, only then they can go for their desired goal to achieve.

2.6.3 Learning environment:

Learning environment is another important issue for the learners of second language. In my research the learners are from different background. Most of them have completed their primary, secondary and higher secondary level from Bangla medium. In the tertiary level, while they come to a new environment where the medium is English, they face problems. In order to cope with the new environment, they need to interact with the various types of learners and teachers. As the learning environment is totally new to them, they need supportive, cooperative environment to suit with the learning process. Here teachers can play vital role to give support to the learners to adjust with the new

learning environment. Harmer (2001) says, '...teacher's rapport with the students is critical to creating the right conditions for motivated learning' (p. 53)

To find out student's difficulties in learning, we need to investigate these questions:

- Is he willing to learn?
- Is he not being able to learn?
- Is there any interaction gap?
- Is his environment not supporting to the utmost? (psychology)

2.7 Study of Error - Contrastive analysis:

In the 1970s, EA replaced Contrastive Analysis (CA), which sought to predict the errors that learners make by identifying the linguistic differences between their L1 and the target language.

The underlying assumption of CA was that errors occurred primarily as a result of interference when the learner transferred native language 'habits' into the L2. Interference was believed to take place whenever the 'habits' of the native language differed from those of the target language. CA gave way to EA as this assumption came to be challenged. Whereas CA looked at only the learner's native language and the target language, EA provided a methodology for investigating learner language. For this reason EA constitutes an appropriate starting point for the study of learner language and L2 acquisition. (Ellis1994: 47). Much of the early work on learner errors focused on determining the extent to which L2 acquisition was the result of L1 transfer or of creative construction (the construction of unique rules similar to those which children form in the course of acquiring their mother tongue) (Ellis1994:19). The study of learners errors showed that although many errors were caused by

transferring L1 'habits', many more were not; learners often contributed creatively to the process of learning. They also indicated that learners appeared to go through stages of acquisition, as the nature of the errors they made varied according to their level of development (1994: 19).

There is a close connection with the learners' error and development of second language learning. In our country as well, we can see learners commit different types of errors while they struggle with academic writing.

2.8 Error analysis:

Error analysis is the technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by a learner of a foreign language, by using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics. It is thought that analysis of a learner's errors will reflect in a systematic way his or her level of competence (Sinha, 1997). The study of errors is carried out by means of Error Analysis (EA). In 1970s EA became a recognized part of applied linguistics, a development that owed much to the work of Corder. Systematically analyzing errors made by language learners make it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder, 1974). Pit Corder is the "Father" of Error Analysis. EA took a new turn with his article entitled "The significance of Learner Errors" (1967).

According to Corder (1974), error analysis (EA) research consists of several steps. He suggests the following steps:

1. Collection of a sample of learner language
2. Identification of errors
3. Description of errors
4. Explanation of errors
5. Evaluation of errors.

Sipple (1978) in his article "*Error Analysis: How to Translate It into Positive Teaching*", supports the attitude of error analysis as a problem- solving task in which there is an attempt to discover the rhetorical and linguistic reasons behind the occurrence of error.

Error analysis emphasizes "the significance of errors in learners' **interlanguage** system" (Brown 1994, p. 204). The term *interlanguage*, introduced by Selinker (1972), refers to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language. Corder (1967) referred to it as the *Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence*.

2.8.1 Error Analysis: why do we need that?

While doing analysis of errors in writing, we basically focus on grammar, vocabulary and spelling error patterns. Error analysis helps a learner to work with their errors. Students can discuss with any language instructor or teacher to find cause and solution to their common error patterns. It can help the learner to reduce their error if they can successfully follow advice of the teacher.

For the teachers, error analysis can help a lot to identify students' problems in writing and their errors. Teacher can then work on their syllabus which can work as need analysis in respect of students' difficulties. Teacher can develop their material according to the students' need. If a teacher can identify students' common trouble spots in second language learning then it becomes easier for him/her to develop material according to their need.

We can say that error analysis involves analysis of errors in writing, making the necessary changes to work, and judging the accuracy/appropriateness of writing. So it is

inevitable that error analysis facilitates learning and teaching both as it helps learners and teachers' in all respects.

2.9 Types of error:

Errors can be classified into different categories. Corder's (1974) framework for describing errors is a useful tool instrument. He distinguished three types of error according to their systematicity: presystematic errors, systematic errors, postsystematic errors.

1. **Presystematic errors** occur when the learner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the target language. These are random.
2. **Systematic errors** occur when the learner has discovered a rule but it is the wrong one.
3. **Postsystematic errors** occur when the learner knows the correct target language rule but uses it inconsistently (i.e. makes mistake)

(Corder, 1974:56)

A number of different sources or causes of competence errors have been identified. Richards (1971b) distinguishes three: interference errors, intralingual errors and developmental errors.

1. **Interference errors** occur as a result of 'the use of elements from one language while speaking another.' An example might be when a German learner of L2 English says 'I got not' because the equivalent sentence in German is 'Ich gehe nicht'. Similar kind of example in Bangla 'amader desh valo na' in English the learner directly translate it as; 'our country is good not when using English.'

2. **Interlingual/Transfer errors:** There are interlingual errors when the learner's L1 habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him/her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1971). Interlingual errors reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply'. For example, '*I am agree with this statement*', in this sentence, the learner has used "*am*" to indicate present tense or we can say that the learner failed to learn the proper condition under which rules apply.
3. **Developmental errors** occur when the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience. For example, to indicate past tense the learner has written; '*I was not read the international language*'. This error indicates that the learner interpreted "was" as a marker of the past tense and because of this false hypothesis he made the error.

According to Richards (1970), "items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language. The learner, in this case, tries to "derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Richards, 1970:6).

Richards (1985) discusses major types of intralingual and developmental error in terms of (1) overgeneralization, (2) ignorance of rule restrictions, (3) incomplete application of rules, and (4) false concepts hypothesized.

- **Overgeneralization errors:** overgeneralization covers instances where learners create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of other structures in the target language. For example:

*We **are** live in this hut*

*We **are** hope.....*

*He **is** speaks...*

*He did not **found***

*He did not **asks** me*

*They would **became***

*I can **saw** it*

*He **come** from India*

*She **speak** German as well*

- **Rule restrictions error:** It is closely related to generalization of deviant structures where students' fail to observe the restrictions of existing structures, which indicate the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. For example: *I made him to do it.* Here it ignores restrictions on the distribution of make. For this kind of error, learners basically use the previously acquired rule in a new situation.
- **Incomplete application of rules:** According to Richards (1985), this kind of errors may signal the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of rules required to produce acceptable utterance. For example, systematic difficulty in

the use of questions, a statement form may be used as a question, one of the transformations in a series may be omitted, or a question word may simply be added to the statement form (1985:50).

- **False concepts hypothesized:** This type of errors indicate faulty rule-learning at various levels, there is a class of developmental errors that derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. For example, the form *was*, may be interpreted as a marker of the past tense: *it was happened*; *is* may be understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense: *she is speaks German*. (Richards, 1985:51)

According to Brown (2000), errors can be viewed as being either *global* or *local*. Global errors obstruct communication. They prevent the message from being comprehended as in the example below:

** We lead modern life communicating with full world.*

On the other hand, local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the receiver to guess the intended meaning as follows:

** To improve ourselves we have to know speaking English.*

2.10 Interrelation between Writing and Error:

“Learners who wish to write in new academic settings have to gain a mastery of the concepts and content of their subject area as well as developing an ability to express themselves effectively and appropriately in a foreign language” (Tribble, 1996:83)

2.11 Academic writing in tertiary level:

Academic writing is an important aspect in tertiary level. Tertiary level is considered as the advanced level in Bangladesh. In this level, students need to write numerous academic papers, reports and essays to obtain their academic degree. The ability to write academic essays is widely considered as one of the common phases of higher education. It is essential that university students be able to write clearly about topics related to their research fields. (Cohen and Miller, 2003)

In Bangladesh, professional educational system has been divided into four levels; namely, primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary level. Tertiary level is the utmost level among all the other three levels. In general, the public and private university students are considered as tertiary level students in Bangladesh. In this level students can pursue their educational career for obtaining a Bachelor's degree. After completion of their Bachelor degree, they can enroll into post-graduate studies. In this tertiary level, it is expected that students will have efficiency in writing and their writing will be error free as they are going to get their highest degree in this level on the basis of their performance.

2.12 Academic writing: Academic writing refers to different writing approaches that students' need to accomplish in an academic setting. It is difficult for the ESL/EFL students to write academic essays or any kind of academic writing in a second language. Writing in one's own language is difficult enough and if it is second language then it becomes more difficult for the students. Often students are unfamiliar with the conventions of writing English academic reports or essays. To develop academic essay writing skill, at first students need to have clear concept of this kind of formal writing.

About academic writing Tribble (1996) believes that,

“learners who wish to write in new academic settings have to gain a mastery of the concepts and content of their subject area as well as

developing an ability to express themselves effectively and appropriately in foreign language". (p. 83)

Academic writing attempts to be precise, semi-formal, impersonal and objective: in academic writing the focus is on presenting information as clearly and accurately as possible. In this way such writing differs from normal speech and writing, which is more personal and uses more lively idioms and phrases. For example, a sentence like, "A lot of people think that the weather is getting worse", is acceptable in Standard English, but it does not conform to the conventions of academic writing. So, the standard style can be "It is widely believed that the climate is deteriorating" (Tribble, 1996)

Academic essay and paragraph writing

An academic essay is based on the clear sense of argument which is essential to all forms of academic writing. The characteristic of academic writing includes a formal tone. In academic writing, the writer writes from the perspective of third-person point of view rather than first-person. In academic essay usually, clear focus is always given to the issue or topic rather than the author's opinion. In academic essay, writers employ the formal academic style.

Academic essay-writing is one of the vital skills which ESL/EFL students need to acquire for their prospective studies in English-mediated university courses. Though academic essay writing is a vital aspect for the students in Bangladesh, it has been seen that students mostly commit errors in writing paragraph, essay or any type of comprehensive question-answer. Sinha (1997) illustrates that, "Error frequently occurred when the students were asked to write paragraph and dialogues or when they attempt to answer comprehension questions".

2.13 Writing structure of essay and paragraph:

Students need to have proper guideline for developing their writing skill; in particular they need to have clear idea about the writing structure of essay and paragraph.

“A paragraph is usually a block of sentences set off by spacing or indentation at the beginning. Though commonly part of the essay, it can and sometimes does serve as an essay in its own right, and the writing of one paragraph essays will give us small scale practice in organization.” (Heffernan, 2001; Lincoln, Atwill)

The basic paragraph consists of three parts: a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

Topic sentence:

The main idea of each paragraph is stated in a topic sentence that shows how the idea relates to the thesis or overall focus of the paper. Generally, the topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph. All subsequent points made in the paragraphs need to support the topic sentence. The lead sentence is sometimes the topic sentence of the paragraph, the sentence that states its main point.

Supporting Details:

Supporting details are the elaboration of the controlling ideas and it proves the topic sentence. Using a combination of different supports is the most common and effective way to strengthen a paragraph. For example: expert opinion, facts and statistics, personal experiences, other's experiences etc.

Concluding sentence:

Each paragraph should end with a final statement that ties together the ideas brought up in the paragraph and emphasizes the main idea one last time.

STRAUCTURE OF A PARAGRAPH

Three basic parts of a paragraph:

TOPIC SENTENCE:

Introduces the main idea of the paragraph.

Explains what the paragraph is about.

Usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph.

SUPPORTING DETAILS:

Consists of sentences that support, develop or explain the main idea:

- By giving details
- By giving examples
- By telling an incident

CONCLUDING SENTENCE:

Restate the topic sentence in different words.

Summarize the information that has been presented.

Source: Class handout given by class teacher

Teachers can help students to overcome their difficulties in academic writing. As there are certain rules and requirements for academic writing, students need to emphasis on those. These requirements for academic writing can be provided by the teachers.

Teachers can play the role of facilitator to guide the students in academic writing. Teachers can also play the role of motivator to encourage the students in academic essays writing which they find most difficult in their academic life. The teacher needs to make the students realize that they are not writing in a vacuum. They have a voice and what they write will elicit a reaction from the academic institution or even from the other readers. So, to develop this skill students' need to practice the strategies that are vital for academic success.

Structure of argumentative essay:

The following structure of the essay has been given by the course instructor:

Structure of an Argument essay

Typically written in 4/5 paragraphs (sometimes more but rarely less)

1. Introduction:

Introduces the topic and also states what we plan to argue in the essay.

Four types of sentences (sometimes more, sometimes less)

- a) Background statement – general introduction about the topic of the essay
- b) Detailed background statement – something written in a little more details related to the background statement.
- c) Thesis – (the most important in the entire essay) asserting what we are trying to prove. It is written as a direct and exact response to the essay, he or she will know right from the beginning what your opinion is on the question that you are given.
- d) Outline – tells us in what topic we are going to speak about in the Supporting paragraphs.

2. Supporting paragraphs or body paragraphs

Gives evidence that supports what we said we are going to argue.

- a) Topic sentence: includes subject that supports the thesis.
- b) Supporting details:
- c) 1. Example: true from real life evidence supporting the topic; 2. Discussion: links the example to the topic; 3. Conclusion: links the topic to the thesis.

3. Conclusion:

Summarizes the main points of this essay and restates the thesis in different way.

- a) One or two sentences that provide summary, retelling the two supporting topics briefly
- b) Restatement of thesis in different words.
- c) Prediction/ Recommendation: the last sentence would be something about what we believe in future would be like based on the essay or state something that should be true.

Source: class handout given by course instructor

2.14 Common errors in students' academic writing:

In different kinds of studies in writing, frequency of errors has been commonly discussed.

John C. Mellen's (1975) National Assessment and the teaching of English is a source that contains a section describing the frequency of error found in the writing of students at various levels. He develops statistical information in a table and lists the common writing problems such as, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, fragments and run-ons, awkward constructions, agreement, and word choice.

Other studies on students' common error also support the statistical information developed by Mellen. The most common error that students make are in areas of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

(1) Frequency of occurrence: grammatical errors

(2) Punctuation:

Punctuation is important because it tells readers where they need to stop, to pause, or to notice emphasis. Greenberg (1994) says that punctuation illustrates the relations among ideas and between the parts of the sentences. According to Greenberg (1994), punctuation serves six basic functions of writing:

1. ends sentences.
2. combines sentences.
3. separates items in a series within a sentence.
4. separates words or phrases from that modify a sentence.
5. separates quoted words or phrases from the rest of a sentence.
6. indicates the possessive case of nouns.

Peck and Coyle (1999) states that:

“Punctuation is an essential part of the signaling system of language and is central to effective communication..... a lot of people make an awful mess of punctuation, which means that their performance in essays suffers and they fail to do themselves justice.” (p.19)

Punctuation errors are often considered important in the context of first-year composition courses. Three aspects of punctuation are confusing for many ESL/EFL learners. Those are *comma splices*, *run-on sentences* and *fragment*. Understanding *comma splices*, *run-on sentences*, and *fragments* is important for teachers and ESL/EFL students.

- A *comma splice* is the mis-use of a comma to make a compound sentence. A compound sentence is made of two or more simple sentences that are combined to make a new sentence. The new compound sentence should be created with particular types of connections.

To make a compound sentence,

1. We need to combine the two simple sentences by using a comma and one of the coordinating conjunctions: *He loves sociology, and he plans to major in that disciplinary area.*

2. We need to combine the two simple sentences by using a semicolon

He loves sociology; he plans to major in that disciplinary area.

A *comma splice* makes the connection but leaves out the coordinating conjunction:

He loves sociology, he plans to major in that disciplinary area.

A *comma splice* is a compound sentence with a comma but without a coordinating conjunction.

- A **run-on sentence** is a compound sentence that has been incorrectly punctuated.

There are two types of run-on sentences:

1. One involves writing that has sentence after sentence presented without end punctuation--without a period at the end of one sentence or a capital letter at the beginning of the next. Sentences just run together. This type of writing tends to be the product of a new writer who has not yet learned to separate speaking from writing.

He loves sociology as a discipline however he plans to major in anthropology to the dismay of his mother she prefers geography.

2. In the case of comma splice, comma is used to tie a sentence together--without a coordinating conjunction. Here the opposite occurs when uses coordinating conjunction but leaves out the comma.

He loves sociology and he plans to major in that disciplinary area.

- A **fragment** is a piece of a sentence used as if it were a complete sentence. It indicates incomplete sentence. It is a very common error that learners make while writing. Following example is a typical example of fragment:

He loves sociology. Because he is fascinated with understanding how people behave in social groups.

The second part of this example is an adverbial clause that is presented as a complete sentence. It is a very common source of fragments. We often talk in this way, putting a pause between the main sentence and the clause that gives the reason for something. But we need to learn that we do not write this way in formal written English.

The most common punctuation errors that the tertiary level students commit are run-on, comma splice and fragment. Raimes (2005) also referred to these three end punctuation problems as common sentence punctuation problems in writing.

Table: 2.1 Problem with end punctuation

PROBLEM WITH END PUNCTUATION		
Problem	Feature	Example
Run-on	No end punctuation	* My sister is shy she doesn't say much.
	Transition: no end punctuation	* My brother works hard however he doesn't make a lot of money.
Comma splice	Comma separates two sentences with no coordinating conjunction	* My sister is shy, she doesn't say much.
	Comma separates two sentences with transition word	* My brother works hard, however he doesn't make a lot of money.
Fragment	Sentence has no subject	* My boss is never late. Works extremely hard every day.
	No complete verb	* Both of them working very hard.
	No independent clause	* Because she wanted to save a lot of money to buy a car. * Although he was offered a job in a new company, which was located in Florida. * Hoping to get more money because he had a lot of bills to pay.

Raimes (2005: 219)

(3) Spelling :

Spelling error is a common error that ESL/EFL students commit while writing an essay or paragraph. Though incorrect spelling does not usually prevent the understanding of a written message, it can adversely affect the reader's judgment, specially when reading or examining.

Brown (2001) believes that bad spelling is perceived as a lack of education or care. He states that the cause of students' frequent spelling error is the lack of correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious. Brown added "an issue that makes spelling difficult for some students is the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way". For example, it is difficult to decide which one is correct: color or colour, and theater or theatre.

Brown (2001) suggests that, to solve this kind of problem students should focus on a particular variety of English (British or American English, for example) as a spelling model which will be their desired one.

To help students improve their spelling Port (1995) thinks that, teachers can draw attention to spelling problems and explain why they occur. Copying from written models is one way to do this; when students see and reflect on their mistakes, their spelling 'consciousness' will be raised.

In the book, *The Advancing Writer* Greenberg (1994) discussed five causes of spelling errors.

1. Addition – adding a letter because of wrong pronunciation.
2. Deletion – deleting a letter because of wrong pronunciation.
3. Transposition – transposing a letter with the letter next to it.
4. Substitution – substituting a letter that has a similar sound.
5. Homonym – confusing a word with another word that sounds alike.

(4) Word choice:

Peck and Coyle (2005) state that, “ ..when producing an academic essay, language is merely a kind of wheelbarrow for trundling their ideas around” (p.120). When developing an academic essay, learners need to be concerned about choice of words while they are constructing a sentence. It is a most frustrating experience for the learners when they are not able to find the words they need to express their idea. Harmer (2001) in his book, The Practice of English Language Teaching states that when speakers or writers of their own or of a foreign language do not know a word or just cannot remember it, they may employ some or all of the following strategies to resolve the difficulty they are encountering: (2001:249)

- **Improvising:** speakers sometimes try any word or phrase that they can come up with in the hope that it is about right. Such improvisations sometimes work, but they can also obscure meaning.
- **Discarding:** when speakers simply cannot find words for what they want to say, they may discard the thought that they cannot put into words.
- **Foreignising:** when operating in a foreign language, speakers (and writers) sometimes choose a word in language they know well (such as their first language) and ‘foreignise’ it in the hope that it will be equivalent to the meaning they wish to express in the foreign language.
- **Paraphrasing:** speakers sometimes paraphrase, talking about something *for cleaning the teeth* if they do not know the word *toothbrush*, or saying that they are not happy somebody when they want to say that they are really fed up. Such lexical substitution or circumlocution gets many speakers out of trouble, though it can make communication longer and more convoluted.

Harmer (2001) believes that teachers should encourage paraphrasing and improvising as more useful techniques than discarding thoughts or foreignising words blindly.

2.15 Errors at tertiary level:

Students' error is a huge discussion all over the world. Students commit different types of errors in their writing. At certain levels, making error can be taken positively as a sign of students' development, but at the tertiary level students' errors are intolerable. After 12 years of studying English, teachers and other stakeholders expect learners to be competent in language. The identification of common errors in students' writing can facilitate teachers to work more on the target areas that students face difficulties. Students' error in writing at the tertiary level is now a crucial issue in Bangladesh. Teachers always deal with students' error in writing, so at first they need to adopt different techniques to make students error free in academic writing. Giving feedback and using different techniques of error correction have already been developed to make students error free. In addition teacher feedback is an essential factor in developing students' writing.

2.16 What is feedback?

Feedback is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance (Ur, 1996). Ur (1996) indicates that feedback is given to improve learners' performance. Feedback on errors is perhaps one of the oldest and most widely reported forms of feedback (Chaudron, 1977, 1988; Celce Murcia, 1993). In written work, typical ways used by the teacher are either to underline, indicate and correct the errors in the text or simply to indicate them by means of code in the margin about the kind of error. Sometimes they underline errors and do not correct them; sometimes they tell the students the kind of

error they have made but they do not correct it and sometimes they do all three (Allwright, 1975; Norrish; 1983; Hendrickson, 1984; Chaudron, 1988; cited in Khan, 2002). According to Khan (2002), "Feedback is an indispensable tool for improving the teaching and learning of writing, by providing information to students on the performance of their written work." (Khan, 2002, p.2) A teacher can give different types of feedback; he or she can give comments or a grade. Generally teachers prefer to give written comments in the margin of an essay.

Feedback has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction.

Assessment: Assessment indicates how good or bad the learner has performed. A percentage or grade on an exam would be one example; or a comment such as 'Fair' at the end of a written assignment.

Correction: Some specific information is provided on aspects of the learner's performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives. Ur (1996) states that "principle correction can and should include information on what the learner did right, as well as wrong, and why". She comments:

"If a correction is supplied, the learner is very aware that this means the teacher thinks something was wrong; if comment is given on why something was appropriate, there is necessarily an underlying message of commendation". (Ur, 1996:242)

In most cases, learners feel confident when they find good comments on their correct answer with the correction of their wrong answer. It works as a positive reinforcement for better performance.

Evaluation: Ur (1996) termed evaluation as 'summative', where the teacher evaluates the overall aspect of the learner's knowledge in order to summarize the situation: how proficient he or she is at a certain point in time, for example, or how much he or she has progressed during a particular course.

According to Ur (1996) most of the feedback we give our learners is ongoing correction and assessment, which directed at specific bits of learner-produced language with the aim of bringing about improvement.

2.16.1 Error correction in Feedback

There are different opinions in different language teaching approaches regarding error correction.

Audio-lingualism: There is little need for correction at first sight.

Cognitive-code learning: Mistakes should be corrected whenever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

Interlanguage: Mistakes are important part of learning. Correcting them is a way of bringing the learner's interlanguage closer to the target language.

Communicative approach: Not all mistakes need to be corrected. Focus should be on message rather than mistakes.

Monitor theory: Correction does not contribute to language learning.

(Ur, 1996)

Corder (1973) points out that, language learning is not parrot learning; we do not 'learn' or 'practice' examples. They are the data from which we induce the system of the language. Skill in correction of errors lies in the direction of exploiting the incorrect forms produced by the learner in a controlled fashion.

- **Error correction major form of feedback:**

Hedge (1988), prefers to think of 'correction' under the more general heading of 'improving', a cover term that stresses the interacting of marking procedures with processing categories.

If a teacher returns a paper full of red marks and notes all over, then it becomes quite discouraging for the student or learner. The most important aspect while giving feedback

is adopting a positive attitude to student writing. While marking mechanically we may not realize that we are showing the student only his mistakes – negative points. If the student receives only negative feedback, he may easily be discouraged from trying to form complex structures and using new vocabulary. However, feedback sessions can be a beneficial experience for the student if the teacher shows the strong points as well. Another important point to consider while giving feedback is the amount of correction on the end product. In academic writing, the end product is expected to have:

- A wide range of vocabulary
- Correct grammar
- Meaningful punctuation
- Accurate spelling
- Varied sentence structures
- Unity and coherence in ideas
- Well-supported and explained major points

Another strategy for decreasing teacher writing on a student paper is to use some kind of “code”. A teacher can help the students through providing different types of feedback so that they can write successfully in future. There are different techniques of giving feedback. Harmer (2001) mentions coding as a technique of giving feedback:

- **Coding:** Different coding systems have been developed as teachers’ feedback tool. Some teachers use codes and put codes either in the body of the writing itself, or in a corresponding margin. This makes correction much neater, less threatening, and considerably more helpful than random marks and comments.

Frequently used symbols of this kind refer to issues such as word order, spelling, or verb tense as:

Table: 2.2 Editing code and symbol (1)

WF	wrong form	WF	The harder you work the <u>best</u> will be your achievements.
WW	wrong word		patient, funny, and <u>kindly</u> WW
T	wrong tense		In the last few weeks you <u>didn't have</u> much fun
Λ	something is missing		You arrived in Brighton 1st July.
Sp	wrong spelling		<u>confortable</u> SP
WO	wrong word order		You haven't seen (yet) London
P	wrong punctuation		Look out. P
V	wrong verb form		The Titanic <u>sunk</u> very quickly. V
//	new paragraph needed		
φ	not necessary		John came in and he sat down.
—	You don't need a new sentence. Join up the ideas.		
?	I don't understand what you're trying to say.		
—	This isn't quite right. It needs clearer expression. Usually the teacher provides an alternative.		
[]	This part needs to be re-arranged or reworded.		
!!	You really should know what's wrong here because —we've just done it in class		

Source: Oxford University Press

Table: 2.3 Editing code and symbol (2)

SYMBOL	MEANING	EXAMPLE
S	Incorrect spelling	I ^S recieved ^S our letter.
W.O.	Wrong word order	We know ^{W.O.} well this city. Always ^{W.O.} I am happy here.
T	Wrong tense	If he <u>will come</u> , it will be too late.
C	Concord. Subject and verb do not agree	Two policemen ^C has come. The news ^C are bad today.
WF	Wrong form	We want ^{WF} that you come. That table is ^{WF} our.
SP	Singular or plural form wrong	We need more ^S informations.
Λ	Something has been left out	They said ^Λ was wrong. He hit me on ^Λ shoulder.
[]	Something is not necessary	It was too much ^[] difficult
?M	Meaning is not clear	Come and rest with us for a week. ^{?M} The view from here is very suggestive. ^{?M}
NA	The usage is not appropriate	He ^{NA} requested me to sit down.
P	Punctuation wrong	Whats ^P your name ^P He asked me what I wanted? ^P

From *Teaching Writing Skills* by D Byrne (Pearson Education Ltd)

Source: Teaching writing skills by D Byrne (Pearson Education Ltd)

Teacher may provide a typed sheet of paper in advance with all the symbols and abbreviations along with the meaning while giving feedback using specific codes. From this students will know the meaning of those codes which will be used to indicate the type of error they made.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains the methodology of the study to examine tertiary level students' difficulties and errors in writing essay. In the following section, research methods and techniques used for data collection is mentioned. The other parts of this chapter focus on the nature of the research, research question, participants and setting, data collection procedures, instruments of data collection, sources of data as questionnaire and document analysis, and finally methods of analysis.

3.1 Nature of the research:

3.1.1. Primary empirical research:

This research is a primary research by nature. According to Brown (1988), primary research obtains original or first hand data to explore the original information. This research is based on original data as first hand information regarding students' common errors in academic essay writing have been obtained by using document analysis and questionnaire responses. The participants of this study already exist in a natural context and they are studying in private universities in Bangladesh. This research is considered as a primary empirical research as it qualifies the characteristics of empirical research as well. Empirical research is based on experimentation with evidence. Such research is often conducted to answer a specific question. This research is designed based on a specific question and the result will be discovered through empirical data analysis. As empirical research, this study will enhance better understanding of students' difficulties in academic essay writing through analyzing their common errors in writing.

3.1.2 Mixed methods research:

The research has been done based on mixed methods as it combines both qualitative and quantitative research. But mostly it is a quantitative one, as I have used questionnaires and data collection method to find out the necessities. In this paper the results and answers has been shown with the presentation of numerical data. To identify students' error in their essay, I have used coding system which is a common method of error identification. It has a qualitative touch in it too, as I have used coding method to analyze the documents. So both the research methods have work together to contract the resolution.

Brown and Rodgers (2002:12) defined qualitative research as non-numerical data, whereas quantitative research contains data "gathered using those measures which lend themselves to being turned into numbers and statistics."

Qualitative Research is collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. Coding includes symbols, editing tools and abbreviations.

Quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, which indicates numerical data analysis. According to Nunan (2002), quantitative research is obtrusive and controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of 'facts' which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher.

For this research, I have collected data by analyzing the students' exam papers. This analysis part has been considered as document analysis. After completion of the document analysis the results have been shown with the numerical presentation. To make the analysis more comprehensive both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected for this research.

This research has been done followed by mixed method to generate comprehensive result of the research question. An integrated research strategy is likely to produce better result in terms of quality and scope. Briefly, this research is a primary research where mixed method is implemented and functioned as an empirical research.

3.2 Research question:

- What are the common errors that tertiary level students of Bangladesh frequently commit while writing academic essay or paragraph?

3.3 Participants and setting:

The participants of this study were first year students ranging in the same age group of 20-21 years. The students had completed twelve years of schooling of primary, secondary and higher secondary. The total number of students was 50. The study was conducted in two private universities of Bangladesh where the medium of instruction was English. For this study I investigated 50 learners' exam copies to identify their errors in writing essay. The course introduced in both the universities was named as English language proficiency (EL-Pro) course. The final exam was conducted by the teachers of the course. The course teacher had been taking this course for three months. It was a fundamental English course and mandatory for all department students. Students had to take this course in their first semester. This course was aimed at developing students' basic language skill while they were freshers. The final exam was conducted after completion of their three months semester. The exam copies I have collected were already been checked by the teachers of that course. With the permission of the concerning authority, I collected the copies for my research investigation.

This course is divided into four parts – reading, writing, speaking and listening. From the course content (See Appendix – A for course content) it is visible that the course has been designed to develop students' all four basic language skills. I have chosen the writing part for in-depth analysis of the students' written essay, so it will be an in-depth document analysis of the students' errors in their exam on academic writing.

3.4 Data collection and procedures:

In this research study, the participants had classes on paragraph and essay writing. The course teacher took four classes on essay and paragraph writing. The duration of each class was 90 minutes. For this study I investigated 50 learners' exam copies to identify their common errors. I have collected the copies from two universities. Though the universities were different, the same course had been introduced in both universities. The course was run by some course instructors who were trained from the same institution. These course instructors were hired to run the EL-Pro (English language proficiency course) course in those universities. As the teachers were trained from same institution, their teaching material and technique was similar.

So, the teachers were different but they had collaboration, they planned the course and set the question together. The students were from two different universities but their course contents, materials were same as the teachers were trained from same institution. In one university the total number of students for that batch was 24 and in the other university that particular batch contained 26 students. After the completion of the students' writing exam, I collected the copies from the teachers. In the writing part, the question was given, *"In present age, there is no other way but to adapt the technique of speaking English clearly and accurately for better communication internationally. As an international language, ability to speak good English has become more important than to know the mother tongue well. Do you agree or disagree?" Give reasons for your*

answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Students were asked to write this essay within 250 words in 45 minutes. Total marks for this question was 15 (See Appendix – C for Exam question). Most surprisingly teachers are not even free of mistakes. My experience showed me not only students, teachers also compose wrong questions which confuses others. Thereby we cannot expect correct forms of answers. The question I have used in my paper is a fragmented one and hardly means anything.

The essay was an argumentative essay, which was reasonably familiar to all the participants as they had previously discussed in classroom. So it was expected that the students would be able to write on this topic. After collecting all the 50 marked scripts, I rechecked the copies to identify common errors. All the errors were categorized into different groups.

3.5 Research instrument for data collection:

In this research, I have adopted integrated strategy to produce better result of the research question. Qualitative research indicates, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Quantitative research refers counts and measures of numerical data analysis, which has been used in this research as a key method for this study. As research instrument, I have incorporated document analysis and questionnaire for the teachers and students.

3.5.1 Source of Data:

The main data source of this study was the students' exam scripts, specially focused on essay writing part. These scripts have been taken as samples of students' writing, which falls under the category of document. Each sample will be analyzed for error. Questionnaire is used as a research instrument to collect quantitative data. The questionnaires were organized in such a way that after collecting and analyzing the finding of the quantitative data, it would reflect teachers' and students' general attitude and perception on error and error analysis.

According to Seliger and Shohamy (2003), in a descriptive study it begins with questions and with a specific focus. In this research study, I have research questions and specific focus is on Error analysis.

3.5.1.1 Questionnaire:

Questionnaires are one of the most popular data collection devices. "Questionnaires are printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond to a stimulus provided by the researchers." (Seliger and Shohamy (2003:172). Questionnaires facilitate the researcher to collect data in field settings (Nunan, 2002).

Questionnaire items can be relatively closed or open ended, or a mixture of closed and open questions. In this research both open and closed questions were used. Nunan (2002) refers that "open item is one in which the subject can decide what to say and how to say it." (p.143). It is likely that "responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say" (2002: 143).

Brown and Rodgers (2002:142) state that "questionnaires are predominantly made up of more closed-response items such as Likert scales, multiple-choice, yes-no, and ranking". Responses to closed questions are easier to collect and analyze data.

I had to visit three different universities for collecting data. Therefore my questionnaire includes answers from separate language teachers and students from all the universities. After delivering the questionnaire to students, I have found that a few students did not understand some questions. One or two teachers did not understand some words while they answering the questions. So, when they asked me I made the meaning clear to them. I could not change those words and terms as those were used in my paper and also necessary for the research.

It took almost 15 days to collect all the questionnaires. As there were only two teachers for that language course in those universities, I had to go to other private university to collect data. It took more than one week to collect questionnaire answers from the teachers, as I had to go different universities and the campus which were in different places. Two different sets of Questionnaire were given to students and teachers (See Appendices D and E for Questionnaire). The questionnaire contained a mixture of closed and open questions respectively. Questionnaire for the teachers contained closed questions including ranking, multiple choice, yes-no items. In some questions, teachers were given option for their comments or suggestions. There were given two fully open ended questions for the teachers.

Questionnaire for the students mostly contained closed questions including ranking, multiple choice and yes-no items. For both sets of questionnaires, option was given to choose more than one if they wanted but they were asked to rank according to priority. At the end of the both questionnaire sets, a general comment/opinion was asked on error or error analysis. The nature of all the questions was mainly based on students' error, error in writing and error analysis.

Description of the questionnaire for teachers:

To elicit data from the teachers' questionnaire, a written questionnaire comprising of 20 questions (See Appendix - D) with both fixed alternatives and open-ended questions have been used that are discussed below:

Background information on students' error and error analysis:

The first 3 questions were asked to elicit teachers' opinion on students' error and error analysis. The questions were yes-no, multiple-choice with the option of teachers comments/suggestions. In question 1, they were asked to put tick mark on yes-no item. If the answer is 'yes', then there was an option to explain reason. Question number 2 and 3 were multiple choice questions that would help the researcher to find teachers' belief on student most common error.

Teachers' opinion and attitude towards tertiary level students' capability of writing essay and making error:

Questions 4 and 5 were yes-no questions and additionally in question 5, option was given to explain the answer. These two questions were designed to find information about tertiary level fresher students' capability of writing essay and the teacher's perception towards tertiary level students' error tolerance. These questions were intended to probe the teacher's perception on tertiary level students' ability to write and tolerance of making error at that level.

Fossilization is one of the reasons behind tertiary level students making error:

Questions 6 and 7 were asked to reveal the teachers' perception on fossilization and response on fossilized learner. These two questions were asked to understand how much importance teachers are giving on this to overcome students' error.

Effectiveness of existing error identification methods:

Questions 8 and 9 were asked to get information about teacher's thoughts on existing error identification methods. These questions were asked to identify effective technique of error identification from the teachers' perception. Question 8 was a ranking question and 9 was yes-no question where teacher can give suggestion as well.

Teachers' role on tertiary level students' error :

Questions 11, 12 and 13 were multiple choice questions. These three questions were asked to reveal teachers' response on tertiary level students' error in writing. Through these questions it was intended to probe how seriously teachers are taking students' error at tertiary level and what is their reaction on that to avoid error.

Types of error and evaluation of errors:

Questions 14, 15, 16 and 17 concerned types of error and evaluation of those errors from the teacher's point of view. Questions 14 and 16 were ranking questions and questions 15, 17 were multiple-choice. These questions were asked to draw information regarding teachers' reaction on the various types of errors. These questions will help me to reveal the actual scenario of teachers' response on tertiary level students' error in academic writing.

Teachers' response on existing methods of teaching academic essay writing and effective feedback for students' writing skill development:

Question 18 was multiple-choice question and asked suggestion for one option. Question 19 was an open-ended question to the teachers to reveal their thoughts on effective feedback. Through these questions new idea could be revealed for effective teaching of essay writing at that level.

Teacher's expectation on students' performance on academic essay writing in final exam:

Question 20 was the last question which was asked to find out teacher's expectation on students' performance on essay writing in final exam. It was a ranking question, where teachers were asked to rank according to importance. It was intended to find out teacher's believe on what a good academic essay should require and how it should be presented by the students at the end of the course.

At the end of the questionnaire a general comment/opinion had been asked to the teachers to give on error or error analysis.

Description of the questionnaire for students:

To elicit data from the students' questionnaire, a questionnaire comprising of 10 questions (See Appendix - E) with fixed alternatives was used.

Students' difficulties in academic essay writing at the tertiary level:

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were asked to elicit students' opinion on errors in academic writing, their capability of writing essay, teachers' role regarding their errors and the common errors that they make in writing. It was intended to reveal students' own belief on these important issues related to students' error. Questions 1, 3 and 4 were multiple-choice questions and question 2 was yes-no question. In question 4, students were allowed to tick more than one option that would allow the research to explore student's own belief on listing common errors.

Errors in writing:

Questions 5 and 6 were closed questions with the multiple-choice item. These two questions were asked to get the information about students' perception on making errors in writing.

Effectiveness of given essay structure:

Question 7 was a yes-no question. This question was asked to find out the students' understanding of essay format organization. It was intended to find out the effectiveness of how essay structure was taught in class.

At the tertiary level, getting effective feedback, students' difficulties in exam and the possibilities to overcome language error at that level:

Questions 8 and 9 were asked to draw information on the students' view on getting most effective feedback, and the other one was on whether they found the final exam was difficult. It was intended to probe the thoughts of students regarding their level of learning. Question 10 was asked to elicit students' own believe on overcoming the errors at the tertiary level. At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to give their comment/thoughts on the errors they usually make in writing and how their teachers deal with those errors.

3.5.1.2 Document Analysis:

In order to answer the research question and meet the goal of the research aim, data analysis has been done using both qualitative and quantitative data. Each student's written scripts were examined to find out common errors they made while writing essay in academic setting. According to the students' common errors, the data were categorized into different groups; such as; grammatical error, syntactic error, lexical error, spelling error, punctuation error and organizational/structural error. The classifying was qualitative and the counting was quantitative.

Errors were identified and categorized into different groups. Some pertained to grammar, some to vocabulary and some to mechanics. In order to do so, I have used Sinha's(1997) classification of errors, as she dealt with similar students, Bangla speaking Bangladeshi students of tertiary level. I felt this was the most appropriate model for my analysis.

For organizational errors I used the writing criterion from class handout (See Appendix – B for class handout) and checked the student writings against this.

Mainly two types of errors have been focused on, errors in language and those in organization of essay. Initially errors were categorized into these different groups according to the types discussed in the literature review. In this survey, syntactic errors are the common errors that the students commit frequently. Most of the students can not even write a sentence properly. In this survey, while analyzing the errors, I tried to be selective. I have collected the errors in order of seriousness and frequency of occurrence, they are as follows:

In use of Language:

1. Syntactic error :

Fragment

Run-on sentence

Wrong sentence structure

2. Lexical error:

Wrong use of vocabulary

Wrong word form

3. Grammatical error:

Misuse of prepositions

Misuse of articles

Misuse of helping verb and auxiliary verb

Lack of subject verb agreement

Tense error

4. Spelling errors

5. Punctuation errors

For Organization:

Lack of topic sentence

Lack of supporting detail

Lack of support in conclusion/ incomplete conclusion

3.6 Methods of Analysis:

Different research instruments were used to accomplish this research. The main sources of data were students' exam scripts and questionnaire so both qualitative and quantitative data were used for this research. Though the research is mainly quantitative, the use of coding introduces a qualitative aspect. After getting the results from the analysis of the students' essays and from the questionnaires they were statistically analyzed to obtaining more absolute consequence. According to Seliger and Shohamy (2003), " To analyze quantitative data frequencies are used to indicate how often a phenomenon occurs and they are based on counting the number of occurrences." (p. 211). In this study, I computed the frequencies for the errors by each student and then tabulated. For the questionnaire, answers given by students and teachers were tabulated and then converted into percentages. Tables, pie charts and bar diagrams were employed for the presentation of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the raw data, both qualitative and quantitative, obtained from samples; questionnaire will be shown and discussed. In this chapter, the results will be shown through graphical presentation and chart of the samples. Graphs and charts will be discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Types of errors identified from document analysis:

From the samples, different types of errors have been identified and categorized according to their types. We know that in error analysis, collection of samples of learners' language and then identification of errors are very important steps. In this study, the aim was to find out the tertiary level students' common errors in academic writing. The aim of the study will be obtained through the identification, description, explanation and evaluation of the errors which are the essential part of error analysis. Then the samples will be classified into different categories such as, syntactic error, lexical error, grammatical error, spelling error and error in punctuation. Different types of errors will be classified following Sinha's (1997) classification of errors. In addition, students' essays have been analyzed for the identification of organizational errors in writing essay. For well-organized essay, I used the writing criterion from (class handout) and checked the student writings against this.

The following error chart illustrates the different kinds of errors the students have committed. To give general idea about the students' different types of error, Sinha's (1997) classification of errors has been followed here.

Table: 4.1 ERROR Chart:

Type	Examples from students essay	Source of errors
Interference errors	1) Our country is <i>good not</i> in communication 2) English TV sinama or English natok must be English language know.	1) L1 interference, direct translation in English from Bangle 2) Interference errors in the use of vocabulary, code switching to solve the problem.
Overgeneralization errors	1) I <i>am</i> agree with this statement 2) When we <i>are</i> born.... 3) We <i>are</i> know this problem 4) Without <i>communicate</i> with country people <i>welly</i> ...	1), 2) & 3) to indicate present form, unnecessary use of 'auxiliary verb' 4) - to indicate 'properly', to make it adverb a deviant form of word insertion.
Errors by analogy	1) It is not possible for <i>his/her</i> 2) so, I am agree <i>about</i> the opinion	1) used wrong pronoun; rule restriction error 2) learner encountering a particular preposition with one type of verb which is wrong insertion of preposition
Syntactic errors	1) <i>We have to knowing English.</i> 2) <i>I am disagree with this topic.</i> 3) <i>If I job in any multinational company my need more good know an English.</i> 4) Without communicate (.....)country people well, <i>how</i> can a man learn English clearly.	1) idea that verbs are marked with "ing" for the progressive aspect 2) "am" as a marker of present tense 3) Fragment, lack of knowledge in TL. 4) subject-verb inversion for the question word.
Lexical errors	1) English <i>natok</i> (instead of drama) 2) cannot gather his idea <i>welly</i> . 3)... most of the people all <i>even</i> the world. (instead of over) 4)... we cannot do <i>something</i> better in our	1) lack of exposure of TL (target language), code switching. 2) "welly" word that do not exists. 3) "even" word used out of context. 4) "something" wrong use of word.

	<i>then</i> mother tongue. 6)..communicate with <i>there</i> country people.	"their"
Spelling errors	1)..its develop our . communication <i>scile</i> 2) Bangladeshi <i>peapole</i> .. 3) ..learning other <i>languge</i> well. (language) 4) ...his/her mother <i>tangue</i> . Not more than mother <i>tungue</i> .(tongue) 5) more <i>then</i> 50 countries ... (instead of than). They can prove that <i>there</i> basic of English is very good.	1) Because of wrong pronunciation. 2) Adding a letter because of wrong pronunciation 3) Deleting a letter because of wrong pronunciation. 4) Substitute a letter that has a similar sound. 5) Homonym; confuse a word with another word that has similar sound.
Error in the use of preposition	1) English learning is more important to communicate <i>to</i> other country. 2) ..I know good <i>on</i> English. 3) Mother tongue is the first language <i>for</i> hear and speak <i>to</i> everyone.	1) & 2) Wrong use of preposition, It is an error by analogy. 3) L1 interference. Direct translate from L1.
Error in the use of article	1) In our country though English is <i>an</i> second language it is very important to <i>a</i> learn 2) English is <i>a</i> international language. 3) English is <i>an</i> more important ... 4)...through <i>the</i> all over <i>the</i> world.	1), 2) ,3) & 4) lack of grammatical knowledge.
Lack of subject- verb agreement	1) Language is <i>a tools</i> which we can use. 2) Some students can not <i>realizes</i> English 3) Bangladeshi people <i>is</i> a very	1) Overgeneralization of the use of word "tools" 2) & 3) lack of knowledge

These are few examples of errors that have been shown through this error chart.

Interference Errors

E.g.

- 1) Our country is *good not* in communication
- 2) English TV *sinama* or English *natok* must be English language know. (Instead of cinema -*sinama*, and the word- “drama” – *natok*)

The interference errors in syntax and vocabulary show that the students already have learned the sentence structure and use of words in their first language but now the new structure of L2 (second language) are being hindered by the L1 (first language). These errors show that the students' knowledge of Bangla acted as a resource which they used when they display the TL (target language) in their writing. I realized that because of their lack of L2 input they were using strategies like direct translation or code switching to solve their problems. In the first example, we could see that the student was making direct translation from L1 to TL. In the second example, the sentence structure was wrong and L1 was interfering in the formation of L2. From the other example it was evident that, student code switched as they have lack of input in the target language. While using the word “drama” the student used L1 “natok”. Another wrong word “sinama”, there is no existence of this word in TL. Because of L1 interference, the student made the spelling error. As the student's L1 is Bangla, in Bangla the English word “cinema” is pronounced as “sinama”. So while the student developed this sentence, lack of TL input and L1 pronunciation interfered to make this error.

a) I *am* agree with this statement.

b) When we *are* born....

Here the students used unnecessarily “am” and “are” to indicate present form. They use (am, is, are) auxiliary verb to form sentence in present tense, here they generalize this concept and used to indicate present form.

E.g. 2

a) Without communicate with country people *welly*...

Here error analysis reveals another kind of strategy the learner used in TL. Here the learner has lack of knowledge in TL, to indicate the word “properly” he used a deviant form of word “welly”. The learner knew the word “well” which means good, to make it adverb, he added ‘ly’ to form it as adverb. Here the learner generalized the concept of using ‘ly’ at the end of the word to make it an adverb. He tried to use that knowledge in a situation where it did not apply. As he does not know the appropriate word for this sentence, to make the word “well” as adverb, he used “ly” at the end of the word. So, we can say that here the student overgeneralized the concept and made a deviant form word.

Rule Restriction Errors

E.g.

1) It is not possible for *his/her*

2) So, I am agree *about* the opinion

In the first example, we can see that the student has used wrong pronoun.

This example show that the student created deviant structure on the basis of his knowledge of using pronoun. Instead of using “him/her”, the student used “his/her”. In the second example, we can see that the sentence structure is wrong and the student

which indicate the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. For this kind of error, the students basically use previously acquired rule in a new situation.

Error because of false concept hypothesized:

E.g.

a) We are must use international language.

b) If we are want prosper in life then we must know English.

These errors indicate that some of the students interpreted “are” as a marker of auxiliary verb which is always needed after the subject and because of this false hypothesis they frequently made errors.

These are few common errors that the students made. As I analyzed these errors I realized what sort of errors the learners were making while learning the target language. These errors helped me to be aware of learners’ common errors and their deficiencies. While I have done the analysis, all the copies sampled according to the learners’ error. I have analyzed those errors and categorized according to the types of errors in different tables.

tertiary level students, syntactic errors are less expected in academic writing. From the samples of the essays, syntactic errors have been classified into three groups such as, fragment, run-on sentence and meaningless wrong sentence structure. At a glance if we count the number of syntactic errors made by the students then we can see the following types with the numbers of errors they made:

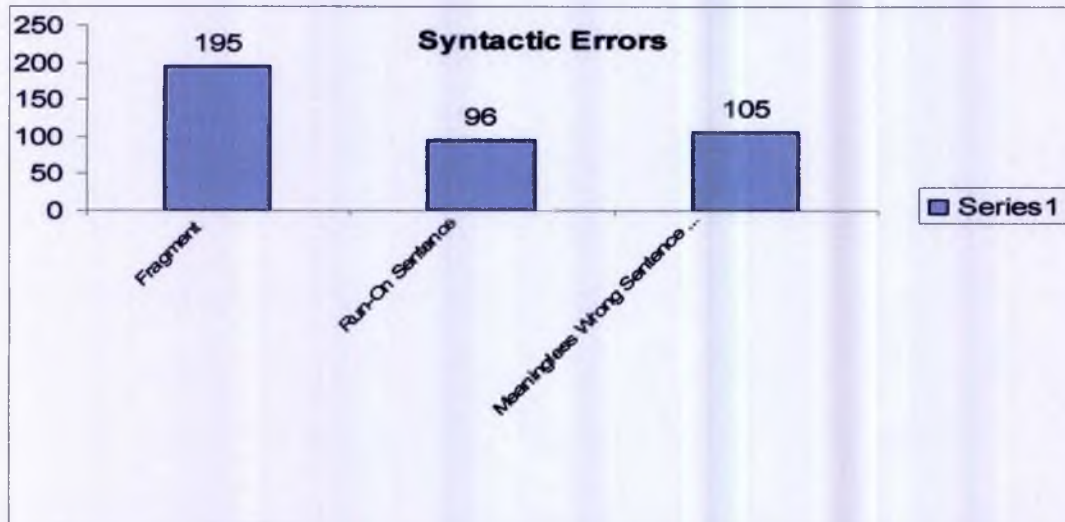


Figure1: Different types of syntactic errors.

Run-on sentence is the third highest syntactic errors that students made. Among total percentage of syntactic errors, 24% run-on sentence was identified. It shows that students lack knowledge in writing compound sentences and most of the time when they try to write this kind of sentence they incorrectly punctuate. There were two types of run-on sentences identified from the samples. One type involves writing sentence after sentence without end punctuation. It indicates sentence that just run together. Another type of run-on sentence also identified from the students' essays which were like using coordinating conjunction but leaving out the comma. The second type of run-on sentence was very

The syntactic errors that had been identified reveal that, though the students are in tertiary level but they were not prepared for this level. The kind of syntactic errors students made cannot be expected in the tertiary level. In academic writing, these kind of syntactic errors are totally intolerable.

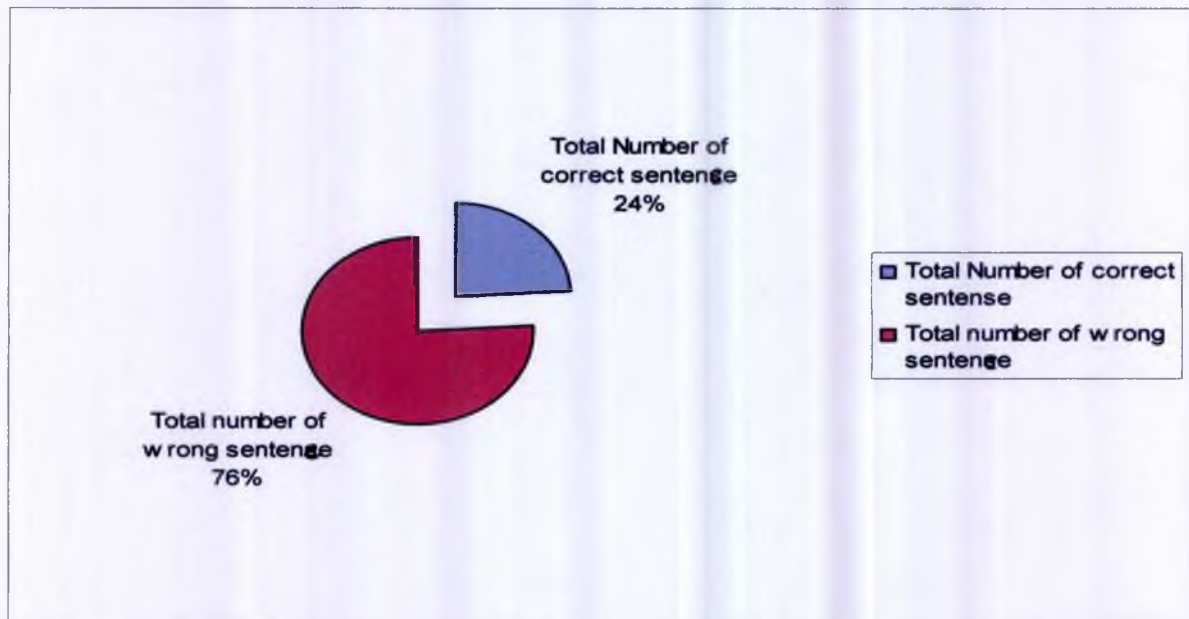


Figure: 2 Wrong sentences in comparison to correct sentences

The raw quantitative data has been converted into percentage; from this pie-chart it is more apparent that 76% sentences were incorrect sentence among all the essays developed by the students. Among all the essays, only 24% sentences were correct. So, from this analysis it is revealed that the majority of the students have problem in sentence construction.

Syntactic Errors and Corresponding Correct Sentences

Sample	Fragment	Run-On Sentence	Meaningless Wrong Sentence Structure	Total Syntactic Errors	Correct sentences
1	3	1	5	9	3
2	4	3	4	11	3
3	5	1	4	10	3
4	2	3	0	5	7
5	1	1	0	2	3
6	6	2	0	8	7
7	4	3	1	8	5
8	2	2	2	6	3
9	3	2	0	5	8
10	4	1	3	8	2
11	10	4	2	16	2
12	4	3	2	9	1
13	3	2	1	6	1
14	3	3	2	8	6
15	6	4	1	11	3
16	4	2	2	8	1
17	10	3	3	16	2
18	8	1	2	11	2
19	7	0	5	12	4
20	2	1	1	4	1
21	6	2	2	10	1
22	6	0	4	10	2
23	4	2	2	8	1
24	2	2	1	5	1
25	4	0	2	6	2
26	3	1	3	7	2
27	2	2	2	6	3
28	4	4	1	9	7
29	4	3	0	7	2
30	2	0	8	10	0
31	3	3	1	7	5
32	4	2	4	10	2
33	1	0	2	3	1
34	2	2	0	4	1
35	6	0	5	11	1
36	3	2	2	7	1
37	3	3	1	7	3
38	4	1	0	5	2
39	2	2	0	4	0
40	3	3	0	6	0
41	3	3	3	9	2
42	1	3	2	6	1

47	4	1	4	9	1
48	5	4	2	11	2
49	4	2	2	8	2
50	3	3	2	8	3
Total	195	96	105	396	126

Table: 4.1.1.1

Corresponding correct and wrong sentences made by students:

Total Number of correct sentences	126	24%
Total number of wrong sentences	396	76%

If we look at this table we can see that, from the 50 essays total number of syntactic error are 396, among those errors, total number of fragments are 195, which is the highest number of errors among other categories. The second highest is meaning less wrong sentence structure which is 105 in total number. Another category identified is run-on sentence, which is 96 numbers of errors under the syntactic error category. If we see the graphical representation of these syntactic errors, then we can reveal that among all the syntactic errors, 49% is fragment. From the sample essays it shows that, most of the students write fragments which indicate incomplete sentence. It is the most common errors that students make while writing. The second highest syntactic error is meaningless wrong sentence structure which is 27%. From this kind of errors, it has been found that students cannot even write a sentence which can make sense for example, *"We are always shopping, university, college, and so on other technique in English language speaking"*. This kind of syntactic error shows that students are so weak that they can not express their thinking while writing, so to express it they just put words together and create a deviant structure which is meaningless.

word indicates the choice of word for the context was not correct. Wrong form of words indicates that, the words which are used with incorrect form. Some examples of wrong form of words that had been made by the students were, “*if we talk or **sharing** our expression to other countries people...*”, “*I hope that our country is very **development***”, “*we must use **internationally** language*”. Wrong words that had been used in the essays were inappropriate for the context most of time. Some example of wrong word were, “*English has become important but it’s not more **then** mother tongue*”, “*...communicate with **there** country people*”. This kind of errors occurs because of similar sound, which is regarded as malapropism. Malapropism indicates the words that out of context.

From the graphical presentation we can see that, 61% of lexical error occurred for choosing wrong word which is the highest for this kind of errors. 39% of lexical error occurred for choosing wrong from of words.

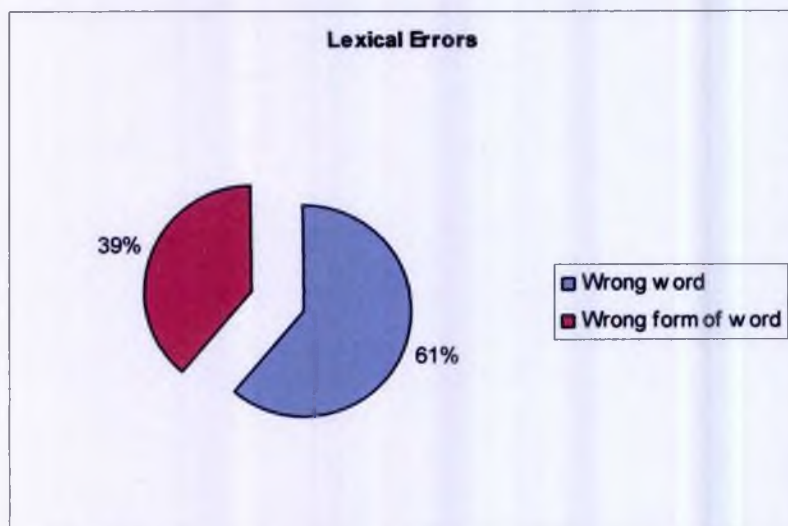


Figure 3: Different types of lexical errors

Students used wrong form of words because of their lack of knowledge in the target language. Students used wrong from of words as they do not have proper knowledge of

In the following table the total number of lexical errors and their categories shown:

Table: 4.1.2

Lexical Errors

Sample	Wrong word	Wrong form of word	Total lexical Errors
1	3	3	6
2	3	3	6
3	2	2	4
4	2	1	3
5	3	1	4
6	1	1	2
7	2	0	2
8	4	0	4
9	1	1	2
10	2	1	3
11	2	1	3
12	3	0	3
13	5	0	5
14	4	1	5
15	3	0	3
16	2	2	4
17	1	1	2
18	3	5	8
19	0	1	1
20	2	2	4
21	2	0	2
22	0	0	0
23	3	3	6
24	1	0	1
25	2	3	5
26	1	1	2
27	3	2	5
28	2	1	3
29	4	1	5
30	3	3	6
31	1	1	2
32	4	2	6
33	1	1	2
34	1	1	2
35	2	1	3
36	1	1	2
37	1	2	3
38	2	2	4
39	1	0	1
40	0	0	0
41	1	2	3

46	2	0	2
47	2	1	3
48	3	3	6
49	3	3	6
50	2	1	3
Total	100	64	164

From this table we can see that total number of lexical errors is 164, among these errors total number of wrong words is 100. Total number of wrong form of words used in the 50 essays is 64. It indicates that students frequently used wrong word in their essay. This kind of error occurs because of lack of knowledge and less stock of words in the target language. This type of error stem from students' ignorance and poor knowledge of L2 which leads to the production of some wrong words.

4.1.3 Spelling Errors: Spelling error is one of the most common errors that students make. Spelling errors has been categorized into different types according to the students' error. Spelling errors has been categorized and grouped into 6. The categories are addition, deletion, substitution, transposition and homonym. These categories already discussed in literature review.

Another group included here which is grouped as 'not exits' which indicates the words that are not exits, make by the students. This kind of spelling error occurred while student does not know the exact spelling of the word. Sometimes this kind of spelling error occurred because of L1 interference. Some examples identified from the essays are like, Akjakli, prafir, adelt, scile, tung, sinama. If we analyse these spellings carefully we may find out what they meant, but a native speaker of English may not understand what the writer means.

Types of spelling errors	No.
Addition	9
Deletion	20
Substitution	44
Transposition	5
Homonym	38
Not Exists	14

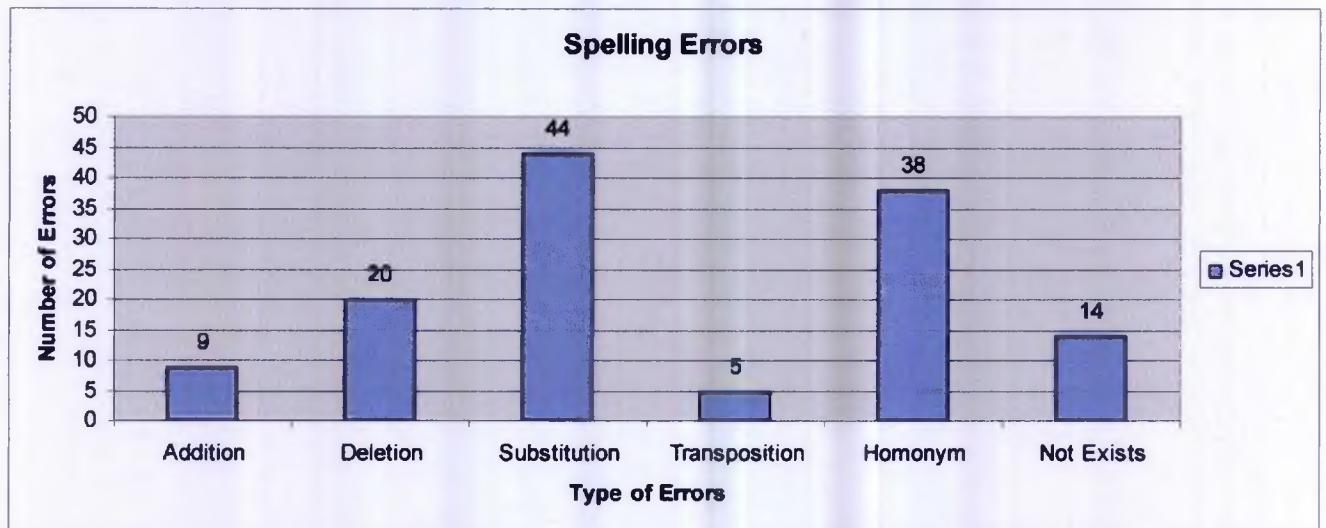


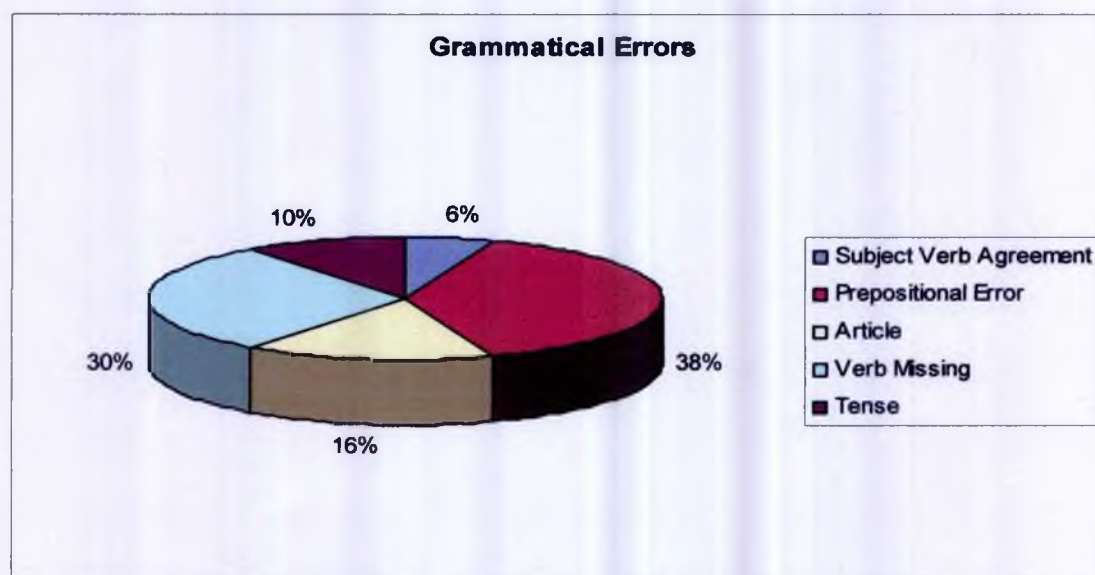
Figure 4: Different types of spelling errors

If we analyze the graph, we can see that students made substitution error most. Total number of substitution error is 44. Substitution spelling error indicate substitute a letter with the letter nest to it. The second highest is homonyms which indicates that the students may got confused with a word with another word that sounds alike. Most common homonyms that identified from the essays were, 'then' instead of 'than' and another 'there' instead of 'their'.

Table: 4.1.4**Grammatical Errors**

Subject Verb Agreement	Prepositional Error	Article	Verb Missing	Tense	Total no. of Grammatical errors
6	42	17	32	11	108

From 50 essays, prepositional error has been identified from 42 essays and the second highest verb missing grammatical error identified from 32 essays. It indicates that most of the students have lack knowledge in the use of preposition. Prepositional error occurred because most of the students get confused with the proper use of preposition. While identifying the errors I could see that some students make prepositional error because of L1 interference, they just direct translate from L1.

**Figure 5:** Different types of grammatical errors

writing a sentence. This kind of error occurred because of students' ignorance and sometimes lack of their knowledge. As they are the students of tertiary level they had to pass the primary and secondary level before they get admission in the university. From their primary and secondary education, they have learned the use of verbs. So after passing these levels if they make this kind of error, then we can say that it happens because of their ignorance or some of them get fossilized learner.

10% of students made tense error, where they mixed up tense. Among 50 essays, 6% students made subject – verb agreement error.

4.1.5 Punctuation Error: Punctuation is an essential part of language. Peck and Coyle (1999) referred punctuation as the signaling system of language. Many students make awful mess of punctuation, which denotes that their performance in essays suffers. From the essays I have identified that most of the students made punctuation error. It has been discussed in literature review that three aspects of punctuation mainly confused people. The three aspects are comma splice, run-on sentences, and fragments. From the students' essays I have found all these three aspects of punctuation error. We know that to make a compound sentence, we need to combine two simple sentences by using a comma and one of the coordinating conjunctions. I have found comma splices in students' essays where it makes the connection between the two sentences but leaves out the coordinating conjunction. In many essays I have found that students prefer to write long sentence by using a particular conjunction. They frequently used 'and' but left out the comma where it was needed. They did not use comma while they write long sentences. Those long sentences became over-loaded sentence without proper punctuation. In the literature review we have seen that run-on sentences basically indicate incorrectly punctuated

used coordinating conjunction but left out comma. Fragmental error can fall under punctuation error, where students write incomplete sentence and use full stop. These kinds of punctuation errors are very common in the essays. From the essays, I can reveal that students have lack knowledge in using comma. Most frequent punctuation errors I have encountered from the essays are misuse of comma. It indicates that students are unaware of the proper use of comma in sentence which suffers their performance of the essays.

4.1.6 Comparison between number of errors and assessment:

As these were final exam scripts which students will not see, errors were not identified by the teachers. Teacher was reluctant on marking the errors that the students made in their exam. To gain an understanding of how teachers treated the error, I tried to analyze the relation between errors and marks obtain. The following table is on correlating of error as marks obtained. This correlation helps us ascertain teachers' attitude to errors.

Table 4.1.5 Comparison between number of errors and assessment

Samples	Total number of errors (In use of language)	Mark obtain
1	19	7.5
2	20	7.5
3	17	5
4	10	10
5	10	2
6	14	9
7	12	7
8	15	5
9	22	9
10	15	4
11	22	5
12	15	6
13	22	4
14	15	8.5
15	16	8
16	17	6
17	18	7

22	11	4
23	16	6
24	14	4
25	19	4
26	13	6
27	19	6
28	10	10
29	12	5
30	17	2
31	12	8
32	14	6
33	13	2
34	10	3
35	8	3
36	17	3
37	10	4
38	10	5
39	12	2
40	20	3
41	12	5
42	16	5
43	15	4
44	17	5
45	15	5
46	14	5
47	17	5
48	11	6
49	17	6
50	15	5

The total number of errors made from the summation of syntactic, lexical, spelling and grammatical error. If we analyze this table then we can say that the teacher did not give importance to the grammatical, syntactic, lexical and spelling errors. If we compare the total number of errors and the mark of each student, then we can not say that the teacher made the assessment on the basis of students' grammatical errors. Concerning organizational/structural error assessment, teachers gave more marks to those students who tried to follow the structural or organizational sides of essay writing. The student, who made 22 errors in the use of language, got 9 and the student who made 8 errors got

much. I have identified that among all the essays, 30% essays were too short and incomplete. Teacher gave lowest mark to the unfinished essays. The students who comparatively tried to follow the structure of essay got more marks.

4.1.7 Organizational error/structural error:

While students write any academic essay, then organization of the essay is very important. The structure of the essay needs to be viewed through well- organization of it. There should be a general specific sequence of writing an essay. There needs to be have proper unity among sentences that relate to the topic. Supporting details should be developed in a way that supports the topic sentence of each paragraph.

To analyze the students' organizational error in writing essay, I have followed the structure of argumentative essay that has been provided by the teacher in the class.

I used the writing criterion from (class handout) and checked the student writings against this. I have observed several classes where lectures delivered on the structure of essay writing, students got sample of writing different types of essays. In the classrooms students had practice on writing topic sentence, supporting details and concluding sentence. Teacher had presented the structure of writing essay with the example in the class. In spite of having practice, and getting handouts on the structure of essay, students fail to perform accordingly in the final exam.

A quick glance at the global errors at the organizational level shows that students cannot produce proper essays.

Three basic parts of Essay writing	Introduction:	Out of 50 students	Out of 50 students
	Error in Topic sentence –	42	8
	Error in Thesis sentence -	43	7
	Ability to develop supporting details	45	5
	Conclusion	40	10

Introduction:

Introduction part is the first part of the essay. It introduces the topic and also states what we plan to argue in the essay. We know that, topic sentence introduces the main idea of the essay or paragraph. It usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph. Topic sentence should be the first sentence in a paragraph. The topic sentence is a general statement that introduces the paragraph that followed by specific details that expand, explain, or illustrate the topic sentence.

Thesis statement is the most important in the entire essay. It comes in the introductory part. It states what the writer is trying to prove. As written in the class handout, “thesis statement is written as a direct and exact response to the essay, he or she will know right from the beginning what your opinion is on the question that you are given”.

According to Cohen and Miller, (2003) “A good thesis statement is supported by the other ideas, explanations, and examples in the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion” (Cohen and Miller, 2003:68)

Students’ performance on developing introduction: As it was an argumentative essay, students should introduce the topic in a way that it show what the writer’s plan to argue in the essay. I have identified that most of the essays do not have proper topic sentence and it does not introduce the topic in a proper way of argumentative essay. Among 50

So, majority of the students failed to write properly a topic sentence at the beginning. 8 students wrote completely wrong sentence which does not construct any proper meaning. On the basis of students' performance on the introductory part, graph have been developed and shown below:

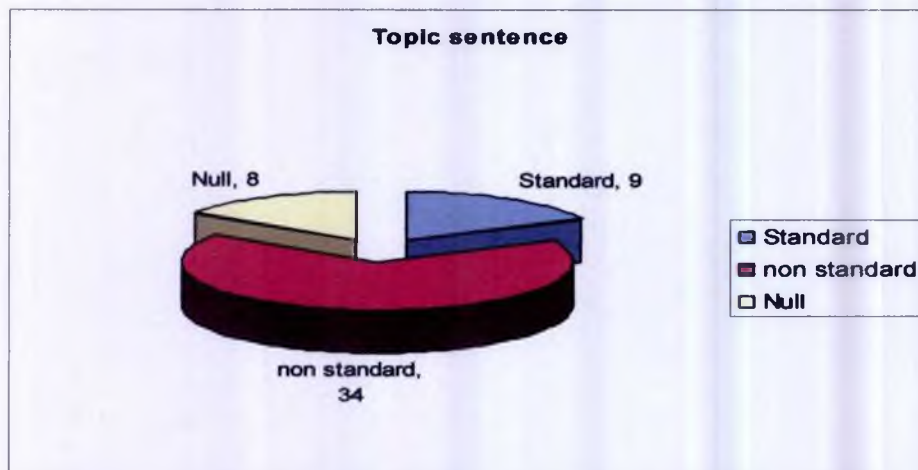


Figure: 6 Errors in writing topic sentence

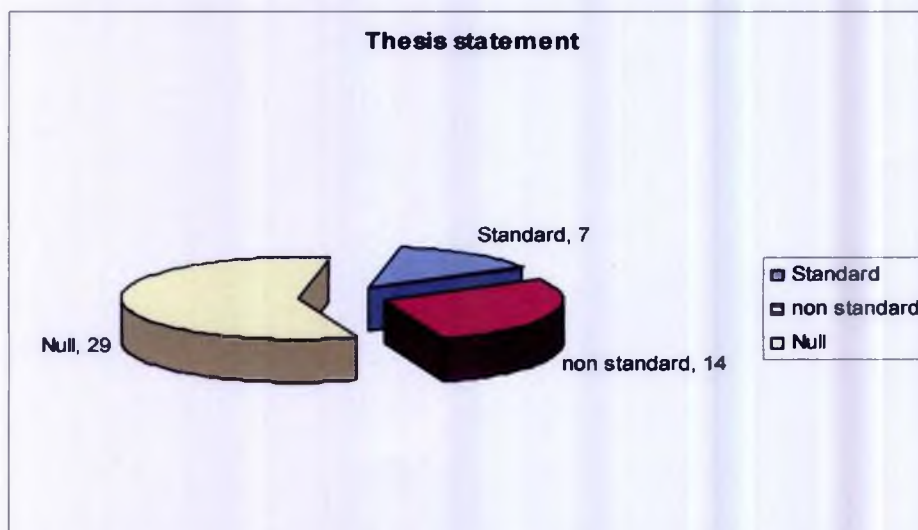


Figure: 7 Error in writing thesis statement

they agree or disagree with the statement of the essay topic. It indicates that students have written direct and exact response to the essay question. When I analyzed their essays, I have found that 7 students could write thesis statement properly, 14 students wrote very weak thesis statement and majority of the students could not even mention thesis statement clearly.

Supporting paragraphs/ body paragraphs:

We can say that, supporting paragraphs are developed by supporting details of each idea that the writer argue. Supporting details consists of sentences that support, develop or explain the main idea of the essay. Here the writer provides enough evidence that supports the writer's argument. The writer should develop the ideas in detail with enough examples in supporting paragraphs.

Students' performance on developing supporting paragraphs:

Regarding supporting paragraphs, few students tried to generate the paragraphs with evidence that supports their arguments but I could see that because of lack of knowledge in the target language, they fail to express their thoughts properly. Among 50 essays, I have found that 7 students developed the essay in a single paragraph. It means they did not even know the general structure of essay. Only 5 students tried to develop the supporting details within 3 or 4 paragraphs. I could find that 38 students tried to write body paragraphs but those sentences lack coherence in supporting detail. So, the majority of the students failed to explore the supporting paragraphs properly. Students' performance on the supporting paragraphs or main body paragraphs, shown through the graph shown below:

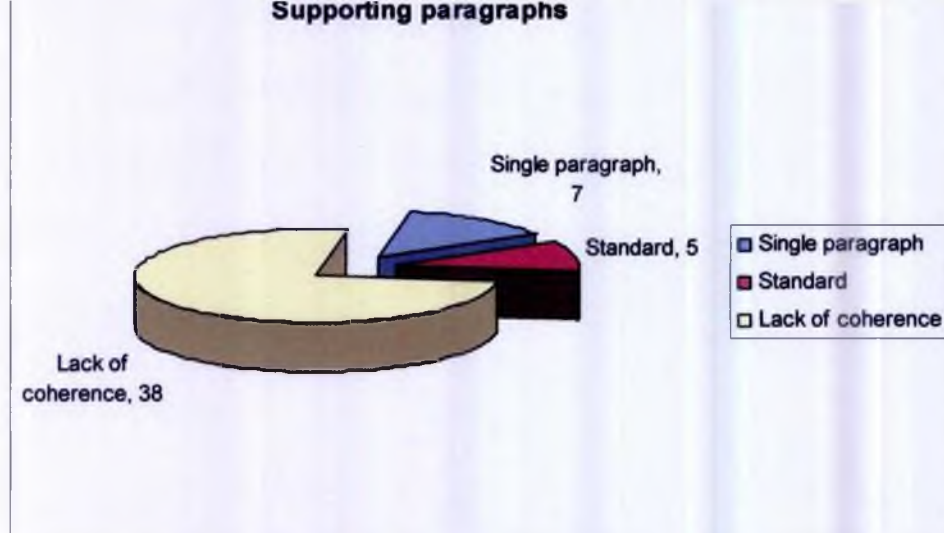


Figure: 8 Students' performance on developing supporting paragraphs

Conclusion:

The third part and the ending part of the essay is the conclusion. Here the writer should summarize the main points of the essay and restates the thesis in different way. From the structure of the essay students came to know that conclusion should summarize the main points of the essay. In the concluding part, the last sentence could be recommendation or prediction of believe in future which is related to the argument.

Students' performance in developing conclusion:

Most of the essays lack supports of the thesis statement in conclusion and there were no restatement of the thesis statement. From my analysis of those 50 essays, I could see 10 students' tried to follow the criterion of concluding part and 18 students developed very weak conclusion. Most alarming thing is 22 students could not even finish the essay. Among these 22 essays, most of the essays were too short. After analyzing those 50 essays I have identified that very few students tried to follow the structure of

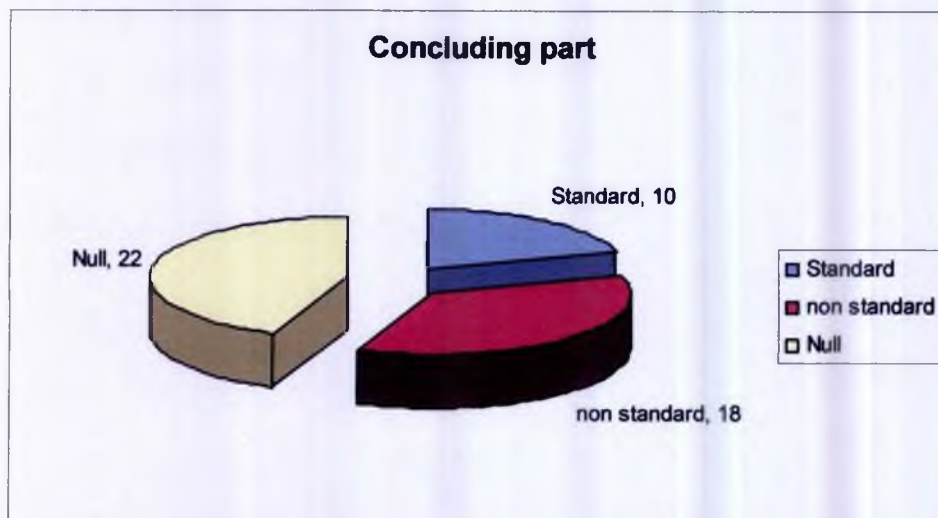


Figure: 9 Students' performance in developing conclusion

After analyzing these 50 students' essays, I could say that inspite of getting handout (See Appendix- B) and lectures on the organizational/structural part of argumentative essay in the class, students failed to perform accordingly in their final exam. It indicates students did not learn the structure of essay properly in their previous academic years even.

contains 10 questions. These questionnaires include multiple-choices, ranking, yes-no and open-ended questions that have been used to elicit added information from the students and teachers on the concerning issue. The questionnaires were organized in such a way that after collecting and analyzing the finding of the quantitative data, it would reflect teachers' and students' general attitude and perception on error and error analysis; tertiary level students' difficulties in academic essay writing. In this section, students' and teachers' responses collected from the questionnaires are analyzed below.

4.2.1 Teacher's perceptions:

4.2.1.1 Views on Error analysis:

The first question was asked to the teachers' to discover teachers' perception on the importance of error analysis. In this question "yes-no" options were given and teachers were allowed to give comments if the answer is "yes". Out of 10 participants, 9 of them answered "yes". Only 1 teacher's response was "no", which indicates error analysis is not important for them. Among these 9 teachers who gave positive response on error analysis, 6 teachers explained why they think error analysis is important for the teachers. The other 3 teachers did not give any comment. 5 teachers believe that for this kind of analysis, it will help them to know about the weakness of the students and then they can focus on those problem areas. 1 teacher commented that it will be helpful for the teachers to design effective language course according to the students' need.

From the overall response to this question, it is clear that the majority of the teachers believe that error analysis is important for the teachers. From their comments it is visible that error analysis will help them to find out students' weakness and then they will teach accordingly. They believe, for this kind of analysis teachers design the syllabus

Table: 4.2.1.

Teachers' view on tolerance of error and error analysis:

Teachers' perception on error and error analysis		
Error analysis: Views of importance:	Important 90 %	Not important 10 %
Tolerance of error:	Will tolerate 0 %	Will not tolerate 100 %

From this table it is clear that the majority of the teachers' believe that error analysis is a vital issue for the teachers. Teachers' believe that tertiary level students' error should not be tolerable. From their comments it is revealed that teachers' by this time students should know the correct one.

4.2.1.2 Teachers' reaction on students' error:

It is discovered that majority of the teachers' frequently find 5 types of errors in students' writing. Among 10 participants, 8 of them respond on "5 types". The rest of the 2 teachers respond on "More". Option was given to list down the types of errors. 6 teachers gave list of errors that students frequently commit. A common type was discovered from the teachers' response that is "faulty sentence construction". Most of the teachers believe that faulty sentence construction is a common error that students frequently commit in their writing. Among other types of errors, teachers mentioned spelling error, grammatical error, punctuation error.

Another question was asked on students mostly make error or mistake. Almost all the teachers believe students make both mistakes and errors in their writing. A question was

which indicated not tolerable.

Teachers' role is always significant for the students' development. In order to obtain teachers' response on tertiary level students' error in writing, question 11, and 12 were designed for the teachers. For these questions multiple-choice option was given. Through these questions it was intended to probe how seriously teachers are taking students' error at tertiary level and what is their reaction on that to avoid error.

50% teachers believe that it is to some extent worthwhile to work on tertiary level students' error and other 50% teachers believe that it is very much essential for the teachers to work on students' error at the tertiary level.

In question 12, teachers were asked to give their opinion about their motivation in dealing with errors at the tertiary level. On response to this question, 8 teachers think that teachers' motivation in dealing with students' error at the tertiary level is average. Only 2 teachers believe that teachers' motivational level is minimum to deal with students' error at the tertiary level. So, it is clear that majority of the participants think that at the tertiary level teachers are averagely motivated to deal with students' error.

At the tertiary level, teachers are not highly motivated to work on students' error but in some extent they are dealing with the students' error. Teacher can play a vital role in helping students to avoid errors. Teachers believe that they should be more concern about students' error.

reaction on various types of errors. In teachers' questionnaire, question 14, 15, 16 and 17 were asked on this regard. Question number 14 and 16 were ranking questions, where teachers' were asked to rank according to importance.

Question 14 was on the kinds of errors that teacher's deduct most marks according to the importance. As it was a ranking question, teachers' put numbers besides the types of errors according to the importance. The raw quantitative data has been converted into percentage and presented through the graph shown below:

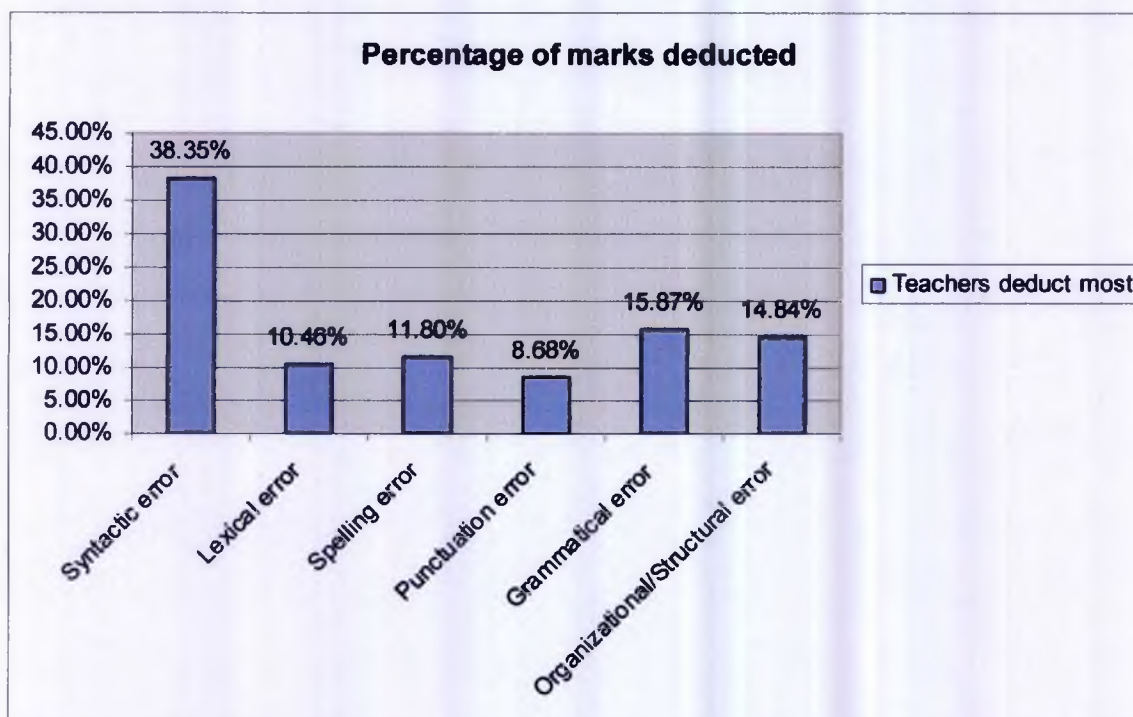


Figure10: Teachers' Evaluation of errors

From the graph, it is visible that teachers' deduct most marks for syntactic error. The highest percentage shows that 38.35% teachers deduct marks for wrong sentence construction. The second highest percentage is on grammatical error which is 15.87%. So teachers are taking grammatical error seriously after the syntactic error. 14.84% teachers' consider organizational error as 3rd serious types of errors that they cut marks

is the lowest one.

Question 15 was on two types of error that the teachers tolerate less. Among organizational/structural error and use of language error, 60% teachers' cut most marks for language error and 40% teachers' cut most marks for organizational error. It is discovered that majority of the teachers do not tolerate errors in the use of language.

Question 16 was on the use of language errors that teacher's deduct most marks according to the importance. It was a ranking question, teachers' put numbers besides the types of errors according to the importance. The raw quantitative data has been converted into percentage and presented through the graph shown below:

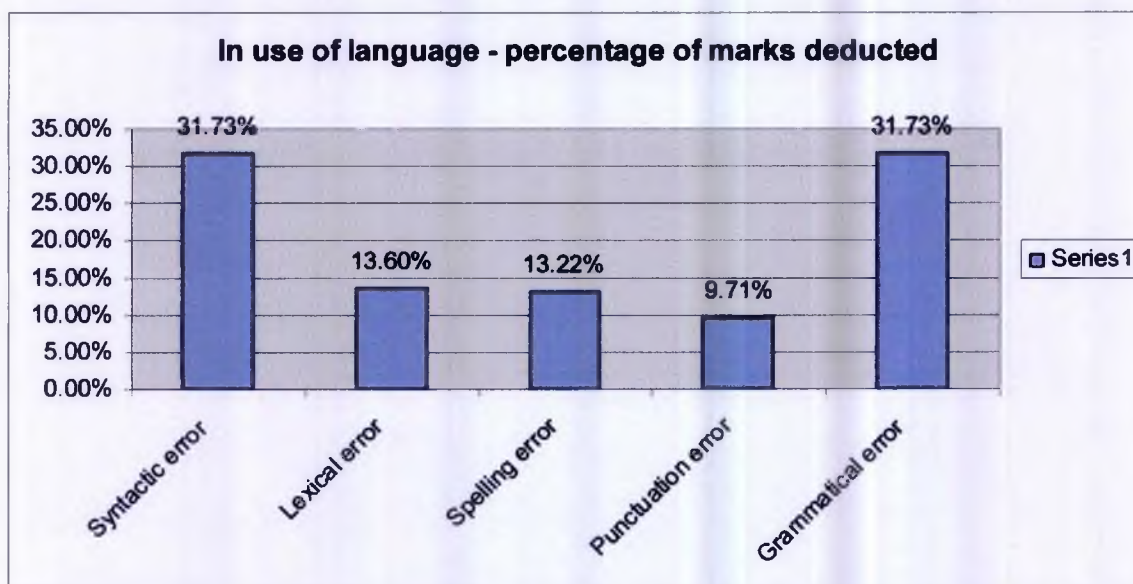


Figure 11: Teachers' evaluation of errors in use of language

From the graph it is visible that teachers' equally deduct marks for syntactic and grammatical errors. Same percentage of teachers' cut marks for syntactic and grammatical error and they cut the most marks for these kinds of errors in use of language. For spelling and lexical error in the use of language, teachers' almost equally deduct marks. After syntactic and grammatical error teachers' cut marks for lexical error

(9.71%) cut mark for punctuation error.

Question 17 was on percentage of marks that the teachers deduct for structural/organizational error. Percentages of marks they cut were given as multiple-choice option for the teachers to respond.

Table: 4.2.2

Teachers' evaluation on organizational error:

Total response out of 10 participants	Percentages of marks
4	41% - 60%
3	21% - 40%
3	0% - 20%

This quantitative data indicate that some teachers take organizational error as a serious kind of error in essay writing.

From all these quantitative data on teachers' evaluation of errors, it is discovered that teachers cut most marks for syntactic and grammatical errors in use of language and after that they cut marks for organizational/structural error.

4.2.1.4 Preferred method for error identification

In teachers' questionnaire, question 8 and 9 were asked to get information about teachers' thought on existing error identification methods. These questions were asked to reveal effective technique of error identification from the teachers' perception.

In question 8, teachers were asked to rank the existing methods of error identification according to importance. Choices were given and they were asked to put numbers according to importance. Instruction was given in the question for the number allocated

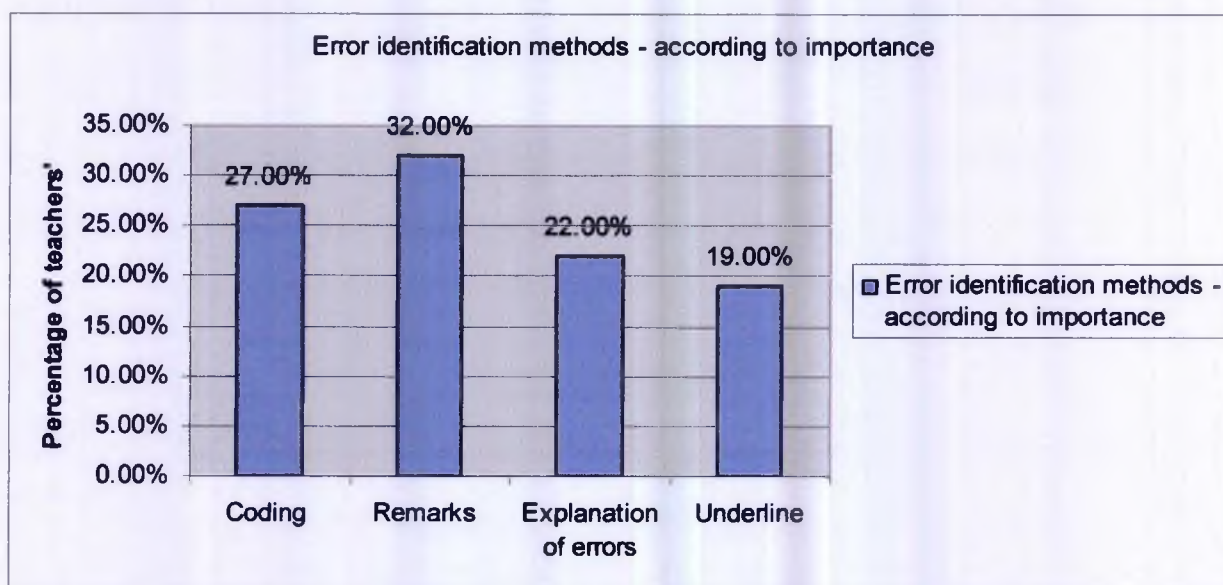


Figure: 12 According to teachers' preference –Error Identification methods

From the graph it is visible that, 32% teachers prefer “remarks” as the most effective exiting error identification method. 27% teachers believe “coding” is effective error identification technique. 22% teachers believe “explanation of errors” is effective error identification method. 19% teachers prefer “underline” as error identification technique. According to the percentages of teachers' preference, it is discovered that the most effective existing error identification method is giving remarks. The 2nd effective error identification technique is using codes or symbols. 3rd effective error identification method is providing explanation of errors in students' copy and the least effective technique is underlining the errors.

In question 9, teachers were asked to whether the existing methods of error identification are adequate in showing or highlighting the error to the students or not. Among 10 participants, 6 of them respond on “no” which indicate they do not think it is adequate in highlighting the errors to the students. Rest of the 4 participants respond on “yes” that

errors to the students. Few teachers gave suggestion that student counseling is an effective method.

In question 13, teachers were asked, whose determination is helpful for the students to avoid errors. Three options were given for this question, such as, “student’s determination”, “teacher’s determination” and the last option was “both”. Among 10 participants, all of them respond on “both”. All the teachers believe that, in helping students to avoid errors, both sides determination is important.

4.2.1.5 View on Fossilization and fossilized learner:

In teachers’ questionnaire, question 6 and 7 were asked to reveal the teachers’ perception on fossilization and response on fossilized learner. These two questions were asked to get the information about teachers’ thought on this issue and how much importance they are giving on this to overcome students’ error.

In question 6, teachers were asked whether they consider fossilization as one of the main reasons for the students to make errors at the tertiary level. “Yes-No” option was given for the getting teachers’ response. Majority of the teachers’ believe that fossilization is one of the main reasons for the students to make errors at the tertiary level.

Question 7 was open-ended question for the teachers. This question was designed to get teachers’ opinion on positive feedback to overcome the errors of fossilized learners. Among 10 participants, all of them respond as writing “Yes”. Though it was an open-ended question but none of the teachers’ gave any detail comment on this question.

From these questions it is revealed that majority of the teachers believe that fossilization is one of the main reasons for the students to make errors at the tertiary level. Teachers

4.2.1.6 Teachers' suggestion for feedback:

In teachers' questionnaire, question 19 was open-ended question to the teachers to reveal their thoughts on effective feedback. Among 10 participants, 4 of them attempt this question. Teachers' were reluctant in giving open-ended question. Among these 4 participants, 2 of them suggested individual student counseling as a means of giving effective feedback. One teacher suggested, reflective teaching according to the students' level. Another teacher recommended, interpersonal relationship and teacher's inborn ability to teach and to make understand, capability of winning students' attention can be work as effective feedback.

4.2.1.7 Aspects teachers' emphasis in writing:

Teachers were asked to rank on the important aspects of academic essay writing criterion that the students should display in the final exam. 7 options were given for the teachers to rank according to importance.

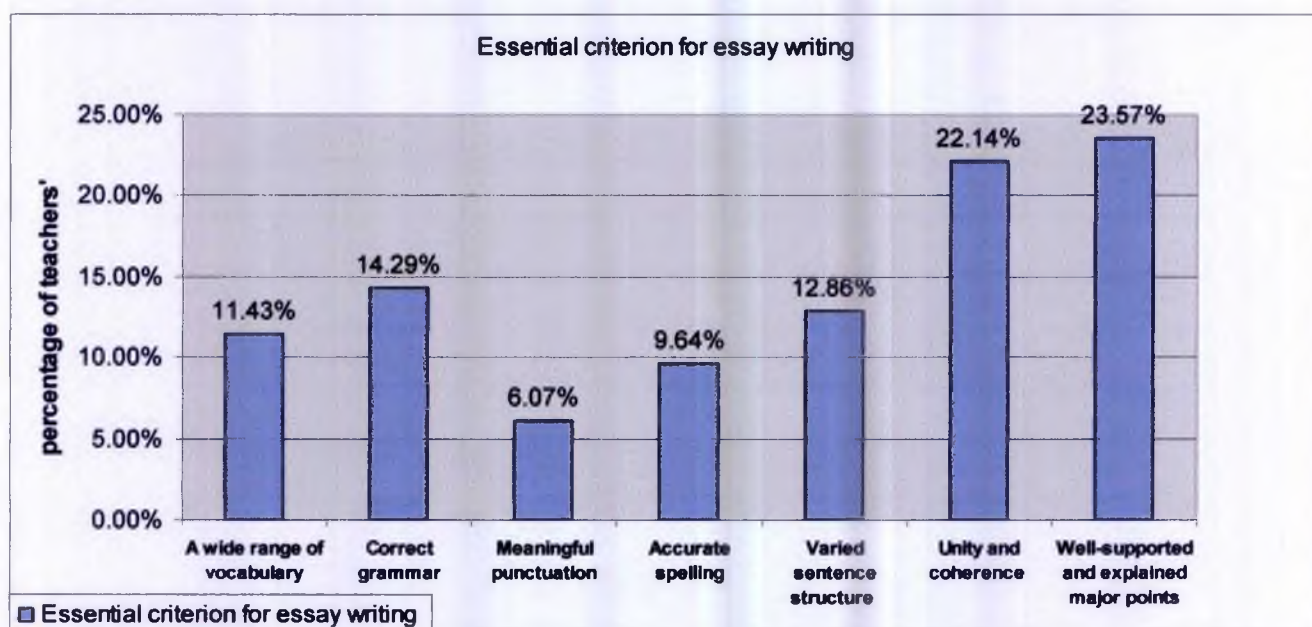


Figure: 13 Teachers' expectation from the students' on essential essay writing criterion

writing criterion. The second highest percentages of teachers (22.14%) believe that “Unity and coherence” is important criterion that should be displayed in students essay in final exam. The third highest percentages of teachers (14.29%) believe that students should present their essay with “correct grammar”. The fourth highest percentages of teachers (12.86%) think that students should acquire and display “Varied sentence structure” in their essay. According to the teachers’ perceptions the chronologically important criterion are presented in the table given below:

Table: 4.2.3

Teachers’ perception on essay writing criterion according to importance:

Options	Essay writing criterion that should be displayed in the students’ essay
1	Well-explained and well- supported
2	Unity and coherence
3	Correct grammar
4	Varied sentence structure
5	A wide range of vocabulary
6	Accurate spelling
7	Meaningful punctuation

Teachers’ overall opinion on students’ error or error analysis:

At the end of the teachers’ questionnaire, teachers were asked to give overall opinion on students’ error or error analysis. Among 10 participants, only one teacher gave opinion on that issue. The teacher state that, “How the teacher will analyze students’ errors

teacher gives importance to the students' level of intelligence while analyzing the errors.

4.2.2 Students' perception:

4.2.2.1 View on types of error:

Majority of the students think that they most frequently make "grammatical error". Among 20 participants, 18 of them believe that they make grammatical error. Most of the students admit that they commonly make "syntactic error", as they believe they have problem in sentence construction. From the students' opinion, it is discovered that the second highest types of error is "syntactic error". Among 20 participants, 13 of them respond on the "syntactic error" option. Out of 20 participants, 5 of them think that they frequently make lexical error. 3 participants believe that they frequently commit spelling error. 3 participants think that they also make organization/structural error while developing essay. Among 20 participants, only 1 student admits that he makes punctuation error frequently.

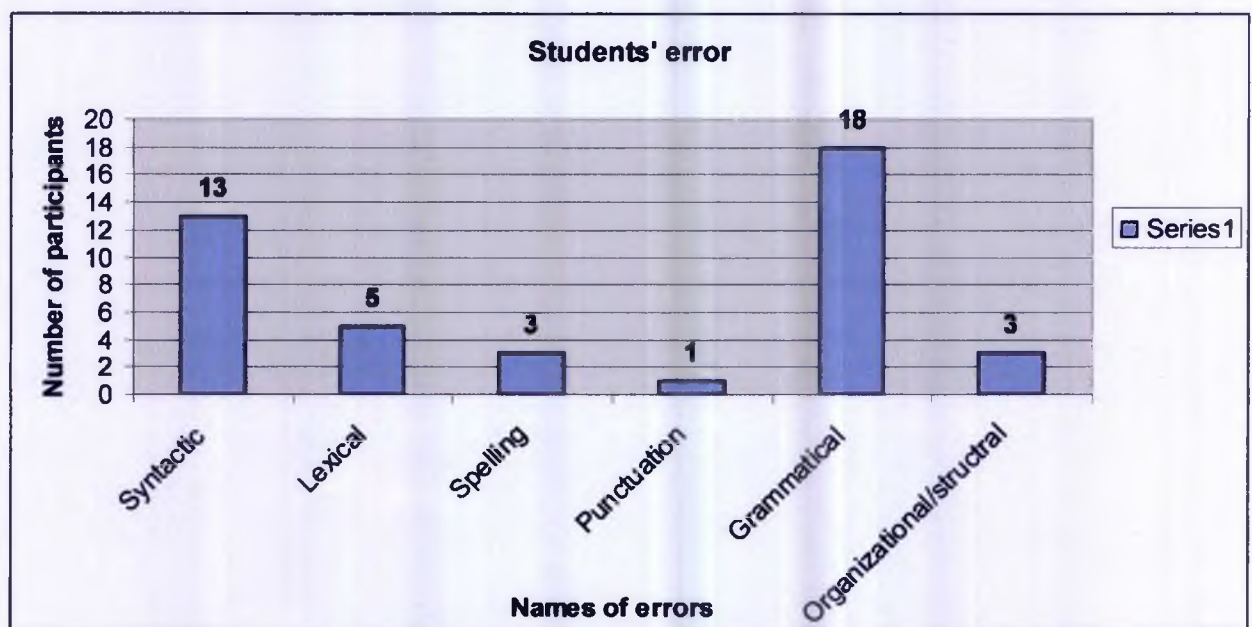


Figure: 14 Students' opinion on their common types of errors

participants put tick marks on 2 types of errors they frequently commit. From the students' response on this question, it is discovered that majority of the students believe they frequently commit at least 2 types of errors and that is syntactic and grammatical error.

Another question was asked to the students on repetition of same error their writing. Majority of the participants (16 out of 20) respond on "sometimes" option, as they believe not always but sometimes they make same error repetitively in their writing. Only one student responds on "yes" and rests of the 3 students respond on "no" which indicate they do not make same error repetitively in writing.

Majority of the students think that they most frequently make grammatical error. From the students' opinion, it is discovered that the second highest types of error is "syntactic error".

4.2.2.2 Overcoming and avoiding language error at the tertiary level:

At a glance students' opinion on the possibility of overcoming and avoiding language error at the tertiary level:

Table: 4.2.4

Students' view on the possibility of overcoming and avoiding language error at the tertiary level

Students' perception:		
Effective ways of avoiding errors:	Teachers' help (75%)	Self determination (75%)
Possibility of overcoming language error at the tertiary level	50% (possible)	50% (not possible)

Students were allowed to put tick mark on more than one option if they want. Among 20 participants, 13 of them put tick marks on 2 options which were “self help” and “teachers’ help”. So the majority of the students believe that to avoid errors in writing, self help and teachers’ help both are essential. Among rest of the 7 participants, 4 of them believe environment help is needed. 2 participants think self help, teachers’ help and environmental help is needed to avoid errors. 1 student responds on self help, teachers’ help and motivational grooming option.

From the students’ response, it is discovered that teachers’ help and students self determination is needed most to avoid errors in writing. Students’ were asked to give their opinion about teachers’ role in helping students to avoid errors. From the students’ response it is evitable that majority of them think that, teacher can play vital role in helping students to avoid errors.

A question was designed for the students to discover their view on overcoming errors at the tertiary level. From the students’ response, it is revealed that 50% students believe that it is possible to overcome their error at the tertiary level. Other 50% students believe that it is not possible to overcome their error at this level.

4.2.2.3 Effective feedback for students:

In students’ questionnaire, question 8 was asked to get the opinion from the students that they consider effective feedback to understand their errors and stop them to make error. 4 choices were given for students’ response. Students were allowed to choose more than one option.

Options	Effective feedback on helping students to understand errors	Students' response (20 participants)
1	One to one conference/ session with teacher	4
2	Self awareness	0
3	Remarks/coding/explanation by teachers	4
5	One to one conference + self awareness + remarks/coding/explanation by teachers	7
6	Self awareness + Remarks/coding/explanation by teachers	2
7	One to one conference + self awareness	3
8	Otherssuggestion	0

From the above table, it is visible that majority of the students (7) believe that all three options are needed as effective feedback. The options are one to conference or individual counseling, self awareness and remarks/coding/explanation by teachers. Other 4 students believe that individual counseling is effective feedback. Other 4 students respond on Remarks/coding/explanation by teachers. If we analyze the table then it is discovered that among 20 participants, 14 of them respond on one to one conference or individual counseling option which is considered as most effective feedback. So, students consider this option as most effective feedback to understand their errors. 13 students respond on remarks/coding/explanation by teachers. This option is discovered as second effective feedback for the students to understand their errors. 12 students respond on self awareness which is discovered as 3rd effective feedback.

explanation by the teacher is considered as effective feedback.

Students' comment on their errors and/ or how teachers' correct them:

In the final part of the students' questionnaire, students were asked to comment on errors they usually make and teachers' dealings with those errors. Among 20 participants, 10 of them tried to give comments on these issues.

From the analysis of 10 students' given comments, it is revealed that they have some expectation from the teachers to overcome their difficulties in writing. Students expect that teachers' will be more supporting towards them to overcome their mistakes and errors. Students also believe that they need to be more conscious their common errors. So, they think self awareness is badly needed. From the students' opinion it is also discovered that, they expect individual counseling or one to one conference from the teachers as effective feedback to overcome their difficulties in writing. Regarding teachers' correction of errors, they think giving remarks, using codes, explanation of the errors given by the teachers are common techniques that the teachers' apply.

4.2.3 Comparison of teachers' and students' response:

4.2.3.1 Attitude towards students' performance on the final exam:

In teachers' questionnaire, question number 4 and in students' questionnaire, question number 2 was same. Same question was asked to the teachers and the students to reveal both sides perception on the matter. The question was on student's (first year, first semester) capability of writing 250 words essay in 40 minutes during exam. "Yes-No" options were given for the answer.

Do the students (1 st year, 1 st semester) capable of writing 250 words essay in 40 minutes during exam?	Teachers' perception (Total no. of teachers: 10)		Students' perception (Total no. of students: 20)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	2	8	16	4

From the response of the teachers and the students on this question, it was discovered that majority of the teachers believe that students are not capable enough to write 250 words essay in 40 minutes during exam. Students believe they are capable of writing 250 words essay during the time limit in their exam at this level. From the analysis of the response of both teachers and students, it is revealed that the responses from the both sides were totally differing. There was another question on students' difficulty in final exam. From the students' response, it is discovered that more than 50% students found the final exam difficult for their language class.

At a glance, comparison of teachers' and students' response on significant aspects of error and error analysis.

Comparison of teachers' and students' response	
Effectiveness of existing teaching essay structure	- teaching essay structure is not effective enough. - new practices should be introduced to make student understand the format organization of essay writing
Teachers' role on tertiary level students' error	- should be more concern about students' error - can play vital role
Types of error students commonly make	- wrong sentence construction - grammatical error
Effective ways in helping students to avoid error	- teachers' help - students' determination - environmental help
Effective feedback	- individual student counseling - remarks/coding/ explanation by the teacher

From the teachers' and the students' response on the existing teaching essay structure, it is discovered that existing methods of teaching essay structure is not effective enough. New practices should be introduced to make student understand the format organization of essay writing.

Both teachers and students believe that they should be more concern about students' error. On the other hand, majority of the students believe that teachers can play a vital role to helping students in avoiding errors.

grammatical error is another most frequent error that students commit in writing.

After getting response from the teachers and the students on this question, it is discovered that teachers' help and students self determination is needed most to avoid errors in writing.

Both teachers' and students' believe that individual student counseling is most effective feedback for the students to understand their errors. The existing methods such as, remarks/coding/ explanation by the teacher is considered as effective feedback.

In this chapter, major findings, recommendation, limitation and conclusion of the research will be discussed.

5.1 Major findings:

This present study was aimed at investigating Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common errors in writing the academic essay. From the data collected in this study and analyzed in chapter four it is seen, that though the students were in tertiary level they continue to have major difficulties in writing sentences. The majority of the students could not properly generate sentence, as they are not much expert in the target language. Students face serious problems in developing sentences while expressing thoughts. Some syntactic errors were so unique that it became difficult to comprehend. Firstly, the sentences did not make any sense. In some sentences the meaning is unclear but if we translate in Bangla it become lucid. There by we can say that students are making literal translations from Bangla. It is a kind of mother tongue interference. It also says that their vocabulary is very weak. Students think in Bangla but shows inability while producing the require words. Lightbown and Spada stated that, "the transfer of patterns from the native language is undoubtedly one of the major sources of errors in learner language". (1999: p, 165) From the analysis of students' error I can also find that transfer of patterns is sometimes causing errors. While writing in other language Students overgeneralize the language patterns with their mother tongue while expressing in other language. Richards (1974) refers to overgeneralization as one of the contributory factors for learners committing errors. According to him, "Overgeneralization covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language." (p.174)

indicates that their previous learning is inadequate. Moreover a course in EL-Pro (English language proficiency) is not enough for them.

It was also noticed that, students face problem while using vocabulary. As they have a limited stock of words, they could not find the proper word they need while writing. Use of wrong word and wrong form of word are common errors that students made. Sometimes they used words which are out of context, which indicates their lack of knowledge in the target language. Use of wrong form of words indicates that students do not know the proper use of the words. Spelling error is one of the most common errors students made. Majority of the students made substitution spelling error, where they substitute the letter. These types of spelling error occurred as the students were confused about the spelling. Some students made spelling error because of L1 interference. For L1 interference, students mostly do pronunciation error which sometimes reflected in their writing as well.

Regarding grammatical error I have found that students made prepositional errors the most. They get confused with the use of preposition and here I can also reveal that L1 interference is causing prepositional error. Misuse of helping verb and auxiliary verb denoted that students were so weak in the target language. Though students have been learned these grammatical aspects from their primary level, still they commit errors while writing in advance level. The kind of common errors students frequently committed in writing indicate that they are not prepared to be student of tertiary level. Though they have completed primary, secondary level and higher secondary level but still they are not prepared for the level they are studying. English was compulsory in primary, secondary level and higher secondary level. They have learned the structure of

Regarding the sources of errors, my analysis reveals different sources of error for students' frequent errors in writing. The main sources are: a) Interference of Bangla which is their L1 b) transfer of L1 knowledge c) incomplete application of rules d) ignorance of rule restrictions e) overgeneralizations f) lack of enough exposure and overall lack of knowledge in L2.

The investigation of student writings reveals that students continue to make mistakes in gender of pronouns and plurals. These are areas that they have already studied and should not be committing them. However, the students are not yet fossilized learner because they are still in the age where learning can take place. Krashen, and Scarcella (1979) believe that adults learn grammatical aspects faster than children. They think that in the case of formal learning situations adults seem to do better even in the area of learning. So, their view supports that the learners of twenty plus can still learn and they can even learn better in the formal learning situations.

The students are from private universities of Bangladesh, and this fundamental course has been introduced to develop students' language skills. This course has been made compulsory for all department students in their first semester to develop their standard of English. As I have analyzed their final exam scripts, I came to know about their common errors that they still commit at the advance level. After analyzing the errors I think that the course is not adequate for the learners' development. After getting lectures and having practice on the essay writing, students still committed number of errors. Students' frequent errors indicate that they are not prepared for upper level courses. From this study, I can say that though the students have enrolled in the university after completion of their higher secondary level of education, where English was compulsory but still they

was not effective, and that is why students continue making error in syntactic, grammatical and lexical area frequently.

Though students are learning the structure of essay and paragraph from their primary level, still they have problem in developing essay properly. Majority of the students could not write topic sentence or thesis statement properly. In the body part, there was a lack of coherence in their writing. Regarding concluding part, majority of the students could not come up with a standard conclusion with recommendation.

Surprisingly the teachers are not that much concern about language errors. Global errors are given specialty than language errors. Brown (2000) says that global errors are a kind of error that prevents the reader to comprehend the message. The marks located by teachers and their responses on questionnaire, both indicate that teachers give more priority to student ability of producing well developed coherent essay.

The teachers' overall response to the questionnaire indicates that the majority of the teachers believe that error analysis is important for the teachers. From their comments it is seen that error analysis will help them to find out students' weakness.

Concerning common types of errors frequently identified by the teachers', it is discovered that teachers frequently find 5 types of errors in students writing. Most of the teachers' believe that faulty sentence construction is a common error that students frequently commit in their writing. Among other types of errors, teachers mentioned spelling error, grammatical error, and punctuation error.

From the teachers' view on evaluation of errors, it is discovered that they cut most marks for syntactic and grammatical errors and after that they cut marks for organizational/structural error.

In case of giving feedback, it is seen that giving remarks and using codes are most effective existing error identification methods. Majority of the teachers do not believe that these techniques are adequate enough to highlight the errors to the students. A few teachers gave suggestion that student counseling is an effective method.

Majority of the teachers believe that fossilization is one of the main reasons for the students to make errors at the tertiary level. Teachers also believe that through positive feedback it is possible to overcome errors of fossilized learners.

Students' view on the overall error and error correction is they expect that teachers will be more supportive towards them to overcome their mistakes and errors. Students are concerned about their error in writing. They want to overcome their difficulties in writing. They believe self awareness and individual counseling with the teachers can help them to overcome their errors in writing.

Regarding frequent errors that the students make in their writing, majority of the students admit that they commonly make grammatical and syntactic error. Concerning feedback, students think that giving remarks, using codes, and explanation of the errors are the common techniques that their teachers apply. They believe that individual counseling or one to one conference can work as effective feedback for them to overcome their flaws.

From the perception of both teachers and students it is revealed that students' make much mistakes in sentence construction. Grammatical error is another most frequent error that students commit in writing.

Both teachers and the students believe that teacher can play a vital role in helping students to avoid errors. Teachers believe that they should be more concerned about students' error. On the other hand, majority of the students believe that teachers can play

determination is needed most to avoid errors in writing.

Most of the teachers believe that existing methods of teaching essay writing is not effective. Some teachers believe new practices should be introduced. Most of the students also think that existing method of teaching essay structure is not effective for them to understand the format organization of essay writing.

From both the teachers' and the students' response it is revealed that individual student counseling is most effective feedback for the students to understand their errors.

There were few mismatches in the views of teachers and students. Majority of the teachers believe that at that level students are not capable enough to write 250 words essay in 40 minutes during exam. On the other hand, majority of the students' response was opposite. It indicates that students believe they are capable of writing 250 words essay during the time limit in their exam at this level.

Teachers' questionnaire discloses that teachers are more tolerant of language error than structural flaws. Majority of the teachers respond that they cut "40%-60%" marks for structural and global errors. This is corroborated by the document analysis which reveals that students who were able to write a complete essay received good marks after having their language error. From the document analysis it is revealed that teachers' gave more marks to those essays which were completely developed in spite of having more language error on the essays. In chapter four, (see table: 4.1.6) we have seen that student who made 22 errors in the use of language, got 9 marks and the student who made 8 errors in language got 3 marks. From the document analysis it is revealed that the students got less mark as the essay was not well organized and unfinished. So here we can say that teacher give more importance on the fluency rather than accuracy.

phrase level. Teachers expect students to be able to write a coherent well developed essay which the students are unable to do. This maybe a reason why the teachers think that students at tertiary level should able to write 250 words essay in their exam. At tertiary level it is important that a student can express himself and develop their thoughts in writing. This is essential for all courses not just English language course. Students are making numerous errors as spelling, grammar, punctuation but at the tertiary teachers regard these errors as less problematic or significant than structural errors. At the tertiary level, teachers believe that students should be more concerned about organization of writing. My view on this issue is teachers are giving less importance to the language error rather than organizational or structural error as they have taken classes on structure of different types of essay writing specially for this level of students so they expect students will give importance on this and perform accordingly. Tertiary level students are considered as advance learners, so their syllabus has been developed according to their level. The kinds of language errors students are making at this level are unexpected as they have learnt all those grammatical aspect from their primary level. As students continue making mistakes in the use of language at the tertiary level, teachers are giving less importance to the language error as it is an old aspect. Teachers are taking structural errors and global errors seriously as the students have recently learnt this which is required for their advance level academic writing.

happens because their basic grammar platform is very weak. My findings would recommend that grammatical errors and syntactic errors should be given priority. Amongst other common errors are spelling error, punctuation error, organizational/structure error and so on.

Words are easy to learn, but putting them all together in a composed manner is difficult. A student should have proper ideas about how to process his/her words and provide something meaningful. Students make syntactic errors when they are confused about their grammatical basics. As they do not know the grammar methods properly despite knowing many words they end up writing something meaningless or fragmented. We face students who lack enough knowledge about root level grammar. Later on they cannot keep pace with the fast teaching practices they meet at their tertiary level. As a result, they end up performing poorly when writing essays, providing speeches and producing thoughts into their second language. To cancel this confusion, teachers should take upper hand. Either at the primary level, teachers can experiment with efficient and beneficial language teaching methods or after meeting the slow or weak students at the tertiary level, they can design a method which will help them in learning old things in a new effective manner. I propose this because there is a strong need of proper deletion and effective teaching procedure to make students feel extremely familiar with their second language. Second language is never too friendly, that is why teachers should take care of the hindrances students face while learning it.

To improve students' grammatical error, they should have enough practice of the grammatical items that they frequently get confused about. If they see the proper use of

In case of teaching grammar, CLT (Communicative language teaching) approach should be applied. If the root level learning is CLT, a child will certainly feel advantageous later on. Past experiments have shown us listening and speaking are the best tools for the kids. When a kid starts attending school, the first thing he gets to experience, teachers' speech. This is what makes him learn different words, dealing out with inner thoughts and putting all of them together. If this kid does not get to feel acquainted with CLT (Communicative language teaching) at his early age, he will certainly face problem at the advance stage of learning. GTM (Grammar translation method) will make him not only learn less but a slow learner.

To deal with organizational errors, students should be given opportunities to learn producing proper sentences, organizing key thoughts, make it articulate and providing a proper conclusion. All these can be done if the teacher pays her extreme attention in making them learn. Another way out is teachers can divide them into groups, make them choose a topic, discuss about it and produce a complete work. If they work in group or pair, they will feel more confident and different ideas will also come.

The longing of this research was to identify students' common language errors and how the teachers treat this error. Interestingly teachers suggest that fluency is as important as accuracy. The research was focused on language errors as well as structure based errors but now the teachers' views suggest that we need to develop fluency not just correct the students' language error in writing.

According to Wallace (1982), to develop students' knowledge of vocabulary in L2, students should have these abilities:

- (a) recognize it in is spoken or written form;

- (d) use it in the appropriate grammatical form;
- (e) in speech, pronounce it in a recognizable way;
- (f) in writing, spell it correctly;
- (g) use it at the appropriate level of formality;
- (h) be aware of its connotation and association.

To build up vocabulary in L2, at first students should feel the need of learning vocabulary. They can think about acquiring of L1 vocabulary. Everyone in his lifetime acquires a fairly large vocabulary in his mother tongue; it becomes possible as they feel the need of learning. Knowing the words become the matter of survival or at least of social competence. So, at first students should feel the need of learning vocabulary to survive in the present situation.

Students should spend more time in the environment where they can get enough exposure of target language. If the student gets enough exposure of the language then he will come across new vocabulary and the same time they will see the use of those words.

For improving spelling ability students can adopt certain things:

- a) Listing every word that the student misspells. If the student writes down every misspelled word and its correct spelling then he will see the correct spelling of a word that usually confuses the student. From this the learners also come to know his typical patterns of spelling errors.
- b) Developing a set of hints for remembering words that give the learner problems. For example, if the learner confused about the spelling of *there*, remember “*They’re* home in *their* house over *there*.” (Greenberg , 1994)

When we write, we use punctuation marks to represent the pauses and stresses. Commas are most commonly used punctuation mark in writing. It becomes difficult for the reader to grasp the meaning of a piece of writing that is missing commas. This is a very common punctuation error that students made. I think students should have proper idea about the use of punctuation marks.

In order to reduce the number of errors committed by students in their written English, I would suggest:

- When students write in English, teachers should frequently remind their students that they must think in English rather than in Bangla which is their L1. It could have reduced their tendency of brining any feature of the mother tongue in the target language.
- In giving feedback teacher should explain why certain constructions are ungrammatical. It would be ideal if the teacher has a very good command of the target language. Teachers should encourage their students to write by providing helpful criticisms. They should make constructive criticisms of their students' work.
- Teachers of English should advise their students to keep on studying in English. There are no short cuts to learning the language. When they are sufficiently exposed to the language through the various language skills the possibility of making errors will be diminished.
- Students should be advised to listen to good English from whatever available source they have like the radio, television, native speakers and good local speakers of the

in the target language.

- The teacher should provide an explanation to the possible source or cause of error to bring about an awareness of what could be the potential contributory factor of making errors.

From the results of students' common error in writing, it is evident that the course is not adequate for developing students writing. More intensive English courses should be there before they take their major course of their respected area.

Teacher can introduce courses where students can get more structured writing activities. To improve the students' capacity, teacher should reorganize the syllabus according to the students' difficulties. While working on this topic, one thing came to my mind and that is teachers should prepare syllabus after meeting the students. Now why is that so? I have a feeling that most of the times students face problems because their past style of learning do not match. After two or three introductory classes a teacher will certainly get to know about the levels of his/her students. Therefore, it will be easier for the course teacher to prepare such a syllabus which will be highly balanced, appropriate and comfortable for each level of student. Certainly after that there will be no question of perplexity any more, as the syllabus will match their level of acquiring and learning. My recommendation is to provide the syllabus later and a regular constructive change should be there. I have a strong feeling that many weak students feel threatened and anxiety after seeing the syllabus which includes a puzzled style regarding their course materials. This single look at the syllabus minimizes their capacity of learning a lot more. This is

In my paper I talked about fossilized learner. My finding says that extremely fossilized learners are few in numbers. What I mean by extremely fossilized learner there are some people who lack every possible capacity of learning in every case. In case of learning second language at their tertiary level, they lose confidence, capacity and interest of learning as well. There is hardly any way to make them feel better and learn new things. I would like to offer those students individual counseling and private sitting by the expert language teachers. Not every one is fully fossilized. My finding also says that there are some, whose condition can grow better. People who are half fossilized, proper motivational acquaintances and effective teacher-student partnership can help them overcome their faults. Therefore, I would say teachers should be play highly responsible while working on such students.

My questionnaire has offered me a choice. It says while correcting students faults, it is the teachers who should work hard and find diverse way outs to stop them from repetitive common errors. Proper teacher-student relationship is the key to success when it is about error analysis and erasing the errors for long. Amongst the possible way outs individual counseling has been appreciated of all. Teachers and students both highly appreciate the fact that personal sitting and privately delivered motivational speeches help a lot more than a general error analysis discussion in a classroom. This is how the confidence level of students will grow more and they will feel highly motivated and interested about doing something proper. These steps that have been recommended to help students become better learners, teachers more effective in correcting errors and thereby errors may be reduced.

conducting this research. As the aim of this study was to identify the Bangladeshi tertiary level students' common error in academic writing, I had to collect the data from tertiary level educational institutions. As my research instrument was students' exam script, I had to convince the teachers to give me the scripts checked by them. I had to take permission from the university authorities to collect the samples. University authority did not want to give me permission to take documents from the course teachers. It took time to convince the authority to allow me to collect samples. As the teacher did not identify the errors in the exam script, it became difficult to find out results to which aspect teacher gave importance and assess the scripts.

I collected data from two private universities and 50 students' exam scripts were collected for document analysis. For my study, my wish was to investigate students' performance in similar kinds of courses. To analyze the data, I had to collect standard number of samples. Unfortunately, due to time constraints it was difficult for me to collect more than 50 samples.

The major limitation of this study is, the research has been done only on the two private university students. If this survey can be done in more universities then more reliable findings can be obtained. The target students were from two private universities, so the findings discussed in this study cannot be generalized for all the Bangladeshi tertiary level students. As the public universities were left out, we can not generalize the performance of the students from all private and public universities. However, it can be argued that this data shows the condition of the general tertiary level students who did not succeed in the very competitive admission tests of public universities. It can be assumed the most talented students have probably entered the public universities and

from public universities.

One of my research instruments was questionnaires for teachers' and students'. As it was questionnaire-based survey, there is the possibility that not all students and teachers answered with due care. As there were 20 questions in the teachers' questionnaire, I could see less disagreement and time pressure that had influenced some of the teachers when responding to the questionnaire. I have collected completed questionnaires from 10 language teachers from two different universities. As there were only two teachers for the language course in those universities, I had to go to other private universities to collect data from language teachers. It took more than one week to collect questionnaire answers from the teachers, as I had to go different universities and the campuses were in different places.

For the students' questionnaire I have selected 20 students. I could not manage to get answers from all the previous students whose exam script was analyzed. It was not easy for me to get all the previous students for the questionnaire. The students were from different departments and by that time they were in the second semester enrolled in different courses. So, it was tough for me to bring together all the 50 students in a short period of time. Because of the time constraints, I could manage 20 participants to get response on the questionnaire.

In conclusion, I expect that this investigation will help the teachers, syllabus designers, and material designers to develop their teaching aid and material according to the students' need. We know that English is a rich language but it is a complex language for the second or foreign language learner. Consequently, certain features of the language are inherently difficult for the learners even at the advance level of their academic stage.

exposure of the target language learnt, there is a possibility of making errors in all aspects of the language. Error Analysis is useful in second language learning because this will help the teachers, syllabus designers, material designers, and textbook writers to find the problem areas. It will be beneficial for them to design remedial exercises for the students paying more attention on the trouble spots. Finally I would like to conclude by urging for an error free language practice which is possible if only our teachers and students try to get along from the very first level of learning. On the other hand, after realizing the need for error correction our education method will change accordingly and the learners will be benefited. As we know, words are powerful devices and we should help our learners to make the best use of it. They will be able to do it only after they are free from errors they are making and thus lacking behind. Hope my paper will do its duty and generate the inspiration for the teachers and students both.

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Listening Module:

- a) Primary listening skill development.
- b) Advanced listening skill development
- c) Attacking & cracking questions and accomplishing answers.
- d) Labeling a diagram with number parts
- e) Discussion on the final summary of listening strategies
- f) Rectification

Reading skills:

- a) Techniques of reading better and faster
- b) Techniques of skimming and scanning
- c) Strategies and preparation on reading task
- d) Intensive and Extensive reading, learning about connecting words and usages.

Vocabulary building: correct and precise diction, affixes, level of appropriateness, standard and formal.

Writing skills:

- a) Introducing to writing task.
- b) Brainstorming: defining, understanding and studying a given example.
- c) Sentences, sentence variety, generating sentences, sentence clarity and correctness.
- d) Creative writing, journal writing.
- e) Business letter writing, formal and informal letter writing, report writing.

Speaking Module:

- a) Greeting and introduction
- b) Fluency practice and conversation on language formats
- c) Getting introduced with English task
- d) Elicitation
- e) Speculation and attitudes
- f) Removing inertia and preserving the habit of speaking English.

STEP-1:

Task -1: Studying the structure of a paragraph

Task -2: Studying the topic sentence with the topic and the controlling idea

Task -3: Learning 10 controlling ideas

Task -4: Practicing writing topic sentence on given topics

Task-5: Making weak topic sentence strong

Task -6: Supplying topic sentences to the paragraphs

STEP-2:

Task -1: Getting introduced with the supporting ideas Task -2: Practicing the supporting ideas Task -3: Finding wrong supporting ideas from outlines Task -4: Detecting wrong supporting ideas in the paragraph Task -5: Writing supporting ideas for the topic sentences

Session 2:**STEP-1:**

Task -1: Understanding four kind's pf details

Task -2: Knowing how the proper application of details strengthens and enlarges a paragraph

Task -3: Studying a full length paragraph by supplying details

Task -4: Practicing supplying details to the weak paragraphs by inserting the details

Task -5: Adding details by own effort

STEP-2:

Task -1: Entering into writing paragraph

Task -8: Enlarging the outlines of each supporting idea and details to a full complete sentence captioned by the original topic sentences of each group
Task -9: Discovering several paragraphs of your own essay

PHASE-3: WRITING TASK -1 Session -3:

Task -1: Introduction to writing task-1

Task -2: Understanding and describing visual information

- a. Planning the answer
- b. Organizing the answer

Task -3: Skills necessary for writing task-1

- a. The language of data and comment
- b. Describing trends
- c. Dealing with percentage and numbers
- d. Appropriate register

e.

Session -4:

Task -1: Skills necessary for writing task-1 (continues)

- f. Varying the types of sentences used
- g. Using simple, compound and complex sentences
- h. Paragraphing
- i. Comparing and contrasting
- j. Distinguishing features
- k. Describing objects and moving parts
- l. Describing natural process
- m. Describing a mechanical process
- n. Describing a non-mechanical process
- o. Vocabulary of time and directions

SUPPORTING DETAILS:

Consists of sentences that support, develop or explain the main idea:

- by giving details
- by giving examples
- by telling an incident

CONCLUDING SENTENCE:

Restate the topic sentence in different words.

Summarize the information that has been presented.

Topic Sentence: A computer is a useful tool for students.

Supporting details: Computers make it very easy to keep notes and write up projects and assignments.

Reference books on computer CDs make it convenient for children to research their school projects.

In addition, the internet makes research on any subject possible from the comfort of one's own home.

EXAMPLE 2:

Tourists tend to visit features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary. The viewing of these tourist sights often involves different forms of social patterning, with a much

greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than is normally found in everyday life. People linger over these sights in a way that they would not normally do in their home environment and the vision is objectified or captured through photographs, postcards, films and so on which enable the memory to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured.

EXAMPLE 3:

A variety of allergy tests are available for determining specific substances that trigger allergic reactions in individuals. Allergists, also known as immunologists, are trained in selecting the types of tests that are both safe and appropriate, depending on the suspected allergies. By using allergen extracts, tiny amounts of commonly bothersome allergens (usually in the form of purified liquid drops), immunologists are often able to isolate which substances cause reactions in allergy sufferers.

EXAMPLE 4:

Shopping malls are becoming popular gathering places for many citizens. The convenience of finding many kinds of shops under one roof is in itself enough to draw crowds. Department stores, drug stores, boutiques, book shops, tobacco shops, bakeries, and many more try to entice shoppers. Shops that provide services such as pet grooming, hair styling, and optical services add to the convenience. Entertainment has not been overlooked, either. Movie theaters and amusement arcades can be found in almost any mall worthy of its name. For hungry shoppers, there are restaurants and ice cream parlors, fast-food booths and candy counters. Last, but certainly not least, shopping malls provide a place for people of all ages to go, whether they are interested in buying or not. Even if they have no money to spend, they are welcome to stroll, look at window displays, or just sit on the benches that are conveniently placed throughout the malls. They can relax and feel that they are part of the bustling world around them. When considering all of these advantages, it is easy to understand why people are flocking to the shopping malls.

3. Conclusion: links the topic to the thesis.

3. Conclusion:

Summarizes the main points of this essay and restates the thesis in different way.

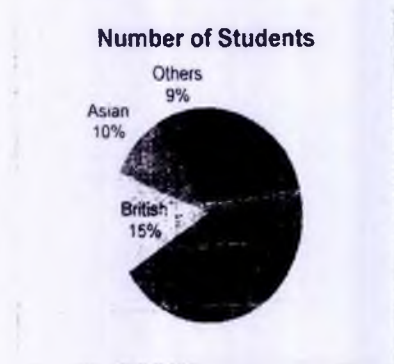
a) One or two sentences that provide a summary, retelling the two supporting topics briefly

b) Restatement of thesis in different words.

c) **Prediction / Recommendation:** the last sentence would be something about what we believe in future would be like based on the essay or state something that should be true.

3. Choose two words from the following that use **ʌ** for the vowel sound in them:
Lunch, pure, hunt, burn.

Look at the diagram and choose the correct answer from the options given in *italics* (write the right answer in the boxes 4 and 5 given in the answer sheet):



4. This type of diagram is called a *pie chart* / *bar graph* / *line graph*.
5. Almost *two third* / *half* / *three fourth* of the students are Americans.

(WRITING Task Two: Marks 15)

You should spend about **45 minutes** on this task.

Write about the following topic:

In the present age, there is no other way but to adapt the technique of speaking English clearly and accurately for better communication internationally. As an international language, ability to speak good English has become more important than to know the mother tongue well. Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

BILKIS FAHMIDA

Part – 1: Personal Details

1. Which course do you teach -
2. Designation.....
3. University.....

Part – 2: Error Analysis:

Please tick (✓) the correct answer. You can choose more than one for each question, but put number according to priority.

1. Error analysis is the technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by a learner of a foreign language. Do you think error analysis is important for the teachers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes

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..... (Why)

3. Do you think students mostly commit errors or mistakes?

☐ Mistakes ☐ Error ☐ Both

4. At this stage (first year, first semester), do you think students are capable of writing a 250 words essay in 40 minutes during an exam?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Do you think tertiary level student's errors should be tolerable or not?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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..... (Why)

6. Is fossilization one of the main reasons for making errors at tertiary level?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Rank these existing methods of error identification according to importance: (1-5, 1= lowest, 5 highest)

- ☐ Coding,
- ☐ Remarks,
- ☐ Explanation of errors,
- ☐ Underline

9. Are existing methods for error identification adequate in showing or highlighting the errors to the students?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any suggestion?

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10. Is the lack of adequate interaction/teacher feedback a reason for student errors?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment:

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13. What is the most effective in helping students to avoid errors?

- ☐ Student's determination ☐ Teacher's determination ☐ Both

14. For which kind of errors do teachers' deduct most marks? Rank according to importance. (1-6, 1= lowest, 6= highest)

- a) Syntactic error (e.g. fragment, wrong sentence structure)
- b) Lexical error
- c) Spelling error
- d) Punctuation error
- e) Grammatical error (e.g. preposition, article, sub-verb-agreement, tense etc)
- f) Organizational/structural error

15. Which type of error do you tolerate less?

- ☐ Organizational/ Structural error
- ☐ Use of language (spelling error/ lexical error/syntactic/punctuation/grammatical)

17. What percentage of marks do you deduct for structural/organizational error?

- ☐ 0 – 20%
- ☐ 21% - 40%
- ☐ 41% - 60%
- ☐ 61% - 80%

18. Do you think existing methods of teaching essay writing is effective?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ New practices should be introduced..... (like)

19. How can a teacher provide effective feedback? Please suggest:

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- Accurate spelling
- Varied sentence structures
- Unity and coherence in ideas
- Well-supported and explained major points

Please feel free to add your overall opinion on student's errors or error analysis:

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BILKIS FAHMIDA

Part – 1: Personal Details

1. Session/semester:
2. Department:
3. University:

Part – 2: Error Analysis:

Please tick (✓) the correct answer. You can choose more than one for each question, but put number according to priority.

1. Why do students make errors in academic essay writing?
 - ☐ Lack of knowledge
 - ☐ Lack of practice
 - ☐ Interaction gap with teachers
 - ☐ Lack of proper environment

2. At this stage, in your academic career, do you feel capable of writing a 250 words essay in 40 minutes during an exam?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No

i) Spelling error

j) Punctuation error

k) Grammatical error (e.g. preposition, article, sub-verb-agreement, tense etc)

l) Organizational/structural error

5. Do you find yourself making the same error in all your essays/ paragraphs?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

6. What will help you in avoiding errors in your writing?

☐ Self help ☐ Teachers' help ☐ Environmental help ☐ Motivational grooming

7. Is the essay structure given by teacher effective enough to make you understand the format organization and process of writing the essay?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. What kind of feedback will help you to understand your errors and stop you to making them?

☐ One to one conference/ Session with teacher
☐ Self awareness
☐ Remarks /coding/explanation by teachers
☐ Others (Suggest)

9. Did you find the final exam for your language class very difficult?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. How far can one overcome language errors at tertiary level?

☐ Not at all ☐ Somewhat ☐ More or less ☐ To the utmost

Please add your comment/ thoughts on the errors you make in writing and /or how your teachers correct them:

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