

Doing error analysis: the case of the students at the tertiary level of education at Gono Bishwabidyalay

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Abstract

Writing accurate and meaningful English is the need of time irrespective of any program and level. But frequent errors in academic writing impede the advancement of the learners' English language proficiency. The main purpose of this study was to explore the errors committed by the tertiary level students at Gono Bishwabidyalay through their answer scripts of semester final test. The participants were from three faculties who were studying at tertiary level of education at Gono Bishwabidyalay. They had attended just about the similar number of periods of education through primary, secondary and higher secondary education in Bangladesh. Each of the participants arrived from non-English speaking background and hardly exchanged a few words in English outside the University. Errors in the answer scripts were identified entirely and classified into a range of categorizations. So, the study reveals the types of error, the quantity of error and the comparative analysis among the performance of the students of the different faculties. Based on the findings, some pedagogic implications will be offered which might assist ESL/EFL teachers with some helpful suggestions to reduce future problems regarding the performance of Bangladeshi learners in their writing in English language.

Keywords: Explore error, academic writing, tertiary level, pedagogic implication.

1. Introduction:

The past thirty years have seen increasingly rapid progresses in error analysis domain. However, this research exhibits that students have not attained an adequate understanding of the way to minimize errors in writing. This research will report on the findings of a large-scale study which aims at examining the errors made by Bangladeshi learners of English especially the students of Gono Bishwabidyalay of the faculties of Arts and Social Science, Science and Engineering and Health Science in their English writing. Bjork and Raisanen (1997) focused the significance of writing in all university curricula not only because of its

instant realistic application, i.e. as a distinctive skill or ability, but because we believe that, seen from a wider perspective, writing is a thinking mechanism. It is a mechanism for language development, for analytical thinking and, extension, for learning in all disciplines... (Bjork and Raisanen 1997). Writing is generally regarded as a productive skill of language usage. In Bangladeshi universities, writing English is significant in students' academic course of study as research work depends on it. It is considered necessary for receiving notes, unfolding objects or apparatus and writing essays, answering written questions, writing compositions, writing investigational reports, etc. Moreover, the procedure of writing, exclusively writing through a practical research task, also helps to develop the students' cognitive skills in achieving the necessary approaches such as analyzing results of a research task, deducing from the significant diversities scrutinized in comparing means, frequencies ...(Bacha 2002).

Because of these motives, writing has always been a crucial phase of designing the curriculum of English language for educational outcomes.

Furthermore, it is a rudimentary need of teaching English in Bangladeshi institutions of higher education to cope the learners with the environment where English language is the medium of instruction.

The domain of error analysis (EA) in SLA-Second Language Acquisition was flourished in the 1970s with the hand of Corder and his colleagues. A sort of linguistic study that highlights the faulty or deviant form of language the learners produce due to incomplete knowledge or learning is referred as EA. It is comprised of a comparison between the errors made in target language (TL) and within that TL itself. According to Corder (1967), EA has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The former is to understand what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language (L2). The latter is to facilitate the learner to learn more proficiently by using the knowledge of his dialect for fulfilling the pedagogical needs. The investigation of errors can serve two purposes simultaneously such as diagnostic and prognostic.

Researchers interested in EA discerned that errors are beneficial for both learners and teachers. It conveys information to the teachers on students' faulty production of language. This assists the teachers in three ways, firstly to rectify their errors, secondly to ameliorate their teaching and thirdly to highlight those area that need reinforcement.

Because of these reasons the researchers had taken attempts to investigate the errors in 240 written answer scripts which are regarded as corpus of Bangla-speaking Bangladeshi learners of English. The entire participants in the study are the students of the different faculties of

Gono Bishwabidyalay who had been completing English Language courses as the part of their Undergraduate degree programmes.

1.2 Objectives of the research

The objectives of this research are:

- a) To identify and classify errors in the written corpus of English language at the tertiary level students of the faculties of Arts and Social Science, Science and Engineering and Health Science of Gono Bishwabidyalay.
- b) Measure the frequency of such errors in the writing tasks of each group.
- c) To classify the errors.
- d) To elevate teachers' awareness of the errors those occur on students' writing and allow them to pay close attention to improve the learning outcome.

1.3 Research question

What are the errors that tertiary level students of Bangladesh frequently make in academic writing?

2. Review of Literature

In the field of EFL/ESL, 'error' can be defined as deviation form of language, which is apart from accuracy or correctness. In relation to identification of errors, Ellis (1994) delineates error as a deviation from the forms of the target language. On the contrary Corder (1967) regards error as a way of investigating learning process. According to behaviorist theory, Ellis (1985) thinks that "old habits get in the way of learning new habits." It specifies that where the L1 and L2 share a meaning but discloses it in different ways, an error is likely to appear at the L2 because the learner will transfer the realization device from his first language into the second... (Ellis 1985).

Error analysis in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was established in the 1960s by Stephen Pit Corder and colleagues. As a substitute to contrastive analysis, Error analysis (EA) became an approach utilized by behaviourism through which applied linguists made attempt to use the formal differences between the learners' L1 and L2 to infer errors. EA demonstrated that contrastive analysis was incapable of predicting a vast proportion of errors which are produced by learners making defective inferences about the mechanisms of the target language. The most noteworthy achievement of EA, aside from the role it played in the re-evaluation of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, depends on its success in uplifting the status of errors from undesirability to that of an escort to the internal activities of the language learning process. For Corder, the errors committed by learners "are not adequately considered as accurate or faulty in themselves, but only as evidence of an accurate or faulty system".

EA technique encompasses “collection of samples of learner language, identifying the errors in the sample, describing these errors, classifying them according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating their gravities”. In the field of language teaching and learning, EA is a “procedure for identifying, classifying and methodically interpreting the inadmissible forms generated by someone learning a language as second or foreign, using any of the principles and procedures presented by Linguistics”.

The pivotal role of error analysis is to identify errors which are different from mistakes. Corder has disclosed a criterion that aids us to differentiate between mistakes and errors. It is a self-correctibility criterion. A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot be. Errors are systematic, i.e., likely to occur frequently and not identified by learners. Mistakes, in contrast, are deviations due to performance factors such as memory limitation, emotional strain, lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, etc. that are usually random and voluntarily corrected by the learners when pointed out.

It is traced that 86% students are of Bengali medium background In Bangladesh, ...(Jahan 2008). So, it becomes difficult for those students of private universities, where English is used as the medium of instruction. When teachers give their lectures all through in English, it becomes struggle for students to comprehend properly. There are some students who are introvert and feel shy to ask the teachers if they face any problem in understanding. This factor is also responsible for making errors during the performance in English.

It is considered that analysis of a learner's errors will reflect in a successive way his or her level of competence... (Sinha 1997). The study of errors is brought by means of Error Analysis (EA). During 1970s EA became an appreciated part of applied linguistics, an upliftment that owed much to the work of Corder. Methodically analyzing errors made by language learners make it enable to seek areas that need reinforcement in teaching... (Corder 1974). Stephen Pit Corder is regarded as the “Father” of error analysis. Error analysis got a new shape with the publication of his article entitled “The significance of Learner Errors” (1967). Corder (1974) mentioned that 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 stresses “the significance of errors in learners’ inter language system”... (Brown 1994). The term *interlanguage*, launched by Selinker (1972), denotes the systematic knowledge of a second language which is independent of both the learner’s first language and the target language. Corder (1967) represented it as the *Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence*.

3. Materials and Methods

This section outlines the materials used, the methodology and the research design.

3.1 Materials

The target groups are the students of Gono Bishwabidyalay who sat for their semester final examination at the end of 2016.

- The target groups are the students of Arts and Social Science, Science and Engineering and Health Science faculties of Gono Bishwabidyalay.

Target Groups	Number of learners
Faculty of Arts and Social Science	
Department of Law, S1	20
Department of Business Administration ,S1	20
Department of Sociology, S1	20
Department of Politics Governance , S1	20
Total	80
Faculty of Science and Engineering	
Department of Computer Science & Engineering, S1	20
Department of Applied Mathematics, S1	20
Department of Electrical & Electronics Engineering, S1	20
Department of Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering, S1	20
Total	80
Faculty of Health Science	
Department of Pharmacy, S1	20
Department of Physiotherapy, S1	20
Department of Microbiology,S1	20
Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, S1	20
Total	80
Total Number of Participants	240

3.2 The Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of the male and female students enrolled in Gono Bishwabidyalay in three faculties who were studying English fundamental courses. Thus the sample included 240 male and female undergraduates at the Gono Bishwabidyalay completing the English courses during the first semester of the academic year 2016/2017. A plain random sampling was used as the students being homogeneous in terms of their linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic background.

3.3 Research Design

In order to investigate the type and frequency of errors made by the tertiary level students, quantitative data was collected to identify errors, their types and their frequency.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used for error analysis were the written scripts of 240 participants providing answers on different topics of English language such as letter writing, composition and other topics. Data collection procedure using the written examination scripts was considered an appropriate method for this study because it was during examinations when the learners wrote about the same topics, under the same circumstances. The intention was to examine tertiary level students' end-of-year final examination scripts because by the end of the semester final phase, it was when they had had maximum exposure to English language. The fact that the instruments used were produced during examination ensured that all writing samples used were non-revised first drafts. However, the instruments can also have a negative effect on the study results because learners can be tense and nervous during examination and they rush to finish writing their answers within the allotted time. It is vital to note that the error analysis used in this study focused especially on grammatical and spelling errors regardless of learners' writing skills such as idea expression, organization and cohesion.

3.5 Data Collection and analysis

All of the answer scripts were taken from the office of the controller of examinations. These were used for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the errors - unacceptable forms of written language.

Researchers on error analysis like, Ellis (1997) informed the processes used to analyze the data. The four steps followed were:

□ **Data collection:** The answer scripts from the departments of Politics and Governance, Sociology, BBA and Law of the Arts & Social Science faculty; the department of CSE, Applied Mathematics, MPBME and EEE of the Science and Engineering faculty and the department of pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Microbiology, BMB of the faculty of Health Science were included.

□ **Identification of errors:** The selected answer scripts were checked and the errors were marked following codes such as, SVA- Subject-Verb Agreement Sp- Spelling, Prep-

Preposition, T-Tense, Mod- Modals, Con- Conditionals, WW- Wrong Word choice, WO- Wrong Order, SS-Sentence Structure, Pu- Punctuation.

□ **Classification of errors into error types:** The identified data were classified according to Syntax error, Lexical Semantic error, Morphological error and Punctuation error.

□ **A statement of error frequency:** For stating frequency of error the percentage, mean and standard deviation of the errors were determined by using software like Microsoft Excel. The errors were grouped in order of seriousness and frequency of occurrence, they are as following:

In use of Language:

i. Syntax error:

Subject- Verb – Agreement

Tense

Article

Preposition

Modals

Conditionals

Sentence Structure

Word Order

ii. Lexical Semantic error:

Wrong word choice

iii. Morphology

Spelling errors

iv. Punctuation errors

During the analysis of the data, the highest errors that occurred amongst the three faculties were identified. The data were also analyzed by looking at the similarities and differences in the errors recorded.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Polit and Hungler (1993) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. The researchers have ensured reliability by checking answer scripts by three examiners to identify errors. The number of errors investigated by three examiners is almost similar which proves reliability.

The validity of an instrument refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure...(Polit & Hungler 1993). Finding out the the concurrent errors in the written corpus of English language at the tertiary level of education of the students of the faculties of Arts and Social Science, Science and Engineering and Health Science of Gono Bishwabidyalay was the goal of this study. By the help of data collection instrument the investigators have identified errors from the written corpus of English language in the written tasks such as application, composition and dialogue writing. Thus validity is also ensured.

3.7 Error types

The following linguistic errors are discussed: *Syntax, Lexical semantic, Morphology, spelling and Punctuation error*. Errors made by each group are also indicated through comparison. The aim is to determine the type and frequency of errors made by each group.

The following key will be used for all the tables and graphs in this paper. Please refer to the key on the next page when reading the tables.

Syntax

SVA= Subject- verb- Agreement

T= Tense

SS= Sentence Structure

WO= Word Order

CON= Conditionals

MO=Modals

Prep= Preposition

Art= Article

Morphology

SP= Spelling Error

Lexical semantic

WW= Wrong Word choice

P= Punctuation

S1= 1st Semester

An analysis of each student's writing indicated several grammatical errors. All 240 scripts were checked and the researchers traced the subsequent types of error. The following chart is giving sample example out of every category as identified in different scripts.

Table 1. Categorization of error types

Categorization of Error	Example of error Identified	Correct Sentences
Syntax		
SVA	Festivals is very wonderful	Festivals are very wonderful
T	They go home yesterday.	They went home yesterday.
Con	If we comoniketed anyone do it easily.	If we communicate, anyone will do it easily.

Mo	We can watching different customs.	We can watch different customs.
Prep	The citizen continuously suffers to skin diseases. Basically	The citizen continuously suffers from skin diseases.
Art	Advertisements have become a important part of modern business.	Advertisements have become an important part of modern business.
SS	Eid is the main festival for muslims people .	Eid is the main festival of muslim.
Morphology		
Sp	Science is wonderful for our life style and comportable .	Science plays an important role to make our life comfortable.
Lexical Semantic		
WW	The Durga Puja situated at five days.	The Durga Puja lasted for five days.
Punctuation		
p	Basically it is a process of expanding trade and commerce	Basically, it is a process of expanding trade and commerce.

Table 1 above illustrates sample paradigms of errors identified in the subjects' written work and correction each error type indicated.

4. Discussion on findings

This section presents and discusses the findings. The error measurements of the first semester students are discussed

4.1 Comparison among the faculties:

First the overall results were presented with comparison between the three faculties.

4.1.1 Syntax Error

The errors in terms of syntax which are identified reveal that, though the students study at the tertiary level but they are not equipped with this level. The type of syntactic errors students committed cannot be desired at the tertiary level. These types of syntactic errors are totally intolerable in academic writing. The entire number of Syntactic errors made by the students of the Arts and Social Science faculty was 1198 which is the highest among the students of

the three faculties (Table 2). On the contrary, the total number of syntactic errors made by Health Science faculty students was 744.

The Table also displays that the students of Health Science faculty had made the highest number of errors in Subject-Verb-Agreement which was 153.

Table 2 Total number of different types of error recorded from the first semester students of the three faculties.

Group of errors	Types of error	Faculty of Health Science				Faculty of Science and Engineering				Faculty of Arts and Social Science			
		No. of error	% of frequency	Mean	Stdvn	No. of error	% of frequency	Mean	Stdvn	No. of error	% of frequency	Mean	Stdvn
Syntax	SVA	153.0	12.41	38.25	34.6	134.0	8.08	33.50	14.5	204.0	10.93	51.00	10.10
	T	117.0	9.49	29.25	10.5	182.0	10.97	45.50	2.08	209.0	11.19	52.25	17.90
	SS	75.00	6.08	18.75	6.0	178.0	10.73	44.50	16.7	213.0	11.41	53.25	9.29
	Wo	78.00	6.33	19.50	6.24	170.0	10.25	42.50	15.4	143.0	7.66	35.75	9.29
	Con	38.00	3.08	9.50	4.16	67.0	4.04	16.75	2.31	71.00	3.80	17.75	4.65
	Mo	58.00	4.70	14.50	1.53	64.0	3.86	16.00	0.58	79.00	4.23	19.75	7.27
	Prep	126.0	10.22	31.50	29.4	166.0	10.01	41.50	8.14	174.0	9.32	43.50	19.84
	Art	99.00	8.03	24.75	20.8	104.0	6.27	26.00	1.15	105.0	5.62	26.25	14.59
	Total	744	--	--	-	1065	-	-	-	1198	-	-	-
Morphology	Sp	249.0	20.19	62.25	4.58	317.0	19.11	79.25	22.0	372.0	19.93	93.00	33.60
Lexical	WW	153.0	12.41	38.25	19.5	179.0	10.79	44.75	8.08	169.0	9.05	42.25	19.55

sem anti c													
Pun ctua tion	Pu	87. 00	7.06	21.7 5	18. 3	98.0 0	5.91	24.5 0	5.8 6	128.0	6.8 6	32.0 0	18. 92
Gra nd Tot al		123 3	-----		165 9	-----		1867	-----				

These kinds of error made by the students were unexpected because of the extra-departmental English course was supposed to improve their English. The lowest number of errors which was 38 made by the students of this faculty was in the category of 'Conditionals' but this was due to the fact that very few students used conditional sentences in their writings. So errors in conditionals are less frequent in number.

In case of the students of the Science and Engineering faculty, the total number of 'Syntax error' was 1065, which was the second highest, also the students of this faculty made the highest number of errors in 'Tense' (182) indicating that the students did not have adequate knowledge in the use of tense. However, the students of this faculty made the lowest number of errors in 'Modals'. The Table 2 also displays that the students of the Arts and Social Science faculty made the highest number of errors in sentence structure (213). It indicated again that the students were incapable of using the sentence structure which hampered their performance in academic writing.

4.1.2 Morphological error

The total number of spelling errors made by the students of the Arts and Social Science faculty was 372 (Table 2) and it was the highest in number of errors whereas the faculty of Health Science students made the lowest number of errors (249) here. Spelling error was one of the most common morphological errors that students had made. Spelling errors occurred while the students did not know the exact spelling of the word. Sometimes this kind of spelling error occurred because of their unintelligible pronunciation.

4.1.3 Lexical Semantic error

The total number of lexical error made by the students of Science and Engineering faculty is 179 which is the highest in number. The students of the faculty of Health Science have made the lowest number of lexical semantic errors (153) but the position of the faculty of Arts and Social Science students in making this kind of error (169) is in between the former and latter. This indicates that students frequently use wrong words in their academic writing. This kind

of error occurs because of the lack of knowledge and less stock of words in the target language. This type of error stems from students' ignorance and poor knowledge of L2 which leads to the choice of some wrong words.

4.1. 4 Punctuation error

The students of the Arts and Social Science faculty made the highest number of punctuation error (128) while the students of the faculty of Science and Engineering were in the second position (98) in making this error (Table 2). The students of the faculty of Health Science were a little better than the students of other two faculties in case of punctuation error.

Punctuation is an essential part of language. Peck and Coyle (1999) referred punctuation as the signaling system of language.

4.2 Comparison of results of the Departments within the Faculties

Here the results of each Department of the faculties are discussed.

4.2.1 Departments of the faculty of Health Science

When the errors in the answer scripts of the departments of Pharmacy, Microbiology, Physiotherapy, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology under the faculty of Health Science were compared (Table 3), students of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology were found to make the highest number of errors (420), followed by Physiotherapy and Pharmacy (354 and 269). Among all the categories of errors, the major problem was in 'Spelling' (249) followed by 'Subject-verb-agreement' and 'Wrong Word choice' (153 each). Under 'Syntax Error' the students made the highest number of errors in 'Preposition' (126) and 'Tense' (117).

Table 3: Different types of error of first semester students in the faculty of Health Science

Types of error	Departments				Total Errors	% of errors	Mean	Std
	Pharmacy	Microbiology	Physiotherapy	Biochemistry				
SVA	78	18	18	39	153.00	12.41	38.25	34.64
T	12	30	30	45	117.00	9.49	29.25	10.39
Sp	45	51	54	99	249.00	20.19	62.25	4.58
SS	12	18	24	21	75.00	6.08	18.75	6.00
WW	54	15	36	48	153.00	12.41	38.25	19.52
WO	9	18	21	30	78.00	6.33	19.50	6.24

Con	11	3	9	15	38.00	3.08	9.50	4.16
Mo	9	10	12	27	58.00	4.70	14.50	1.53
Prep	9	9	60	48	126.00	10.22	31.50	29.44
Arti	9	9	45	36	99.00	8.03	24.75	20.78
Pu	21	9	45	12	87.00	7.06	21.75	18.33
GT	269	190	354	420	1233.00	100.00	308.25	

The lowest number of errors was made by the students of the department of Microbiology (total of all type of errors -190) indicating their little bit better knowledge in English. The major source of errors of the students of this department was in 'Spelling' and in 'Tense'. Here, the students of Pharmacy department had made the highest number of 'Subject- Verb-Agreement' error (78).

4.2.2 Comparison of results of the departments of Arts and Social Science faculty

The errors found in the answer scripts of the four departments under the Arts and Social Science faculty which comprised of the departments of Law, Business Administration, Sociology and Politics & Governance. The **Table 4** displays that the students of the department of Politics & Governance had made the highest number of errors (571) indicating that the students of Politics & Governance were the weakest in English academic writing among the four departments. Under 'Syntax error' they made the highest number of errors in 'Preposition', 'Articles' and 'Punctuation'. It indicates that most of the students have lack of knowledge in the use of preposition and this error occurred because most of the students get confused with the proper use of preposition. The students of the department of Politics & Governance also made the highest number of errors in 'Lexical semantics' (69) indicating that they do not have sufficient knowledge on proper word choice and their range of lexicon is also very weak.

The lowest number of errors was made by the students of Business Administration, total number of errors being 310. However, the students of this department made the highest number of errors in 'Spelling' (65). The students of the Sociology department made the second highest total errors (535) by making the highest number of 'Spelling errors' (141). It indicates that the students of Sociology department do not know the exact spelling of the word. Sometimes this kind of spelling errors occurred because of pronunciation problem. The

students of the department of Business Administration made the lowest total number of errors (310) in total.

Table 4: Different types of error of first semester students in the **faculty of Arts and Social Science**

Types of error	No. of errors				Total Errors	% of errors	Mean	Std
	Department of							
	LAW	Business Admin	Socio	Govt.&Pol.				
SVA	57	36	57	54	204.00	10.93	51.00	10.10
T	60	26	57	66	209.00	11.19	52.25	17.90
Sp	90	65	141	76	372.00	19.93	93.00	33.60
SS	48	54	66	45	213.00	11.41	53.25	9.29
WW	39	22	39	69	169.00	9.05	42.25	19.55
WO	45	23	39	36	143.00	7.66	35.75	9.29
Con	21	12	16	22	71.00	3.80	17.75	4.65
Mo	19	10	23	27	79.00	4.23	19.75	7.27
Prep	30	25	51	68	174.00	9.32	43.50	19.84
Arti	21	17	19	48	105.00	5.62	26.25	14.59
Pu	21	20	27	60	128.00	6.86	32.00	18.92
GT	451	310	535	571	1867	100.00	466.75	

4.2.3 Comparison of the results of the departments of Science and Engineering faculty

Table 5 displays the results of the four departments in the faculty of Science and Engineering eg. the departments of Computer Science And Engineering, Applied Mathematics, Electrical

& Electronics Engineering and Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering. The students of the department of Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering had made the highest number of errors among the four departments and the number of errors was (452), the highest number of errors was in 'Sentence Structure' indicating their lack of knowledge in sentence structure. Another highest category of errors made by the students of this department was 'Spelling error'. There was very little difference among the departments of E.E.E, Applied Mathematics and Medical Physics & Biomedical Engineering in this type of error. However, the lowest number of error was made by the students of the department of Computer Science & Engineering (342). The students of this department had made the highest number of errors in 'Spelling' and the lowest number of errors in 'Conditionals'.

Table5. Different types of error of students in the faculty of Science and Engineering

Types of error	No. of errors				Total Errors	% of errors	Mean	STD
	Dept. of C.S.E	Dept. of A. Math	Dept. of E.E.E	Dept. of M. P. B. M. E				
SVA	20	48	27	39	134	8.08	33.50	14.57
T	44	48	45	45	182	10.97	45.50	2.08
Sp	59	63	99	96	317	19.11	79.25	22.03
SS	25	45	57	51	178	10.73	44.50	16.17
WW	53	39	39	48	179	10.79	44.75	8.08
WO	29	54	57	30	170	10.25	42.50	15.37
Con	17	21	17	12	67	4.04	16.75	2.31
Mo	13	12	13	26	64	3.86	16.00	0.58
Prep	30	45	43	48	166	10.01	41.50	8.14
Arti	29	27	27	21	104	6.27	26.00	1.15
Pu	23	25	14	36	98	5.91	24.50	5.86
GT	342	427	438	452	1659	100.00	414.75	

From the findings discussed above, it can be said that among the three faculties the students of the department of Politics & Governance in Arts and Social Science faculty have made the highest number of errors. The number of errors made by the students of this department is 571. The lowest number of errors is made by the students of the department of Microbiology of the faculty of Health Science which is 190.

4.3 Syntactic errors of the students of the three faculties

The Fig.1 shows the syntactic errors of all the students. It can be seen that the students of the faculty of Arts & Social Science had made the highest number of syntactic errors while the students of the faculty of Health Science had made the lowest number of syntactic errors. The Science and Engineering faculty maintained the intermediate status. This consistent and comparative position of the three faculties regarding the different error indicators used in this study shows that the evaluation of the English knowledge level did grouped the students correctly.

It is apparent from the Fig: 1 that error in 'Tense' was in the highest position in all the three faculties. The next highest erroneous area was the 'Subject-Verb-Agreement'. The graph also displayed that errors in 'Preposition' was in the third position. Thus, the students of all the three faculties had severe problem on 'Tense' and 'Subject -Verb -Agreement', while in 'Preposition' they had moderate problem. The performance of the Arts and Social Science faculty was worse than the other two faculties. The Health Science faculty had little better students in terms of English writing skill.

The lowest number of errors made in Conditionals & Modals in all the three faculties shown in the Fig:1 may not represent the improved level of knowledge, rather the students did not take much attempt to use Conditionals & Modals. So they made the lowest number of errors in these two syntactic categories.

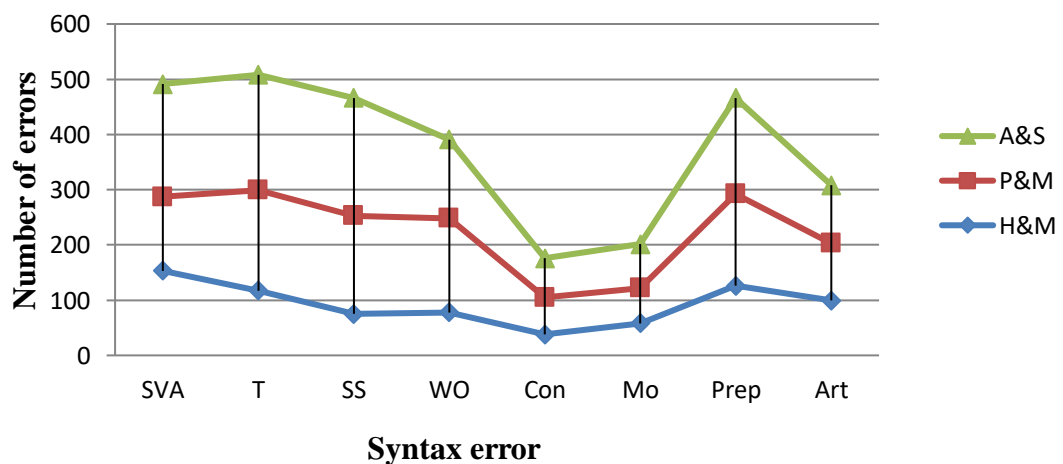


Fig. 1 Total number of syntax errors of first semester students in the three faculties

[Key to Fig 1 : A&S = Arts and Social Science ; P&M= Science and Engineering and H&M = Health Science faculties]

5. Pedagogic implication

The present study aimed at investigating the writing errors committed by the students of Gono Bishwabidyalay in their academic writing. The results revealed that the students committed writing errors such as: syntax error, morphological error, lexical semantics error and punctuation error. The students of the three faculties had made the highest number of syntax error. Under syntax error the students of all the three faculties had made the maximum number of errors in 'Tense'. Other major syntax errors were 'Articles', use of 'Prepositions' and 'Subject-verb Agreement'. 'Word Order', 'Spelling' and 'Wrong Word' were other erroneous categories. Among the three faculties the students of the faculty of Arts and Social Science were in the worst position regarding errors. Writing accuracy of the students of the Health Science faculty was better than the other two faculties who made the lowest number of errors in all the categories.

From the results, it is seen that although the students study at the tertiary level, they continue to have major troubles in writing sentences in English. The bulk of the students could not properly generate sentences because of their incomplete knowledge using the target language. Students face serious difficulties in the construction of sentences while expressing thoughts. Some syntactic errors were so weird that it became difficult to comprehend. Firstly, the sentences did not make any sense. In a number of sentences the message is obscure but if we translate it in Bengali it will become clear. There by, it becomes apparent that students are making literal translations from Bengali. It is a sort of mother tongue interference.

It is obvious that their vocabulary is such poor that they use wrong words or unable to write in English because of unavailability of correct words. It was also sought that, students struggle to find an appropriate word. As they have a limited vocabulary, they could not find the proper word they need while writing. Lexical semantic errors or the use of wrong words and wrong form of words are usual errors that students made.

Sometimes they use words which are out of context, which indicate their incomplete learning in the target language. Use of wrong form of words specifies that students do not know the proper use of the words. Spelling error is one of the most concurrent errors students made. Most of the students made substitution spelling error, where they substitute the letter. These kinds of spelling error occurred as the students were confused about the spelling. Some students made spelling error because of LI interference. For LI interference, students mostly do pronunciation error which sometimes reflected in their writing as well. Though students have been learned these linguistic aspects from their primary level, still they commit errors while writing in advance level. Though they have completed primary, secondary level and

higher secondary level but still they are not prepared for the level they are studying. Regarding the sources of errors, our analysis reveals different sources of error for students' frequent errors in writing. The main sources are: a) Interference of Bangla which is their LI b) Overgeneralization c) Incomplete application of rules d) Ignorance of rule restrictions e) False concepts hypothesized f) lack of enough exposure and overall lack of knowledge in L2.

However the checking of linguistic category is an absolute necessity in the writing skill of language teaching. Now the sources of errors are identified, a remedial teaching style can be adopted easily. Studying the nature of more recent errors which are investigated by the investigators will enable English language teachers and researchers to have a better understanding of the linguistic domain where participants face the most difficulties while writing. The data provided by the analysis of participant's errors will assist the teachers to develop material, design syllabus, develop testing style and to determine the teaching methodology with proper context.

6. Limitations

This error analysis research has been conducted only in a specific university of the suburb of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Though this is one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh, it cannot be the absolute representative of the whole country. So the finding is confined in specific university of Bangladesh. Considering the above-mentioned limitation, a further study can be conducted on a larger number of universities with larger quantities of participants in multiple locations of Bangladesh to get a more crystalline impression about the recent errors of Bangladeshi EFL learners.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that the bulk of the errors that participants committed were syntax error especially 'Tense', 'Subject –Verb-Agreement', 'Sentence Structure' and 'Preposition'. The participants also had a quite poor stock of lexis and their sentences were sometimes not comprehensible. They produced errors in applying sentence structure rules in the English language. Little improvement in making less error is visible among the students of Health Science faculty. Among all the three faculties, the students of Arts and Social Science faculty have shown the weakest performance in linguistic accuracy in academic writing. So, much attention and care should be taken to resolve the errors for ensuring their English language proficiency. So, we can conclude that these participants have problems in learning normal linguistic rules in English. This study has shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language. Moreover, it presents that error analysis can help the teachers to discover in a systematic manner the specific and common language problems students have, so that they can focus more attention on these types of errors. This kind of insight into language learning problems is beneficial for teachers because it presents information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be utilized in the

development of more suitable teaching materials. Furthermore, by being active to infer errors to a certain extent, teachers can be well-equipped to aid students lessen and solve their learning problems.

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