AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING

(A Descriptive Study of Students' Writing at Second Grade of SMK Bakti Purwokerto Academic Year 2013-2014)

AN ARTICLE

Submitted to English Department

A Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for S.Pd Degree

By:

Indra Ratna Mulianingsih

(1001050019)

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY

MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF PURWOKERTO

2014

APPROVAL

Title : AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING

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Name : Indra Ratna Muliarningsih

NIM : 1001050019

Faculty : Teacher Training Education

Study Program : English Education Department

Supervisor : Listiani, M.Pd

Approved by:

Supervisor

Listiani, M.Pd

NIK 2160448

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Indra Ratna Mulianinigsih, Listiani

Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto

ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at knowing (1) student' writing ability in second grade of SMK Bakti Purwokerto (2) the types of grammatical and lexical error made by the students which was influenced by Bahasa Indonesia (3) the percentage of each type of error. The method used in this research was descriptive study. The population of this research was all of students in second grade which consists of 289 students. 25 % of the population or 72 students were taken as the sample. The sample was chosen randomly. The data was taken through an essay test. The students were asked to write a personal letter and choose one of topics provided.

The result of analyzing the data could be concluded in the following explanation. Firstly, the students' writing ability in SMK Bakti Purwokerto at grade XI could be reflected in this result: none of the student (0%) belonged to very good category, the students who belonged to good category is 43.05%, enough category 25%, bad category 30.55%, and fail category 1.38%. Secondly, the types of error and the percentage of each type were explained in the following explanation. The type of error was divided into grammatical error and lexical error. The types of grammatical error which was influenced by mother tongue, from the highest to the lowest frequency of occurrence were as follow: (1) error in tenses (25.44%), (2) omission of TO BE (18.89%), (3) addition of TO BE (13.35%), (4) error in composing interrogative sentence (8.81%), (5) error in using article (7.05%), (6) error in using preposition (6.80%), (7) omission of subject (6.04%), (8) error in possessive case (4.78%), (9) misordering in composing adjective phrase (3.02%), (10) error in using pronoun (2.26%), (11) omission of main verb (1.15), (12) the substitution of auxiliary (1.26%), (13) error in using adverb (0.75%). Next, the types of lexical error were as follow: (1) inappropriate word with the context (42%), (2) spelling (25.8), (3) part of speech (8.60%), (4) wrong diction (8.60%), (5) Indonesian word (7.52%), (6) wrong term (6.45%), (7) plural (1.07%). Form this facts, it could be concluded that the influence of Bahasa Indonesia gave the impacts for students' writing.

Key words: error analysis, students' writing, influence of mother tongue.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is one of skill that is very important for the student. Ramelan (1992: 13) stated that the more cultivated and more technologically advanced man is, the more he will use the written language. Unfortunately, the students still find the difficulties in composing a good writing since the previous research did not show the satisfying result. The position of English as foreign language in Indonesia may become the main factor why the students face the difficulties to deliver their idea in English since the rule of English and Bahasa Indonesia are different. According to Richard (1980:5) sentences in target language may exhibit interference from mother tongue. The students may write the sentence, by translating their ideas in Bahasa Indonesia into English, without considering English grammar and word choice. The influence of L1 was found in SMK Bakti Purwokerto. There are some problems dealing with students' writing when the observation was done there. Some students got the idea from Bahasa Indonesia, and then translated it into English. The students did some mistakes in choosing the appropriate words. The grammar used in the sentence was not appropriate as well. Knowing the problem, it is important to make a research to find out the type of error influenced by mother tongue made by the students in SMK Bakti Purwokerto. The discussion will be limited in the aspect of grammar and vocabulary, since Bahasa Indonesia interfere those aspects much in students' English writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Error Analysis

Before discussing about Error Analysis, it is important to know the definition of Error. There are some definitions of error presented by some experts. In Bahri and Sugeng (2009), James (1998: 77) defined that error is a systematic deviation; when learner has not learnt something consistently gets it wrong. While in Gass and Selinker (2001: 78), Corder defined that error is a systematic deviation from the norms of the language being learned.

From the explanation above it can be concluded that error is a deviation caused by the lack of competence of the learner which happens consistently.

There are two general types of error according to Tarigan (1995: 85)

First, *Interlanguage errors*. This error is caused by interference of students' mother tongue towards the target language being learned.

Second, *Intralanguage errors*. This error reflects general characteristics of the language rules, for example generalization, imperfect rules' application, and failure in learning condition of rules' application.

After knowing the description of errors, the question may arise is how to distinguish whether the deviation made by the students is caused by the limitation of the students' knowledge or students' lapses. We need to distinguish **errors** and **mistakes.** According to Ellis (2003 : 17) *Error* reflect gaps in learner's knowledge, they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. *Mistakes* reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. Tarigan (1995: 75) said that mistakes are usually caused by the factor of performance. Usually students have already known the systematic rule of the language being used, but because of something they forget about that system. Error is caused by the factor of competence. It means that the students have not known the linguistic system of the language being used. Error usually occurs consistently and systematically.

Error analysis is a procedure in the research. There are some steps in error analysis. In Tarigan (1995:170), Ellis (1986) explained that Error analysis is a working procedure, which is commonly used by the researcher and the language teacher, which includes data collection, error identification, explanation of error in the sample, classification of errors based on the causes, and evaluation and assessment about the level of error seriousness.

There are some steps of error analysis according to Tarigan (1995 : 71)

Collecting Data: It is the data which contain the errors made by the students, for example; the result of the test, students' writing, or students' dialogue.

Identifying or classifying error: knowing and choosing errors based on language category for example error in spelling, word formation, word fusion, and sentence arrangement.

Ranking the error: arrange the error based on the frequency of occurrence.

Explaining error: describing the place of error, the cause of error and giving example of the correct ones.

Predicting the area which is risk by error: predicting the language area which has potency to cause error.

Correcting the error: correcting the error and if it is possible, elicit the error through compiling the correct material, appropriate hand out,and relevant teaching technique.

The Problem of Grammar and Vocabulary in Students' Writing Caused by Mother Tongue.

It has been known grammar and vocabulary are one of the aspects of writing. Those aspect are prone to error influenced by mother tongue, as Richard (1980:5) said that sentences in target language may exhibit interference from mother tongue. The students may write the sentence, by translating their ideas in Bahasa to English, without considering English grammar and word choice.

The problem of grammar can be caused by the habit of the students in transferring their language to the language target. As Lado (1977: 146) explained :

> "The students transfer the set of habits of the grammatical structure of his native language to the foreign language. Thus when a given structure pattern has the same function, the same form, and the same distribution in the native foreign language, the students will "learn" it easily and quickly by simple transfer. When the structural pattern is not paralleled in the native language, the student will have trouble learning it because of the interference from the native language habit pattern"

The influence of mother tongue also gave impact for students in making error in their vocabulary. As Lado (1977) said that: "According to the theory of language testing, the students tend to transfer his vocabulary habits to the foreign language. He will transfer meaning, forms, and distribution of the lexical units of his native language".

From those statements it can be concluded that students' grammar and vocabulary are risked by error influenced by their native language.

Writing Assessment

Before knowing the type of writing assessment it is important to know the definition of writing. According to Nurgiyantoro (2001: 298) from the perspective of language competency, writing is a productive activity, and it is an activity of producing language. While from general definition, writing is an activity of expressing idea through language media. From those statements, it can be conclude that the important elements of writing are the elements of language and the idea.

The assessment of writing competency should require students to consider the language elements and idea, so the appropriate writing assignment is in the form of essay. There are many kinds of writing assessment, according to Nurgiyantoro (2001: 298-303), the types of writing assessment are : Arrange the paragraph : Objective test, Writing based on visual stimuli, Writing based on voice stimuli, writing based on book stimuli, writing a report, writing a letter, writing based on certain topic.

METODOLOGY

The steps of conducting this research are as follow:
Collecting data: the data was taken trough writing test. Test was conducted to the sample. After the data collected, the result was scored using the rubric of writing.
Classifying or identifying the error: the researcher identified what type of error made by the students in the aspect grammar and vocabulary which is influenced by mother tongue.
Ranking the error: after classifying error, the type of error was ranked by giving the percentage of the frequency of occurrence.
Explaining error: after that there was a list which consists of explanation of the error. The explanation includes the cause of error and the revision.

The population of this research was all of students in second grade which consists of 289 students from all study programs. There are nine classes in second grade (Multimedia two classes, AP four classes, and AK three classes). 25 % of the population or 72 students were taken as the sample. The sample was chosen randomly and there was no criteria in choosing the participant.

Test was used to collect the data. The form of the test is writing test. The students were asked to make a personal letter. The students might choose one of topics provided in the instructions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' Writing Ability
The data was classified into some categories to make a conclusion about students' writing ability in SMK Bakti Purwokerto. Below is the category of students' writing ability.

No	Score	Category	Number of students	Percentage
1	80-100	Very Good	0	0%
2	66-79	Good	31	43.05 %
3	56-65	Enough	18	25 %
4	40-55	Bad	22	30.55 %
5	30-39	Fail	1	1.38%

Types of Grammatical and Lexical Error

Grammatical Error

In writing personal letter, there were many grammatical errors done by the students which were influenced by Bahasa Indonesia. The classifications of those errors are explained in the explanation below. The types of error is adapted from Burts and Kiparsky (1972), and also Politzer and Ramirez (1973) in Tarigan (1995)

The types of grammatical error from the highest to the lowest frequency are as follow: (1) error in tense happened 101 times and the percentage is 25.44%, (2) omission of TO BE, the total number of this error is 75 with the percentage 18.89% (3) addition of to be, 53 sentences, (13.35%), (4) error in composing interrogative sentence, 35 sentences, (8.81%) (5) error in using article, 28 sentences (7.05%), (6) error in using preposition, the total number is 27 (6.80%), (8) omission of subject, 24 sentences (6.04%), (9) misordering in composing adjective phrase with the total number of occurrence 12 times , (3.02%), (10) error in using pronoun occurred 9 times (2.26%) , (11) omission of main verb, 6 sentences, (1.51%) (12) the substitution of auxiliary *do* with *be* 5 sentences, (1.26%), (13) error in using adverb, the total number of this error is 3, (0.75%).

Lexical Error

The influence of Bahasa Indonesia also gave some impacts for the students in choosing and writing the vocabulary. The lexical errors made by the students are classified in this following explanation. The types of lexical error from the highest percentage to the lowest one are as follow: (1) The inappropriate word with the context, 39 words (42%), (2) spelling, 24 words (25.8%), (3) part of speech 8 words (8.60%),(4) wrong diction, 8 words, (8.60%), (5) the use of Indonesian word 7 words, (7.52%) (6) the wrong term occurs 6 times (6.45), (7) plural, 1 word (1.07%)

DISCUSSION

Grammatical error

a. Error in using tenses

Most error happens in tenses. The percentage of this kind of error reached 25.44%. This number of percentage shows that the students prone to doing error in using tenses.. Here are the examples of the sentences made by the students when they tell about their activity in the past.

S 24: "I <u>am</u> very happy because I <u>can</u> visit historical place that I never visited"

S59: "We <u>go</u> to beach at 07.15."

Based on the example, the reason of error can be assumed. Student 24 did error in using auxiliary (to be and modal). He did not use the past form of both to be and modal. He used *am* and *can* when he was telling about the past activity. Then, student 59 did error in using verb. He used the *go* instead of *went*. The error made by the students is because Bahasa Indonesia does not apply the tense rule. The verb is the same although the time is different. Here are the correct suggestions for those sentences:

I was very happy because I could visit the historical place that I'd never visited.

We went to beach at 07.15

b. Omission of TO BE

There were some students who wrote the sentences without to be although the sentences need it. The percentage of this type of error is 18.89%. The example of the student's sentence is as follow:

S31: "All society very obidient."

Student 31 may want to say "*Semua masyarakatnya sangat patuh terhadap lalu lintas*", and he wrote "*All society very obedient with the traffic*". He did not put to be before adjective *obedient* (adjective). It can be concluded that the students got the idea from Bahasa Indonesia then they translated into English, word by word. Bahasa Indonesia does not have TO BE. That is why the students wrote those sentences without TO BE. The correct one is as follow:

All society are very obedient with the traffic law.

c. Addition TO BE

Some students did error in using to be. The frequency of this error occurrence is 13.35 %.

Here are the examples of the sentences:

S61: "I <u>am</u> here went to Ancol."

From the example, Student 61 wrote to be before verb, "*I am here went to Ancol*". In that sentence, *to be* is not needed. The reason of this error is because there is no TO BE in Bahasa Indonesia. They got confused of the use of to be. They may often hear about the subject and to be, such as '*I am*', '*You are*', '*He is*', but they do not know when it is used. The result is the student put to be after subject when it is not needed.

The correct suggestion is as follow:

Here, I went to Ancol.

d. Error in composing Interrogative sentence.

When the student composed interrogative sentence, they did many error. The percentage of this error is 8.81%. These errors may

be influenced by Bahasa Indonesia. In these following sentences, error in making interrogative sentence was identified:

S61: *"How condition home in Rusia?"*

S18: *"Happy what not?"*

Based on the example from students 61, he did error in making WH Question. He did not put auxiliary (to be) after the question word. Then, student 18 did error in making Yes-No Question. It seems that the students translate the idea from bahasa and use the form of Bahasa Indonesia where it does not apply neither to be nor auxiliary do. Here are the revisions of those sentences:

How is the condition of Home in Russia?

Were you happy?

e. Error in using article

This type of error reached 7.05 %. The occurrence of the error is assumed because it is not easy to determine whether or not a word or phrase uses article. Furthermore, the students have to decide what article used in that word (a/an/the). Bahasa Indonesia does not apply that article much.

This case caused some problems in students' writing. Here are the examples made by the student:

S31:*"Public transportation is very good and comfortable too."*

From the example above, S31 may want to say " *Transportasi umumnya sangat baik dan nyaman*". In English, the sentences need "*the*" because public transportation that he means is the public transportation in a city he was in. It can be concluded that the students still get confused in using article. It is because In Bahasa Indonesia, they are not accustomed with the complex rule of article. The correct sentences IS as follow:

The public transportation is very good and comfortable.

f. Error in using preposition

The percentage of error in using preposition is 6.80%. There are many preposition in English, sometimes the students use the wrong preposition. Here is the example:

S31: *"I promise with you, Mom."*

The students may do the error because they thought that because the meaning of the preposition is the same. In fact, English the verb/noun/adjective use the certain preposition. Based on the student 31 sentences, they may want to say '*saya berjanji denganmu, Bu'* but he wrote '*I promise with you'* instead of '*I promise to you.'* This case exists because the student translates '*dengan'* as '*with'*. Here is the suggestion of the correct sentence:

I promise to you, Mom.

g. The omission of subject.

The percentage of the omission of subject is 6.04 %. Here is the example of the sentences made by the student:

S34: "I very happy <u>because can playing</u> at your home."

Student 34 may want to say "Saya sangat senang karena dapat bermain di rumahmu." In his sentence, he did not put the subject after *because. Because* is a conjunction which connect two independent clauses. This case may be influenced by Indonesian informal language, because Bahasa Indonesia also needs subject and verb in a sentence.

Those sentences should be:

I am very happy because I could play at your home.

h. Error of possessive case

Error in possessive case reached 4.78%. There is difference between the form of possessive case in Indonesia and that of English. This difference makes the students did error in making possessive case. The example is as follow:

S53: "I hope <u>holiday you</u> fun"

S53 wrote "*holiday you*" to translate "*liburanmu*". The form of possessive case in Bahasa Indonesia and English are different. In Bahasa Indonesia, the formula is kata benda (noun) + subjek (subject). For example :*buku Ani*. In English the formula is **possessive pronoun + noun**. For example: *her book*. The formula **noun's + noun** can also be used. For example: Bird's egG.

The sentence should be:

I hope your holiday was fun.

i. Misordering in adjective phrase.

This type of did not occur very often. The percentage of this error is 3.02%. To identify error in misordering in adjective phrase, it is needed to observe the example of the sentence made by the student below:

S64: "I am here get <u>experience fresh</u>."

Based on student 64 sentence, he wrote "*experience fresh*" to deliver the idea "*pengalaman yang segar (baru)*". Error in using adjective in a phrase is strongly influenced by Bahasa Indonesia because adjective phrase in Bahasa Indonesia follows the rule DM (Diterangkan Menerangkan). It means the adjective is putted after the noun (Tarigan 1995:5). Different from Bahasa Indonesia, an adjective phrase in English mention the adjective word first, and then followed by the noun.

So, the correct suggestion is as follow:

Here, I got many fresh experiences.

j. Error in using pronoun.

Error in using pronoun reached 2.26%. To know the error did by the students in using pronoun, let us see the following sentence made by the students:

S4 : " My spent at city park"

S29: "I am in here playing a fireworks with he."

From the example of student 24, the students wrote 'my', to deliver the idea of 'saya'. '*My'* belongs to possessive pronoun, while in that sentence it needs subject pronoun so the correct one is *'I'*. Another example is student 29. He wrote "*with he*" to say "*dengan dia*. This problem comes because there is no difference between subject, object and possessive pronoun in Bahasa Indonesia. For example: *Saya mencintai dia, Kamu harus membantu saya, Ini adalah bangunan ayah saya.* That is why the students did such error.

The correct sentence should be:

I wish mother like him.

k. The omission of main verb.

This type of error reached 1.51%. Some students wrote a sentence without verb. The examples are as follow:

S34: "Yesterday time I to home you, you very friendly to me.'

When the student 34 wrote "*Yesterday time I to home you*", he may want to say "Kemarin waktu saya kerumahmu". The sentence does not have main verb. This kind of error was also influenced by Indonesian informal language because normally Bahasa Indonesia also has main verb in a sentence.

The correct suggestion is:

Yesterday, when I went to your home, you were very friendly to me.

l. The substitution of *auxiliary do* and *be*.

This kind of error reached 1.26%. This error is caused by the students' weakness in distinguishing the use of to be and auxiliary. The students tend to substitute *auxiliary* by *to be*. These are the examples of the students' sentences:

S44: "Mom, are you know?"

S70: "I am not still remember."

S44 want to express "*Bu, apakah kamu tahu?*". He used *are* to translate '*apakah*' in an interrogative sentence although there is a verb (know) in that sentence. Student 70 may want to deliver the idea " *Saya tidak ingat*". He used "*am not*" to say "*tidak*" although there is a verb (remember) in this sentences. The problem of auxiliary substitution often exists in an interrogative and negative sentence

because *auxiliary be* and *do* are translated by the same meaning, they are '*apakah*' in an interrogative sentence, and '*tidak*' in a negative sentence. The corrections of those sentences are as follow:

Mom, do you know?
I don't still remember.

m. Error in using adverb.

Error in using adverb hardly occurs. The percentage of this types of error is only 0.75%. Bahasa Indonesia and English has different rule to modify verb or how someone do something. Unfortunately, the students apply the rule of Bahasa Indonesia in modifying verb in writing English sentence.

S60: "I am very miss you, Mom."
S28: "I hope you spent it in very happy."

In English, a verb is modified by adverb. Unfortunately, students 60 and 28 modify verb above using **very**, and student 28 modify the verb using **in** + **adjective**. That problem is influenced by Bahasa Indonesia where it uses **in**/**with**+**adjective** and **very** to modify verb. For example: *Saya sangat rindu kamu*, *Bu*; *Saya harap kamu melaluinya dengan senang*. Of course, that rule cannot be accepted in English.

The correct suggestions are as follow:
I miss you so much so much, Mom.
I hope you spent it happily.

Lexical Error

a. The inappropriate word with the context.

The student still did error in choosing the appropriate word which delivers their idea. This case has the highest percentage that reach 42%. Below are the examples of the sentences made by the students:

S36: "Because I can look masjid Nabawi in Madinah."
S42: "I to collect by comrades."

Based on the example, student 36 wrote "*look*" to say "*melihat*". The more appropriate word to that sentence is "*see*". Although the meaning is almost the same, the use of those words is different because "*look*" means to turn eyes in the direction of something or someone so that people can see them. The more example is the sentence made by student 42. He may want to deliver "*saya berkumpul dengan kawan-kawan*", but he chose '*collect*' to say

'berkumpul'. Of course it is not appropriate, because being together with other people means *'gather'*. The students may translate the word from Bahasa Indonesia into English by using dictionary without seeing the context of the sentence. Here are the correct sentences:

I can see Nabawi Mosque.

I gathered with my comrades.

b. Spelling (influenced by Bahasa Indonesia)

Many students did error in spelling the word. The frequency of this error is 25.8 %. This case is not merely about misspelling of a word, but it deals with the influence of Bahasa Indonesia. Some words made by the students have incorrect spelling. They wrote what they heard and spell it like in Bahasa Indonesia. Below are the examples of error in word spelling influenced by Bahasa Indonesia.

S60: "The tourism objek here is very interesting."

S53: "Hai friend!"

From the example above, student 60 knows the sound of the word *'object'* but they did not know exactly how the spelling is. He just wrote what he heard and spelled it like in Bahasa Indonesia. As the result he wrote *'objek'*. Another example is student 53. He wrote *'Hai'* to greet the reader. The correct spelling is *'Hi'*.

Below are the correct suggestions of those sentences.

The tourism object here is very interesting.

Hi, friend!

c. Part of speech

Some students chose the word without concerning about its word class. The number of this problem is 6.80%. Here are the examples:

S27: "Certain will happiness if there is you in here."

S32: "I hope I can school in here."

In the example of student 27, he wrote *'happiness'* to deliver the idea of *'senang'*. It should be an adjective word, and the appropriate word is *'happy'*. This case indicates that the students cannot distinguish the word class. The student 32 wrote *'school'* to say the activity of learning a subject the class. Of course it is wrong because *'School'* is the place where the students study and it belongs to noun. This case seems to be the reason why the student did error. They did not concern about the class of word of the sentence. He should write *study* instead of *school*. These are the correction of those sentences:

I would be happy if there were you here.

I hope I could study here.

d. Wrong diction

Some students chose the word which has different meaning with the word that they mean. The occurrence of this error is 8.60%. Not only that, the sentence became confusing. Here are the examples:

S61: "How report mother in house"

When student 61 wrote report he may want to say '*kabar'*, but he chose the inappropriate word. Report means the description of even or situation. The more appropriate word is *news or condition* or he can say "How's mother?".Here are the correct suggestions of those sentences:

How is mother's condition in house?

e. The use of Indonesian word.

Some student still used Indonesian word in their writing. The percentage is 7.52%. Below are the examples of the sentences made by the students.

S32: "Because I can look Masjid Nabawi in Maddinah."
S35"People climb bicycle round about Kampoeng together."
S51: I celebrate with friends in the main alun-alun Purwokerto.

Based on the example, it is clear that the student 32, 35 and 31 still use Indonesian word in their sentences like *masjid, kampoeng, alun-alun* whereas it is easy to find the meaning of those word in the dictionary. Below are the correct suggestions of those sentences:

Because I could look Nabawi Mosque in Madina.
People ride bicycle and round the village together."
I celebrate with friends in the main square.

f. Wrong term

Some student made their own term by translating word by word. The percentage of this type reached 6.45%. In fact, English has its own term, which cannot be translated word by word. Here are the examples:

S67: "In Korea, I am to shopping for home people."
S6: "After that I walking-walking."

Home people and walking-walking are the examples of the terms made by the students themselves. The creation of they own term is from the translation of the words which is combined by them. The result is in English the word is unclassified. They'd better write these ways:

In Korea, I went shopping for my family.
After that, I went for a walk.

g. Plural

The error in plurality did not appear in high frequency. The frequency of occurrence is only 1.07% but the teacher may anticipate about this case. Here is the example:

S17: "I want to tell <u>many story</u>."

In Bahasa Indonesia, there is no suffix *s/es* to show the plural noun. That is why the student did not also put suffix *es* in the plural word. The correct sentence should be:

I want to tell many stories.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Form the result, it could be concluded that most students belong to good category (43.05%). The influence of Bahasa Indonesia gave the impacts for students' writing. The students still follow the habit of translating the words from their mother tongue that causes such error in grammar and vocabulary. In grammar, error in tenses is the highest number of error made by the students with the percentage of 25.44%, while the use of adverb is the lowest one that only has 0.75%. In vocabulary, the use inappropriate word with the context has the highest frequency of error occurrence, that is 42% and the lowest one is error in using plural word which only has 1.33%.

By knowing the result of the research, there are some suggestions given. Firstly, by knowing the types of grammatical and lexical error made by the students in their writing, the teacher should give more attention to those types to avoid the students doing the same error. Secondly, the result of the research shows that the students could not abandon the habit of translating the idea from Bahasa Indonesia word by word. This habit can cause such error in grammar and vocabulary. Thus, it is better for the teacher to teach grammar and vocabulary in the context of sentence. In teaching grammar, the teacher should not give the formula only, but it should be applied in a sentence. In teaching vocabulary, the students should not only know the meaning of English word in their mother tongue, but they have to use the word appropriately. The last, students still need more practice to write, so their English will be more natural.

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