

**THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL ACHIEVEMENT  
THROUGH ERROR ANALYSIS METHOD**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This research attempts at knowing the effectiveness of Error Analysis Method toward the students' achievement in English writing skill and their perceptions to Error Analysis Method (hereafter EAM) for teaching and learning writing. The method used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The subjects of this research are 31 students of the third semester of English Department of State University of Medan of 2012/2013 academic year. The instrument for collecting data is essay writing test. The data are analysed by descriptive analysis. The results of the research shows that 1) the students' achievement in English writing skill is (76.74) in average or it increases (17.32) basis points from the pre-test (59.42) in average and 2) in general, the students have positive and good perceptions toward Error Analysis Method for teaching and learning writing skill of English. This implies that the implementation of EAM is significantly effective to improve students' writing skill.*

**KEYWORDS:** Error, Error Analysis Method, Writing

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## INTRODUCTION

In line with 2013 High School Indonesian National Curriculum and Higher Education Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) 2008, writing skill is one of the emphasis among other language skills such speaking, listening, and reading. Factually, writing seems to be very important which must be learned and mastered by the students because, by writing, one can express his/her thought idea, feeling, and expression as well by written language.

Regarding to writing skill, in English Department of Languages and Art Faculty, State University of Medan Indonesia, writing subject is taught and learned for four semester from semester I up to semester IV. The contents of writing subject cover various and diverse topics and themes such as sentence writing, paragraph, essay writing, academic writing, and genre writing as well. Genre based writing becomes the new approach to teaching and learning writing.

Genre based writing, particularly becomes the essence of writing subject in both curriculums. The genre based writing views writing as a product and process (Ann 2003). By product, writing has its own typical features and characteristics such as communicative purpose, rhetorical structure, linguistic features, style, and readers (Hyland, 2003; Knapp and Watkins, 2005; Dirgeyasa, 2015). While as a process, genre based writing, views writing as systematic procedure for teaching and learning process. Genre writing as a process implements a cycle teaching and learning consisting of three main phases such as (a) building context, (b) joint construction, and (c) independent learning (Rothery, (1996) in Firkin, Forey, and Sengupta, 2007; Hyland 2003). By this model of teaching and learning students are expected to be able to write well.

However, based on data in English Department of Languages and Art Faculty, State University of Medan Indonesia, the students' writing skill are relative low and they do not meet the expected target by the curriculum. The actual students' writing achievement in the last three academic years (2009/2010 up to 2011/2012) is shown by table 1 below.

Table 1 The actual students' writing achievement in the last three academic years (2009/2010 up to 2011/2012).

Academic Year	Grades			
	A %	B %	C %	E %
2011/2012	16.57	31.43	42.00	10.00
2010/2011	15.63	30.53	44.84	9.00
2009/2010	15.54	29.34	42.44	12(.85
Rata-rata	15.91	30.43	43.09	10.61
Total of C+E			43.09	10.61
				53.70

*Source: Self-Evaluation of English Department of Languages and Arts Faculty of State University of Medan 2013.*

In line with success and failure of teaching and learning process, theoretically they are caused by many factors such as teaching and learning method, assessment model, the students' background and characteristics (entry behavior, motivation, attitude, etc), media, learning materials etc (Brown, 2004; Harmer, 2009; Kiato, 2009). Among the determining factors of success and failure of teaching and learning process, the teaching method and or strategy plays important role.

Then, Nunan (1995); Sutikno and Fathurrohman (2007) adds that the students' achievement are influenced by many factors such as media, learning material, assessment, input, media, learning resources, and learning method. In line with the role of teaching and learning method. They also emphasize that the result of teaching and learning achievement is significantly influenced by the teaching and learning method implemented by the lecturer.

This clearly shows that the root case of the low students' achievement in writing is the teaching learning method implemented by the lecturer. It is assumed that the teaching and learning method implemented is not relevant and appropriate in terms of the students' background, the nature of the subject matter, the academic atmosphere, etc. Then, the teaching and learning method implemented in the classroom can not create students to think critically and challengingly and involve the students actively involved during the teaching and learning process. The classroom atmosphere is relatively boring, monotonous, and dominated by the lecturer' role.

Actually, there are some teaching and learning methods which are relevant and significant to improve the good and conducive teaching and learning atmosphere for writing subject in particular such as mind mapping, problem based learning, error analysis method, etc. Those methods actually have their own strengths, weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages, and uniqueness in teaching and learning process. Of course, one teaching and learning method may suit and fit for a certain subject and the other one may match with another subject. In short, the use of a certain teaching and learning method depends on the context.

In line with teaching and learning writing, EAM is assumed to be relevant for teaching and learning writing. Corder (1967) and Brown (2000) both highlight that language learners' errors are important to study because it shows the state of the learners' knowledge. In addition, theoretically and empirically, the EAM can significantly improve the students' learning achievement as reported by Dirgeyasa, and Husein (2007: 25). However, their research is concerned with the structure subject. By EAM, the students' achievement significantly improves.

Regarding to EAM, (Nunan (1995; Harmer, 2009) argues that it is a typical teaching and learning process emphasizing the bottom-up approach in which the students' involvement and participation are essential during the teaching and learning process. Then, James, C. (2001) states that it has two functions in teaching and learning that is (1) it observes and monitors how the teaching and learning process works, and (2) it provides whether remedial teaching and learning is necessary or not in order to reach the learning targeted achievement. Then, according to Corder as cited by Richards (1984) noted that EAM could be significant in three ways: "it provides the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt, it provides the researcher with evidence of how language was learnt, it serves as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language."

## LITERARY REVIEW

### Error

Learning language is relatively unique and different. Errors made by the learners become something universal and a must. Errors positively are part of the learning process. Actually the definition of error in language learning may be relatively different among the linguists. Error in language learning occurs because the learner is not able to use language properly and correctly. Corder (1971:152) states that errors are the result of some of failure of performance. It means that the learner make language deviation. Here, she/he gets wrong or fail. Then, it can be stated that errors is regarded as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently then they finally get it wrong.

While Brown (1980:85) states that error is noticeable grammar from the adult of native speaker, reflecting the inter language competence of the learners. This shows that there is a gap in learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know the correct ones.

In term of error, Weireesh (1991) then argues that error of the learner to be particular importance because making error (s) is a device for the learner to learn. ThenThe concept of error is also proposed by (Dulay, et al 1982; Nunan,1995) states that error refers to language patterns which deviate from the standard rules of a certain language. The error may also occur because the learners do not know well the language systems they learn.

While Richards (1995) explains that error may happens because of slip of the tongue (slip of the hand), hesitation or context of learning. Then, Kavaliauskiene (2009) States that transfer of errors may occur because the learners are lack of the necessary information in the second language or the intentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine. Then, finally the errors made by the learners indicate the difficulties faced by the learner with certain aspects of language such as spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, writing, etc.

## Error Analysis Method (EAM)

Historically, error analysis in second language acquisition was established in the 1960s by Corder and colleagues. Error analysis (EA) or Error analysis Method (EAM) is an alternative to contrastive analysis, an approach influenced by behaviorism through which applied linguists search to use the formal distinctions between the learners' first and second languages to predict errors. The rise of the error analysis method is caused by the assumption that contrastive analysis is unable to predict a great majority of errors, although its more valuable aspects have been incorporated into the study of language transfer. A key finding of error analysis has been that many learner errors are produced by learners making faulty inferences about the rules of the new language.

In line with EAM, Ubol (1988: 8) said, "Error analysis is a systematic description and explanation of errors made by learners or users in their oral or written production on the target language. It means that error analysis is concerned with the explanation of the occurrence error and the production of their oral or written expression differs from that of native speaker or target language's norm. The error analysis movement is characterized as an attempt to account for learners' error that could not be explained or predicted by contrastive analysis. Error analysis provided a methodological for investigating the learner language.

The quotation above also implies that EAM is a systematic and chronological strategy or method which can be used to know, discover, and investigate the errors made by the leaner so that learners can achieve better in the future.

Referring to the significances and contribution of EAM in teaching and learning, (Corder, 1981; James, C. 1998) proposes that EAM has two functions and or roles namely (1) to know and monitor how the teaching and learning process take place and (2) to know whether remedial teaching and learning are necessary or not in order to achieve the targeted goal of teaching and learning itself.

In addition, the implementation of EAM provides three benefits for teaching and learning process. Those three include (1) the lecturer really know how far the learning objectives have been achieved, (2) the error analysis provides data, fact, and evidences s how the students learn and what strategies they use for, and (3) the error and mistakes made by the students can be used as learning resources or materials for further studies so that they will know what wrongs are or what corrects are (Brown, 2000; Corder 1981).

Then, Brown (2000), Harmer (2003) states that EAM is a typical analytical process toward the students' error either spoken or written language when they use language. Then Crystal as quoted by Peteda (1989) elaborates that EAM is a technique or method used to identify, classify, and interpret systematically the errors made by the students by linguistic procedures and theories.

According to linguist Corder (1967) the following are the steps in any typical EA or EAM research such as (1) collecting samples of learner language, (2) identifying the errors, (3) describing the errors, (4) explaining the errors, and (5) evaluating/correcting the errors.

In line with Crystal and Corder, (Richards, 1995; Selinker, 1972) proposes that EAM as a typical teaching and learning method analyses the students' errors by the systematic steps such as (1) identifying, (2) describing and classifying, (3) interpreting, (4) correcting, and (5) reinforcing for remedial.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is carried out at English Language and Literature Department, Faculty Languages and Arts, State University of Medan in the academic year of 2012/2013. The classroom action research (CAR) is used in this research. There are 31 students of the third semester who takes writing as the subjects of this research. The object of the study is student's writing. The technique for collecting data is test. Then, instrument for collecting data is essay writing test. The writing is assessed by using assessment rubric. Then, the data are analyzed by descriptive analysis. The indicator of achievement of this research is the average of the students' achievement in writing reaching (75) point or (B) category.

## THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Findings

This research is conducted for two cycles. The data of the research are presented by cycle consisting of three types namely (1) pre-test of students' writing achievement, (2) post-test of students' writing achievement in cycle I, and (3) post-test of students' writing achievement in cycle II or the end of the research. Then, this research also presents the students' perception regarding to teaching and learning writing through EAM. In terms of types data, this research consists of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are the students' achievement in writing. Then, the qualitative data are the students' perception toward EAM.

Before teaching and learning process is carried out, the students are given pre- test in order to know their entry behaviour or prior writing achievement. The writing average score of the pre-test is about (59.42). And the generally the students' entry behaviour are not proportionally distributed as shown by table 2 below.

**Table 2 The distribution of the students' writing achievement in pre-test**

Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
80 -100	Very Good	0	0.00
70 – 79	Good	6	19.35
60 – 69	Fair	16	51.61
55 – 59	Poor	8	25.80
0 - 54	Very Poor	1	3.22
Total		31	100

Table 2 above shows that most of the students (51.61%) still have the average scores ranging from (60-69) or (C) categorized. The students having *good* achievement ranging (70-79) is about (19.35%). However, students who achieve scores ranging (55-59) is about (25.80%) and only (3.22%) of the students gets *very poor* category.

After cycle I finishes, generally the average of students' achievement in writing improves relatively significant to be (67.58) basis point but it does not meet the indicator of achievement of the research (75) basis point. The complete students' achievement in writing is shown by table 3 below.

**Table 3 The distribution of the students' writing achievement in cycle I**

Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
80 -100	Very Good	5	16.12
70 – 79	Good	11	35.48
60 – 69	Fair	13	41.93
55 – 59	Poor	2	6.44
0 - 54	Very Poor	0	0.00
Total		31	100 100

Referring to table 3, the students' achievement in writing is not proportionally distributed. Most of them (41.93%) still gets score ranging (60-69) and it is categorized (C) or *fair* even though it decreases around (9.68%) from average score of the pre-test. However, the students achieving *very good* or (A) category reaches (16.12%) and (35.48%) gets *good score* (B) (70-79) points. Only (6.44%) of the students gains ranging (55-59) points or *poor* (D) and none of them gets *very poor* category (E).

Before the cycle II is implemented, the evaluation and reflection is done for the cycle I. This is done because the results of students' writing do not meet the indicator of achievement yet. That is why, some revisions regarding to implementation of EAM are necessarily done. The revisions includes (1) the process of teaching and learning, (2) the implementation of small group (3-4) from classical group, (3) students' writing work are used as learning or materials for teaching and learning writing, (4) the extension of teaching and learning writing, and (5) the use of writing assessment rubric for assessing the students' writing.

After cycle II or the end of the research is done, the students' average writing score (77.74) points. The complete distribution of the students' writing achievement is presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4 The distribution of the students' writing achievement in cycle II**

Range	Category	Frequency	Percentage
80 -100	Very Good	7	22.58
70 – 79	Good	17	54.83
60 – 69	Fair	6	19.51
55 – 59	Poor	1	3.22
0 - 54	Very Poor	0	0.00
Total		31	100 100

Based on table 4, it is found that the students who get score ranging (70-79) or *very good* category or (A) is about (54.83%). Then, (22.58%) and (19.51%) of the students respectively are categorized *very good* or (B) and *fair* or (C). Only (3.22%) of the students gets *poor* or (D) category and none of them gain *very poor* category.

(67.58).

## DISCUSSION

Based on the description of the data above, after cycle I ends, the students' average writing scores are improving significantly from pre-test (59.42) to be (67.58) at the end of cycle I. It means that there is an improvement of student score about (8.16) point at the end of cycle I.

However, the improvement of the students writing in cycle I does not meet the indicator of the research yet. To note that the indicator of the research is about (75) basis point or (B) category.

In cycle II or at the end of the research, the students' average in writing achievement increases significantly from (67.58) in cycle I to be (76.74). It means that there is a (10.16) basis point of improvement. In addition, this also means that the improvement of students' writing achievement is bigger than that of the improvement from pre-test to the end of the cycle I (8.16) basis points. Then, the improvement of the students' average in writing become higher when it is seen from the average of pre-test (59.42) basis point to be (76.74) basis point at cycle II or at the end of the research. The value of the improvement is about (17.32) basis point.

The significant effect of EAM as a teaching and learning method or strategy is actually also reported by Dirgeyasa and Husein (2007: 25). However, their research is concerned with the structure subject. But, principally, the EAM can improve the students' learning achievement significantly.

In addition, this means that students learn a lot from their experiences even though they have low entry behaviour. By EAM, the students are assumed to be able to improve their learning achievement because the EAM facilitates them to learn more systematically and more easily. Then, Wu and Garza (2014) argues that by error analysis, the students have their own learning resources so that they can improve their teaching and learning process. The students' effort of trying should be praised, and the teacher should encourage to engage writing for different purposes in order to language in the different context.

In his research, Ubol (1988) also argues that the EAM does not only orient and concern to the students' errors, mistakes, difficulties confronted by the learners in a learning process but it also as a typically systematic teaching and learning method used to know all matters regarding the errors made by the learners. By EAM students tend to be accustomed and familiar with the language uses either in the first language or second and or target language. Then, Ridha (2012.p.42) in Sawalmeh (2013) reports that error are necessary for the students if they could to correct them.

So it is clearly stated that that the EAM really is effective to improve the students' writing achievement. This happens because the EAM has three strengths and advantages for teaching and learning such as (1) the lecturer really know how far the learning objectives have been achieved, (2) the error analysis provides data, fact, and evidences s how the students learn and what strategies they use for, and (3) the error and mistakes made by the students can be used as learning resources or materials for further studies so that they will know what wrongs are or what corrects are (Brown,1980; Corder 1981; Chafe,W.L,1982). Then, Weireesh (1991) View learners' errors to be particular importance because making errors is a device learners' use in order to learn. According to him, Error analysis method is a valuable aid to identify and explain the difficulties faced by learners. Candling (2001) states that L2 learners' errors are potentially important for the understanding of the progress of second language acquisition (SLA).

In term of the perception regarding the use of the EAM, the data show that the students' perception towards the EAM as a teaching and learning method for teaching writing is classified into two 6 (six) items namely (1) relevant, (2) systematic, (3) practical, (4) critical and analytical, (5) motivating, and (6) interesting. The results show that students have different perceptions regarding to the EAM for teaching and learning writing as shown by table 5 below.

**Table 5** The students' perceptions regarding to the EAM for teaching and learning writing

N0	Description	Categories						Total	
		1		2		3			
		f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	Relevant	21	67.74	7	22.58	3	9.67	100	
2	Systematic	24	77.41	5	16.12	2	6.45	100	
3	Practical	10	32.25	16	51.61	5	16.12	100	
4	Critical and analytical	23	74.19	8	25.80	0	0.00	100	
5	Motivating	17	54.83	12	38.70	2	6.45	100	
6	Interesting	12	38.70	13	41.93	6	19.35	100	

Legends:

1 : Relevant/systematic/practical

2 : Fair

3 : Poor

Referring to table 5 above, most of the students (67.74%) states that the EAM is relevant for teaching and learning writing. Then, about (22.58%) of the students states that it is fair and the rest says it is poor. Then, the EAM is really systematic way for teaching and learning writing. It seems that it is not surprising because the EAM really provides the students to learn writing chronologically and gradually from the simple step to the complex one. So it can be concluded that error analysis is a systematic description and explanation of errors made by learners or users in their oral or written production on the target language (Ubol, 1988; James, C, 1998). In addition it is also relevant to what (Selinker, 1972; Richards, 1995;) argues that the EAM as a typical teaching and learning method analyses the students' errors by the systematic steps such as (1) identifying, (2) describing and classifying, (3) interpreting, (4) correcting, and (5) reinforcing for remedial. On the other hand, because of its systematic and complex step, most students (51.61%) state that it is fair practical because it provides a number of steps so that it takes time to finish a set of teaching and learning process.

Because of its complex steps, the EAM as a teaching and learning strategy for writing enables the students think critically and analytically (74.19%) and only (25.80%) of the students assumes that it is fair critical and analytical. Then, the EAM also enables to encourage and motivate (54.83%) the students learn writing seriously and hard. However, the EAM is categorized fairly interesting and interesting respectively (41.93%) and (38.70%) by the students. In line with motivation

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, by implementing the EAM systematically and consistently, it can help the students to improve their writing achievement significantly. It increases to be (76.74) in average or it improves (17.32) basis points from the pre-test (59.42). Besides that, it also provides the students' to have positive and good perceptions toward the EAM for teaching and learning writing skill of English. Also, the EAM can lead the students to think critically and analytically about the subject they learn.

By this conclusion, it is advisedly recommended that the EAM actually can also be used for the other relevant subjects such as the structure, the vocabulary, the pronunciation, etc. To provide a good and significant achievement in teaching and learning, it should be implemented gradually and systematically. In addition, the lecturers also should allocate enough time during the process of teaching and learning because the EAM provides relatively long and complex steps and procedure to implement.

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