Using The List of Minimum Requirements to Analyze Students' Errors In Their English Compositions

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Abstract: *This research was conducted to analyze the errors made by the students in their English compositions. The researchers used the list of Minimum Requirements which was developed by Fountain to analyze the students' writing errors. Based on the data analysis, it was found that the students made 60 errors altogether in their English compositions entitled About Me. There are nine kinds of error made by the students. The students made 19 errors in punctuation (31.7%), 11 errors in preposition (18.3%), seven errors in concord/agreement (11.7%), seven errors in finite verbs (11.7%), six errors in articles (10%), four errors in spelling (6.7%), two errors in tenses (3.3%), two errors in verb groups (3.3%) and two errors in word choice (3.3%). It is advisable that the list of Minimum Requirements is used as a guideline to help the learners minimize their errors in writing.*

Keywords: *minimum requirements*; *error; English composition*

I. Introduction

There are four language skills which are needed to complete communication. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. One of these four language skills which is very crucial and most required in academic field is writing. In all academic situations where writing English is required, students must be able to present their ideas in a clear and well-organized manner. In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) and of English as a second language (ESL), writing might be a very challenging language skill for learners to master (Bram, 2012, p. 114). As a skill, writing is often taken for granted. But the reality proves that teaching writing skill is not an easy task because students often some difficulties to write about what they think in their mind and state it on a piece of paper or on a computer screen.

It is important to stress that writing is much more than merely producing sentences which are both semantically and grammatically correct and acceptable according to what might be referred to as educated, standard English. In fact, one of the main purposes of writing is to communicate. A communication process between a writer and a reader takes place through writing. Bram (2012, p. 114) states that the term *writing* may be defined as (learners') using written language across or sharing ideas with others, particularly in a one-paragraph composition.

Bram (2012, p. 114) states that in the present context, the primary focus is on a number of grammatical or language errors, for instance, missing a determiner (as in *She can play piano*, instead of *She can play the piano*) and no concord or agreement between the subject

and finite verb (as in *His children is reading now*, instead of *His children are reading now*). Often, there is a tendency for the teacher to make so many corrections on the compositions that students become confused.

Wishon & Burks (1980) state that the thoughtful teacher usually faces a dilemma in deciding how much or how little correcting to do on the students' papers. The researchers also experience the same thing when correcting their students' English compositions, for instance, the absence of a finite verb, namely *is* (a form of the verb be) as in *My name Siska Ria Pandiangan*, instead of *My name is Siska Ria Pandiangan* and the wrong spelling as in *I study at Chatolic University of Saint Thomas* instead of *I study at Catholic University of Saint Thomas*. Unfortunately, when their students read over their English compositions, they generally are unable to identify many of their errors.

Krashen & Seliger (1975, p. 180) assert that all teachers probably provide some means of correcting spoken and written errors in order to help students reconsider their incorrect sentences. If a learner is unaware of his errors, his teacher will have difficulty in helping him to correct them (George, 1972, p. 15). Thus, at least a number of fundamental abilities such as how to use punctuation and construct simple sentences in the target language correctly are needed by the learners to equip themselves in order to succeed in writing, in expressing themselves.

To assist the learners to minimize their writing errors and at the same time to encourage them to be (more) independent or autonomous, the teacher should clarify and discuss the points in the list of Minimum Requirements, which can be multiplied and distributed to every learner to be used as a guideline. Minimum Requirements is a list developed by Fountain which can be used to minimize errors in writing English. Heritage (2003) states that if we want to impress our readers, we would better brush up any problem areas we have with our grammar and spelling. Bram (2012, p. 121) stresses that it is important for the learners to keep in mind that their use of English in writing will be judged (by the teachers and also by other readers). It is expected that Minimum Requirements can help the learners reduce their writing problems.

Corder (1967) proposes that not only do language learners necessarily produce errors when communicating in a foreign language, but that these errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how languages are actually learned. How about the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018? What errors did they make in their English compositions? This research is primarily intended to analyze the errors made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions. Errors made by the students were analyzed by using the list of Minimum Requirements.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Writing: Process and Product

Writing is a productive skill of the English language which needs to be mastered by the students in learning the English language because they need it for academic purpose. Meyers (2005, p. 2) states that writing is an action, a process of discovering and organizing our ideas, putting them on paper, reshaping and revising them. It means that writing is an activity to write something on paper. Meanwhile, Graham & Perin (2007, p. 9) state that

writing is a skill that draws on the use of strategies (such as planning, evaluating, and revising text) to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence. Writing is a process of expressing ideas or feelings on a piece of paper which is started by planning, drafting, evaluating and revising in order to tell and inform someone about something.

Costas (2002) states that writing is a process and at the same time a product. As a process, writing may involve brainstorming (looking for an idea or topic to write about), drafting, cooling down, editing, revising, and proofreading. Understandably, such a process might be regarded as time and energy-consuming. It is essential then for the teacher of the English language to try to make sure that the learners also realize that their writing engages these two aspects: a process and product. If the teacher succeeds in this attempt, the learners will certainly allocate more effort and energy in their writing activity in order to produce better compositions with reduced or minimum language problems, for example, missing a determiner before an indefinite, countable, singular noun.

Below are some suggested writing processes which can be implemented by EFL/ESL learners. It should be noted that the order of the stages might be flexible, or sometimes be optional. The processes are elaborated as the following:

a. Brainstorming

Bram (2012, p. 115) states that the term brainstorming may be defined as an activity to quickly suggest various ideas which may later be used as interesting writing topics or themes. When brainstorming, the learners can write down a word, phrase or clause/sentence. It is also possible to write a code, use a symbol or draw a simple picture in this particular writing process.

b. Drafting

Bram (2012, p. 116) states that in the drafting process, the learners ought to feel free to write down any ideas coming to their mind. The main purpose here is to record the core messages or ideas to share with others. Other potential issues such as correct spelling and better diction (word choice) can later be fixed where necessary, for instance, in the editing phase. It might be useful to bear in mind that the result of drafting is a draft and not a final writing product yet. As a result, very often, such a draft needs revising, polishing in order to improve it, including minimizing language mistakes.

c. Cooling Down

Bram (2012, p. 116) states that in the cooling down stage, the learners might want to leave or seemingly forget their temporary writing results (which may be called drafts) for a while to allow them to cool down. Depending on the availability of time and perhaps on the type of writing task, the duration of the cooling down process can also be flexible, ranging from 15 minutes up to several days, for example. It is expected that after cooling down, the learners will reproach their writing with a fresher mind in order to make improvements (where necessary).

d. Editing

Bram (2012, p. 116) states that in the editing stage, the learners can try to spot writing mistakes or shortcomings such as comma splices (connecting sentences using a comma) and redundant words, and then correct them. An example of a comma splice is *My friend is diligent, she studies every day*. This comma splice, which is ungrammatical, can be improved, for instance, by splitting it into two simple sentences: *My friend is diligent. She studies every day*. It is also possible to correct it by replacing the comma with the conjunction *and*: *My friend is diligent **and** she studies every day*. Next, an example of redundancy is the

phase *in shape* in the sentence *That plate is round in shape*. Notice that in this particular context, the word *round* automatically refers a shape, and therefore, the words or phrase in shape is unnecessary. Thus, the redundant phrase should be omitted and the edited sentence will be read: *That plate is round*.

What is given above is in line with Nation's (2009) stance says that editing involves going back over the writing and making changes to its organization, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness.

e. Revising

Bram (2012, p. 117) states that sometimes revising is also called editing. Both the editing and revising processes aim to improve a writing product, for example, a one-paragraph composition consisting of six sentences. Probably, it may be said that editing generally tackles minor, easier-to-fix problems, whereas revising might deal with relatively more serious, tougher-to-fix issues, such as, to revise sentence constructions (e.g. changing a passive voice into an active voice) and reorder the sequence of sentences in a paragraph. It can be then be concluded that the revising stage may involve a lot of rewriting.

f. Proofreading

In the present context, proofreading refers to reading carefully a piece of writing in order to spot possible weaknesses or mistakes, for instance, missing words, misspellings and ungrammatical sentences. Argante (2004) says that the main objective of proofreading is to check for typo graphical mistakes. When proofreading, the learners need to read word by word and if necessary, they can start from the last word (the end of the composition) to the first word (the beginning of the composition).

To proofread (their own writing products) better, the learners might want to pretend that they are reading others' works (Bram, 2012, p. 117). It should be pointed out that the spelling issue is easy to tackle if the learners prepare their writing using the Microsoft Word processor because they can check their spellings and even grammar electronically. In fact, to proofread manually – the author believes – remains a useful, practical skill.

2.2 The Purposes of Writing

A writer must know what the purpose of his writing is in order to make it understandable. O'Malley & Pierce (1996, pp. 137-138) state that there are three purposes of writing that describe the kinds of students' writing. Those are:

a. Informative Writing: Informative writing helps writers integrate new ideas and examine existing knowledge. Thus, writers can share knowledge and give information, directions, or ideas. The examples of informative writing include describing events or experiences, and developing new ideas or relationships, such as biography about a well-known someone from the writer's life.

b. Expressive/Narrative Writing: Expressive writing is a personal or imaginative expression in which the writer produces a story or an essay. This type of writing is often used for entertainment, pleasure, discovery as fun writing, such as poems and a short play.

c. Persuasive Writing: In persuasive writing, writers attempt to influence others and initiate action or change. This type of writing includes evaluation of a book, movie, consumer product and controversial issues.

2.3 The Categories of Writing

According to Brown (2001, p. 343), there are five major categories of classroom writing performance. They are:

a. Imitative or writing down: This type is at the beginning level of learning to write. Students will simply write down English letters, words, and possibly sentences in order to learn the conventions of the orthographic code.
b. Intensive or controlled: This intensive writing typically appears in controlled, written grammar exercises. This type of writing does not allow much creativity on the part of the writer. A controlled writing is to present in which the students have to alter a given structure throughout.
c. Self-writing: The most salient instance of this category in classroom is note-taking by the students. Diary or journal writing also falls into this category.
d. Display writing: For all language students, short answer exercises, essay examinations and research reports will involve an element of display. One of the academic skills of ESL students that they need to master is a whole array of display writing techniques.
e. Real writing: Some classroom writing aims at the genuine communication of messages to an audience in need of those messages.

2.4 Components of Writing

In writing process, the writer can be said successful if his writing contains some assessments of writing. The following are the components of writing based on Heaton (1988, p. 138) are:

a. Content: Content is about the logical development of ideas. The ideas should be concrete and thoroughly developed. They should address the main idea. The writer must exclude everything irrelevant to main idea to excellent level of content of writing.
b. Organization: Organization consists of introduction, body, and conclusion. A writer should write his ideas in appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with the ability to select and organize other relevant information. A writer is expected to demonstrate an understanding of how texts are structured as a whole piece of writing.
c. Vocabulary: Vocabulary is about the style and quality of expression. It is about how the writer uses precise words. The writer should choose the words clearly, do not be ambiguous.
d. Language use: Language use is about all the rules of language application used by the writer. It is also about the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences. The writer should write the sentences correctly based on tenses.
e. Mechanical skills: Mechanical skills are about the punctuation, spelling, and all of the graphic conventions of the language.

2.5 Sample Composition

Bram (2012, p. 124) states that the learners (and the teacher) can use the list of Minimum Requirements both inside and outside of the classroom to check or evaluate every written work, for example, a one-paragraph composition containing five to nine sentences with the topic About Me (self-introduction).

About Me (sample edited composition)

Let me introduce myself. My name is Bun Bonna. I come from Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. Now I live on Sihanouk Boulevard. My school is not far from here. I like reading books and listening to music. (*6 sentences*)

Notice that the sample composition above is already edited and proofread, and thus is categorized as a good example paragraph which contains no grammatical and spelling mistakes, for example. It is likely that a learner's original version of the second reads: *My name Bun Bonna*. The problem with this ungrammatical sentence is the absence of a finite verb, namely, *is (*a form of the verb be). Another possibility might be the last word in the fourth sentence is wrongly spelled as *Boulavart,* instead of *Boulevard*.

It is expected that individually or groups, the students use the Minimum Requirements list during the editing, revising, and/or proofreading process by themselves. Bram (2012, p. 124) states that this way, the learners under the guidance of the teacher will gradually manage to minimize their mistakes in writing.

2.6 Error Analysis

The word error entails different meanings and usages relative to how it is conceptually applied. Brown (1987, p. 204) states that learners do make errors and these errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal operating system within the learner leads to a surge of study of learner's errors called error analysis. Error analysis is a study of linguistic ignorance which investigates what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance. It seems this concept is the same as the one proposed by Crystal (1987, p. 112) who says that error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics.

According to Dulay et al (1982), the most useful and commonly used descriptive of errors is linguistic category taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, communication effect taxonomy, and surface strategy taxonomy. The errors are elaborated as follows:

a. **Linguistic Category Taxonomy**: These taxonomies classify errors according to the language component or linguistic constituent (or both of them) which is affected by the error. Among language components we count phonology, syntax and morphology, semantics and lexicon, and discourse. Researchers use the linguistic category taxonomy as either the only one or combined with some other taxonomy. This taxonomy is also useful for organizing the collected data.

b. **Comparative Taxonomy**: The comparative taxonomy classifies errors on the basis of comparing the structure of second language errors to other types of constructions, most commonly to errors made by children during their first language acquisition of the language in question. In this taxonomy, we work with four main error categories: (1) developmental errors, (2) interlingual errors, (3) ambiguous errors, and (4) the 'grab bag category' of other errors.

c. **Communicative Effect Taxonomy**: This taxonomy focuses on the effect of the errors have on the listener or reader. Errors that affect the overall organization of the sentence hinder successful communication, while errors that affect a single element of the sentence usually do not hinder communication. They call the errors as the former global errors and the latter local errors.

(1) Global errors include:
    a. Wrong order of major constituents
    b. Missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors
    c. Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules
    d. Regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions

     e. Wrong psychological predicate constructions (i.e. predicates describing how a person feels)

     f. Improper selection of complement types (i.e. subordinate clauses)

(2) Local errors include errors in noun and adverb inflections, articles, auxiliaries, formation of quantifiers, and etc.

d. Surface Strategy Taxonomy: This taxonomy concentrates on the ways in which surface structures are altered. Using this taxonomy, Dulay et al (1982) divide errors into the following categories: (1) omission, (2) additions, (3) misinformation, and (4) misordering. Omission is typical for the early stages of the second language acquisition, whereas in the intermediate stages, misinformation, misordering, or overuse are much more common.

2.7 Some Common Language Problems

Chen's (2002) and Ferris' (2003) studies respectively reveal common types of errors made by students. Bram (2012, p. 119) states that the word *error* here is interchangeable with the word *mistake*. It is now necessary to ask why learners' mistakes or errors need to be examined. Chen (2002) has an answer, which Bram (2012) finds justifiable, "… we need to recognize the value of error analysis in diagnosing students' individual errors, then helping them identify their weaknesses and cope with those problems". Thus, a list of common language problems will benefit both the learners and the teacher.

Table 1 lists eight types of errors and their frequency proposed by Chen (2002). In his study, Chen (2002) examined the characteristics and problems of Taiwanese university students, consisting of 28 first and third year students. The participants' task was to write a reflection: *My problems when writing in English*. The writing problems which the students identified were then grouped and counted.

Table 1. Types and Frequency of Errors

No.	Errors in order	Frequency
1.	Word usage	118
2.	Tense	58
3.	Definite article	54
4.	Prepositions	39
5.	Verbs	32
6.	Number, singular/plural	25
7.	Relative clauses	18
8.	Redundancy	17

Source: Chen (2002)

Table 2 below lists five main kinds of errors proposed by Ferris (2003). This shorter version was condensed from Ferris et al (2000) more detailed list, which contains 15 kinds of mistakes. Ferris et al (2000) analyzed over "5,700 errors marked by three ESL writing teachers on 146 texts written by 92 college-level ESL composition students. The marks … were classified into 15 different categories …". For practical purposes, Ferris (2003) provides a more concise list which might be easier to adopt.

Table 2. Error Types

No.	Error Types
1.	Verb errors
2.	Noun ending errors

3.	Article errors
4.	Word choice errors
5.	Sentence structure errors

Source: Ferris (2003)

It should be pointed out that although error types in Tables 1 and 2 are similar to a certain extent and both are applicable. Bram (2012, p. 120) suggested using *Minimum Requirements* which were originally developed by Fountain (nd). Bram's considerations for this decision are the list of Minimum Requirements is already in detail (accompanied by example problems) and fundamental aspects of the English language. Based on Bram's suggestion, the researchers used the list of Minimum Requirements to analyze the errors made by the fourth students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions.

2.8 Minimum Requirements

It is stated that Minimum Requirements which were originally developed by Fountain (nd) are already in detail (accompanied by example problems, namely: concord/agreement, finite verbs, tenses, verb groups, articles/determiners, punctuation, and spelling). The following are the explanation about the list of Minimum Requirements according to Bram (2012, pp. 121-123).

2.8.1 Concord/Agreement

First, you should make sure that you use the feminine and masculine pronouns correctly.

"My sister goes to school and *he* is in the second grade".

Second, you should make sure that you use the correct singular and plural forms for verbs and pronouns.

"Things which *interferes* …" "A teacher *want* …" "Tell the waitress to put *their* bag on …"

Third, you should make sure that you use the correct forms of the nouns after the following words.

one, a, an, each, another and *every* are followed by singular countable nouns.

"Each *trees* …" "*Another *music* …"

Both, these, those, many few, a few, two, three and other bigger numbers are followed by countable plural nouns. "*Many *pencil* …" "Those *bicycle* …" "*Three *elephant* …"

This and that are followed by uncountable and countable singular nouns (not plural nouns). "*This *houses* …"

Much is followed by an uncountable noun. "We saw much *stars* in the sky last night.

2.8.2 Finite Verbs

You should make sure that every simple sentence and the main (principle or independent) clause in every complex sentence, each has a finite verb. "*We happy". "*She written a letter". "When they arrived, *Trat reading".

2.8.3 Tenses

You should make sure that you do not change the tense from present to past or from past to present unless you have a good reason for doing so. "All participants were ready. The instructor *begin the training session".

2.8.4 Verb Groups

You should make sure that the verbs in questions (interrogatives) and negative constructions have the correct form. "He does not *allows …", Did they *liked fishing in the river?"

2.8.5 Articles/Determiners

First, if you use a singular countable noun, you should use a singular countable noun, you should make sure that you put **a**, **an**, **the** or a similar function word (for example, this or that) before the noun. "My friend put *book on *chair".

Second, if you use an uncountable noun or a plural countable noun, you should make sure that you do not put a or an before the noun. "They gave me *an information". "Did you see *a children in the street?"

When you write English, you must check to make sure that you do not make the mistakes in punctuation and spelling listed below.

2.8.6 Punctuation

First, you should use a capital letter (upper case) at the beginning of every sentence, a full stop or period (.) at the end of every statement, and a question mark (?) at the end of every question.

Second, you should use a capital letter to name of a person, town or country.

Third, you should make sure that you use the possessive apostrophe (') correctly. "The swan is cleaning *it's wings". "They found a *students bag".

2.8.7 Spelling

First, you should make sure that you correctly use the words *their, there, then*, and *than*.

Second, when a word ends in p, t, d, m, n and l and has a short vowel in its final (stressed) syllable, the consonant should be doubled when the suffixes *-able, -ed,* and *-ing* are added. Note that in some contexts, the doubling of the letter **l** does not apply to American English, which spells traveling and traveled, for example, with a single **l.** In British English, a double **l** is used**,** as in, **travelling** and **travelled**.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research is usually conducted in order to fill a gap in the prevailing knowledge or understanding of a subject field. Talking about research design, Cheek (2008, p. 761) gives her opinion as follows:

> Put simply, research design refers to the way in which a research idea is transformed into a research project or plan that can then be carried out in practice by a researcher or research team. However, research design is more than just the selection of

methods or techniques to be used in collecting data for a particular study. Rather, the term refers to and encompasses decisions about how the research itself is conceptualized, the subsequent conduct of a specific research project, and ultimately the type of contribution the research is intended to make to the development of knowledge in a particular area. Importantly, the process of developing a research design combines three broadly connected and interdependent components: the theoretical, methodological, and ethical considerations relevant to the specific project.

In conducting this research, the researchers applied descriptive research design in order to describe systematically the facts of area of interest factually and accurately. Isaac & Michael (1982, p. 46) state that descriptive research is used in the literal sense of describing situations or events. It is the accumulation of a data base that is solely descriptive.

3.2 Data and Data Source

The errors made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions are the data of this research and the students' English compositions entitled About Me are the data source in this research.

3.3 The Subject of the Research

The subject of this research is the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018. There are 21 students as the subject of the research.

3.4 The Technique of Collecting Data

The technique of collecting data in this research is by asking the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year 2017/2018 to write an English composition entitled About Me.

3.5 The Techniques of Analyzing Data

Miles' and Huberman's model (1988) was applied to analyze the data descriptively. This model is focused on four activities. The four activities can be seen in the following figure.
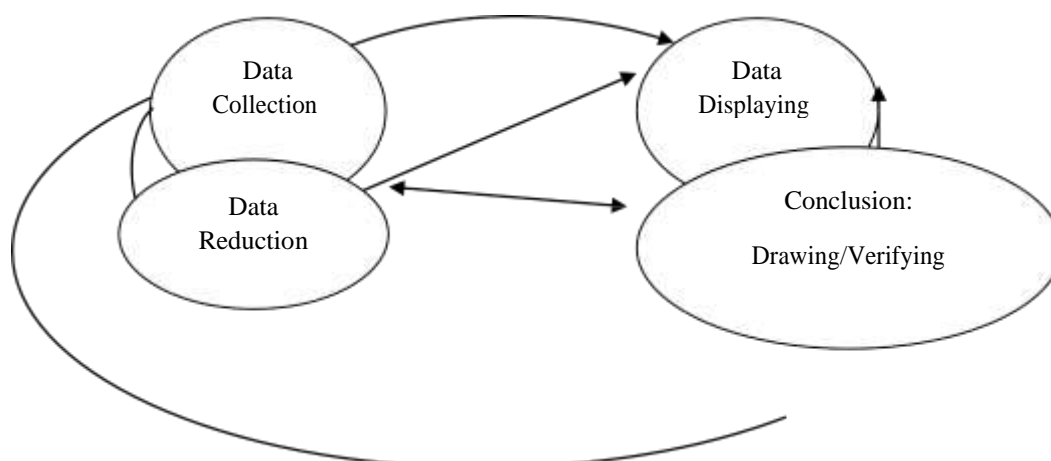

Figure 3.1 Miles' and Huberman's Data Analysis Model

Each activity was explained as follows:

1) Data Collection

The data were collected by asking the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year 2017/2018 to write an English composition entitled About Me.

2) Data Reduction

The writer did not reduce any data because all students wrote their English compositions completely.

3) Data Display

After finding out the errors made by the students in their English compositions, the writer displayed the data in the tables.

4) Conclusion Drawing

After completing the data analysis, then the conclusions were drawn in order to answer the research question.

3.6 The Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness has become an important concept because it allows researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters that are typically applied in quantitative research. Given & Saumure (2008, p. 895) state that the concepts of generalizability, internal validity, reliability, and objectivity are reconsidered in qualitative terms. These alternative terms include transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability. In essence, trustworthiness can be thought of as the ways in which qualitative researchers ensure that transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability are evident in their research. In sum, trustworthiness provides qualitative researchers with a set of tools by which they can illustrate the worth of their project outside the confines of the often ill-fitting quantitative parameters (Given & Saumure, 2008, p. 896). The followings are the further explanations about the trustworthiness of the study.

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility and internal validity are also considered to be parallel concepts. Given & Saumure (2008, p. 895) say that a study possesses internal validity if the researchers have successfully measured what they ought to measure. In contrast, a credible study is one where the researchers have accurately and richly described the phenomenon in question. Here, instead of ensuring that one has measured what one set out to measure, one is making sure that they have accurately represented the data.

3.6.2 Transferability

Due to the nature of the qualitative methodologies, it is not appropriate to have the large sample populations found in some quantitative studies, which might have a sample of 500 to 1.000-plus participants. With any study, there should be careful thought into selecting the participants with the inherent notion that they somehow represent the entire population. Jensen (2008, p. 886) states that this being the case, researchers and readers can then begin to make connections from the revealed data to both local and entire community-level behavior and practice. These considerations are applied to qualitative methodologies through a process called transferability.

In increasing the transferability of a study, there are two strategies proposed by Jensen (2008, p. 886). The first is through thick description. Thick description means that the researcher provides the reader with a full and purposeful account of the context, participants, and research design so that the reader can make their own determinations about

transferability. The other methodology is through purposeful sampling. Here, participants are selected because they most represent the research design, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

3.6.3 Dependability

One of the challenges of working within a qualitative context is the variability of the environment. Through extensive literature reviews and experience in the context, a researcher can create a pretty good theoretical understanding of what the environment will be like and then design appropriate methodologies for studying it. Once the researcher is out in the field, he or she may find it to be quite different from what was expected. This could affect research procedures such as what types of interview questions are asked and how many interviews are conducted.

Talking about dependability, Jensen (2008, p. 209) states that dependability also addresses the fact that the research context is open to change and variation. The researcher must be conscious of change and must track all of the nuances that differ from the design in the proposal. As part of this, the researcher should track the alterations to the research design made necessary by the changing context. This could include changes in methodology such as increasing the number of interviews required, tracking nonverbal cues as well as spoken text, including document analysis, increasing intercoder reliability by having more coders, and/or increasing contact time in the environment from 1 week to 2 weeks. Tracking this process is called an inquiry audit. An external agent will review the researcher's field notes and log book to ensure that the various changes in the research design have both methodological and theoretical foundations and are linked to the revealed data. The transparency and relevancy of this process will increase the dependability of the study. Dependability accounts for these issues through relevant methodologies.

3.6.4 Confirmability

The next pair to be considered is objectivity and confirmability. Given & Saumure (2008, p. 895) say that in an objective study, the data is considered to be unbiased. Confirmability, on the other hand, reflects the need to ensure that the interpretations and findings match the data. That is, no claims are made that cannot be supported by the data.

IV. Research Findings

After analyzing the data, the researchers found the research findings as follows:

1) There are 60 errors altogether made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions.

2) The students dominantly made errors in punctuation, namely 19 errors of 60 errors (31.7%). There are 11 errors in preposition (18.3%), seven errors in concord/agreement (11.7%), seven errors in finite verbs (11.7%), six errors in articles (10%), four errors in spelling (6.7%), two errors in tenses (3.3%), two errors in verb groups (3.3%) and two errors in word choice (3.3%).

3) In analyzing the errors made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions, the researchers used the list of Minimum Requirements which was originally developed by Fountain (nd). Minimum Requirements are already in detail (accompanied by example problems, namely: concord/agreement, finite verbs, tenses, verb groups, articles/determiners, punctuation, and spelling). After

analyzing the data, the researchers found two more example problems. They are preposition and word choice.

V. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the researchers concluded that there are nine kinds of error made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions. The nine errors are concord/agreement, finite verbs, tenses, verb groups, articles/determiners, punctuation, spelling, preposition, and word choice. There are 60 errors made by the fourth semester students of English Language Education Study Program of Catholic University of Saint Thomas in the Academic Year of 2017/2018 in their English compositions. The students dominantly made errors in punctuation, i.e. 19 errors of 60 errors (31.7%). There are 11 errors in preposition (18.3%), seven errors in concord/agreement (11.7%), seven errors in finite verbs (11.7%), six errors in articles (10%), four errors in spelling (6.7%), two errors in tenses (3.3%), two errors in verb groups (3.3%) and two errors in word choice (3.3%).

NOTE

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