

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the issues discussed in second language acquisition studies is the deviant form of learners' language, namely errors. The core idea in error analysis is the fact that although Second Language (L2) learners have the cognitive ability in their mind to learn and acquire the L2, it is hard for them to avoid errors. As a matter of fact, L2 learners have their own systems in producing errors, by actively forming rules, sometimes over-generalizing them, and gradually adapting them (Littlewood, 1984). By studying the errors that L2 learners make, L2 researchers may be able to reveal the types of errors committed by L2 learners. Consequently, studying errors also has immediate practical applications for foreign language teachers in which errors provide feedback. They tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and techniques, and show them what parts of the syllabus that have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention (Corder, 1973). Therefore, committing errors must be seen as a natural new step ahead in the learning process rather than a fatal point of total failure (Littlewood, 1984). The notion of error analysis is then changed, from the pessimistic view to the optimistic view. More studies in error analysis are, thus, held to stimulate improvements in teaching practices.

Based on the issue stated above, L2 learners may also produce a deviant form of the language which is caused by slip of the tongue, fatigue, excitement and so on, of what is so-called "performance errors (lapses) or mistakes". In studying errors, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between *mistake* and *error*, the systematic deviations due to the learner's still developing knowledge of the L2 rule system (Corder, 1967). A learner cannot self-correct an error because he or she does not know what the correct form is. In other words, errors reflect the learner's current stage of L2 development or underlying competence. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine which one is a mistake and which one is

an error, and it will take a much more sophisticated study (Corder, 1973). According to Ellis, we cannot absolutely certain when a learner produces a deviant form; it is not just an accidental slip of the tongue (Ellis, 1997). As a result, in this study, I disregard the distinction between errors and mistakes, and I decide to refer all deviant form that the L2 learners make to **errors**.

In order to render a more specific and complete classification of errors, a study conducted in this field must include all the linguistics components. The linguistics components are lexicon, syntax, morphology, orthography and phonology. In the errors investigation in composition, there are four linguistics subcategories that must be included such as lexical, morphological, syntactic, and orthography subcategories (Hendrickson, 1979). For one thing, the *lexical subcategory* refers to the misuse and omission of any unbound morpheme of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs; for example, the L2 learners misuse the word 'hours' for 'wristwatch.' Secondly, the *morphological subcategory* includes any misuse and omission of a required bound morpheme; for instance, L2 learners may produce the utterance, "I'm so surprising," instead of, "I'm so surprised." Next, the *syntactic subcategory* deals with the misused and omission of articles, demonstrative and possessive adjectives, modals, qualifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, sentence connectors, subordinators, question words, faulty word order and certain uncategorized syntactic structure. For example, the L2 learners say, "They *enjoy highly* the lesson," and not, "They *highly enjoy* the lesson" (wrong word-order). Last of all, the *orthographic subcategory* consists of the addition, omission, substitution, rearrangement or malformation of one or more letters in any lexical, morphological or syntactic form or structures, as well as any error in punctuation or capitalization. The orthographic error can be seen in this sentence, "The plaen went to skiy" ('plane'; 'sky'). By discussing these four linguistic subcategories, the classification of errors done in this research, hopefully, can give a full insight on the students' ability in composing an essay. In addition, it is important to note that this study excludes the phonological errors classification for it deals with the essays written by the students of Writing I; therefore, the phonological category is not applicable.

As ESL learners, students of English Department, Petra Christian University are required to take a series of skill courses such as Writing, Reading, Listening and Speaking. Specifically in Writing I class, the students are only obliged to compose a simple composition, and not a complex one. The students are only asked to write a narrative and descriptive composition, and not an argumentative or the persuasive one. Even though it seems to be very simple, there are some students who find it difficult to express their ideas in the written form. In addition, since the students are freshly graduated from high school, their abilities in writing are still very limited. As a result, errors cannot be avoided. However, it is required of the English Department students to be able to write a composition. Due to this reasons, in this study, I use fifteen compositions written by fifteen students of Writing I as my source of data since I believe that it will provide me with a lot of types of errors that are needed for the errors' classification.

The written form is particularly interesting to discuss, for its formality in expressing the ideas. It is not always easy to state an idea in a formal written form, especially for the beginners. In addition, writing a composition also demands the writers to have the ability to organize and unite the details or ideas into a complete paragraph. Since composing a piece of writing is regarded as a way of transferring ideas, an ideal composition should fulfill the four basic requirements, which are unity, support, coherence and effective sentence skills. Therefore, it raises a question on whether L2 learners, in this case the students of Writing I, also adhere the rules so that they can be said to be fully competent writers. If not, then, errors would be committed frequently.

In summary, investigating the types of errors in English compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University is then worth doing. By revealing the error types and classifying them, I can provide a complete classification of error in error analysis study, under the subject of Second Language Acquisition. In this way, it will be clear whether an error is classified as lexical, morphological or syntactical error in English composition.

1.2 Research Questions

My study on the types of errors in the English compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University tries to answer these following questions:

1. What are the types of lexical errors that are found in the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University?
2. What are the types of morphological errors that are found in the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University?
3. What are the types of the syntactic errors that are found in the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University?
4. What are the types of the orthographic errors that are found in the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University?
5. Which type of error, in terms of lexical, morphological, syntactic, or orthographic that is committed most frequently in the compositions?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study is conducted due to my curiosity about the types of errors based on the lexical, morphological, syntactic and orthographic categories. Therefore, by conducting this research, I aim to reveal the types of lexical, morphological, syntactic, and orthographic errors that are found in compositions. In addition, I also intend to find out which type of errors that is produced most frequently in the compositions.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Focusing on the study on the types of errors found in the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University, I expect that the result of this study can contribute more understanding

about the error types based on linguistic categories in Second Language Acquisition. More importantly, this study is also hoped to give some contributions for the development of the theory of error analysis. Furthermore, I hope that this study would give some valuable inputs for second language teachers, especially the teachers at the English Department, Petra Christian University. In this particular case, by revealing the errors produced by the students of Writing I in writing a composition, the study might contribute some clues in which aspect(s) should be given more emphasis in the teaching process so as to decrease the number of errors committed by the students in writing their compositions. Last of all, this study, hopefully, is worthy as an additional reference to those who want to conduct further studies in this field.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

As this research deals with the types of errors in terms of lexical, morphological, syntactic and orthographic based on the compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department, Petra Christian University, it deals with language acquisition. Specifically, it is included in the study of Second Language Acquisition, in this case, English. Here, the classification is limited to the lexical, morphological, syntactic and orthographic categories; whereas, the phonological classification is excluded. This study does not include the explanation of the causes of errors. As the source of data, I use fifteen compositions written by the students of Writing I at the English Department of Petra Christian University in order to have sufficient data of errors.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Second Language Acquisition

The way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside the classroom (Ellis, 1997).

2. Lexical Error

Errors that occur due to the misuse or omission of any unbound morpheme of nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs, for example, the use of ‘cattle’ instead of ‘sheep’ (Hendrickson, 1979).

3. Morphological Error

Errors that occur due to the misuse or omission of a required bound morpheme, for example errors in tense markers such as, “He *singed* that song brilliantly,” instead of, “He *sang* that song brilliantly” (Hendrickson, 1979).

Errors that deal with the indefinite article incorrect, possessive case incorrect (‘s), third person singular verb incorrect, simple past tense incorrect, past participle incorrect, and comparative adjective/adverb incorrect, for example, “He got up *more higher*” (Politzer & Ramirez, 1973)

4. Syntactic Error

Errors that occur due to the misuse or omission of articles, demonstrative and possessive adjective, modals, qualifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, sentence connectors, subordinators, question word, wrong word order, and certain uncategorized syntactic classes, for example, “The man works *on* the office,” instead of, “The man works *at* the office” (Hendrickson, 1979).

Errors that deal with the misuse or omission of noun phrase, verb phrase, verb-and-verb construction, word order, and some transformations (including negative transformation, question transformation, ‘there’ transformation, and subordinate clause transformation), for example, “He (fell) in the water” → omission of verb (Politzer & Ramirez, 1973).

5. Orthographic Error

Errors that occur only in written communication which consists of addition, omission, substitution, rearrangement, or malformation of one or more letters in any lexical, morphological or syntactic form, and also error

in punctuation or capitalization, for example, “He lives in *new york*” (Hendrickson, 1979).

1.7 The Organization of the Study

In order to have a well-organized study, I include five chapters in this study. The first chapter is an introduction in which I give the general explanation concerning the background of the study, research questions, purpose and significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms. Then, in chapter II, I provide review of the related literature. The next chapter is for methodology, in which I explain how the data is collected and analyzed. After that, I am going to put the findings of the investigation and the analysis of the finding in chapter IV. This chapter is also to answer the research questions. Finally, chapter V is for the conclusion of this research. By applying this organization, I hope that I can do the investigation as well as presenting the findings in a systematic way.