

Examining University Teachers' Writing Errors in the Philippines: Implications for Teacher Qualifications

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ABSTRACT

Since teachers are known to be models in the classroom, mastery of the course they teach and a good English proficiency should be a few of the qualities that should be considered. This present study attempts to identify, classify, and analyze the sentence-level writing errors found in the compositions of fifty (50) selected probationary faculty members in one of the universities in Mindanao, Philippines. The instrument used in the study was the participants' composition in English. Fifty compositions were subjected to error identification, classification, and analysis. Findings revealed that syntactical errors were found common in the participants' compositions. Other errors found were lexical, morphological, and mechanical. The results showed that the probationary faculty members really need a refresher course on the basics of the language for the enhancement of their language ability. The implication of this study is for the school administrators, deans, and department heads to look into the English proficiency of their faculty members and design a language enhancement training program to address the problem.

Keywords: Error analysis, faculty members, language proficiency, sentence-level errors, writing skills

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INTRODUCTION

Considering the role and responsibility of the teacher as respected authority and model, it is very important that qualification standards and merits are strictly upheld in the recruitment process by the schools, universities, and colleges. Although some studies in the literature revealed that a

number of school districts worldwide faced a challenging issue and a serious concern on teacher shortages (Aragon, 2016; Barth et al., 2016; Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2015), this does not mean that hiring qualified, proficient, and effective teachers will no longer be taken into account. A combination of proper motivation, carefully thought out teaching strategies, a rich variety of teaching tools or instructional materials, commitment and a good command of the English language should be a few of the basis for the teachers to be part in the teaching profession. Cárdenas and Chaves (2013), Namaghi and Hosseini (2015), O'Dowd (2015), and Samson and Collins (2012) clarified that English proficiency among teachers should be emphasized in order to prepare them to teach courses using English as a medium of instruction.

In the Philippines, the education system is patterned after the American system, with English as the medium of instruction. The English language is used as the primary medium of instruction in all public and private institutions of learning in the secondary level, including those established as laboratory and/or experimental schools, and non-formal and vocational or technical educational institutions. As the primary medium of instruction, the percentage of time allotment for learning areas conducted in the English language is expected to be not less than 70% of the total time allotment for all learning areas in the secondary level (Executive Order No. 210, s. 2003). Even in tertiary education, all higher institutions in the country were encouraged to adopt the use of the English language as the

primary medium of instruction. With this, an accepted English language proficiency level in speaking and writing is required even of teachers who teach courses other than English (Department of Education, 2016). Likewise, the Department of Education (DepEd), through the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines [NEAP], the Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force [EDPITAF], the CHED, the TESDA, as well as through the educational institutions in the private sector, was mandated to evaluate the proficiency of educators in the English language and conduct training programs nationwide to develop and improve it (Executive Order No. 210, s. 2003).

Although language requirements are not as exacting for teachers who do not teach English, still in their classes, discussion is facilitated by using the English language. In fact, English is most likely to be conveniently adopted as the lingua franca in many classrooms in Mindanao, Philippines because of the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students. Likewise, in the case of an English teacher, anything less than mastery or perfect command of the second language calls to question the competence of the teacher. For the students, the language classroom is a venue where language is taught, learned and reinforced. They depend so much on the teacher's competence to model and master the English language.

Thus, this present study aims at identifying, classifying, and analyzing the sentence-level language errors found in the written output of selected probationary

faculty members in one of the private universities in Mindanao, Philippines. It is expected that through this study, the university's administration, the human resource management, and the heads of the different academic departments in different public and private education institutions in the ASEAN region could draw ideas in hiring and training of English language teachers. Studies of this kind is not only relevant in the Philippine context, but also to all the nations in the ASEAN region where the teaching of English has been of great importance since English has been used as a common language and a lingua franca in the region.

RELATED LITERATURE

Historical Development of Error Analysis

The study of error analysis in the field of second language teaching and learning has been going on for some time and it has still captured the interest of many researchers. The work of Corder (1967) became influential in the later developments of error analysis (EA) in the second language that it opens for more studies and debates. It was thought to be an alternative to Lado's (1957) work on Contrastive Analysis (CA). While CA believed that errors were solely products from the interference of the first language, there are some types of errors which cannot be justified by interference alone. Thus, the focus shifted from contrastive analysis to error analysis in the late 1960's (Lennon, 2008; Tomkova, 2013). Although both CA and EA shared the same purpose of

explaining and identifying the sources of learners' errors, they differed significantly in the process of doing it (Tomkova, 2013). CA only focused on first language interference as the cause of errors in learning the target language, while EA indicated that there are a number of sources of learners' errors. These sources of errors are constantly manifested among language learners learning the target language and whose first language is not English. These errors can then be carried over to learning their second or target language (Lennon, 2008). In other words, learning English as a second language always entails errors regardless of one's first language.

Consequently, with the development of error analysis as a linguistic method (Tomkova, 2013) to explain and identify the sources of errors in the second language learning, it is best to distinguish the difference between "errors" and "mistakes". Some definitions and distinctions between the two terms were illustrated in the literature. For example, Corder (1973) identified mistakes as lapses and as 'breaches of code' of native speakers since by definition, the learners know the formation rules of their mother tongue. However, an error is "a systematic deviation from what is regarded as the norm" by a foreign learner of the language. Edge (1989) used mistake as a generic term that applies to a number of categories of incorrect use or forms: slips which a student can self-correct; errors which a student cannot self-correct, but where it is clear which form the student wanted to use, and where the class is familiar with that

form; and attempts, where students have no real idea how to structure what they want to mean, where intended meaning and structure are not clear to the teacher. In this construct, there is a big group known as mistakes of form which occur when the speaker's English departs from standard English. He also distinguished between two sorts of mistake: the mistake that occurs when a speaker uses a correct piece of language (linguistic form) that does not mean what the speaker wanted to mean, and the mistake that occurs when the speaker uses a correct form which, unfortunately, is socially inappropriate or unacceptable. As quite clear from the foregoing discussion, mistake is an umbrella term covering several types or classes, including errors.

Masorong (2010) asserted that mistakes were inevitable since learners tried different ways to master the language as a means for a more effective communication. Thus, errors provide valuable insight into the language learning process not just to the learners of the target language, but also to ELT practitioner. It is errors that serve as the basis for a more effective program for the treatment of the errors committed. Lastly, according to Brown (2000), a "mistake" refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an "error" is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. This recognition process is followed by the error description process. Learners' sentences are compared with the correct sentences in the target

language and finding the errors follows. Then comes the next step—explanation stage, or finding the sources of errors. The beginning stages of learning a second language are characterized by a good deal of interlingual transfer from the native language. In the early stages, the native language is the only linguistic system upon which the learner can draw. These kinds of errors can be found in all aspects of language learning. Intralingual transfer (within the target language itself) is also a major factor. At an intermediate level, learners' previous experience and existing level of competence begin to influence structures within the target language itself. Most of the time, negative intralingual transfer or overgeneralization occurs, and these kinds of errors are called developmental errors. It has also been found that overgeneralization makes the study of the psychological process of language learners significant. Cultural interference can cause either linguistic errors or inappropriateness in certain contexts. In addition, it sometimes hinders communication, so it should be taken seriously.

Errors and mistakes are usually thought of as a problem. However, authorities in the field have now this area of agreement: errors are a useful or necessary part of language learning. They are the indicators of the stage or progress of one's language learning (Abu-Jarad, 1986; Corder, 1973; Dulay & Burt, 1974; Richards, 1974; Richards & Sampson, 1974; Selinker, 1992). Hence, errors must not be regarded as evils that hinder progress of learning. They in fact reveal the strategies

and styles that learners devise and use to learn in their struggle to master the language system of the target language. Analyzing the learners' language errors is the key towards understanding their language ability.

Related Studies on Error Analysis

Studies which focused on the analysis of EFL/ESL and the errors in the speech or in the written materials include that of Ananda et al. (2014). The researchers investigated the types of sentence errors and their frequency made by 44 first grader students from a high school in Banda Aceh in their writing of English. The findings revealed that three out of four sentence errors in the students' writing were fragmented sentences while nearly a quarter of the errors were run-on or comma splice sentences. The researchers also found that there were only a few choppy sentence errors and no stringy sentence errors.

Jabeen et al. (2015) tried to investigate why Pakistani ESL and Iranian EFL learners failed to produce grammatically correct sentences in English in spite of having English as a compulsory subject at all levels in their learning institutions and schools. Findings revealed that students lacked grammatical accuracy in their writing and they were not sure of the grammatical rules that may apply in their writing in English. To this, the researchers concluded that the participants were highly influenced by the rules of their first language (L1). Likewise, Tesfaye and Tsadik (2015) also made a study on error analysis by focusing on the common errors made by graduating

trainees in selected colleges of Oromia Regional State. The researchers chose the sample group which consisted of 200 learners. The results indicated that the learners made extensive errors in spelling, word choice, sentence fragment, verb form, capitalization; errors in punctuation/comma splices, word form, and run on sentences.

Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) conducted the same study on error analysis to fifteen Akan speakers in the Junior High School (JHS) in Ghana. The study made use of ninety (90) written essays that were subjected for analysis. Findings revealed that transliteration, omissions, wrong word use, L1 induced spelling errors and wrong pronoun use were the errors that occurred in the students' writings as a result of L1 interference. It was also identified that transliteration and omission errors were the most frequently committed by Akan speakers.

In the local scene, the immediate antecedent of the present study is Anonas' (2008) inquiry on the problem for her master's thesis "Error Analysis of the Interoffice Correspondence of Selected MSU Offices, 2007-2008". Error analysis was performed on corpora of texts consisting of Special Orders, memorandums, cover letters, endorsements, and letters from the offices of the President, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Graduate School. Findings revealed that most of the errors, a total of one hundred sixty-six (166) comprising 90.36% of the sum collected from the entire body of data, were local errors; the remaining one hundred fifty

(150), forming only 9.64%, were global. It was further found that the causes or sources of the errors were mostly developmental, interlingual (influence of L1 on L2), and ambiguous. Further, that despite this seemingly large number of errors found to mar the compositions, on the whole, clarity of the meaning did not suffer much, thus comprehension of the intended message and the communicative purpose of the language was still achieved, although with some difficulty.

The study of Masorong, completed in 2010 for her thesis “An Error Analysis Performed on English 230 Students’ ELPT Compositions: A Basis for a Proposed Intensive Grammar Enhancement (2009),” could count among the more recent investigations that lent impetus to the present study (Masorong, 2010). As in the study of Anonas (2008), errors gathered from the Test of Written English (TWE) compositions of the English 230 students who took the ELPT in the SY 2008-2009, were first broadly classified as local or global, then classified into the three categories, according to the level at which they occurred: morphological, syntactic, and lexical. Another group of errors, Mechanical/Others was treated separately. Of the six hundred and seventy-eight (678) errors discovered, 83.2% were determined to be local, and the rest comprising 16.8% identified as global. Out of the total of 678 local errors, 154 (27.3%) were classified as syntactic errors, thus the most numerous in terms of frequency. This category was closely followed by lexical errors (26.4%);

morphological errors (20.9%) formed the smallest group.

All the studies mentioned above formed part of the basis of this study – theoretical and methodological; the rest, particularly the related studies reviewed provided empirical support as well. However, it is worth mentioning here that these studies did not include examination of the errors of faculty members as the focal concern of the study. They only concentrated on the errors committed by struggling learners of English as a second or foreign language. Thus, this present study is conducted in order to provide additional literature on error analysis with faculty members of a university as participants. It is hoped that through this, other education institutions, teacher education programs, and heads of different academic organizations in the ASEAN context would be able to check on their teacher professional development programs and address the language proficiency problem of their teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types or classes of language errors are found in the compositions of the participating faculty members?
2. What could account for the occurrence of these types of errors?
3. What implication does this study have for the education institutions, and teacher educations program with regards to the English proficiency of their faculty members?

METHODOLOGY

For this study, a combined quantitative-qualitative design was adopted. It is quantitative-qualitative because it determined the demographic profile of the faculty-respondents and used frequency count and percentage in analyzing the errors in the compositions. Likewise, the data were gathered through documentary or content analysis and a non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling.

Participants

Of the 77 fulltime probationary faculty members in one of the private universities in Mindanao, Philippines, only 50 (38 females; 12 males), their informed consent secured, took part as the participants of this study. The other 27 were not free during the conduct of the study. Furthermore, these faculty members were the probationary

lecturers of Arts and Sciences and other selected programs in the university. There were 32 participants who had only earned a bachelor's degree and 18 who were taking their master's degree. Most of the participants had 1 to 3 years of teaching experience and had been using English as their second language. They had been also using English as their medium of instruction in the classroom. The researcher considered them as ideal respondents of the study since they had not yet been awarded tenure; and one of the qualifications for tenure was language proficiency through a written exam and interview. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Data Gathering Procedure

This research study made use of non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. From the population of

Table 1
Demographic profile and distribution of the respondents

Programs	Total number of respondents	Number of BS/AB Degree Holders	Number of MA/MS units earners	Years of Teaching Experience (1-3 years)	Years of Teaching Experience (4-6 years)
Arts and Sciences (full-time probationary and part-time faculty)	29	20	9	19	10
Accountancy	2	2		2	
Business Administration	3	3			3
Computer Studies and IT	2	2		2	
Engineering and Technology	2	2		2	

Table 1 (Continued)

Programs	Total number of respondents	Number of BS/AB Degree Holders	Number of MA/MS units earners	Years of Teaching Experience (1-3 years)	Years of Teaching Experience (4-6 years)
Law Enforcement Academy	1	1		1	
Nursing	8		8	3	5
Teacher Education	3	2	1	2	1
Total	50	32	18	31	19

probationary faculty, the researcher selected only those who were not tenured yet and were willing to join the study as respondents. It also made use of a modified survey questionnaire to draw the demographic profile of the respondents. Before administering the survey questionnaires, the self-constructed tool was submitted to the researcher's adviser to ensure the validity of the items.

The first step taken by the researcher in order to start the research, particularly the collection of needed data was to inform the Office of the Vice President for the Academic Affairs through a letter of permission to conduct the study in the said university, with some of the institution's fulltime probationary faculty members as participants. It was made clear in the letter the purpose of the study and its contribution to the university. After securing the essential approval from said office, the researcher then forwarded the letter to the Office of the Human Resource Management Division and to the Office of the President of the university. He had to make sure that he had institutional support or cooperation for the research undertaking.

After obtaining approval from the Office of the President, the researcher then wrote a letter addressed to the participants informing them about the purpose of the research and that they were chosen as participants. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the study, and that their participation was voluntary. In order to convene them at a common time and place, the researcher organized a one-half day lecture type seminar on K+ 12 with the Dean of the Teacher Education Program as the resource speaker. After the resource speaker delivered her lecture in the morning, the researcher asked the respondents to write a 2-3 paragraph piece on how they felt about the implementation of K+12 in the Philippines, a move of the DepEd which has stirred up a raging controversy in the afternoon. Thus, since the faculty-respondents had the whole afternoon to write on their reflections, the writing activity was untimed. However, most of the respondents finished the writing in 2 hours.

The researcher then photocopied the written outputs, read and highlighted the errors in the composition, and forwarded these to the three language experts to check

and validate the identification of errors. With the help of the three expert raters, the written outputs were subjected to analysis, following the procedure outlined by Corder (1967): recognition or identification, description, and explanation. The researcher retrieved the body of data from the raters after three (3) weeks for analysis and tabulation. Then the data were submitted to the statistician to apply the appropriate descriptive statistics, specifically measure of central tendency.

FINDINGS

As shown in Table 2, errors were distributed in terms of frequency of occurrence as well as percentage. Thus, lexical, 40 (33.89%); syntactic, 56 (47.47%); and morphological, 22 (18.64). Errors occurring at the syntactic level formed the largest group (47.47%), comprising nearly 50% of the total number of local errors. There is a wide margin between it and the next class, the lexical (33.89%), and a much wider margin between the two and the morphological group of errors, which constituted only 18.64%.

Table 3 shows the list of types of errors committed by the participants in the study. These are broken down into more specific types under the three subdivisions or areas: lexical, syntactic, and morphological. Lexical errors were identified as follows: Verb (omission/Misuse of verb form); Noun (misuse/omission of noun); Adjective (misuse/omission of adjective); Adverb (misuse/omission of adverb). In this class, the most numerous was the Verb (omission/Misuse of verb form) group which had 25 or 21.19%. Trailing behind were Noun (misuse/omission of noun), 8 (6.78%), Adjective (misuse/omission of adjective), 6 (5.08%); and Adverb (misuse/omission of adverb), 1 (0.85%). Sample errors and their corrections are shown in Table 4.

The fault in the sentence in item 1 as presented in Table 4, is in the use of the verb "be". Since it is preceded by the "be" verb. The verb "enhance" should be in the past participle form. The verb enhance being a regular verb, its past participle would require only the addition of "-ed," hence, enhanced.

Table 2

Frequency and percentage distribution of errors by categories: Lexical, syntactic and morphological

Errors	Frequency	Percentage %
Lexical	40	33.89
Syntatic	56	47.47
Morphological	22	18.64
Total	118	100

Table 3
Distribution of errors by specific category

Errors		Frequency	Percentage %
Lecical Errors	Verb (Omission/Misuse of verb form)	25	21.19
	Noun (Misuse/omission of noun)	8	6.78
	Adjective (Misuse/omission of adjective)	6	5.08
	Adverb (Misuse/omission of adverb)	1	0.85
Syntatic Errors	Articles (Misuse/omission of article)	13	11.02
	Pronouns (Misuse/omission of pronouns)	10	8.70
	Word Order	5	4.24
	Prepositions (Misuse/omission of prepositions)	28	23.73
Morphological Errors	Subject-verb Agreement (Improper use of subject-verb agreement)	15	12.71
	Plural Markers (Improper use of plural markers)	7	5.70
Total		118	100

Table 4
Sample lexical errors and their corrections

Lexical errors	Corrections
1. ...our present Basic Ed curriculum needs to be enhance.	1. ...our present basic education curriculum needs to be enhanced.
2. I hope the program to be offer will be for free.	2. a. I hope that the program to be offered will be for free. 2. b. I hope that the program will be offered for free.
3. If this K12 will__ implemented what will be the assurance that the students who will be enroll in this program will ready in facing the future?	3. a. If this K12 will be implemented, what will be the assurance that the students who will be enrolled in this program are ready to face the future? 3. b. If this K12 will be implemented, what will be the assurance that the students who will enroll in this program are ready to face the future?

In sentence number 2, it represents the same case – i.e. erroneous use of “be” verbs. It has an incorrect verb form of “offer”. The verb “offer” should also be in the past participle form since it follows the verb “be”.

A more terse but straightforward version appears in item 2.b. There is a rub, though. The gain in simplicity and concision could be at the cost of sacrificing an important thought, that is, the futurity of the program in question; the program is apparently still on the drawing board. However, if in a preceding sentence, the futurity of the program has been established, the second version is the better choice.

Following in sentence 3 is another sample sentence that illustrates the same problem as the cases above. This time, the error is caused by the omission of the “be” verb, which forms a unit with the helping or auxiliary verb *will* and the main verb *implemented*.

The first verb “implemented” should have been preceded by the verb “be”, making it “will be implemented”; instead in the original sentence, the verb *be* is missing, thus the erroneous construction “will implemented”. The writer here forgot to insert the word “be” that is, if it is a simple case of carelessness or sloppiness. Or, it could be a case of inadequate knowledge/application of the rule or correct form: helping/auxiliary verb+ verb *be* + main verb.

The other error has to do with the verb *enroll* which is preceded again by the verb “be”, but remains in the base form. This time, the writer forgot to use past participle form of the verb *enroll*.

In the second recast (3.b.), the monotony created by the repetition of the past participle structure in the second half of the sentence – an embedded question – is relieved by the use of the simple future tense, *will enroll*.

Syntactical errors were classified under the following headings: Articles (misuse/omission of article); Pronouns (misuse/omission of pronouns); Word Order; and Prepositions (misuse/omission of prepositions). Prepositions (misuse/omission of prepositions) have the highest number of errors, 28 (23.73%). Errors involving articles (misuse/omission of articles) formed only nearly half of that number, 13 (11.02%). Sample errors are shown in Table 5.

In Table 5, sentence number 1 shows an error in the use of the definite article “the” as an article for “other countries.” To repair the sentence necessitates crossing out the unwanted article. Likewise, another error that occurs in the same sentence is the misuse of the preposition “for” when the correct preposition is of.

Sentence number 2 violates the rule of parallelism because of the omission of the article “a” before the noun “mentor”. The repaired version of the sentence is given in the correction section with the insertion of the article “a” before the noun “mentor”. Putting right the sentence included the deletion of the unwanted and unnecessary preposition “for” which the verb “support” before it does not call for. If “support” were used as a noun, the preposition for could stay because that is what is idiomatic.

The following sentence number 3 also contains errors in the use of article “the”.

Table 5
Sample syntactical errors and their corrections

Syntactical errors	Correction
1. Unlike the other countries, the Philippines has only 10 years for basic education.	1. Unlike other countries, the Philippines has only 10 years of basic education.
2. As mentor and an advocate of knowledge and education, I strongly support for the implementation of K12 without discrimination to the system of our education.	2. As a mentor and an advocate of knowledge and education, I strongly support the implementation of K12 without discriminating the system of our education.
3. There are the negative and positive attributes that it can bring to the country and people.	3. There are negative and positive effects that it can bring to the country and to the people.

The first sentence below shows a departure from the standard by the misuse of article “the”. The article “the” is only used for definite nouns. However, in the sentence, it is used with the adjective “negative”. The best way to correct this is to omit the article “the” before the adjective “negative”. Another error is the opposite of the addition of an unwanted or unnecessary “the” in the first half of the sentence. This time, the problem (still concerning the use of article) is one of omission. The article the is omitted before the noun “people”.

Morphological errors, on the other hand, were also classified according the following rubrics: Subject-verb Agreement (Improper use of subject-verb agreement) and Plural Markers (Improper use of plural markers). The former has the highest number of errors of 15 (12.71%), while the latter has only 7 (5.70%). Table 6 below shows sample sentences that have errors on using nouns.

Table 6
Sample morphological errors and their corrections

Morphological errors	Correction
1. I also feel uncertainty for i might fail to finish the next years path that im going to take.	1. I also feel uncertain for I might fail to finish the next year’s path that I am going to take.

The sentence in item 1 as presented in Table 6 makes use of the noun “uncertainty” which is wrongly used, thus making the meaning unclear. The writer in the sentence might mean to use the adjective form of “uncertain” to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

It is not only the misuse of noun that the sentence above is erroneous. It has also a mechanical error just like the omission of the punctuation in the word “year’s” to show possession the contraction form of I am which is “I’m” and capitalization of the pronoun “I”.

Table 7 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of other local errors found in the composition of the probationary faculty-respondents. Mechanical errors are errors which include Punctuation Marks (Improper/misuse use of punctuation marks), Capitalization (misuse of capitalization), and Misspelling/Typographical Errors.

While other types of language errors include Conjunction (Omission/misuse) and Word choice. Table 6 had an overall total of 104 errors with Punctuation Marks (Improper use of punctuation marks) as the highest with 24 errors or 23.08%, and Capitalization (Improper use of capitalization) as the lowest with 14 numbers of errors or 13.46%. The following sample sentences are erroneous because the writers have omitted the use of the punctuation mark "apostrophe". These errors are illustrated in Table 8.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study was to identify, classify, and analyze the errors found in the compositions of 50 faculty respondents. From the result, it is clear where the greater linguistic problem of the respondents lies – grammar or the assembling of constituent parts of a construction into phrases, clauses and sentences. The preponderance of grammatical errors was also noted in a number of earlier studies of Ananda et al. (2014), Darus (2009) and Tesfaye and Tsadik (2015). Moreover, the prominence of syntactic errors based on frequency of

Table 7

Frequency and percentage distribution of mechanical errors (other types of language errors)

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mechanical errors	Punctuation Marks (Improper use of punctuation marks)	24	23.08
	Capitalization (Improper use of capitalization)	14	13.46
	Misspelling/Typographical Errors	23	22.11
Other types of errors	Conjunction	20	19.24
	Word Choice	23	22.11
Total		104	100

Table 8

Sample mechanical errors and their corrections

Mechanical errors	Correction
1. I think its a good idea for it will make the Filipino people globally competitive.	1. (it's)
2. Its quite frightening but I have no choice.	2. (It's)
3. Im personal confused on what to prioritize.	3. (I'm personally)
4. As an instructor of this university Im glad to know about this program.	4. As an instructor of this university, I'm glad to know about this program.

occurrence and error gravity gained support from French (1985) when he said that rules badly learned and wrongly applied could induce errors. However, contrary to what was asserted by others, he rejected the idea of L1 being the root cause of errors.

Errors are mostly traceable to the inability or failure of the learner to master the second language. Everyone who writes in English makes such mistakes, whether native speaker or ESL student. In many cases mechanical errors are the consequence of quick writing where the focus is on the content rather than the form. Mechanical errors seldom interfere with comprehension, but can reflect negatively on the writer, particularly in formal/academic settings (Shoebottom, 2011). This finding also calls to mind the study of Aiyewumi (2004) in which L1 interference, L2 idiosyncrasies and inappropriate learning and application of rules were named as the major causes or sources of errors. Inadequate knowledge or lack of mastery of the grammatical rules of the TL as a cause or source of errors is rivaled only by language transfer or L1 interference/influence. In the study of Politzer and Ramirez (1973) who had Mexican-American children as their subjects, they discovered how tenacious and profound the influence of Spanish as the subjects' L1, which emerged as the most common source of errors. Not far behind was the improper application of standard English. The same is true to the more recent studies of Mohammed and Abdalhussein (2015), Jabeen et. al (2015) and Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016).

From the findings, what can be inferred is that the same areas in which errors preponderate are common to peoples who are learning or using English as a second or foreign language. Mostly, error of usage, according to Lawal (2004) is attributable to the complexity of the English language itself. The level at which people commit error in language usage varies from one person to another depending on linguistic background of the speaker or user of the relevant language. As pointed out by Corder himself (1967), an array of factors – e.g. motivational, developmental, circumstances of learning and more – could come into play. Corder's (1967) pre-systematic errors, which are committed by the learner while he or she is trying to come to grips with a new point, or at the stage where the learner is ignorant of a particular rule and makes a random guess which goes wrong, must not be considered as a possible description or cause for the errors just analyzed, since the writers are faculty members, and are therefore past such groping stage. It is unflattering to suppose that their use of the target language depends on guesswork or random choices, rather than being the deliberate process that it should be.

From the samples of sentences presented, it is clear that the kinds of errors in grammar committed by faculty members themselves are no less serious, damning and reprehensible as their students'. The public is more forgiving with students since they could always argue that they are still learning the target language and their errors only mark the level or stage of their progress in transit to mastery; in other words, their

errors are part of their interlanguage, which is a transitory or temporary stage. The same argument cannot be brandished by the faculty who, by virtue of their advanced learning and position, are already of a different league. Errors in written discourse should be critically examined to determine the aspects of the language where they encounter difficulty, or are at their most vulnerable, hence, prone to errors. Ignoring these errors promotes fossilization in teachers and this is not good. The low level of writing proficiency detected in college teachers speaks of the kind of person they are for whom the more critical have such unflattering labels as “sloppy,” “careless,” “fossilized,” and others. Worse, perhaps, it also reflects on the school represented by the faculty. Needless to say, the image of the institution suffers when its faculty’s linguistic competence is called to question, because as pointed out language is an essential tool.

The illustrative errors reflected in the written outputs are discouraging. They obviously are no longer a function of individual’s carelessness but proofs or exhibits of an inadequate command of the language, or even of fossilization. In writing, unlike oral discourse, errors are permanent or become part of records. Once thoughts are printed or written and sent out to the intended receiver, whatever errors found from the text can no longer be erased; hence, the emphasis in writing courses on writing as going through a process that involves planning, drafting, editing and revision. Errors in writing can affect not just the form but communication as well. It also matters who are committing the errors – i.e.

the teachers -- as this can have an impact on the learners’ personality and development.

Generally, the present study has its own limitations. It focused only on the language errors discovered in the brief compositions of 50 selected probationary faculty members of a private university in Mindanao, Philippines. Only errors concerning language form came under critical scrutiny in this study. Faulty format, content and incorrect mechanics were excluded from the analysis. Thus, future researchers should conduct a similar study, with other types or groups of respondents and other bodies of texts. This is to maximally use error analysis as a feedback system and tool for the improvement of instructional materials and guide or basis for other pedagogical decisions like choice of approach and strategies. Future researchers can also focus on the impact of language training program packages. Tracer or assessment studies can be carried out by other workers in the field.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that selected probationary faculty members lack mastery of the English language system. This may be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents were not language teachers. Although they have been using English as their second language and as a medium of instruction in the classrooms, their knowledge of the basics of the language was limited. However, the language problem of the selected probationary faculty members can always be remediated through a language proficiency program designed to address the problem. School administrators,

language program coordinators, teacher education deans and heads should seriously consider a program that would look into and deal with the English proficiency level of their faculty members. They should include language enhancement training for the newly hired faculty members so that the latter will be able to check and self-assess their command of the language. Thus, future teachers of the university will become linguistically competent not just in teaching their subjects, but in communicating with others as well. If this language problem is ignored or is not seriously dealt with, these faculty members will remain fossilized or stagnant at their low proficiency level. The negative impact of this on their students is a foregone conclusion. The vicious cycle is set off, with these faculty members transmitting their inadequacies or weaknesses to their students, and the latter handing down the inherited weaknesses to their own students.

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