

ERROR ANALYSIS ON EFL STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT WRITING TASK OF TOEFL iBT

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ABSTRACT

TOEFL iBT, introduced in 2005, is a standardized test measuring English proficiency for not only university students where English is the language of instructions but also a requirement of many employers (Gallagher, 2016). Four skills tested in TOEFL iBT are : Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. The writing part is the object of this study focusing on analyzing EFL students' essay writing errors. Essay is one type of writing tasks which is called as independent writing. The researchers analyzed some samples of independent writing task of 7 TOEFL iBT candidates. Examining 16 writing tasks entirely, the researchers categorized the errors into three major categories: grammar, mechanics, and content errors. This study found that most frequent grammatical errors were in agreement (30,5%), verb (18%), and followed by sentence structure (16,3%). The mechanic errors are in the uses of capitalization which is mostly in the letter of 'i' as a first singular pronoun and punctuation errors containing the omission and incorrect use of comma. The last finding is about content errors comprising plagiarism of using the phrases or sentences from the question; question addressing where the essays did not address the topic of the task well; and the missing of conclusion part which is obligatory in essay structure. The findings of this study are expected to enhance TOEFL iBT teachers' understanding of candidates' problems and to improve TOEFL iBT preparatory materials for having more effective teaching approach.

Keywords: Error Analysis, TOEFL iBT writing, Independent writing task

ABSTRAK

TOEFL iBT, diperkenalkan pada tahun 2005, adalah tes standar yang mengukur kemahiran bahasa Inggris tidak hanya mahasiswa di mana bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa instruksi tetapi juga persyaratan dalam pekerjaan (Gallagher, 2016). Empat keterampilan yang diuji dalam TOEFL iBT adalah: Membaca, Mendengarkan, Berbicara dan Menulis. Kemampuan menulis adalah objek penelitian ini yang berfokus pada analisis kesalahan penulisan esai pada siswa yang mempelajari bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Esai adalah salah satu jenis tugas penulisan yang disebut penulisan independen. Para peneliti menganalisis beberapa sampel tugas penulisan esai dari 7 kandidat TOEFL iBT. Para peneliti menganalisis 16 esai dengan mengelompokkan kesalahan menjadi tiga kategori utama: tata bahasa, mekanika, dan kesalahan konten. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kesalahan tata

bahasa yang paling sering adalah dalam agreement (30,5%), kata kerja (18%), dan diikuti oleh struktur kalimat (16,3%). Kesalahan mekanik dalam penggunaan huruf besar yang sebagian besar dalam huruf 'i' sebagai kata ganti tunggal pertama dan kesalahan tanda baca pada penggunaan koma. Penemuan terakhir adalah tentang kesalahan konten yang terdiri dari plagiarisme dari menggunakan frasa atau kalimat dari pertanyaan; kesalahpahaman atas pertanyaan di mana esai tidak menjawab pertanyaan dengan baik; dan hilangnya bagian kesimpulan yang wajib dalam struktur esai. Temuan penelitian ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan pemahaman guru tentang kendala-kendala yang dihadapi pembelajar TOEFL iBT dan untuk meningkatkan persiapan guru dalam mengajar TOEFL iBT untuk mendapatkan pengajaran yang lebih efektif.

Kata kunci: Analisis Kesalahan, Kemampuan Menulis dalam TOEFL iBT, tugas penulisan

INTRODUCTION

TOEFL which stands for Test of English as a Foreign Language is one of the standardized language testings which has been “internationally recognized and respected” (Warfield in Munadia, 2015:1). There are 4 skills tested in TOEFL iBT: reading, listening, speaking and writing. One of the skills supposed to be the most complicated one is writing task as test-takers are expected to equip themselves by some proficient skills such as planning, organizing, and revising as well as the mechanics of the writing such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Richards and Renandya in Keyvanfar and Khoskhou, 2015:61).

Besides the technical procedures, another problem is that the test-takers must be also familiar with kinds of questions taken from various topics of science and social. The test-takers' knowledge and readiness have significant role for getting through the problem. Seeing the problems of writing task, the researchers as the TOEFL iBT tutors as well, intend to investigate detail problems that the test-takers face while having it in order to give some inputs to improve the methods of teaching writing in TOEFL iBT. Error analysis is used to examine the candidates' TOEFL iBT writing samples, focusing on one type of writing tasks, independent writing. It's a kind of essay which requires candidates to respond the task by clearly stating and supporting their opinion about a selected topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The TOEFL Definition and its Background

Warfield in Munadia (2015:1) TOEFL is one of the standardized language testings which has been “internationally recognized and respected”. According to Riley and Wyatt (2009:6), TOEFL is administered by ETS (Educational Testing Service), one of the world's leading organization in the field of educational and psychometric research, based in Princeton, New Jersey. Since it was introduced in 1964, TOEFL has become a global standard for the assessment of English language proficiency. It aims at measuring non-native speaker's ability to use English to communicate effectively in college and university settings.

As cited in Keyvanfar and Khoshkhou (2015:62), previously the writing component of the TOEFL contained only one independent task. However, this task was seriously questioned since it did not reflect the exact genre used in real academic settings (Ohkubo, 2009). Hamp-Lyons and Kroll (in Cumming, Grant, Mulcahy-Ernt, & Powers, 2005) have censured then administered writing component of TOEFL test on the grounds that it by no means assessed the types of writing students realistically have to perform in academic settings. Cumming, et al. (2005:2) challenged the educational relevance, authenticity and content validity of the TOEFL test.

TOEFL iBT in Brief

Riley and Wyatt (2009:6) stated that ETS launched the “next generation TOEFL” in 2005. This new version of the test combines all four language skills (Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing) and is internet-based (iBT), which makes it more widely accessible all over the world.

The TOEFL Test complies with ETS standards for quality and fairness, ensuring that it is a highly reliable instrument for assessing English proficiency. In addition to the TOEFL Test, ETS has designed a wide range of nationally and internationally recognized qualification and aptitude examination. Zareva (in Keyvanfar and Khoshkhou, 2015:62) explains that the new version of the TOEFL is not only an up-dated version of the previous one, but a test that involves new components, such as integrated speaking and writing sections which assess the test taker’s ability to combine information from more than one source and to communicate about it.

Compared to its predecessor, the writing section of TOEFL iBT includes two writing tasks instead of one and the test takers are required to type their responses rather than being given the choice between writing by hand and typing. The integrated task requires the test takers to read an academic passage, listen to a passage of the same topic, and then within 20 minutes write about how the information in the reading and listening passages are related. The reading and listening prompts act as content input which provides test takers with some vocabularies on a given academic topic as well as the genre conventions based on which they can model their response (Zareva, 2005). Note-taking is allowed during the whole exam.

Writing Task Types of TOEFL iBT

The writing task in TOEFL iBT are divided into two types. They are :

1. The integrated writing task.

It displays a 230-to-300 reading passage for 3 minutes and follows with a 2-minutes recording (200 to 300 words) by a speaker who discusses the same topic from a different perspective and contributes additional information. This task also redisplay the reading passage and presents a writing prompt/question. Then, it allows 20 minutes for writing and revising the response to the question.

Test-takers will read and take notes on the first passage, then listen to take

notes on the second passage. Next, they will respond to a prompt in 150 to 225 words explaining and not be penalized for writing a longer response.

2. The independent writing task.

It requires writing an essay that states, explains, and supports the writer's opinion on a given issue. The writer should write minimum 300 words. It allows 30 minutes total for preparation, writing and revision.

Test takers will develop and organize thoughts thoroughly. They not only provide thoughtful support for opinions and choices but also write clearly and accurately.

Another thing which is also important in independent task is the structure of an essay. As stated in Peterson (2007), an essay should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. In the Introduction, it should get the reader's attention and tell the reader what the essay is about and give the reader any special information that guides the reader to the body of your essay. In the case of a TOEFL essay, the introduction should be one paragraph containing four to five sentences. The body of the essay should be made up of one to three paragraphs that contain the ideas to be communicated to the reader. The conclusion, which should be one paragraph, summarizes what is written in the body.

In this study, the researchers focus on analyzing the errors of Independent Writing (Essay). Rilcy and Wyatt (2009) mentions some typical errors of doing this task.

1. Mixed Opinion

Some test-takers wrongly believe that the safest way to get points for this question is to defend the two options given by expressing ideas to support each of them. They do not realize that this 'no-risk' approach makes their answer confusing and may lead test raters to believe that they have not understood the purpose of the question.

2. Choosing an opinion

Test-takers should keep in mind that their goal is not to find out what their opinion is, but to measure their ability to generate and organize ideas in an articulate way. Before choosing a position to defend, the test-takers try to figure out whether they are able to generate relevant arguments to defend it.

Error Analysis Definition

As Richards (in Khansir, 2012:1029) classified errors observed in the acquisition of English as a second language as follows:

- a) Overgeneralization, covering instances where the learners create a deviant structure on the basis of their experience of other structure of the target language;
- b) Ignorance of rule restriction, occurring as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures;
- c) Incomplete application of rules, arising when the learners fail to fully develop a certain structure required to produce acceptable sentences;

- d) False concepts hypothesized, deriving from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language.

According to Gorbet (in Khansir, 2012:1029) , some errors can be attributed to weaknesses or failure of memory. He added that the theory of error analysis proposes that in order to learn a language, a person creates a system of "rules" from the language data to which he is exposed; and this system enable him to use it. Based on Sharma (in Khansir, 2012:1029), "Error analysis can thus provide a strong support to remedial teaching", he added that during the teaching program, it can reveal both the successes and the failures of the program. Dulay et al (1982) mentioned that the term "error" to refer a systematic deviation from a selected norm or set of norms. Error analysis is useful in second language learning because this will reveal to us- teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers and the problem areas. It can used to design remedial exercises and focus more attention on the trouble spots. Corder (1974:125) stated that "The study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process." Richards et al (1992) mentioned the study of errors are used in order to (1) identify strategies which learners use in language teaching, (2) identify the causes of learners' errors, and finally (3) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in development of teaching materials (cited in Khansir 2008).

Corder (in Keyvanfar and Khoshkhou, 2015:64-65) stated that error analysis was the first to look at errors from a new perspective. It was in his article "*The Significance of Learner Errors*" (1967) that he argued against the popular idea of eradicating errors. He further accentuated that learners' errors should be accepted as a part of the language learning process and firmly claimed that errors are important in themselves. He also argued that investigation of errors can be both diagnostic and prognostic at the same time. He explains it is diagnostic because it tells about the learner's knowledge of language at a given time during the process of learning, and it is prognostic in the sense that it provides course organizer with a clearer picture of the learners' current problem; therefore, they can reorient the materials based on the learners' needs and weak-nesses. Concerning how teachers can benefit from error analysis, Corder (1987) stated that errors tell what learners have already learned and what remains for them to learn. He concludes that study targeting EA is aimed at investigating the language learners' strategies, the reason why language learners make errors, and the common difficulties in learning and development of remedial materials. As Erdoğan (in Keyvanfar and Khoshkhou, 2015:64) believes that errors function shows as feedback in the sense that they reflect whether the teaching style of the teacher is effective and what changes it still needs. Errors, he adds, can identify the points and areas which need further attention. He concludes that study targeting EA is aimed at investigating the language learners' strategies, the reason why language learners make errors, and the common difficulties in learning and development of remedial materials.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

Descriptive qualitative method was used in this research to look into EFL students' errors of their independent writing task of TOEFL iBT. Lambert V. and Lambert C (2012:255) stated that qualitative descriptive studies are the least "theoretical" of all of the qualitative approaches to research. In other words, a qualitative descriptive study may have grounded theory overtones, because it used constant comparative analysis when examining the data. However, a qualitative descriptive study is not grounded theory, because it does not produce a theory from the data that were generated.

Nassaji (2015:129) stated that the goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Qualitative research, however, is more holistic and often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and the method of analysis is also primarily qualitative. In this study, the researchers used the EFL students' writing independent task of TOEFL iBT to be analyzed into 3 categories : grammar, mechanics and content errors.

Data Collection Technique

According to Lambert V. and Lambert C (2012:256), data collection of qualitative descriptive studies focuses on discovering the nature of the specific events under study. Thus, data collection involves minimal to moderate, structured, open-ended, individual or focus group interviews. However, data collection also may include observations, and examination of records, reports, photographs, and documents. Data analysis of qualitative descriptive research, unlike other qualitative approaches, does not use a pre-existing set of rules that have been generated from the philosophical or epistemological stance of the discipline that created the specific qualitative research approach.

This research was conducted to the EFL students of Elokuensi, an International Language Center which is located in West Jakarta, Indonesia. There were 7 students who were in Advanced Level of the course. The two were university students and the others were senior high students. The students as the participants had about several years of English learning experience at school and at Elokuensi itself. The samples of the research were taken from all the participants' TOEFL writing independent tasks. The sample was clinically collected as it was specifically collected for research purposes. Based on Ellis's (2008) list of factors to be considered when collecting learner language samples, the following table was drawn.

Table 1
Characteristics of Learner Language Sample of the Study

Factors	Variables	Description
Learner	1.Proficiency level	Intermediate, using TOEFL
	2.Language	learning English language classes (8

	experience	months)
Language Sample	1. Medium 2. Genre 3. Content	Written Independent Writing (An Essay) Academic & argumentative
Production	1. Planned	The discourse produced allowed for 30-minute-task completion

Data Analysis Technique

The participants took Mini Tests and Complete test of Longman Student CD-ROM for the TOEFL iBT 2nd Edition by Deborah Phillips (2008) and Cambridge Preparation for the TOEFL Test, 4th Edition by Jolene Gear and Richard Gear (2007). There were 16 papers collected as the research samples taken randomly from three types of the tests. The writing tasks of the participants were rated using ETS' TOEFL iBT writing rubrics (see Appendices A) and the scores (see Appendix B). It is legitimate to conclude that the participants were intermediate in terms of language proficiency level.

Throughout this study, the writing tasks of these candidates were scored by the TOEFL iBT tutor who acts as one of the researchers. The analysis of the writing samples were carried out by both of the researchers. The writers here focus on analyzing one of the writing tasks which was Independent Writing. At first, grammatical mistakes of the sentences of all the participants were identified. The grammatical errors were then categorized and named based on grammatical rules. Investigating the writing tasks for any possible error, the researcher and her colleague investigated the writing tasks in terms of the mechanics of the writing and the content. Briefly, the errors of independent task were subsequently placed in three major categories of (1) grammatical errors, (2) mechanical errors, and (3) content errors.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In the previous study, Keyvanfar and Khoshkou (2015) investigated also the errors of the TOEFL iBT candidates' writing tasks, integrated and independent task. The errors were classified into three : grammar. mechanics and punctuation. This paper only analyzed the errors of independent writing task.

Grammar Errors

Table 2 provides the grammar errors of the EFL students' TOEFL iBT independent writing task. It contains definitions and the examples for each identified error category at the grammatical level.

There were 301 grammar errors identified in the independent task, 18,3% of verb errors; 30.5% of agreement errors; 7,97% of part of speech errors, 16,3% of sentence structure errors; 3.3% of article or determiner errors; 2,7% for Preposition; 7,3% of connectives errors, 6.9% of wrong word error, 2,7% of

pararelism structure error, and the last is 3.98% of word choice errors. The most frequency errors are founded from agreement category, and the fewest frequency ones are founded from preposition and pararelism structure categories. There are the same error frequency that is from connective word, wrong word, preposition, and pararelism structure categories.

Table 2
Grammar Errors

No.	Grammatical Errors	Definitions	Examples
1	Verb	Errors in tense, passive/active, infinitive, gerund, modals	1. I have (had) to do a Biology practical exam in my ninth grade. 2. I really thought I will (would) get a bad score.
2	Agreement	Errors in subject-verb, number, and pronoun agreement	1. This is why everyone try (tries) to find happiness. 2. Every long-time-employee have (has) a high chance
3	Part of Speech	Errors in gramatically incorrect part of speech	1. Promotion is one of the most important things in live (life) of workers. 2. They can have a good interaction with their collage (colleagues).
4	Sentence Structure	Any errors in main & subordinating clause structure	1. The last reason is because there will be money spent on going somewhere. 2. In my opinion, I prefer grading based solely on exam. (because.....)
5	Article/ Determiner	Any omitted, incorrect, or unnecessary use of the article "the" and other determiners	1. I get a (no need a) very bad grades from there 2. A friend from other (another) class
6	Preposition	Any omitted unnecessary, and incorrect uses of verb & adjective prepositions	1. All of (no need of) humans need something that is called sense of humor 2. I was really happy (at) that time
7	Connectives	Any omitted, incorrect or unnecessary use of connectives words, expressing cause & effect, result	1. They know (that) it will only tire them out 2. It is more beneficial for the company and the worker

8	Wrong word	Incorrect spelling resulting in formation of meaningful actual English word	1. All people have different preseption (perception) about their own life 2. I think this point is quit (quite) crucial and usefull (useful)
9	Pararelism Structure	Any errors in the use of components in a sentence that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction,	1. It improves the company's performance, more competitive, and better quality of worker 2. I joined the talent show and start (started) to perform my talent in front of the judges.
10	Word Choice	sound, and meaning Any errors in selecting precise words that creates a meaning on your audience.	1. There is more (less) pressure in exam 2. while in other type (way), grades are based more on class participation

Table 3
The Frequency and Percentages of the Grammatical Errors of Independent Task

No.	Errors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Verb	55	18,3%
2	Agreement	92	30,5%
3	Part of Speech	24	7,97%
4	Sentence Structure	49	16,3%
5	Article/Determiner	10	3,3%
6	Preposition	8	2,7%
7	Connectives	22	7,3%
8	Wrong word	21	6,9%
9	Paralellism Structure	8	2,7%
10	Word Choice	12	3,98%
	Total Errors	301	100%

Keyvanfar and Khoshkou (2015) found eight categories of grammatical mistakes in the two tasks of TOEFL iBT writing. They found that only one error category, connectives errors belonging to the independent task. However, this study showed there were 10 categories of grammatical errors. Word choice and paralellism structure were the additionan errors.

Mechanics Errors

Besides grammatical errors, another kind of errors in writing task that is

mechanics Errors. It consists of capitalization and punctuation errors. The following explanation of the error categories, definitions, and the example of this level.

1. Capitalization errors: All uses of small letters for capital letters and unnecessary uses of capitaliation.

For examples:

- a. There is one time when *i* became the commitee....
 - b. *we* need a good sense of humor for better social interaction,
 - c. Many people already registered for it. *then*, suddenly ...
 - e. Two months before the retreat started, *The* place we want...
2. Punctuation errors : all cases of ommision, incorrect use of period, colon, semicolon, ommited, and incorrect punctuation in subordinate clauses. All required but missed punctuation are indicated in parantheses.

For example:

- a. Because of the nervousness (,) I feel like something was wrong.
- b. After I finished my performance (,) every one in the room included the judges on their feet clapping for me.
- c. So (,) some of the students can get really bad scores...
- d. With class participation system(,) I can show ...

As for the mechanics errors, the letter "I", , was found as the major error for Capitalization. In total, there were 13 instances of incorrect capitalization of this letter. The use of small letter "i" meaning the first singular person was unconsciously error due to the accuracy of editing the essay. Among these writing productions, some students showed occasional awareness that the first singular pronoun is always capitalized in any position in a sentence.

Capitalization of the letters "T",and "W" was another error. It was repeated for 3 times. The mistake of using capital letter of "W" was found after full stop (.). It means the letter of "W" should be capitalized as it begins a sentence. "T" was written in lower case after fullstop and capitalized after comma.

Punctuation errors were found in the omission of comma (,). This omission was repeated 10 times; 2 in subordinate clause placed in the beginning of a sentence (samples a and b); 5 after conjunction (sample c); 3 after prepositional phrase (sample d).

The errors of 'i' capitalization the major mistake were corresponding corresponding to Keyvanfar and Khoshkou's (2015). The use of 'i' was as singular pronoun. For the rests of the letters were the minor ones. The findings of punctuation errors were not in line with Keyvanfar and Khoshkou's (2015). They found that there were rare omission of the puntuations.

Content Errors

At the content level, the writers founds some errors of the students' independent writing of TOEFL iBT. Based on Peterson (2007:4), An essay of TOEFL iBT should have 3 parts: (1) Introduction which is to get the reader's attention and tell the reader what you are going to write about and give the reader any speacil information guiding the reader to the body of the essay; (2) Body of

the essay which should be made up of one to three paragraphs containing the ideas the a writer wants to communicate to the reader; and (3) Conclusion, which should be one paragraph, summarizes what a writer wrote in the body and reveals the conclusion you want the reader to make.

Another guidance is also the ETS rubrics of independent tasks (see Appendices A), the content of writing productions were investigated to determine if they were mannerly produced and appropriately reflected the content desired.

In this analysis, the writers investigated the errors based on the guidances above. The errors are :

1. Plagiarism

It referred to the sentences or phrases taken mostly from the question of the essay itself while it is supposed to be written by paraphrasing them .

For examples :

Question : Sometimes an event that seems to be going badly turn out well after all. Discuss such an event in your life, using specific details to support your response.

The students' writing productions :

- a. I often experience this kind of event when I *though* something going badly but it *turn* out well.
- b. Sometimes, an event that I feel will be bad turns out to be well after all.
- c. But sometimes when an event going *bad* it can also turn out to become really well.

From the samples above, besides the underlined grammatical mistakes made by the students, it is clear that they use the same words.

2. Question Addressing

According to the ETS independent Writing Rubrics, the task of the independent writing is investigated to determine if the topic was properly elaborated and addressed, and if the test-takers have produced a well-organized writing showing sufficient exemplification, explanation, coherence, unity, syntactic variety and range of vocabulary to support their viewpoint. The researchers found that there were 6 out of 16 samples of the essays which did not address the topic of the task well.

For instance, in the question of “ Sometimes an event that seems to be going badly turns out well after all. Discuss such an event in your life, using specific details to support your responses.” It is found that one student elaborated the by mentioning 3 events in his essay whereas the task asked for elaborating only an event. Another student developed the task by explaining the reasons why sometimes a be-going-bad event comes into the good one.

Another sample, in the question of discussing the advantages of promotions based on seniority and performance, one student responds with the disadvantages as well, while another student only focused on elaborating to the benefits of promotions based on the performance.

The last sample is in the question of “ what is your approach to problem solving, and how does it work?”. The explanation and details are sufficient enough but the use of ‘You’ instead of ‘I’ made the essay didn’t address the question well.

To conclude, the students’ misunderstanding to comprehend the question is also crucial to be noticed as it will affect significantly to the writing scoring.

3. Essay Structure

In accordance with Peterson (2007), an essay has three compulsory parts: Introduction, a body and a conclusion. In the practice of writing the essay, most of the errors of the structure is the conclusion part. 4 (four) essays out of 16 are found without a conclusion. The reason of missing that part as the allocated time of 30 minutes was over. So from this practice, time-management is urgent for any test takers. Gallagher (2016) mentions that the best way to approach the independent writing task is to use your time to plan (5 minutes), write (20 minutes) and revise (5 minutes) the essay.

Another error is found in one essay in its introductory paragraph which is not appropriate to the essay structure. As stated by Rilcy and Wyatt (2009:139), the introductory paragraph contains (a) opening remark or general statement on the subject of the essay, used as a lead-in to engage the reader’s interest, restatement the topic and (b) thesis statement which states test-takers’ opinion or preference and outline the points. In the question of “ Do you think that television programs, movies and video games influence young people’s behaviour? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.” , one student wrote the background with the details of the introduction with the details of the kinds of the games such as PS4, Dota, Mobile Legend. The use of the details is properly placed in the body. The thesis statement given had answered the question yet the subtopic (preview) provided was not in line to the topic.

Khoshkou and Keyvanfar (2015) in the previous study didn’t analyze in details for the content errors in independent task. They only identified the essays in three categories; poor, medium and strong regarding the task development and the organization of the ideas. This study explored more details of the errors.

CONCLUSION

In analyzing the errors of EFL students’ independent writing task of TOEFL iBT, the results for grammar and mechanics errors were almost in line to the previous study carried out by Khoshkou and Keyvanfar (2015) although their investigation was for both integrated and independent task. In this study, the researchers found two additional grammar errors, parallelism and word choice. Mechanic errors were found in the uses of capitalization and punctuation errors. The capitalization error was mostly about the use ‘I’ as a first singular

person must be capitalized in any position in a a sentence. However, this study found that the punctuation errors were about the use of comma (,).

An interesting comparison is that Khoshkou and Keyvanfar didn't explain the details for the content errors of independent task. They focused only on how good the task development and the organization of the ideas. This paper showed that the content errors of independent task containing plagiarism, question addressing and the essay structure. Khoshkou and Keyvanfar (2015) included plagiarism as the content errors of integrated task. This study found that plagiarism of using the phrases or sentences from the question. It is expected that paraphrasing becomes the solution of this error, however, it recommends the researchers as TOEFL iBT tutors to focus on the methods of paraphrasing. Ohkubo (in Khoshkou and Keyvanfar, 2015:70) also writes about the importance of paraphrasing in academic settings. Another error in the content of the writing task was in question addressing. It was discovered 6 out of 16 samples of the essays did not address the topic of the task well. Finally, essay structure was the last content error. Four essays were without conclusion and one essay whose introduction part was not in line with the rules. The findings of the content errors were in contrast with Rilcy and Wyatt (2009:141) mentioning the typical mistakes of independent task were about mixed opinions and choosing an opinion.

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