

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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**AN ERROR ANALYSIS
OF ENGLISH PARAGRAPHS
WRITTEN BY STUDENTS AT PHU CAT 3
HIGH SCHOOL IN BINH DINH PROVINCE:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE**

**Field : THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Code : 60.22.15**

**MASTER THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(SUMMARY)**

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DANANG, 2011

The thesis has been completed at the College of Foreign Languages, University of Danang.

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The thesis will be orally defended at the Examining Committee.

Time: September 29th, 2011

Venue: University of Danang

The original of thesis is accessible for the purpose of reference at the College of Foreign Languages Library, and the Information Resources Center, Danang University

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of the English writing skill at high schools in Vietnam. The writing skill is part of the English syllabus at high schools. Writing an English paragraph is a main activity as a result of the writing lesson in the tenth form. Hence it is very important for students to be taught how to write a paragraph.

While teaching English at PC3HS, I find that my students have difficulties in writing. Some of these difficulties are problems related to grammar and vocabulary at sentence level. How to organize sentences into a larger unit like the paragraph is an even more important problem. Their academic writings lack unity and coherence as they tend to pay attention to accuracy at the sentence level. Many difficulties on writing lead students to be more susceptible to producing errors.

For this reason, I choose to do research on the topic “*An Error Analysis of English Paragraphs Written by Students at Phu Cat 3 High School in Binh Dinh Province: A Discourse Analysis Perspective*”. This thesis is carried out with the hope that the research results will provide certain linguistically useful practical knowledge for teachers in charge of the English writing skill at high schools and improving the students’ skill in writing an English paragraph.

1.2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study investigates English paragraphs written by tenth form Vietnamese students at PC3HS, particularly focusing on the discourse features of the English paragraph. The study is confined to

the investigation of organization, cohesion and coherence of an English paragraph. In addition, the study is also restricted to these discourse features in descriptive paragraphs and narrative paragraphs.

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Aims

This study aims to identify some discourse features of English paragraphs written by PC3HS students in Binhdin province as well as find out the mistakes they often make when writing English paragraphs and put forward some solutions.

1.3.2. Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- investigate the discourse features of English paragraphs written by PC3HS students.
- identify problems faced by the PC3HS students in the process of English paragraph writing.
- provide suggestions for teaching and learning English paragraph writing to PC3HS students.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Research questions

1. What are the types of linguistic errors in English paragraphs written by PC3HS students?
2. What are the features of organization of English paragraphs written by PC3HS students?
3. What are some suggestions for the teaching and learning of English paragraph writing at PC3HS?

Hypotheses

PC3HS students often face problems in writing paragraph, particularly, in writing topic sentences, coherence, for cohesion and

they have not been systematically trained to write successful paragraphs.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1- Introduction

Chapter 2- Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Chapter 3- Methods and Procedure

Chapter 4- Findings and Discussion

Chapter 5- Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Discourse Analysis (DA) can be characterized as the study of the relationship between language and context. Austin [4], Searle [79] and Grice [35] showed their interest in the study of language as a social action. Halliday and Hasan [38] state cohesion is how words and expressions are connected using cohesive devices. Brown and Yule [6] show discourse characterized as a process not a product. Crystal [22, p.25] defines discourse as “*a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit*”. Cook [13] states that discourse is stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive.

Error analysis (EA), offered as an alternative to Contrastive Analysis, has its value in classroom research. Corder [15] advocated in ELT/applied linguistics community the importance of errors in language learning process with the distinction between systematic and unsystematic errors. Dulay and Burt [25] proposed the three

categories of errors: developmental, interference and unique. “Common Mistakes in English” written by Fitikites [31], “Right Words Wrong Words” by Alexander [1] and “Dictionary of Common Grammatical Errors” published by Thong Ke publishing house [3] present a lot of errors and mistakes in English such as grammatical, lexical, phonological errors.

EA with a discourse analysis perspective makes use of DA. A result of EA is made to show the causal factors of the errors and how the errors may happen in students’ writing or speaking. Corder’s [18] theory shows the reason that students usually make errors in writing is the wide differences between the native language and English as the foreign language to be learned. Gass and Selinker’s [33] theory shows steps in conducting an EA.

In Vietnam, there is a variety of linguists to embark in pursuing and applying this new approach into Vietnamese. There are more doctoral dissertations and more master theses related to DA and many pieces of researches on errors of particular groups of learners as “A Discourse Analysis of English Essay Written by EFL Major Students at Quang Nam University” by Nguyen Thi Trung [85], “An Investigation into Common Written Errors Made by High-School Pupils in Danang” by Vo Khac Tien [84], ...

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Text

The term “Text” is defined differently by many linguists. Halliday and Hasan [38, p.1] state that “Text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole”. *Text* is as a “semantic unit” characterized by cohesion. “A text is a passage of discourse”.

2.2.2. Paragraph

2.2.2.1. Concepts of Paragraph

Lunsford and Connors [54] state that “a paragraph is a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit”. Richard Larson [70] explains the three categories of paragraph theory: paragraphs (1) as expanded sentences, governed by comparable syntactical forces; (2) as self-contained units of writing with their own unique principles; and (3) as parts of the overall discourse, informed by the strategies a writer chooses for the overall piece. Galperin [32] shows that “a paragraph is a graphical term used to name a group of sentences marked off by indentation at the beginning and break in the dot at the end”. Oshima and Hogue [65] state a paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main idea.

From that, a paragraph can be understood: A paragraph is a self-contained unit of a discourse in writing dealing with a particular point or a single idea. It consists of one or series of sentences closely related to one another and devoted to the development of one topic. It is marked off by indentation at the beginning, pauses of various lengths and a break in the dot at the end.

2.2.2.2. Structure of an English Paragraph

An English paragraph can be divided into three major parts. A good paragraph should have a topic sentence, several related supporting details and a concluding sentence ([65], [97]). A good topic sentence should contain a topic, a main idea, and the controlling idea. Supporting details are sentences used to support the main idea stated in the topic sentence. A concluding sentence should review the topic sentence and give some final thought about the subject.

2.2.3. Discourse and Discourse Analysis

2.2.3.1. Concepts of Discourse

Discourse is “stretches of language perceived to be meaningful, unified, and purposive” (Cook [13, p.158]). “Discourse: a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative” (Crystal [23, p.25]) “Discourse: a communicative process by means of interaction” (Widdowson [88])

Based on the above definitions, I take the view of discourse as follows:

- Discourse is language in use, for communication.
- Discourse is a language unit which has meaning, unity and purpose.
- Discourse is a process and its linguistic product is text.

2.2.3.2. Discourse Analysis

The term “Discourse analysis” is a general term for many approaches to analyzing written and spoken language use. Brown and Yule [6] state that “discourse analysis” has come to be used with a wide range of meanings which cover a wide range of activities. McCarthy, M. [57, p.5] says that Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationships between language and the context in which it is used.

I take the view of Brown and Yule [6] that the term *Discourse analysis* is the study of how language used in linguistic products with reference to the social and psychological factors influence communication.

2.2.3.3. Features of Discourse

According to Diep Quang Ban (1999), discourse has four

fundamental features:

- i) Every discourse has a specific target
- ii) Every discourse must be complete both in form and content.
- iii) Every discourse has its unity.

iv) Language use can be categorized according to register, level of formality, attitudes of the other participants or to the communication, relationship between the participants and the situational context.

2.2.3.4. Written and Spoken Discourse

According to Cook [13], a type of discourse might be characterized as a class of written or spoken text and language in each form has its own functions and characteristics. Osolun [64] remarks: “spoken language not only expresses propositional, emotional, contextual and culturally specific messages but also signals illocutionary force. Written language, on the other hand, expresses propositional messages, being dependent on a reference between sender and receiver of message.”

The types of discourse that are dealt with in this thesis belong to written discourse that is well - planned and orderly.

2.2.4. Cohesion and Coherence

2.2.4.1. Cohesion

Richards and Platt [74] state cohesion is the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text. Galperin [32] defines cohesion as lexical, grammatical forms of connection between parts of a discourse. Halliday & Hasan’s [38] view that cohesion is how words and expressions are connected using cohesive devices with five groups: **reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.**

2.2.4.2. Coherence

Coherence is the factor that decides whether a language product is a text or not and is the semantic, implicit relation inside the text itself ([5]). Coherence is built upon the semantic ties in discourse (Yule, [90]). Coherence is “the relationships which link the sense of utterances in a discourse or of sentences in a text” (Richard [74])

2.2.5. Error and Error Analysis

2.2.5.1. Error and Error Analysis

Error is a term used in psycholinguistics referring to mistakes in spontaneous speaking or writing attributable to a malfunctioning of the neuromuscular commands from the brain” (Crystal [23]). Corder [16] suggests that errors are “the result of some failure of performance”. Norrish [60] defines ‘an error’ as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently ‘get(s) it wrong’.

I assume that doing or having an error is related with whether each human has good understanding or not of knowledge in their mind.

-Interlanguage: The term “*interlanguage*” is defined as the linguistic system the learner produces in the process of learning another language ([80]).

-Language Transfer: The term “*transfer*” was first technically defined by behaviorist psychologists as “the automatic, uncontrolled, and subconscious use of past learned behaviors in the attempt to produce new responses” (Dulay et al. [26, p. 101]).

Positive transfer or facilitation is any facilitating effects on acquisition due to the influence of cross-linguistic similarities.

Negative transfer or interference is as cross linguistic

influences resulting in errors, overproduction, underproduction, miscomprehension, and other effects that constitute a divergence between the behavior of native and non-native speakers of a language.

-Developmental or *intralingual errors* are those due to the language being learnt (TL), independent of the native language. (Richards [74]).

-Interlingual or *Transfer errors* are errors when the learner's L1 habits interfere or prevent him/ her from acquiring the patterns and rules of the L2 (Corder [16]). *Interference (negative transfer)* is the negative influence of the L1 on the performance of the L2 learner (Lado [52]).

2.2.5.2. Sources of Errors

Selinker [81] identifies five sources of errors. Corder [16, p.158-171] exposes three sources of errors. Richards and Simpson [72, p.3-18] show seven sources of errors. James [50] identifies three main diagnosis- based categories of error. Dulay and Burt [25, p.129-134] report four types of "goofs

I will accept sources of errors for my thesis like these: (1) Interlingual interference, (2) Intralingual interference, (3) Sociolinguistic situation and (4) Induced errors.

2.2.5.3. Errors in Writing

Learners easily make errors in writing because of information to be transmitted without any aid from sources other than the language itself. They are referred to as (1) phrase structure errors, (2) clause errors, (3) sentence errors, and (4) intersentence errors.

2.2.5.4. Error Classification

a) Pit Corder's Classification

b) Burt and Kiparsky's Classification

c) Edge's Classification

d) Lewis and Hill's Classification

e) Richards, John Talbot Platt and Heidi Weber's Classification

f) Ferris's Classification

2.2.5.5. Model for Error Analysis

Corder [15] [16] identifies a model for error analysis with three stages. Ellis [28] and Hubbard et al [47] offer four steps. Moreover, Gass & Selinker [33, p.67] identified six steps.

I will take following steps: Data Collection, Identifying Errors, Classifying Errors, Quantifying Errors, and Explanation for the ultimate object of error analysis.

2.3. SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the previous studies and theoretical concepts relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of the study is based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach is used in describing and analyzing data to find out the distinctive features of English paragraphs written by PC3HS students in terms of the linguistic errors. On the contrary, the quantitative approach is useful for determining the percentage of some linguistic errors.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to achieve the set goal of the thesis, several methods

are chiefly employed as descriptive method, analytic method and some other methods: inductive method, statistic method, comparison method ...

3.3. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The following steps will be included: (1) Giving topics to PC3HS students to write English paragraphs. (2) Collecting data from the participants. (3) Analyzing the data. (4) Synthesizing the analysis and drawing conclusions. (5) Suggesting some implications for teaching and learning English.

3.4. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

There are 240 tenth form students at PC3HS taking part in process of the study. The participant students were divided into three groups, each of which wrote about a different topic. The length of each paragraph is approximately 100 words. The time allocates for writing a paragraph for each topic about 30 minutes.

Three topics for writing paragraphs are:

Topic 1: Write a paragraph to describe the number of students in District A entering universities from 2004 to 2009 from the table

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of students entering universities	75	90	87	102	125	150

Topic 2: Write a paragraph about a famous person you know well.

Topic 3: Write a paragraph to describe a film you have seen.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

In this study, I collect paragraphs written by 240 tenth form students at PC3HS. All the participants were given the topic to write within the time set. The participants were asked to write their paragraphs on their own without discussing with their friends.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected are mainly analyzed on the basis of the following points: (1) I will examine errors in the structure of an English paragraph. (2) The errors in the paragraphs were categorized based on Ferris' Analysis Model (Ferris [30]).

3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Since the data collected for this study from 240 papers written by 240 students at PC3HS in the school-year 2010-2011, they are a totally authentic source of data, not invented examples, the quality of the data is quite reliable. Additionally, in this study, the researcher sets out the work from the analysis of evidence, statistics, frequencies, then comes to conclusions, so the result of the research is not presupposed. In other words, the research has reliability and validity.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. ERROR ANALYSIS

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. According to Richards et al. [73], errors are classified tend to lexical error, phonological error, syntactical error, interpretive error, and production of the wrong communicative effect.

*Table 4.1. Categories of Errors in the Paragraphs
Written by PC3HS Students*

Categories	Topic 1		Topic 2		Topic 3		Total errors	Rate
	Error	Rate	Error	Rate	Error	Rate		
Morphological Error	502	32.6 %	228	20.5 %	603	33.1 %	1333	29.8 %

Lexical Error	418	27.2 %	325	29.3 %	539	29.6 %	1282	28.7 %
Syntactic Error	543	35.3 %	540	48.6 %	618	33.9 %	1701	38.0 %
Mechanical Error	76	4.9 %	18	1.6 %	61	3.3 %	155	3.5 %
Total	1539	100 %	1111	100 %	1821	100 %	4471	100 %

4.1.1. Morphological Errors

According to Ferris [30], morphological errors consist of verb errors, noun ending errors and article or determiner errors.

Table 4.2. Morphological Errors

Morphological Error	Types	Errors in Topic			Total	Rate (in Morpho-logical)	Rate (in all errors)
		1	2	3			
Morphological Error	Verb error	289	126	355	770	57.8 %	17.2%
	Noun ending error	121	45	79	245	18.4 %	5.5 %
	Article or determiner error	92	57	169	318	23.9 %	7.1 %
Total of morphological errors		502	228	603	1333	100.0 %	29.8%

4.1.1.1. Verb Errors

Ferris [30] shows that verb errors include errors in verb tense, verb form (infinitive, gerund and other forms), and relevant subject-verb agreement. For examples:

(9) The prince wanted to *made* new clothes for her.

4.1.1.2. Noun Ending Errors

According to Ferris [30], noun ending errors consist of all errors in which nouns are used in wrong forms of singular or plural

(error related to S-V agreement, ending incorrect or unnecessary and ending omitted). Some examples of the noun ending errors:

(26) The main *characters* is Linh Lan.

4.1.1.3. Article or Determiner Errors

In the description of major error categories, Ferris [30] classifies article or determiner errors into the types of articles incorrect or unnecessary, articles omitted, determiner incorrect and determiner omitted. Here are some examples:

(38) Neil Armstrong is *national hero*.

(47) The film has *a unhappy ending*.

4.1.2. Lexical Errors

According to Ferris (2005), lexical errors consist of all errors in word choice or word form, preposition errors, pronoun errors and spelling errors only in misspelling resulted of an actual English word.

Table 4.6. Lexical Errors

Lexical Error	Types	Errors in Topic			Total	Rate (in Lexical Error)	Rate (in all errors)
		1	2	3			
Lexical Error	Error in Word Choice	88	82	186	356	27.8 %	8.0 %
	Error in Word Form	36	31	66	133	10.4 %	3.0 %
	Preposition Error	57	51	72	180	14.0 %	4.0 %
	Pronoun Error	18	28	24	70	5.5 %	1.6 %
	Spelling Error	219	133	191	543	42.4 %	12.1%
Total of Lexical Errors		418	325	539	1282	100.0 %	28.7%

4.1.2.1. Errors in Word Choice

(54) There *bear* very many *big* poets.

(56) She is *orphanager* mother.

4.1.2.2. Errors in Word Form

(65) Last Sunday, I watched the “spider man”. It is very *interested* in.... The end of the film Tim and Marry Jane live *happy*.

4.1.2.3. Preposition Errors

(70) Nguyen Trai moved to Nhi Khe *on* 1380 and he died *on* 1442.

4.1.2.4. Pronoun Errors

(79) *He* father is Nguyen Ung Long *He* mother is Tran Thi Thai.

4.1.2.5. Spelling Errors

(81) The cat *allways* find way to catch Jerry.

4.1.3. Syntactic Errors

Syntactic errors are referred to as (1) phrase structure errors, (2) clause errors, (3) sentence errors, and (4) intersentence errors. According to Ferris [30], syntactic errors can be classified according to word order, omitted words or phrases, unnecessary words or phrases, run-ons — comma splices, fragments, and other unidiomatic sentence constructions.

Table 4.7. Syntactic Errors

Syntactic Error	Types	Errors in Topic			Total	Rate (in Syntactic errors)	Rate (in all errors)
		1	2	3			
	Word Order	44	61	104	209	12.3 %	4.7 %
	Omitted Words or Phrases	75	107	132	314	18.5 %	7.0 %
	Unnecessary Words or Phrases	69	74	114	257	15.1 %	5.7 %

	Run-ons – Comma Splices	65	63	89	217	12.8 %	4.9 %
	Fragments Incomplete Sentence	59	31	38	128	7.5 %	2.9 %
	Other Unidiomatic Sentence Construction	231	204	141	576	33.9 %	12.9 %
	Total of Syntactic Errors	543	540	618	1701	100.0 %	38.0 %

4.1.3.1. Word Order

A large number of word order errors and most of them occur in noun phrases. For examples:

(91) Romeo is *a man very strong and intelligent*.

(92) She lives *a family poor*.

4.1.3.2. Omitted Words or Phrases

For examples:

(103) *After, they* takes up love each other.

(107) I like best is “Bong Dung Muon Khoc”.

4.1.3.3. Unnecessary Words or Phrases

For examples:

(114) However, he was a child whose parents died when he was 13 *old*.

(120) One day she decided *that she wanted* to become a doctor.

4.1.3.4. Run-ons - Comma Splices

a) Run-ons

According to Sardegna & Slutsky [77, p.185], a run-on sentence is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses (i.e. complete sentences) are joined without appropriate punctuation or conjunction. For examples:

(125) One of the film I love best is Tom and Jerry this film was written by William Hanna and made in Hollywood USA.

(129) Quoc is the young boy, was born in rich family he doesn't study hard.

b) Comma Splices

Sardegna & Slutsky [77, p.185] define that a comma splice is the use of a comma to join two independent clauses (without a conjunction, semicolon, or full stop). For examples:

(136) I have seen many films, I like best "Bong Dung Muon Khoc". It's very good and interesting, the film was made in Viet Nam. It is a love story film, it tell life's of "Thanh Truc" she is very poor, she always buy books to sell for every one in the park on every day.

4.1.3.5. Fragments Incomplete Sentence

A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence ([98]). It is incomplete because it is either a phrase or a dependent clause. Here are some extracts from the students' writing:

(152) Before 2004, the number very less.

(154) After several years wind and waves.

4.1.3.6. Unidiomatic Sentence Construction

According to Corder [13], sentences in the kind of Unidiomatic Sentence Construction are called idiosyncratic sentences. They are erroneous sentences. For examples:

(176) Jackson is a collection of 8 children 9 children in the family of bring Jackson.

(177) The aim of it, the first; entering universities.

4.1.4. Mechanical Errors

In Ferris' classification [30], mechanical errors are errors in

which the students used wrong punctuation and wrong spelling capitalization.

Table 4.8. Mechanical Errors

Mechanical Error	Types	Errors in Topic			Total	Rate (in Mechanical Errors)	Rate (in all errors)
		1	2	3			
	Punctuation Error	55	12	54	121	78.1 %	2.7 %
	Spelling Capitalization	21	6	7	34	21.9 %	0.8 %
Total of Mechanical Errors		76	18	61	155	100.0 %	3.5 %

For examples:

(197) She live with *step, mother*.

(199) This film was written by *william* and made in *hollywood*.

4.2. PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION

According to Oshima, A. & Hogue, A. [66], the organization of paragraph is usually made up of a topic sentence, one or more supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.

4.2.1. Topic Sentence

The topic sentence tells the main idea of the paragraph.

Table 4.9. Topic Sentence Display

Topic Sentence Display	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Total	Rate
Successful topic sentence	53	20	28	101	42.08%
Unsuccessful topic sentence	17	39	36	92	38.33%
No topic sentence	10	21	16	47	19.58%
Total	80	80	80	240	100 %

4.2.2. Supporting Sentences

The supporting sentences expand the main idea of the paragraph. They provide evidence, details, or information about the topic sentence.

Table 4.10. Organization of Supporting Sentence Display

Organization of supporting sentence display	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Total	Rate
Unity and coherence	47	38	47	132	55 %
Lack unity	33	42	33	108	45 %
Total	80	80	80	240	100%

4.2.3. Concluding Sentence

A concluding sentence which is the last sentence of a paragraph summarizes the information that has been presented.

Table 4.11. Concluding Sentence Display

Concluding Sentence Display	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Total	Rate
In use	21	19	32	72	30 %
No concluding sentence	59	61	48	168	70 %
Total	80	80	80	240	100%

4.3. SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

4.3.1. Suggestions on Teaching How to Write a Paragraph

4.3.2. Suggestions on Reviewing Grammar and Practicing

Writing

4.3.3. Suggestions on Making Drafts

4.3.4. Suggestions on Teachers' Error Correction

4.3.5. Suggestions on Teachers' Check

4.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have reported and discussed the data

about common linguistic errors in writing by the tenth-form students in PC3HS. From that there are some suggested solutions for teachers teaching writing at PC3HS and PC3HS students to reduce errors when they doing writing tasks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

The thesis has so far dealt with the common linguistic errors in writing by the tenth-form students in PC3HS based on Ferris' classification [30]. In this section, I will summarize the study and draw some conclusions on the issue.

The study has collected some important information from the students' writings. Some findings worthy of discussion are:

Firstly, the study reveals the most frequent error types the students made. The greatest number of errors that occurred in this study belong to four categories: morphological errors, lexical errors, syntactic errors and mechanical errors. Morphological errors consist of verb errors, noun ending errors and article or determiner errors. Lexical errors consist of errors in word choice or word form, preposition errors, pronoun errors and spelling errors only included if the misspelling resulted in an actual English word. All errors in the sentence or clause boundaries are syntactic errors which can be classified according to word order, omitted words or phrases, unnecessary words or phrases, run-ons — comma splices, fragments, and other unidiomatic sentence constructions. Mechanical errors are errors in which the students used wrong punctuation and wrong spelling capitalization. While the overall error rates help the

researcher understand the students' overall performance, the specific errors the participants made frequently make help to clarify what the students' learning difficulties are.

Secondly, many errors in the students' writing were due to syntactic errors. The students' writing in this study may have been related to the language structures of the students' first language: Vietnamese. For example, several English writing samples were found with direct word order between a noun and an adjective from Vietnamese sentences. This finding is in line with some research that confirmed the interference from L1 in the process of EFL writing.

Thirdly, regarding the errors of paragraph organization, the study shows that the students lack access to the theory of building a paragraph such as building a topic sentence, developing supporting ideas, especially making a concluding sentence so that the paragraph loses coherence.

Moreover, in order to deal with the problem, some solutions are suggested for students and teachers of writing. Concerning the teachers, there is a view to plan strategies for teaching writing in English. There should be flexible and effective techniques of error correction for the teachers. They should pay much attention to their students' errors. Besides, there should be more practical writing tasks for students in order to reduce errors in their writing.

In conclusion, making errors is inevitable in language learning process. Errors provide feedback about the effectiveness of the teaching techniques and show the teachers what part needs further attention. Studying the learner language in terms of errors is something that teachers have always done for practical reasons. It requires the teacher to have skills of diagnoses and treatment.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

According to this study, the tenth-form students in PC3HS face three kinds of problems in writing: incomplete learning of grammar rules, incomplete learning of writing paragraphs and un-reminiscent vocabulary. In order to achieve effectiveness in paragraph writing, the following points should be paid more attention to:

First of all, it is necessary to raise students' awareness of the importance of writing English paragraphs. Students should be equipped with a deep theoretical insight into the elements of a good paragraph. Students should know how to build a topic sentence and develop supporting ideas unitively and coherently. They should write their first drafts carefully and list ideas relevant to the topic.

Among the causes leading to the students' errors, the influence of mother tongue is a major one. In order to reduce this kind of errors, it is necessary to have students recognize the differences between the usages of English and Vietnamese in thinking and writing. Simultaneously, teachers should analyze how a certain first language interference error comes about by carefully explaining the differences between the two languages in term of the particular features.

Regarding the writing rules, it is necessary to raise student's awareness of problems they often face writing a paragraph and have them correct their own errors. It is obvious that the most important thing to do is practicing writing. The students need to write in class and at home. It would be very useful to increase the number of exercises and activities for writing. Consequently, students can develop their skill of writing and for self-correction.

In terms of error correction, it is crucial that error correction should be carried out frequently. Teachers of writing should use different techniques of correction flexibly and effectively because simply presenting the data repeatedly and going through the same set of drills and exercises can make students bored. Besides, effective error correction requires that the teacher understands the source of the errors in order to provide appropriate remedy, which will resolve the learners' problems and allow them to discover the relevant rules. However, for correcting written works, it is better that the teachers would not correct the students' errors directly but should put marks indicating there is something wrong with that sentence, word or punctuation. Moreover, team work in class is implemented so that students would have to practice together for their presentations in groups on their tasks and correct each other's errors.

In addition, students are also expected to take responsibility for their own learning and become aware of their own strategies. They are also often encouraged to carry out self-evaluation in order to further their learning and regulate their language learning and language using skill.

To sum up, knowledge of error analysis is helpful for language performance. It also improves a process of teaching and learning writing. It is clear that students' ability to communicate in writing will be better if they recognize how to avoid errors effectively and how to arrange information logically. It is hoped that the results of this thesis can be of some help not only for students to be aware of the importance of writing in English so that they can improve their writing skills but also for teachers of English to develop effective measures for teaching the English writing skill.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

Although the researcher has made great efforts to carry out the study, the study has got certain restrictions due to the shortage of time, lack of reference materials as well as the limited knowledge of the researcher. Firstly, the study just collected 240 papers from 240 students in PC3HS for error analysis. That is only a small number. Therefore, the results of the research may be less convincing. Secondly, the data for analysis were paragraphs which were collected from free-writing tasks so that the students could avoid the structures or words which they felt uncertain. This means that the results of the research cannot reflect and detect thoroughly all kinds of errors which the students may commit. However, the researcher hopes that the study will be a valuable reference and useful to the teachers and the students in PC3HS as well as others who are interested in the problem.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

In order to improve the English learning and teaching at high schools in Vietnam, the researcher hopes that there will be researches focusing on the following topics:

- The syntax of topic sentences in English paragraphs.
- Cohesive devices in the English writings by high school students in Vietnam.
- The syntactic features in the English writings by high school students in Vietnam.