

Analysis of Writing Mistakes in University Student's Essay

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Abstract—This research aimed to know about writing mistakes involving capital and italic letters in university students' essay, especially capital and italic letters. The method of this research was qualitative descriptive. The data collected for this research consisted of writing mistakes involving capital and italic letters in university students' essay. The technique of data analysis adopted in this study was a constant comparison. This study found that of 62 essay students analyzed, there were 132 capital letter writing mistakes that were divided into seven types: 1) incorrect capitalization in the first letter of sentences; 2) in writing someone's name; 3) in writing the name of a lesson; 4) in writing title; 5) in the middle of sentences; 6) in writing abbreviation and acronym; and 7) in writing words that stand for abbreviation. Meanwhile, in italic writing, mistakes occurred only when students were writing foreign terms that remain written with an upright letter. This numbered to 123 mistakes. The results of this analysis indicated that there were still many common mistakes made by students, so in the future, there should be a follow-up so that similar mistakes do not happen anymore.

Keywords—Bahasa Indonesia, EBI, writing mistake, spelling

I. INTRODUCTION

University students are very close to essay writing. In writing activities, the process is more emphasized in some steps: *prewriting, writing, revising, and publishing* [1]. This process will help students to express their idea coherently. University student's writing tasks are usually in the form of academic writing. Writing product in academic writing is different between one person and the other. It depends on their knowledge and understanding about the difficulty of vocabulary, the complexity of syntax, and the organization of content [2]. Besides that, students should also pay attention to some aspect such as grammar, spelling, and writing system which must be adjusted to formal writing.

Oshima and Hogue stated that an essay is a writing which consists of some paragraphs, that explores some topics intellectually and argumentatively [3]. Writing an essay needs effective

writing skills which involve basic skills such as writing sentences, writing paragraphs, writing capital letters and punctuation marks [4]. Besides, attention is also involved in writing [5]. These become keys to create a good writing, because if students put attention to what they write, they will be more aware and will try hard to avoid mistakes in those basic skills.

Mistakes and errors are different. Mourtaga stated that error cannot be self-corrected and is caused by a learner's inadequate knowledge of the target language, but mistakes can be self-corrected [6]. Mistakes can occur due to confusion, negligence, or inaccuracy which can be corrected by the students eventough they need to be through the explanation first. In the meantime, the error occurs because of lack of understanding of a language that reflects students' comprehension of that. In the case of capital letter and italic writing, students have already known the basic rules, but sometimes they are not careful and do not pay attention to the details of their writing, so there will be mistakes on things they already know. Such mistakes tend to reoccur if they are not corrected and will cause negative effects on their writing performance.

Students can prevent doing mistakes in writing by learning about spelling. The availability of books, articles, exercise books, and other learning sources both offline and online can actually help students to revise their mistakes and also aid teacher to help students avoid to do same mistakes [7]. Bahasa Indonesia has rules in academic writing which are included in PUEBI (*Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia*). It is an improvement of EYD (*Ejaan yang Disempurnakan*) which was published in 2016 based on decree of former Minister of Education, Anis Baswedan [8]. Besides, it is also to firm up the function of bahasa Indonesia as nation's language [9].

PUEBI contains rules about 4 main aspects which are the using of letters, words, punctuation, and absorption words. These rules have to be obeyed in every formal writing activity. So this is why university students need to know and apply these rules in their writing because they write essayw or

reports almost every day and these involve the using of capital letters to start writing the sentences, writing names or abbreviation, italic letters to write some foreign terms.

A. Capital Letter

People tend to be confused with differentiating between capital letters and big letters, despite the fact that they are very different. The Great Dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia 5th edition mentions that capital letters are letters with a special size and shape (bigger than usual letters) that used as the first letter of first word in a sentence, the first letter of a name, etc [10].

There are some rules of capital writing in PUEBI, such as the first letter of: a) sentences; b) a person’s name including epithet; c) the name of religion, scripture, and God, including His pronouns; d) element of honorary, hereditary, religious, or academic titles that follow the person’s name; e) elements of the title and rank followed by the person’s name, or used as a substitute for a particular name of a person, agency, or place; f) the name of nation, ethnic, and language; g) the name of year, month, day, and celebration day; h) elements of historical events; i) geographic name indicating place; j) every word in the name of country, institution, organization, or document, except task words such as *di, ke, dari, dan, yang, and untuk*; k) elements of title, rank or greeting [8].

In addition, capital letters are also used to write abbreviation and acronym with the following condition: a) as the first letter in every word standing for abbreviations; and b) as the first letter of acronym which is formed by combination of syllables or combination of letters and syllable of the series of the words [8].

B. Italic

Italic is interpreted as letters that are tilted but do not resemble handwriting as in cursive [10]. Italic is usually written in an essay to write foreign terms, but actually, there are some rules in italic writing [9], such as:

- to write the title of book, magazine, or newspaper which are quoted in writing, including in bibliography;
- to affirm or specialize letter, part of a word, word, or word group in a sentence; and to write foreign word or term (except the name of a person, agency, or organization).

Meanwhile, in handwriting or typewriting, parts which should be italicized is marked with underlines.

II. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

A. Data

The data collected for this research consisted of writing mistakes involving capital and italic letters in

essays of the 3rd-semester students of PGSD FKIP Unissula in the Year of 2017/2018. Data resources of this study were the essays of the 3rd-semester students of PGSD FKIP Unissula in the Year of 2017/2018 which the theme was Learning Indonesian for Children with Special Needs.

Data collection technique in this study was documentation technique, in the form of written essay documents of 3rd-semester students. Those documents were read repeatedly and observed in every capital and italic writing. And then, the data collected were recorded in a data table and filtered and classified. The instrument of this study was the researcher himself (human instrument). The researcher as a key instrument has an ability and adequate knowledge about things which are related to the research.

The technique of data analysis adapted in this study was constant comparison method by Ian Dey: a) finding the focus; b) organizing the data; c) reading and annotating; d) creating categories; e) splitting and slicing; f) making data relation; g) creating connection; h) mapping and making data matrix; and i) finding the result [11].

B. Method

The method of this study was descriptive qualitative – case study research. Qualitative research is a research to understand a phenomenon about what is experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., thoroughly, and describes it with words and languages, in a specific natural context and by using various natural method [11]. This research were supposed to find data about writing mistakes in third semester students of Elementary School Teacher Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sultan Agung Islamic University.

III. RESULT & DISCUSSION

Defining abbreviations and acronyms is put the first time they are used in the text, even after they have been defined in the abstract. Abbreviations such as IEEE, SI, MKS, CGS, sc, dc, and rms do not have to be defined. Do not use abbreviations in the title or heads unless they are unavoidable. The result of this study was a description of incorrect capitalization and italic words mistyped in the essays of 3rd-semester students of PGSD Unissula. Based on the analysis, there were 255 mistakes in capitalization and italic mistyped. In capitalization analysis, it was found 9 essays with no mistyped. And the rest, 53 essays contains 132 mistakes in capitalization. Here are the details.

TABLE I. THE ANALYSIS RESULT OF THE NUMBER OF THE INCORRECT CAPITALIZATION

No	Type of Mistakes	Number
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No	Type of Mistakes	Number
A	Incorrect capitalization in the first letter of sentences	38
B	Incorrect capitalization in writing someone's name	7
C	Incorrect capitalization in writing the name of a lesson	2
D	Incorrect capitalization in writing title	41
E	Incorrect capitalization in the middle of sentences	4
F	Incorrect capitalization in writing abbreviation and acronyms	2
G	Incorrect capitalization in writing of words that stand for abbreviation	38
TOTAL		132

Here is the description of the analysis result:

1) *Incorrect capitalization in the first letter of sentences*

There were 38 incorrect capitalizations in the first letter of the sentences. Here is the example of the mistake:

- upaya untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa Indonesia di sekolah

The first letter in that sentence is written in lowercase. Here is the correction:

- Upaya untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbahasa Indonesia di sekolah

There were 38 incorrect capitalizations found in writing the first letter of the sentences. In PUEBI, it was stated that capital letter is functioned to write the first letter of the sentence (affirmative, interrogative, or imperative sentence). So, every sentence in essay writing needs to begin with capital letter.

2) *Incorrect capitalization in writing someone's name*

There were 7 incorrect capitalizations in writing someone's name. Here is the mistake example:

- untuk mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa lisan, seperti yang diungkapkan oleh yeager.

In this sentence, there is a name which is not written with capital letter in the first letter. Here is the correction:

- untuk mengembangkan keterampilan berbahasa lisan seperti yang diungkapkan oleh Yeager.

There were found 7 same mistakes. Those examples showed that there were some students who still wrote someone's name with lowercase. Whereas, in PUEBI (in the second rule of capital letters writing) it is stated that capital letters are functioned as the first letter of the element of a name including a nickname. If the name consists of two or more words, every element of the name should begin with capital

letters. But there were some exceptions that we don't need to write with capital letter as the first letter: 1) if the name is used as a name of a species or unit of measure such as *ikan mujahir*, *5 volt*, *10 ampere*; and 2) element of the name which means 'child of' such as *bin*, *binti*, *van* and also adverb in a nickname such as *Ayam Jantan dari Timur*.

In the essay which were analyzed, there were only names without elements that mean 'child of' and there were no nickname too. The 7 mistakes happened because students did not write those names with capital in every first element.

3) *Incorrect capitalization in writing the name of a lesson*

There were 2 incorrect capitalizations in writing the name of a language lesson. Here is the mistake:

- Peran guru dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia antara lain adalah sebagai

bahasa Indonesia in this sentence indicates a name of a lesson, which needs to be written with capital in every first letter of element of the names. Here is the correction:

- Peran guru dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia antara lain adalah sebagai

Capital letter writing rules in PUEBI, especially in the seventh rule states that capital letters, are functioned as the first letter of the name of nations, ethnic groups, and languages. Here are the examples of writing the name of languages: *bahasa Indonesia*, *bahasa Inggris*, *bahasa Jawa*. However, if those names indicate the name of lessons, the first letter of word *bahasa* needs to be written with capital letter. Such as *Bahasa Indonesia*, *Bahasa Inggris*, *Bahasa Jawa*.

Two mistakes above were caused by the first letter of the word *bahasa* which was not written with capital letters, whereas those referred to the name of a lesson. So it needed to be written with a capital in the first letter of every element.

4) *Incorrect capitalization in writing title*

There were 41 mistakes found in title writing. Here is the example of the mistake:

- Peran Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbahasa Lisan Dan Tulis

This title contains 2 function words, *dalam* and *dan*, in which the first letters of both words are not allowed to be written in capital if the title is already written in combination letter (capital and lowercase). Here is the correction:

- Peran Guru dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbahasa Lisan dan Tulis

In title writing, in both scientific and non-scientific articles/essays, there are some rules which are listed in PUEBI. It is stated that in the rule of capital letter writing number 11 that capital letters are functioned as the first letter in every word (including the element of perfect repetitive words) in the title of a book, an essay, an article, and a paper, also a name of a magazine and a newspaper, except function words (*di, ke, dari, dan, yang, and untuk*) in which the positions are not at the beginning of the title.

Analysis results showed that students wrote their essay titles with 2 kinds of writing: 1) titles written with combination letters (capital and lowercase), and 2) titles written with all capital letters. In the title writing with all capital letters, there was no mistake found. The mistakes were only found in the titles that were written with combination letters.

There were found 2 kinds of mistakes, incorrect capitalization in function words writing and non-function words writing. Each mistake is exemplified above. In the first example, there were two function words, *dan* and *dalam*. Those were written with capital in the first letter, whereas they should be written in lowercase. And then, in the second example, there were 3 words that should begin with capital letters but it was written with all lowercase: *guru, pembelajaran, and bahasa* because those are not included in function words.

In addition that a title can be written in combination letters (capital and lowercase) with rules as described above, it also can be written entirely in all capital letters. If so, every word in the title should be written in capital letters. Here are the examples:

- Peran Guru **d**alam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berbahasa Lisan dan Tulis
→ PERAN GURU **D**ALAM MENINGKATKAN KEMAMPUAN BERBAHASA LISAN DAN TULIS
- Peran Guru dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia
→ PERAN GURU **D**ALAM PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA INDONESIA

5) *Incorrect capitalization in the middle of sentences*

There were 4 words in the middle of sentences. Here is the example of the mistake :

- Pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh guru harus memenuhi beberapa kriteria, antara lain **R**elevan dengan tujuan pembelajaran, **D**apat mengembangkan kreativitas siswa secara individual dan kelompok, **D**apat memudahkan murid memahami materi pelajaran, dan **D**apat mengarahkan aktivitas belajar siswa kepada tujuan pembelajaran yang telah di tetapkan.

This sentence indicates that there are some explanatory sentences in which the first letter of those sentences was written with capital letters. Here is the correction:

- Pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh guru harus memenuhi beberapa kriteria, antara lain **r**elevan dengan tujuan pembelajaran, **d**apat mengembangkan kreativitas siswa secara individual dan kelompok, **d**apat memudahkan murid memahami materi pelajaran, dan **d**apat mengarahkan aktivitas belajar siswa kepada tujuan pembelajaran yang telah di tetapkan.

This kind of mistake can actually be avoided if students are aware of words in a sentence that are not names (someone, geographical location, institution/organization, language/nation/ethnic, etc); element of academic or honor degree; or title of book/magazine/article should be written in lowercase. Those explanatory were still be a part of the sentence that does not have to begin with capital letters.

6) *Incorrect capitalization in writing abbreviation and acronym*

There were 2 mistakes in abbreviation writing. Here is the mistake:

- Pendidikan inklusi berarti sistem layanan pendidikan yang mengikutsertakan **abk**.

This sentence indicates there is an abbreviation which was written in lowercase.

- Pendidikan inklusi berarti sistem layanan pendidikan yang mengikutsertakan **ABK**.

In writing abbreviation and acronym, there are some rules which are listed in PUEBI. One of those is that abbreviation consisting of the first letter of every word (not a name of someone) is written in capital letters without full stop. Examples:

PT perseroan terbatas
MAN madrasah aliyah negeri

Those examples showed that abbreviation (which is not a name) is written in all capital letters. Therefore, the abbreviation of 'ABK' which stands for *anak berkebutuhan khusus* has to be written with all capital letters without full stop.

Meanwhile, the second mistake indicated the writing of self-named acronym in the form of a combination of syllables or a combination of letters and syllables from a series of words written in capital letters. Example:

Bappenas Badan Perencanaan
Pembangunan Nasional

Thus, the writing of 'Paikem' which is an acronym of *Pembelajaran Aktif, Inovatif, Kreatif, dan Menyenangkan* should be written with capital only in the first letter.

7) *Incorrect capitalization in writing of words that stand for abbreviation*

There were 38 mistakes in writing the first letter of words that stand for abbreviations and acronyms (that show names of something) that were written in lowercase. However, the first letter of words standing for abbreviations and acronyms which are names of something were written with capital letters. Here is an example of the mistake:

- Dalam menangani **Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus** perlu kesabaran, wawasan, serta ilmu pengetahuan agar

In this part of a sentence, there are words standing for abbreviation but it is not a name of something, so it should be written with all lowercases.

- Dalam menangani **anak berkebutuhan khusus** perlu kesabaran, wawasan, serta ilmu pengetahuan agar

The first kind of mistake showed the writing of words that stand for abbreviation which is not a name. In PUEBI it is stated that this condition requires being written in all lowercase. Examples:

SD	sekolah dasar
SIM	surat izin mengemudi

Therefore, the writing of words standing for ABK should be written as *anak berkebutuhan khusus*. Meanwhile, in the second mistake, ADHD is a name of a disorder. This is as exemplified in PUEBI that words stand for an abbreviation of a name are written with capital in every first letter. So the words stand for ADHD also need to be written by obeying this rule. These are the examples in PUEBI:

WHO	World Health Organization
PBB	Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa

In addition, because it is an English term, it should be written in italic. This is one of the mistakes of italic writing which was also analyzed in this research. In italic writing, we found that students only used it to write words in foreign languages. They didn't mention about some titles of book or magazine, and also there was no word that need to be reinforced. There were 123 words or phrases in a foreign language which are not written with italic, 15 essays which didn't contain foreign words, and 4 essays contained foreign words or phrases with correct writing. Here is one of the examples of the mistake:

- Metode bermain peran (**role playing**) adalah mengeksplorasi perasaan, sikap, nilai, dan strategi pemecahan masalah

In this part of the sentence, there is a name of a teaching method in an English term but not written in italic. Here is the correction:

- Metode bermain peran (**role playing**) adalah mengeksplorasi perasaan, sikap, nilai, dan strategi pemecahan masalah

Just as explained above, PUEBI contains rules for italic writing. One of the rules is the use of italic for foreign terms writing. In addition, if students focus on writing, they can avoid these kinds of mistakes. It is easy to differentiate which is a term in Bahasa Indonesia and which is in a foreign language.

This analysis result showed a very common mistakes and was so often made in writing, as found in some research such as research which was conducted by Ariningsih, Sumarwati, Saddhono (2012) [12] and Musmulyadi (2016) [13]. Spelling rule actually is contained on *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia (PUEBI)*. Nevertheless, students do not pay attention to those rules, so they make repeated mistakes in the same type. Also, spelling is a component of written language that is very important and may determine the correctness and incorrectness of a writing [14].

These mistakes happened because of the following things: students are not thorough enough when they write the essay; students do re-check their essays after finishing their writing; students do not pay attention to the rules; and also that the students do not understand the rules in PUEBI very well. However, this study was only focusing on analyzing capital and italic letter. This kind of mistakes actually can be fixed if students want to learn more about the EBI-rules, and the lecturer also deigns to inform their students about some mistakes they have made, and give suggestion about how the correct one is. Writing needs to be learned, and students need more practice to make their writing better in the future. Just as Haswell said that when the writer makes mistakes and the mistakes are corrected, there will be improvement [15]. Practicing to write essay regularly can also help students to develop their mental of discipline about time management, to develop their structure of sentences, and to train them to think critically so they will be able to minimize the anxiety that leads them to do mistakes [16].

Students can also practise writing by following formal writing steps: 1) pre-writing, 2) planning, 3) revising, 4) editing, and 5) publishing [17]. In pre-writing step, students choose the topic; considering the benefit, style, and target of the writing; also generalizing and organizing the idea. On the next step, students start writing their idea on a paper. This step gives opportunity for students to write whatever they want to express without worrying about technical things in writing such as spelling, punctuation, etc. After that, students can revise their writing by re-reading the essay. Sometimes, students think that this step is not really important, because they are already confident with their writing. However, they still need to review their essay to add, change, delete, and

rearrange the component of their essay. This step includes reading the essay thoroughly, sharing the writing with friends, and revising the essay based on the suggestions from their friends. The fourth step is editing. Editing is a step when students prepare their writing in the final form. In this step, students will edit the writing and correct the mistakes on spelling, punctuation, and other technical things. There are three things in editing step: students need to 'keep away' from their writing to think more objectively when they face their essay which they want to edit, detect the writing mistakes, and edit those mistakes accurately. Finally, the last step is publishing. Students can share their writing with all of their friends in the class, so they will get feedback from many people about their writing. This can help students to develop their writing skills so that they will write better in the future. After that, we can conduct such a similar study to find out and to check whether there are some improvements in students writing or not, especially in capital letters and italic writing.

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The conclusion of this research was that we become aware of how 3rd-semester students of PGSD FKIP Unissula still made mistakes in writing capital and italic letters in their essay. This result showed that we need some review and follow up actions to prevent them to do same mistakes in the next writing activity. This research give some advantages to the lectures because by knowing the misspellings that students normally do when writing, we can give reinforcement about how to write a good essay with correct spelling. For the next research, we can analyze the other type of spellings, so we can be more aware of other mistakes often made by students and then carried out some action to handle them.

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