

A. Theoretical Framework

Speaking of punctuation marks of English, there are lots of aspects available, such as apostrophe, brackets, dashes, hyphens, commas, and many more. This chapter is aimed at providing some theoretical background of the study.

Writing is an action time for a writer to reflect, play around with their ideas, to obtain new and deeper insights into what he feels and believes. It is time for writer to polish the things about which he wishes to write until they become clear and understandable communication².

Writing is a physical act. It requires materials and energy. Furthermore, it must be performed skilfully to bring pleasure for both the writer and the readers as physical act, it requires practices regularly. Some people, however, are able to be a good writer because of the talent, just like somebody born with a talent to be a great athlete the next day.

Writing in English is not only a key of academic success but also an outlet for self-expression. Through writing, people can communicate with one another across distance and time. It also allows people to give information to others abroad about their intentions, and permit them to express their feelings and emotions. It creates something that cannot be produced by spoken. Besides, it can help students in learning process. Creative writing is a

¹ David Nunan, *Language Teaching Method: A Text Book for Teacher* (UK: Prentice Hall Inc., 1991), 88.

² Bernard Percy, *The Power of Creative Writing* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1981), 6.

diminishing the impact. Another example may show the better understanding about this punctuation.

The director (a tall, handsome man) sat down beside me.

c. Colon and Semicolon

The colon (:) is used to explain or start an enumeration. There are certain time to use this punctuation in writing activity, they are:

- 1) Before the lists
- 2) Before explanation

The semicolon (;) is often used to break up listings with commas, as seen in: *"She saw three men: Jamie, who came from New Zealand; John, the milkman's son; and George, a gaunt kind of man."* As well as joining statements, semicolon can also be used to separate lists, particularly where the lists are complicated by additional descriptions.

d. Comma

The comma (,) is used to disambiguate the meaning of sentences. For example, "Man, without his cell phone, is nothing" (emphasizing the importance of cell phone) and "Man: without it, is nothing" (emphasizing the importance of men) have greatly different meanings, as do "eats shoots and leaves" (to mean "consumes plant growths") and "eats, shoots and leaves" (to mean "eats firstly, fires a weapon secondly, and leaves the scene thirdly").

Taken from *Language Portal of Canada*⁵ providing theory dealing with comma mark, as commas are the most punctuation used in the English language, people need to use them correctly. The following is a list of basic comma rules to help people out.

1) Use Commas

Table 2.1

The Categories of the Correct Placement of Commas

No.	Categories	Examples
a)	After an introductory clause, phrase or adverb	<p><i>When choosing between two products</i>, we need to consider both quality and cost.</p> <p><i>To sum up</i>, the fundraiser was a success.</p> <p><i>Unfortunately</i>, the report was late for the second week in a row.</p>
b)	Between two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)	The manager requested a two-page summary, <i>but</i> the trainee prepared a ten-page report.
c)	Around parenthetic expressions	Management was, <i>on the whole</i> , supportive of the suggestions.
d)	Between items in a series	Ted bought <i>paper, pens, a computer and a printer</i> .

⁵ Government of Canada. “Comma” *Language Portal of Canada*, (<http://www.ourlanguages.gc.ca>, accessed on December 14th, 2014).

e)	Around non-restrictive elements (i.e. elements not essential to the meaning of the sentence)	The CEO, <i>Pam</i> , represented her company at the conference.
f)	Before direct quotations	Lester Pearson said, " <i>Under this Flag may our youth find new inspiration for loyalty to Canada....</i> "
g)	Between a place name and a province, territory or its abbreviation (also add a comma after the name of the province, territory, etc., if it is not the last word in the sentence)	I enjoy going to <i>Gimli, Manitoba</i> , for my holidays. This parcel is being sent to <i>Brandon, Man.</i>
h)	Between parts of dates and after the year	<i>April 1, 1999</i> , is an important date for many Nunavummiut. Jack's son was born on <i>Friday, February 13, 2009</i> .
i)	Between names and titles or degrees	<i>Elizabeth II, Queen of England</i> <i>Charles Peabody, MD</i>
j)	For clarity	<i>We left the crew members, convinced of their dedication.</i> (Those leaving were convinced of the crew members' dedication.) <i>We left the crew members convinced of their dedication.</i> (The crew members were convinced of their own dedication.)

The English language is full of ambiguities, but one way of ensuring that the reader understands what you are writing is by the correct use of commas. Comma has several important uses which include:⁶

(1) Separating words in lists

This is one of the most common uses. They are also used to separate a list of phrases.

For example as follows:

What I like the most is sitting in a hot tub, drinking champagne, eating strawberries and reading my diary.

(2) Separating extra information

Using a comma either side of an additional piece of information.

For example as follows:

The stagehand, who had only recently joined the company, helped me carry my shopping up to the dressing room.

The sentence, however, would still make sense if the additional information is left out, as stated:

The stagehand helped me carry my shopping up to the dressing room.

So, the existence of the comma within the sentence is to give more information about the subject or to give clarity about the subject.

⁶ Ann Gawthrope, *How to Write...* 158.

a)	Between the month and the year	<p>WRONG: Treasury Board approved the submission in <i>February, 2008</i>.</p> <p>REVISED: Treasury Board approved the submission in <i>February 2008</i>.</p>
b)	Between words that share a close grammatical bond (e.g. a verb or preposition and its complement)	<p>WRONG: Francine carefully <i>unwrapped, the silver candlestick and placed it gently on</i>, the table in front of her.</p> <p>REVISED: Francine carefully <i>unwrapped the silver candlestick and placed it gently on</i> the table in front of her.</p>
c)	After a coordinating conjunction instead of before it	<p>WRONG: You can work now <i>or</i>, you can work overtime on the weekend.</p> <p>REVISED: You can work now, <i>or</i> you can work overtime on the weekend.</p>
d)	With restrictive elements (i.e. elements essential to the meaning of the sentence)	<p>WRONG: Any person, <i>who is lazy, will fail</i>.</p> <p>REVISED: Any person <i>who is lazy will fail</i>.</p>
e)	In a series of non-coordinate adjectives	<p>WRONG: <i>Old, stone fences</i> remind me of home.</p> <p>REVISED: <i>Old stone fences</i> remind me of home.</p>

Yet, hyphens which join prefixes to words or words together in a group can cause the readers' confusion since the words which were once hyphenated, now they do not use hyphen mark again. Like in the word: *co-operative* is now usually just written *cooperative*. The hyphen mark is not inserted in the word anymore. It means most of words that use hyphen mark inside the word itself is now omitted.

f. Ellipsis

An ellipsis (...) is a row of three dots. It is mostly used in quotes to indicate that not all the quote has been used. It is only the relevant parts used. It simply means, ellipsis is used to mark omitted text. It is, however, people should not use this to distort the writer's meaning.

g. Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark (!) is used to mark an exclamation. It is used at the end of a sentence. Exclamation mark is used instead of full stop to indicate:

- 1) Strong emotions, e.g. *I couldn't believe my ears!*
- 2) Exclamatory phrases, e.g. *How stupid you can get!*

As writing development nowadays, some writers develop the habit of using them to signal a joke or light-hearted remark⁸. As stated in: *I feel off the stage, twisted my ankle, dropped my script and broke my phone. It just wasn't my day!* While some may use exclamation mark to signal to

⁸ Ann Gawthrop, *How to Write...* 162.

k. Quotation Mark

Quotation marks (‘ ’, “ ”, ' ' , " ") are used to mark quotation. The existence of quotation mark cannot be separated from the dialogue. The use of quotation mark is to indicate a quote within a direct speech. In another word, it is to show that there is someone’s talk that needs to be quoted by quotation mark and distinguishes it from the usual writing.

Quotation mark is also known as inverted comma and speech mark which is used to enclose: direct speech, quotation, and book or song title.

Meanwhile, the placement of inverted commas when writing dialogue demands a lot of writers⁹:

- 1) Placing speech marks around the word being said;
- 2) Starting each piece of speech with a capital letter except when the speech is broken up: ‘If you think I’ve forgotten,’ said Suzy firmly, ‘you are very much mistaken.’ Direct speech which is split into parts may only require a single capital letter (think of the direct speech as a sentence within a sentence);
- 3) Punctuating the speech before closing it;
- 4) Starting a new line for each new speaker.

⁹ David Waugh, Claire Warner, and Rosemary Waugh, *Transforming QTS: Teaching Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling in Primary Schools* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013), 105.

1. Slash

The slash or stroke or solidus (/, /) is often used to indicate alternatives, such as "*his/her*", or two equivalent meanings or spellings, such as "*grey/gray*".

3. The Error in Using Comma

a. The Definition of Error

Making error happens when someone learns either native language or foreign language. Actually, making errors is a part of language. Brown points out that human learning are fundamentally a process that involves the making mistakes. It means that people cannot learn a language without first systematically committing errors¹⁰.

In accordance with the term of error, there are some definitions given by linguists. Brown defines error is a noticeable deviation from the native speakers' grammar, reflecting the Interlingua competence of the learners¹¹.

Error is thing done wrongly or the state of being wrong in belief or behaviour and scope to make any mistakes without serious consequences. However, mistake is an action or opinion that is foolish or wrong of a word, figure, sum, and so on that is not correct. In other word, error is a

¹⁰ H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Inc., 1980), 164.

¹¹ H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language...* 165.

mistake that was done by the language user because he did not know the correct use of the native language pattern. While mistake is the language user's behaviour caused by the factor of forgetting on something. Thus, it makes the pattern of the target language seems incomplete.

In fiction, misuse of commas may create humor where none was intended or cause the reader to stop and have to reread for clarity. Each time a reader stops because of confusion, he is pulled out of the fiction that the writer worked so carefully to create.¹²

Breaking the rules of comma usage is acceptable in order to avoid confusion, of course, followed by always rewriting the sentence to avoid ambiguity. There are plenty of rules for when to use and when not to use commas. When you stick to the rules, your readers will be able to follow your meaning and you won't give them a reason to be pulled from your fiction and your imaginary world.

b. The Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) is the study and analysis of the errors made by the second language learners¹³. Error analysis may be carried out in order to identify strategies which learners use in language learning. It tries to identify the causes of learners' errors. In language learning, error analysis

¹² Bett Hill. “Finding Commas in All the Wrong Places” *The Editor’s Blog*, (<http://heeditorsblog.net>, accessed on February 18, 2016).

¹³ Jack C. Richard, *Focus on the Learner: Pragmatic Perspectives for the Language Teacher* (University of New Mexico: New Bury House Publisher, 1969), 127.

is also used to obtain the information and common difficulties students' face. It can be transformed into an aid to teach or a preparation of teaching materials.

The study of error analysis (EA) proceeds further than merely predicts errors by our contrastive analysis (CA). The error analysis studies the native of errors and presents confirmation of prediction made by constructive analysis. It deals with collecting samples of learners' language identifying the errors according to their hypothesized causes and evaluating seriousness of the errors¹⁴. It begins from the examination of learners' learning problems can be inferred. Errors are attributable to all possible sources, not only those resulting from the native language transfer, as mentioned by Brown where errors can arise from possible sources such as Interlingua transfer, Intralingua transfer, context of learning, and communication strategies¹⁵.

The aim of error is normally pedagogic. Errors provide information which can be used to sequence items for teaching or to devise remedial lesson¹⁶. By analyzing students' error, teacher cannot only detect the students' difficulty in learning the target language, but they also can determine the effectiveness of the teaching methods. In the other hands,

¹⁴ R. Ellis, *Second Language Acquisition in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press Prentice Hall Inc., 1987), 127.

¹⁵ H. Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language...* 171.

¹⁶ R. Ellis, *Second Language Acquisition*... 51.

teacher considers that knowing the students' error is helpful since teacher will recognize the learners' problems on how far they have learned and what remains for them to learn, by error analysis.

c. The Cause of Error

Contrary to popular belief, commas don't just signify pauses in a sentence. In fact, precise rules govern when to use this punctuation mark. When followed, they lay the groundwork for clear written communication.

Commas, in fact, are some of the most often misused punctuation marks, and with good reason. The rules that guide when and when not to insert a comma can be a bit clouded in terminology and exceptions. Because of that a lot of different uses, it drives confusing and leads to errors. So often, though, it comes down to one question whether it is essential.

Learning language like any other human being is fundamentally a process that involves the making mistakes. In fact, those second language learners' errors are important for understanding the process of second language acquisition. The cause is mainly:

1) Interlingua

It is a system that has structurally intermediate status between the native language and the target language. In addition, errors that happened caused the interference mother tongue. Errors, which occur

in learning foreign language, are caused by the interference of mother tongue.

It happens because the features of the two languages are different. To identify inter language error, the learners usually look for the easiest way by translating the sentence form from the learners' target language into the form of sentence in the learners' first language to see if similarities exist without thinking whether the other aspects are also affected (in this case is commas), because of the translating activity. For instance, people are about to make sentences in English. They dominantly will prepare sentence in Indonesian first that soon to be translated word by word into English. Take a look on the example below:

Buku itu ditulis saat musim panas, 4 Juli 2004.

(Indonesian)

When the sentence above is translated into English, it will be:

The book was created in the summer of July 4, 2004.

(English)

Otherwise, people tend to put them according to the sentence order,
write them into:

The book was created in the summer, 4 July 2004.

(English)

Thus, the comma placement becomes error. They put the comma incorrectly and for further case that is not corrected, it may affect the meaning.

B. Review of Previous Study

After doing searching in-depth, it is found some previous studies which are similar with this study. They are:

1. A thesis entitled “A Study of Error Analysis of Second Class of Muhammadiyah 2 Pucang Surabaya in Writing Paragraph” by Anisa Herawati.¹⁷ This previous study and this study, however, have similarities in certain aspect. Both of them discuss the same base theme; that is the error. Furthermore, the next statement problem is that asking about the possible causes of errors may happen. Eventhough, still, it is found some particular things that distinguish one another. Firstly, although the base theme is the same, both have their own term for error; the previous study is about the error in general (errors on transitional signal, punctuation rules, capitalization rules, and grammar in paragraph writing), while this study is about the error in specific way, that is punctuation mark, more on the comma. Secondly, it is about the research subject. This previous study chooses students of Senior High School as the research subject, while this

¹⁷ Anisa Herawati, S-1 Unpublished Thesis: “*A Study of Error Analysis of Second Class of Muhammadiyah 2 Pucang Surabaya in Writing Paragraph*” (Surabaya: IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2009).

study uses students of Junior High School as the research subject. Thirdly, this previous study is based on the triangulation research design in which the method explained briefly as follows: the researcher chose some students by sampling technique to write a recount composition. Thus, the researcher focused only on those selected students. Meanwhile this study uses descriptive qualitative research as the research design where at the end of the study is ended by elaborating the error evaluation after all stages are completely done.

2. A thesis entitled "The Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Recount Text" undertaken by Jannatul Laily Novia Bahari.¹⁸ Within two of this previous study's research questions, it is found similarities, in which it is being questioned the types of errors and the possible causes of those errors. She described the error students produce where there were 336 grammatical errors finding. In this study the researcher teaches the recount text by herself to get the data and the researcher also researches about the strategy of the teacher to solve the students' grammatical errors and emphasizes on errors using past tense in the recount writing which is completely different from the this study. This study gives concern on the comma aspect through students' written work, instead of the grammatical term. Then, the

¹⁸ Jannatul Laily Novia Bahari, S-1 Unpublished Thesis: “*The Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Recount Text*” (Surabaya: State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2010).

3. A thesis entitled “Error Analysis On The Use Of Simple Present Tense In Paper Assignment Of Writing Subject Made By The Fourth Semester Students Of English Department At Stain Salatiga in The Academic Year Of 2011/2012” conducted by Risti Yani Rahmawati.¹⁹ There are several points of similarities between this previous study and this study. Firstly, it discusses about the error which is discussed a lot as the theme, then the use of descriptive qualitative research as the research design, and the why factor of making error as the statement of the problem. Meanwhile the differences between both of them are firstly, the research subject where this previous study uses students of university as the research subject. Secondly, it observes students’ error by their paper assignment. Thirdly, throughout her research, she found out that the problem majority happened in the grammatical aspect on the use of simple present tense when students write their paper assignment. The study, however, is also intended to give some contributions concerning the factors that influence the grammatical errors on the use of simple present tense in students’ paper assignment. So that it is quite clear that the researcher on the

[illegible]

previous study was concerning dominantly on the grammatical issues. Nevertheless, this study, firstly, picks students of Junior High School as the research subject. Secondly, it observes the error by students' written work regularly. Thirdly, it focuses only on the punctuation mark: comma.

4. A thesis entitled “Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department, IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya” written by Anang Rifa’uddin.²⁰ It is found some similarities between this previous study and the study that is now researcher working on. Firstly, it is about the research design used. Both the study which is done by Anang Rifa’uddin and the study which is done by the researcher use descriptive qualitative design, in which they end up the study by drawing conclusion of the findings they obtain while doing research and discover a new finding. Secondly, it is about the statement of the problem; asking about the factor affecting the subject to do it. However, in his research, he conducted it because of his anxiety to the informal English language that is carried out in real life up to thesis writing project that should be written in the form of academic writing; the most formal one. It means it is not allowed to use any kind of *slank* language while the process of writing thesis. Hence, he takes this problem into his discussion while focusing on what features and the factors affecting students to use informal language

²⁰ Anang Rifa'uddin, S-1 Unpublished Thesis: *"Informal Language in Academic Writing: A Case Study at English Education Department, IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya"* (Surabaya: State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2012).

within their thesis. Whereas, this study departs from a number of errors that the researcher found in the use of punctuation placement, more specifically on the comma, in the research subjects' written work which encourages the researcher to analyze them and find out the possible factor of why they happens.

5. A thesis entitled “Error Analysis in Students’ Proposal Writing of English Education Department of Tarbiyah Faculty of IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya” arranged by Mohammad Isnaini.²¹ There are a number of similarities between this previous study and this study are about the error which is discussed a lot as the theme, then the use of descriptive qualitative research as the research design, and the why factor of making error as the second research question. Meanwhile the differences between both of them are firstly, the research subject where this previous study uses students of university as the research subject. Secondly, it observes students’ error by their proposal. Thirdly, throughout his research, he found out that the problem majority happened in the sentence devices when students write proposal. While this study, firstly, uses students of Junior High School as the research subject. Secondly, it observes the error by students’ regularly written work. Thirdly, it focuses only on the punctuation mark: comma.

²¹ Moh. Isnaini, S-1 Unpublished Thesis: “*Error Analysis in Students’ Proposal Writing of English Education Department of Tarbiyah Faculty of IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*” (Surabaya: State Institute for Islamic Studies Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2011).