

**THE MECHANICS ACCURACY OF ENGLISH
LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
STUDENTS' WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**



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ABSTRAK

LILIK YULIAWATI. 2011. AKURASI MEKANIK PADA TUGAS MENULIS SISWA PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS. Skripsi. Jakarta: Departemen Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti akurasi mekanik pada tugas menulis mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (PSPBI). Aspek mekanik yang dianalisis meliputi tanda baca, huruf kapital, ejaan, cetak miring, dan penulisan bilangan pada 65 tugas menulis dari 3 mata kuliah, yaitu mata kuliah ELT Management, Micro-Teaching, dan Research Proposal & Seminar. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis isi. Hasil dari analisis tugas menulis mahasiswa ini diperkuat oleh wawancara dengan 10 mahasiswa PSPBI, 3 dosen mata kuliah menulis, dan 3 dosen mata kuliah lainnya. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa akurasi mekanik pada tugas menulis mahasiswa PSPBI cukup baik (merujuk pada tingkat akurasi); dengan arti bahwa terdapat sejumlah kesalahan mekanik pada tulisan mahasiswa, tetapi kesalahan tersebut tidak terlalu mempengaruhi pemahaman pembaca.

ABSTRACT

LILIK YULIAWATI. 2011. THE MECHANICS ACCURACY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS' WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. Thesis. Jakarta: English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Jakarta.

This study was aimed to find out the mechanics accuracy of English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students' writing assignments. The mechanics that were analyzed include punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering of 65 writing assignments of three courses, that is, ELT Management, Micro-Teaching, and Research Proposal & Seminar courses. The method used in this study was content analysis. The analysis result of the students' writing assignments was triangulated by interview with 10 ELESP students, 3 lecturers of writing courses, and 3 lecturers of non-writing courses. The result of this study reveals that the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments is sufficient (referring to the level of accuracy); it means that there are number of mechanics mistakes in students writing assignments, but those mistakes do not greatly affect readers' understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Writing is an important part of life because it is a tool of communication—to communicate the writer’s ideas to the readers. Checkett & Feng-Checkett (2004, p. 9) suggest, “The purpose of good writing is to get across information to someone in a clear and concise manner”. Thus, when a writer writes he must ensure that the readers understand what he intends to communicate in a fairly simple way.

Checkett & Feng-Checkett (2004, p. 5) also state that there are two obvious problems arising from a poor piece of writing. The first problem is the reader’s understanding. The meaning of a sentence can be confused and unclear because of poor writing. For example, the sentence “*The truck hit the wall, and it was damaged.*” is ambiguous. The pronoun “it” does not refer clearly to either truck or wall, so the reader cannot know which of the two was damaged. The second problem arising from poor writing is the reader’s perception. When people read writing that is difficult to understand or that contains punctuation errors, poorly constructed sentences, and misspelled words, they think less of the writer.

Mastering writing skill is necessary for success in every aspect of life. Especially in colleges and universities most academic courses use essays or other written tasks to assess students’ work. It takes study and practice to develop this

skill. Besides, it also takes a certain amount of commitment, practice, and hard work.

In English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Jakarta State University, the students must take prerequisite courses of writing: Writing 1, Writing 2, and Writing 3. Those are intended to improve the students' writing skill so that they can produce good writing that will be seen when they write written assignments and of course when they write *skripsi* at the end of their study.

In writing courses, the students tend to be more aware of technical errors in writing including the mechanics which is sometimes neglected. The students try to minimize the errors of mechanics, such as the punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering in their essays or papers because they worry that each error they make will decrease the mark. Conversely, they tend to focus more on the idea or content of their writing when they produce papers to fulfill the assignment of non-writing courses. They tend to be *less* aware of the punctuation and spelling use, whereas the punctuation errors and misspelled words will make the meaning of the sentence ambiguous. Besides, other errors of mechanics can make bad impression of readers. Therefore, whatever the students write for, they always need to pay attention in using the accurate mechanics in order to produce a good writing and to make the reader understand what they want to say through their writing.

The above condition triggers the researcher to conduct this study in order to know the degree of mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writings and what

kind of mechanics mistakes mostly produced. The researcher took the samples of students' writing assignments from non-writing courses in order to get the accurate data when the students write naturally with the above consideration about how the students write for the writing and non-writing courses. This study showed to what extent the students implement their knowledge of correct mechanics using in their writings.

B. Identification of Problems

Referring to the background of the study above, the researcher identified some problems as follows:

1. What are the ELESP students' difficulties in producing good writing?
2. How is writing skill taught in ELESP?
3. How is the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments?
4. How is the quality of ELESP students' writing assignments?

C. Research Question

From all the problems above, the researcher focused on "How is the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments?"

D. Purpose of the Study

The study was aimed to find out the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments which includes punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering.

E. Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the result of the study will give basic information about the mechanics accuracy of students' writing assignments, including the most mechanics mistakes, so that lecturers can improve teaching and learning process. The ELESP students can make a reflection on their writing whether the mechanics they used are correct. Besides, the result of this study will be useful for other researchers who want to conduct a related study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Accuracy

Accuracy is important in writing in order to achieve the excellence. The writer must understand the expected writing conventions. “Writing conventions are the rules used to create meaning from the words chosen such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax (order and choice of words), and paragraphing” (available at <http://ncowie.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/formal-writing-accuracy-requirements/>). Therefore, a piece of formal writing without intrusive errors means that the writing product does not have significant and/or repeated error patterns (in spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, and paragraphing).

Accuracy in writing involves the process of editing and revising writing samples. That means work has been closely and carefully proofread to a near-perfect standard with limited errors, so that only minor editing is required. The writer does this editing process to eliminate the errors or mistakes in his writing and to make his writing accurate. The writer has to pay more attention to the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering which sometimes being neglected.

B. Academic Writing

1. Definition of Academic Writing

Both writing and speaking are productive skills. Yet, writing tends to be more formal than talking. When people talk, they may use slang, intonation, facial expressions, and other body language to get their point across. As a result, the exact words people use can be informal or imprecise, and the audience will still understand them. In writing, however, words are all people have to get the point across, so those words need to be more precise and more formal. Fairbairn & Winch (1996, p. 32) suggest, “Writing is about conveying meaning by selecting words and putting them together in a written or printed form”. Therefore, word choice, sentence structure, and paragraph organization become important in writing.

There are various types of writing, such as newspaper articles, essays, short stories, novels, letters, and diaries. Each type of writing has its own set of specific guidelines that the writer must follow. For example, newspaper articles, short stories, and magazine articles usually have fairly short paragraphs and simple writing, but textbooks and academic writing usually have longer paragraphs and more complex writing. As what Ploeger (2000, p. 4) says,

Academic writing, specifically the English-class paragraph and essay, has its own guidelines. Some of these guidelines apply to various types of writing, such as the guideline about paragraph indentation; others, such as length of paragraphs and sentences, are shared by only a few types of writing”.

Thaiss, et al (2006, p. 4) define academic writing as “any writing that fulfills a purpose of education in a college or university”. Besides, academic writing can also be defined as “a form of expository prose which should be precise, semi-formal, impersonal, and objective” (available at <http://www.tutorvista.com/english/define-academic-writing>).

While academic writing might be defined in many ways, Gocsik (2004, para. 5-7) suggests three concepts of academic writing. First, academic writing is writing done by scholars for other scholars. College students will be engaged in activities that scholars have been engaged in for centuries: the students will read about, think about, argue about, and write about great ideas. Second, academic writing is devoted to topics and questions that are of interest to the academic community. The last is that academic writing should present the reader with an informed argument.

2. Elements and Characteristics of Good Writing

In reality, there are some misconceptions about good writing. Sometimes when trying to write assignments, the students think that they must be able to produce a long and complicated paragraph in their paper. Even, they lack the awareness of the mechanics such as punctuation, spelling, etc. In fact, those are not criteria of good writing. Checkett & Feng Checkett (2004, pp. 7-10) suggest four elements of good writing: Good writing doesn't have to be complicated; good writing doesn't have to be long; good writing is more formal than talking; and good writing needs proper punctuation.

The main purpose of academic writing in English language is to inform the reader. It offers factual information on a given subject and it doesn't intend to entertain. Thus, in academic writing it is only allowed to use the standard written form of the English language. The text should be accurate and correct and it should use the words in a precise manner.

According to ThreeStooges (2010, para. 3), "academic writing has eight characteristics: complexity, formality, precision, objectivity, explicitness, accuracy, hedging and responsibility".

Complexity in academic writing comes from the fact that the standard written form of the English language is different than the language spoken daily. The vocabulary used in written language is more varied than the one used in conversations. In close connection with complexity is formality. The degree of formality in academic writing is high. Besides, academic writing should be precise. Factual information and figures or charts should be provided. Another characteristic is objectivity. Academic writing should focus on the main theme and offer information about it—without the writer getting involved in a personal manner. The author of an academic writing is responsible for make it explicit and for making clear how different parts of the text are connected between them and why are they relevant for the central theme. An accurate use of vocabulary is a must in a text. Extra attention should be paid when using words with a specific meaning and the writer should know that there is a clear distinction between phonetics and phonemics. Some academic writers choose to use a technique called hedge.

This has to do with the way that writer decides to approach a certain subject and with how strong the claims he makes are. Last, academic writing should be treated with responsibility. Everything stated should be accompanied by proofs and justifications and no assumptions are allowed. Sources should also be mentioned.

3. Process of writing

Like reading, writing is a process. According to Buscemi (2002, p. 6), “the writing process can be divided into four major steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing/proofreading”.

The first stage of writing is prewriting which “helps you to decide on considerations like purpose and audience, to gather information, and to set up a plan for organizing your ideas” (Buscemi, 2002, p. 6).

Then, the second stage is drafting. Ploeger (2000, p. 7) explains:

A draft is a planning tool to expand your outline into a text with full sentences. As you write the first draft, use your outline to guide you to put ideas on paper in a logical, organized way. Use full sentences whenever possible, but do not worry about whether your writing is grammatically correct. Mechanical errors will occur in a first draft, but these errors will be found and fixed in the editing phase.

The next stage is revising. Dietsch (2003, p. 9) explains, “during revision your goal is to rethink ideas, refine, and develop them. You may drastically reorganize the draft. During this time, you reshape ideas—expanding, deleting, and clarifying”.

The last stage of writing is editing or proofreading. Buscemi (2002, p. 7) states, “Editing means reading the best of your drafts to correct errors in

grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and mechanics. Proofreading involves the final check for spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors”. In this stage, the writer must ensure that the mechanics used is appropriate with Standard English. The writer has to check the use of punctuation and spelling to avoid ambiguity. He also needs to check the use of capital letter, italic, and number in order to get a good impression from the readers.

C. Mechanics of Writing

1. Definition of Mechanics

There are some definitions of mechanics suggested by some authors. According to Kane (2003, p. 15), “in composition *mechanics* refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled or arranged on paper”. Besides, Day (1984, pp. 137-138) defines that the “mechanics are the technical rules that writer, typist, or printer uses in preparing a manuscript”.

When students write they need to check the mechanics aspects, such as placing the name and the title of where the instructor wants them, spacing twice after typing a period or colon, and using the required kind of paper. Mechanics also includes conventions about how to use capitalization, abbreviations, and numbering in writing. Then, Lincoln (1986, p. 405) affirms that the mechanics are conventional rules that a writer needs to follow so that the writing will look the way formal writing is expected to look.

2. Aspects of Mechanics

Aspects of mechanics include punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering. Those aspects influence the understanding of the readers about the meaning of the sentence and the perception of the readers about knowledge of the writer.

a. Punctuation

Meyers (2003, p. 282) suggests that punctuation marks are signals that help readers understand the sentences and avoid confusion. In line with Meyers, Ploeger (2000, p.157) affirms, “punctuation may seem like a nuisance, but without punctuation the reader would not know when the sentence ended, which information was extra in a sentence, or if letters were omitted in a word (such as with contractions)”.

Moreover, Checkett & Feng-Checkett (2004, p. 10) states, “punctuation has two prime functions: First, it divides information into smaller groups, making it easier for the reader to understand; and second, it creates rhythm so that the sentences flow easily together.

Explained further in *Concise Rules of APA Style* (2010, p. 48), punctuation establishes the cadence of a sentence, telling the reader where to pause, stop, or take a detour. Then, punctuation usually denotes a pause in thought; different kinds of punctuation indicate different kinds and lengths of pauses.

In addition, Oshima & Hogue (1999, p. 245) remark, “using correct punctuation is important because punctuation conveys meaning

just as words do”. Therefore, a change in punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence (Reid, 2000, p. 298).

Punctuation includes the used of periods, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, quotation marks, parentheses, brackets, and slashes.

Period “closes declarative sentences—those which state a fact, perception, idea, belief, feeling—and it may also close an imperative sentence, or command (though these are often punctuated with an exclamation point)” (Kane, 2003, p. 383). Question mark also ends sentences—in this case, sentences that ask a question (Meyers, 2003, p. 290). While, exclamation point “signals excitement, anger, fear, or other strong emotions, whether in a full sentence or simply in a partial sentence” (Meyers, 2003, p. 291).

In speaking, people pause to separate ideas or create emphasis. In writing, however, they use commas to signal pauses and shifts in the flow of words. *Concise Rules of APA Style* (2010, pp. 49-51) suggests the rules of comma uses as follows.

Use a comma

- between elements (including before *and* and *or*) in a series of three or more items.
- to set off a nonessential or nonrestrictive clause, that is, a clause that embellishes a sentence but if removed would leave the grammatical structure and meaning of the sentence intact.
- to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction.
- to set off the year in exact dates.
- to set off the year in parenthetical reference citations.
- to separate groups of three digits in most numbers of 1,000 or more.

Concise Rules of APA Style (2010, pp. 51-52) states that semicolon is used to separate two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction and to separate elements in a series that already contain commas. On the other hand, colon is used between a grammatically complete introductory clause and a final phrase or clause that illustrates, extends, or amplifies the preceding thought.

Dash is used to indicate only a sudden interruption in the continuity of a sentence (American Psychological Association, 2010, p. 52).

Concise Rules of APA Style (2010, pp. 53-54) affirms that quotation marks are used to introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression; to set off the title of an article or chapter in a periodical or book when the title is mentioned in the text; and to reproduce material from a test item or verbatim instructions to participants.

Stanley (1988, pp. 467-468) explains, “Parentheses are used to enclose words, phrases, and clauses that are not essential to the meaning of a sentence or paragraph but that clarify or comment on a point made in the sentence or paragraph”. On the other hand, “Brackets are used to enclose your own explanations, comments, and corrections within a quotation from another writer”.

Slash is used to clarify a relationship in which a hyphenated compound is used, to separate numerator from denominator, to indicate

per to separate units of measurement accompanied by a numerical value, to set off English phonemes, and to cite a republished work in text (American Psychological Association, 2010, p. 52).

b. Capitalization

Connelly (2006, p. 396) explains the function of capitalization as follows:

Capital letters are used to begin sentences, indicate special meanings, and prevent confusion.

Words are capitalized to indicate proper nouns and prevent confusion. The word *catholic* means universal; *Catholic* refers to a specific religion. The word *mosaic* describes decorations or paintings made from tiny inlaid pieces of tile or other material, but *Mosaic* refers to the Biblical figure Moses, as in *Mosaic laws*. A *mustang* is a wild horse; a Mustang is the brand name of a Ford car. The word *Earth* refers to the planet we live on, while *earth* means soil.

Langan (2001, p. 491) lists seven main uses of capital letters.

Capital letters are used with:

1. First word in a sentence or direct quotation
2. Names of persons and the word *I*
3. Names of particular places
4. Names of days of the week, months, and holidays
5. Names of commercial products
6. Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, articles, stories, poems, films, television shows, songs, papers that you write, and the like
7. Names of companies, associations, unions, clubs, religious and political groups, and other organizations

c. Spelling

Meyers (2003, p. 304) notes that spelling and related matters may seem to be trivial issues. However, trivial issues can distract the readers from the important one; that is the content of the writing.

Connelly (2006, p. 171) states that “spelling errors confuse readers and make your work appear sloppy and unprofessional”. In line

with Connelly, Fairbairn (1996, pp. 99-100) affirms that spelling can make meaning ambiguous. Besides, bad spelling creates a bad impression. Worse than that, poorly spelled work can be irritating to read, especially on occasions when there is a little excuse.

According to Newman (2009, para. 1),

Standardized spelling is a convenience for reminding readers of the words they know. The chief reason for conventional spelling is the fact that the majority of people consider it a sign of literacy and even social respectability! People take for granted that the spelling of educated people will be conventional; even people who are careless about their own spelling are quick to detect and condemn misspelled words in the writing of others.

d. Italicization

American Psychological Association (2010, pp.73-76) suggests that italics are used for titles of books, periodicals, films, videos, TV shows, and microfilm publications; genera, species, and varieties; introduction of a new, technical, or key term or label; a letter, word, or phrase cited as a linguistic example; words that could be misread; letter used as statistical symbols or algebraic variables; some test scores and scales; periodical volume numbers in reference lists; and anchors of a scale.

e. Numbering

Numbers can be expressed in numerals or words, or sometimes it can be a combination between numerals and words.

According to APA style (2010, pp. 85-87) , numerals should be used to express numbers 10 and above; numbers in the abstract of a paper

or in a graphical display within a paper; numbers that immediately precede a unit of measurement; numbers that represent statistical or mathematical functions, fractional or decimal quantities, percentages, ratios, percentiles, and quartiles; numbers that represent time, dates, ages, scores, and points on a scale, exact sums of money, and numerals as numerals; and numbers that denote a specific place in a numbered series, parts of books and tables, and each number in a list of four or more numbers.

While, words should be used to express any number that begins a sentence, title, or text heading; common fractions; and universally accepted usage.

Sometimes a combination of numerals and words is used to express back-to-back modifiers. A combination of numerals and words in these situations increases the clarity and readability of the construction. In some situations, however, readability may suffer; in such a case, spell out both numbers.

D. Common Problems in Mechanics

1. Run-On Sentences

Run-on sentences—also called *fused sentences*—are incorrectly punctuated compound sentences. Run-ons lack the punctuation needed to join two independent clauses (Connelly, 2006, p. 231). In other words, two sentences are fused without any mark of punctuation as exemplified by Finkelstein (2000, p. 195):

The workstation was not designed ergonomically it leaves much to be desired.

Connelly (2006, p. 235) suggests four methods for repairing run-ons: putting a period between the sentences; inserting a semicolon between the sentences to show a balanced relationship between closely related statements; connecting the sentences with a comma and *and, or, yet, but, or so* to show a logical relationship between them; and rewriting the run-on, making it a simple or complex sentence to reduce wordiness or show a clearer relationship between ideas.

2. Comma Splices

Connelly (2006, p. 231) defines, “comma splices are compound sentences where a comma is used instead of a semicolon”. For example:

My sister lives in Chicago, my brother lives in New York.

Skwire & Skwire (2008, p. 212) suggest four ways for eliminating a comma splice: replacing the comma with a period; replacing the comma with a semicolon; adding coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, yet, or so*) after the comma; and changing one of the independent clauses to a dependent clause.

3. Misspelled Words

Students often have problems with spelling in English because although it has some regularity it is not a straightforwardly phonetic language like. Connelly (2006, p. 409) lists forty commonly misspelled words as follows:

absence	belief	generous	mortgage
achieve	benefit	grammar	necessary
acquire	challenge	guard	obvious
address	committee	height	opinion
among	control	heroes	parallel
analyze	decision	identity	persuade
argument	dying	label	possess
athletic	embarrass	license	privilege
beautiful	enough	marriage	separate
becoming	familiar	material	vacuum

When a writer uses computer in writing, he will get some benefits. One of the benefits of computer usage related to the spelling is the availability of a spell checker. Spell checkers, however, do not recognize all of the English words. Therefore, sometimes the writer has to check the dictionary for the unavailable words in spell checkers. Another problem is that the spell checkers do not find those wrongly used words that are spelled right so that the sentence makes no sense. Ploeger (2000, p. 179) lists common words missed by spell checkers as follows:

Word as It Should Be	Word That Is Typed
the	they
you	your
from	form
new	knew
an	and
is, if, it	if, it, is

There are some possible reasons for students to make mistakes in writing: lack of knowledge, carelessness, and absence of editing and proofreading process. The lack of students' knowledge about the rules of mechanics using will make them confused and produce mistakes in writing. Besides, the carelessness also will decrease the quality of writing. Norrish (as cited in Hasyim, 2002, p. 47)

stated that “Carelessness is often closely related to lack of motivation”. Students are not motivated to enlarge their knowledge about the mechanics rules maybe because they do not aware of the importance of mechanics. Thus, they tend to be careless in using mechanics. Moreover, the absence of editing and proofreading process can also be the cause of the mechanics inaccuracy in students’ writing because this process will check and decrease the number of mistakes in writing.

E. Conceptual Framework

In academic context, most universities use essays or other written assignments to assess students’ work. Besides, the university students must write a *skripsi* in order to finish the study. So, university students will always deal with writing during their study.

Writing is not only a matter of sharing idea in people’s mind but also a matter of how it will be communicated to readers. Thus, the readers should understand what is meant by the writer.

Written language is different with spoken language. In speaking, the speaker can use various intonation, facial expression, and gesture to help other people understand what he intends to say. But, in writing the only that helps the readers understand the text is the language itself. Thus, the writer has to ensure that he uses good language and makes good composition based on writing conventions to produce writing with a good quality.

There are some elements that influence the quality of writing, such as grammar, usage, and mechanics. Unfortunately, sometimes students only focus on

the grammar and the content of the writing, and they neglect the mechanics. It is one of some misconceptions of good writing criteria commonly appear.

In composition, mechanics refers to the appearance of words, including punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering. The mechanics can affect the readers' understanding and the quality of the writing itself. For example, the absence of a comma in a compound sentence will distract and make the readers confused about the meaning of the sentence. Misspelled words also confuse the readers because it can make the meaning ambiguous. Worse than that, errors in spelling will make the readers irritated and consider the writer unprofessional because people take for granted that the spelling of educated people will be conventional.

The accuracy is important in academic writing. It involves the process of editing and revising writing samples. In editing process, the writer has to pay attention to all aspects that can influence the quality of his writing including mechanics. As an important part of writing, mechanics cannot be neglected because it will influence the overall quality of writing. When the writer produces grammatically correct sentences without correct punctuation, it can become run-on sentences. The readers do not know when the idea ends. Thus, when the readers become confused about when to start and when to stop, the writing becomes ineffective. Besides, the mechanics of writing can influence the coherence and cohesion of writing product.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Content analysis is used in this study as a technique that enables researcher to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007, p. 483). The form of the communication usually analyzed is written contents, such as textbooks, essays, newspapers, magazine articles, or students' assignments. Analysis of such communications can tell a great deal about how human beings live.

There are some objectives why a researcher might want to do a content analysis according to Fraenkel & Wallen. Here, the objective that the researcher wants to achieve is to obtain information useful in dealing with educational problems. The researcher used this content analysis to investigate more specific information about the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments through the analysis of mechanics mistakes mostly appear in their writing.

B. Time and Place of the Study

This study was conducted at the English Department of Jakarta State University from February to July 2011.

C. Data and Data Source

There were two kinds of data used in this study: ED students' writing assignments and interview.

1. ED Students' Writing Assignments

The researcher took writing assignments of ELESPP students' year 2008. The data collected were the mistakes of mechanics of writing, including punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering. The source of the data consists of 11 writing assignments of ELT Management course, 27 writing assignments of Micro-Teaching course, and 27 writing assignments of Research Proposal & Seminar course; thus, the total numbers of writing assignments analyzed are 65 papers.

The researcher chose ELT Management, Micro-Teaching, and Research Proposal & Seminar course because there are a lot of tasks in the form of writing assignments in those courses. Thus, the researcher can see and analyze the use of mechanics there.

2. Interview

Then, to confirm what has not been clear from the content analysis result of the writing assignments and to strengthen that result, the writer interviewed 10 ELESPP students randomly because they can give possible reasons to make mistakes in writing assignments as a crosscheck of the analysis. Besides, the researcher also interviewed three lecturers of writing courses and three lecturers of non-writing courses because they can give information

about the process of teaching and learning in terms of the mechanics of writing either in writing courses or in non-writing courses.

D. Data Collection Procedure

The steps in collecting the data: Firstly, the researcher met the lecturers of each courses and asked for their permission to copy the students' writing assignments. After getting the permission, the researcher copied the ELESP students' writing assignments from each course.

Finishing the content analysis of the writing assignments, the researcher contacted 10 ELESP students, three lecturers of writing courses, and three lecturers of non-writing courses to have an interview.

E. Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

When the writing assignments of each course had been collected, the researcher started to identify the mechanics mistakes and categorize them into the type what they belong to in ELT Management, Micro-Teaching, and Research Proposal & Seminar courses. The table is as follow.

Table 1 Mistakes Category

No.	Sentence(s)	Aspect(s) in which Mistake Occurs				
		Punctuation	Capitalization	Spelling	Italicization	Numbering

After categorizing, the researcher analyzed the mechanics mistakes more details by giving comment and suggestion for the correction on those mistakes.

The tables are as follow.

Table 2 Analysis of Mechanics Mistakes

Component	Assignments	Sentence(s)	Comment	Suggestion

Next step is counting the numbers and the percentage of mistakes in all courses according to the type they belong to. The tables are as follow.

Table 3 Total Number of Mechanics Mistakes in 65 Papers

No.	Categories of Mechanics Mistakes	Number of Mistakes			
		ELT Management	Micro - Teaching	Research Proposal & Seminar	Total
1	Punctuation				
2	Capitalization				
3	Spelling				
4	Italicization				
5	Numbering				
Total					

Table 4 Percentage of Mechanics Mistakes in 65 Papers

No.	Categories of Mechanics of Writing	Number of Mistakes	Percentage
1	Punctuation		
2	Capitalization		
3	Spelling		
4	Italicization		
5	Numbering		

When the analysis result of the students' writings had been got, the researcher interview 10 ELESF students and six lecturers (three writing course lecturers and three non-writing course lecturers). This interview is aimed to strengthen the result of the analysis of students' writing assignments.

The researcher linked and compared the analysis of the students' writing assignments and the result of the interview to have a discussion. From the discussion, interpretation and conclusion were drawn to answer the research question, which is "How is the mechanics accuracy of ELESP students' writing assignments?", by using the rubric below.

Table 5 Rubric of Accuracy Level

No.	Level of Accuracy	Description
1	Low	The writing is unclear or difficult to understand because of numerous errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering.
2	Insufficient	The writing has numerous errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering that interfere the reader's understanding of the message.
3	Sufficient	There are some errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering; however, they do not greatly affect the reader's understanding.
4	Good	The writing is generally free from errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, italicization, and numbering.

Adapted from Ohio, Department of Education (available at https://reports.success-ode-state-oh-us.info/OH%20PARS%20Teaching%20Tools/Wessential_tactic5OH_OGT_W_WRITING_10_1.html taken in June, 19th 2011)

The rubric was used to describe the level of mechanics accuracy of students' writing assignments. The accuracy level depends on the numbers of mechanics mistakes and the effect of the mistakes to the readers' understanding of the writing messages.