

## Errors committed by IELTS students in essay writing

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### Abstract

*International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the widely accepted test designed to measure English proficiency of non-native speakers. It covers all four skills. The non-native speakers commit different errors as no one has got mastery over that language. Therefore, this article presents the errors committed by IELTS students in Essay Writing Task II in terms of grammar (article, and preposition) and mechanics. This study was based on primary and secondary sources of data. The sample population of the study consisted of eighty students studying in four purposively selected A, B, C and D consultancies of Banepa Municipality, Kavre. It was a survey research. The required data were collected by providing question of an opinion essay to the students. The students were taken mock test to collect the authentic data. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted statistically and descriptively. From the research, it was found that the total errors committed by the students were 611. The students committed 74 errors in article, 62 errors in preposition and 475 errors in mechanics. It seems that the students made the highest number of errors in mechanics and lowest number of errors in preposition. It is apparent that the students were better in grammar and weak in mechanics.*

**Keywords:** IELTS, mechanics, language proficiency, rubrics and errors

### Introduction

Writing is an act of creating a persistent representation of human feelings and perceptions on any topic using a set of symbols and rules. Writing is one of the productive skills among four language skills. According to Brown (2001, p.335) writing is the written products of thinking, drafting and revising that require specialized skills on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions coherently into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning and how to edit text for appropriate grammar; and how to produce a final

product. Similarly, according to Richards (1990, p.313), Writing is a system of written symbols which represents the sounds, syllables or words of language.

IELTS Writing Task II is the second part of writing test where we have to present with a point of view, argument or problem and asked to write an essay in response.

There are especially five types of essay writing in IELTS writing task II. They are opinion essay, discussion essay, argumentative essay, problem solution essay and double question essay. This research is based on opinion essay. It is also known as 'agree or disagree essay.' In this type of essay, the writers are asked to present their opinion on a given topic, justify it and often compare it with alternative views. The opinion essay mainly includes three parts such as introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion. This type of essay is frequently asked in mock test and real test nowadays.

The present research article is based on the objectives:

- To find out the errors committed by the IELTS students in grammar (article and preposition) in writing task II.
- To find out the errors committed by the students in mechanics in writing task II.

### **Significance of the study**

This study will be beneficial for those who are willing to learn and teach academic IELTS especially writing task II as one can easily determine the level of the students and can also evaluate nearer band score in exam. Moreover, it provides ample benefits for all the students, IELTS instructors, investigators, textbook writers, syllabus designers and other persons who are directly and indirectly involved in teaching and learning activities of second language.

### **Delimitations of the study**

This study had the following delimitations:

- The study was confined to four purposively selected consultancies of Banepa Municipality.
- The consultancies were named as A, B, C and D.
- The research was done on twenty students from each consultancy. So, the total number of respondents were eighty.

- The research was limited to students' errors in terms of grammar (article and preposition) and mechanics in IELTS opinion Essay Writing Task II.
- The research was survey research based on the question prepared by the researcher in mock test.

### **Review of the literature**

Essay writing is task II in academic IELTS. This section is different from general IELTS. There are mainly five types of essays. They are opinion essay, advantages and disadvantages essay, discussion essay, problem and solution and double questions essay. Writing task II reflects thoughts, comments and evaluation or answering a question. This part is complex for the students as they have to gather materials to construct a good essay. Especially non-native speakers have lots of problems to express their views as they are imperfect in all four skills. This study was based on opinion essay. It was a mock test taken by their own instructors in presence of the researcher. The students were given same topic and wrote themselves without cheating from their friends. The candidates should present a clear well-organized argument with relevant examples to the ideas. The students should write minimum 250 words in 40 minutes.

### **Rubrics for IELTS writing task II**

The following are the rubrics which the candidates need to remember while writing task II. Each of them contains 25% weightage in examination.

#### **a. Task achievement**

It is how well the question is answered. If all parts of the question are dealt with and the ideas are logical or the data is accurate and well summarized, then task achievement will be high.

#### **b. Coherence and cohesion**

It is how well the answer is structured and if the ideas are signaled and logically follow on from one another in paragraphs. The candidates should not repeat the same things too many times to get good band score. Therefore, referencing and substitution are important.

### **c. Lexical resource**

It is a range of vocabulary a candidate uses. The wider the range of vocabulary a candidate uses to accurately express themselves, then the higher their band score will be. Similarly, spelling and word formation are also important for good lexical resource.

### **d. Grammatical range and vocabulary**

The candidates can get high band score if they use lots of complex sentences with few errors. It is also important to use correct full stops and commas accurately.

### **Method and data sources**

A survey research study was employed for this research. The total population of the study area was 80. Among them 20 students, each studying in four consultancies of Banepa, were selected for the study. The simple random sampling method was used for the selection of population of the research. Out of 80 students, twenty students were selected from each consultancy using fish-bowl draw sampling method.

There are about 20 consultancies in Banepa Municipality. But the study area for the research were A, B, C and D Consultancies. The research was based on students' errors in grammar (preposition and article) and mechanics in opinion Essay Writing Task II in IELTS.

The researcher used open-ended questionnaire as a tool for data collection.

The researcher had adopted both primary and secondary sources to carry out this research work. Primary data were collected from 80 students selected from four consultancies. Likewise, secondary data were obtained from different books, researches, journals, articles and other documents related to IELTS and writing skill.

The researcher visited the purposively selected A, B, C and D consultancies and told the managing directors about the purpose of visiting there. Then the researcher met the concerned IELTS instructors and requested them to fix the date and time for mock test. The researcher provided the topic of an opinion essay and collected sample writing of students. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using statistical tools and descriptions. Number was used among the means of measurement test. The performance of the students was analyzed on the basis of errors committed by them while writing essay.

## Results

The total errors committed by the students were 611. The students committed 74 errors in article, 62 errors in preposition and 475 errors in mechanics. From the research, it was found that the students committed the highest number of errors in mechanics and lowest number of errors in preposition.

-The students were found better in using preposition. Some errors of preposition are  
In spite of all these facts, need to treatment herself

-In case of article, the students committed errors due to omission, deletion and substitution. For example: on their hand, one the reason

-Regarding the use of mechanics, students are found poor in punctuation and spelling. For example: i believe that trusing, be careful with oure healths

-It is also found that male students are better than female students in essay writing.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, there are different errors committed by non-native speakers in IELTS mock test. The researcher found out that the students have problem in mechanics. It includes punctuation and spelling. Likewise, they are somewhat better in prepositions compared to articles. Students feel difficulty in task II due to different grammatical errors. The researcher suggested the learners to learn the rules of preposition and article. The candidates should also study about uses of punctuation and spellings during practice session.

*[The article was reviewed by Asst. Prof. Ashok Sapkota, Tribhuvan University]*

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