

Grammatical Error Analysis of Business Students' Writing

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Abstract: This research aims at describing the grammatical errors that happen in the final assignment of second semester students of Management Department of STIE SBI. Two research questions are formulated in this study. They are (1) What are grammatical errors in writing made by second semester students of Management Department of STIE SBI? and (2) What are the possible causes or sources of those errors? The research study is classified in to a descriptive study. The data source was collected from the students' writing assignment. The key instrument used in this research is the researcher and writing result. The researcher used Dulay's, Burt, and Krashen theory in analyzing the data. As the supplementary tools of the instruments, some forms of data sheets were used during the research analysis. There were two kinds of data: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data were presented in the form of frequency charts for each category of surface strategy taxonomy and comparative analysis. Then, the qualitative data described each category that occurred in the students' writing. The researcher described the situation about the occurrence of the errors in the students' writing. Based on the analysis of the grammatical errors, four types of errors were found. The most frequent error was committed in misformation (47.01%). The second highest frequency of error occurrence was addition (29.61%). The third percentage of grammatical error in writing was omission which was 176 times of occurrence (21.89%). The least percentage of students' error was misordering. The students only committed 12 errors (1.49%) on their writing. Based on the result, it is figured out that the students still have difficulties in learning grammatical structures in writing process.

Keywords: grammatical, error, writing, descriptive, occurrence

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Introduction

English language learning is a process where all skills of English (listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar) are interconnected. In developing learners writing proficiency, all language skills must be involved. Aiming at mastering those skills, students can learn quickly when they feel confident in expressing their ideas with one another. In fact, they find English rules very complicated because some language features such as sentence construction, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and so forth in their mother tongue are different from those of the target language. These make them difficult to express themselves in a clear, correct and comprehensible manner of writing. Lado affirmed that 'those language features that are similar to the (learner's) native language will be simple for him, and those areas that are different will be difficult' (1957 in Richards, 1987).

In writing, there are a number of language aspects involved such as model texts, grammar, spell-check, punctuation and prepositions. Harmer says that 'writing has a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from differences in grammar and vocabulary, there are issues of letter, word, and text formation, manifested by handwriting, spelling, and layout and punctuation' (Harmer, 2002). It means that writing offers opportunities to increase students' vocabulary, knowledge of grammar and develops their understanding of how things are expressed and how well students' message is understood in the written form.

In Indonesia, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners committed common grammatical errors that showed their incompetency in some grammar aspects. Krishnasamy (2015) argued that there is a need for ESL learners to be equipped with good grammar knowledge since the educational system relies very much on written examination as compared to other language skills.



A better understanding of the errors and the origin of such errors in the process of EFL writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning that language. It will aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better (Heydari and Bagheri, 2012). Moreover, Rozimela (2004) contends that a good mastery of English writing skills is deemed pivotal and helpful due to the nature of the written form in mastering English language learning goals.

Likewise, university students are often use the way of thinking and concept from their native language to express their ideas in English as well. They need to learn how to transfer their knowledge of rule/grammatical concepts of target language from oral language to written language. The difficulties in applying the rules of the language in writing causes students make errors. Dulay states that 'an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker' (1982 in Brown, 1994). It means that learners make errors because they lack knowledge of the rules of the target language. They may make the same errors at other times. Error is often considered as students' mistake in learning a language because the comprehension of that rules related to the student's ability. Learners' errors particularly the ones committed in writing are identified as the key interest of teachers, linguists and syllabus designers (Darus & Ching, 2009; Katayama, 2007b).

Karim, et al (2018), stated that it is noteworthy that proper categorization of learners' errors should be identified so that students can get aware of which areas to be improved, given learners' errors can be different. For instance, errors can arise from grammar, omission, misinformation and misordering, which, in what follows, the article has elaborated on. If the teachers specify errors categorically, it would be easier for the learners to correct their errors quickly.

Rozimela (2004) further states that writing skills were deemed crucial for teaching English in Indonesia, and received similar attention to the other skills. However, the reality contradicts what is expected, meaning that there is a discrepancy between expectations and reality. Some studies find that there are many cases of writing errors made by students in writing.

Considering writing skills are important for teachers to be, this research tried to investigate possible linguistic problems by analyzing the errors of the students' writing assignment. The researcher applied errors analysis on surface strategy taxonomy due to this category related to students' writing skill on grammatical structure.

Writing plays an important role in language learning. It takes a long time to master since it takes study and practice to develop this skill. According to Celce-Murcia, (2001) 'writing is the ability to express one's idea in writing in a second or foreign language and to do so with reasonable coherence and accuracy is a major achievement'. It means that in writing, one expresses ideas, opinion, feeling or experience that somebody read or heard into the written form to develop his writing skill. He should arrange his idea in the form of words, phrases, clauses and paragraphs so that his writing can be understood and read clearly.

Writing is a complex skill among other skills (listening, speaking and reading) which acquires the ability to compose correct sentences. Since writing is a form of thinking using the written words, it takes much time for students to develop their idea into meaningful text. In addition, Calkin and Graves (1983 in Palmer, 1994) present the stages in writing into five stages, namely prewriting, drafting, sharing, revising, and editing.

Rivers (1981) classifies 'writing activity into writing practice (grammatical exercise, the construction of simple dialogue, uncomplicated translation exercise, dictation, and the cloze procedure) and expressive writing or composition (the writing of instruction, reports, resumes, concrete descriptions, or essential correspondence connected with everyday affair)'.

In addition Harmer (2002) proposes that 'there are some aspects that must be concerned in the writing process, such as language use (grammar, vocabulary, and linkers), punctuation and layout, spelling, checking writing for unnecessary repetition words and/or information, deciding on the information on each paragraph, and the order the paragraph should go in, noting down various ideas, selecting the best idea for inclusion, writing a clean copy of the corrected version, and writing a rough version'. It shows that writing is a complex process combining a number of diverse elements, especially for the students and needs much time to brainstorm ideas until finish written works.

Making errors is an important aspect to get information whether it is caused by the grammatical errors or slip of the tongue either in spoken or written language. As Davis and Pearse (2002) state that 'errors are integral part of language learning and not evidence of failure to learn'. Those errors should be analyzed because they give a contribution in understanding the process of language learning. From

their errors, learners can get feedback which can be used to find new attempts to achieve the goal of learning. It contains information on strategies that learners use to acquire language and can play an important role in the study of foreign language.

According to Dulay and Burt (in Brown, 1994), error is considered as “goofs”. An error is a deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker which reflects the learner’s inter language competence. It is called competence error when learners make errors because they lack knowledge of the rules of the target language. They will not be able to correct the errors by themselves quickly. They need guidance to correct the errors. They may also make the same errors at the times. In conclusion, they define errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. It means that learners cannot learn language without systematically committing errors first.

Brown (2000) states that there are two main sources of errors, namely, interlingual errors and intralingual errors. He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language (AbiSamra, 2003).

According to Ellis (1997), mistakes reflects occasional lapses in performance, they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what she or he knows while errors reflect gaps in learners knowledge that occur because learners do not know what is correct and they are still in the learning process. Mistakes refer to performance errors or nonsystematic errors which are caused by inattention while errors refer to competence.

Taylor (1997) states that ‘error analysis is the study and evaluation of uncertainty in measurement’. It implies that error has a positive role in language learning since it is the sign that a language learner does not learn the rules of the target language effectively.

As Erdogan (2005) emphasizes that error analysis deals with the learners’ performance in terms of the cognitive processes they make use of recognizing or coding the input they receive from the target language. Therefore, a primary focus of error analysis is on the evidence that learners’ error provided with an understanding of the underlying process of second language acquisition.

Errors analysis emphasizes ‘the significance of errors in learners’ interlanguage system’ (Brown, 1994). Errors analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the error learners make. As the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner.

From the three definitions above, it can be clarified that error analysis is an activity to identify, classify and describe the errors made by learners in speaking or in writing and it is carried out to obtain information on common difficulties faced by someone in speaking or writing English sentences.

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) propose four descriptive classifications to analyze errors. They are as follows:

a. Error in linguistic taxonomy

Linguistic taxonomy classifies errors according to either or both the language components and the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantic and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary), and discourse (style). Constituent includes the elements that comprise each language component.

b. Errors in surface strategy taxonomy

Surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures are altered. Analyzing errors from a surface strategy perspective holds much promise for researchers concerned with identifying cognitive processes that underlie the learner’s reconstruction of the new language.

1) Omission errors

An omission is a type of error which is “characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance”. As we know that morphemes or words can be distinguished into two classes: content words and grammatical words. Content words are those that carry the bulk of referential meaning of a sentence such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Grammatical or function words are those little words that play a minor role in carrying the meaning of a sentence. They include noun and verb inflection (-s, -ed, -ing): the article (a, the, an): verb auxiliaries (is, will, can, may, etc); and preposition (in, on, or, etc).

e.g.: *John is clever student.*

There is missing “a” that should be: John is a clever student.

2) Addition errors

Addition errors are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance (Dulay et al 1982). It is usually occurred in the later stages of L2 acquisition or learning, when the learner has already acquired some target language rules. There are three types of addition errors:

i. Double markings

This error is caused by the failure to delete certain items which are required in some linguistic construction.

e.g. *She didn't went/goed back.*

There is double marking that should be: *She didn't go back.*

ii. Regularization

Regularization errors is a type of errors "in which a marker that is typically added to a linguistic item is erroneously added to exceptional items of the given class that do not take a marker".

e.g. *sheeps instead of sheep*

There is regularization error in which regular plural marker.

iii. Simple addition

Simple addition errors characterize all addition errors. It is the use of an item which should not be appeared in well-formed utterances.

e.g. *The fishes doesn't live in the water.*

There is simple addition that should be: *The fish doesn't live in the water.*

3) Misformation errors

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morphemes or structure. It is occurred when the learner supplies something although it is incorrect. There are three types of misformation errors:

i. Regularization errors

Regularization errors that fall under the misformation category are those in which a regular marker is used in place of an irregular one.

e.g. *runned instead of run*

There is regularization errors that should be "run".

ii. Archi-forms

Archi-forms errors are the selection of one number of a class of forms to represent others in the class is common characteristic of all stages of second language acquisition.

e.g. *I saw her yesterday. Her danced with my brother.*

There is archi-forms error that should be: *I saw her yesterday. She danced with my brother.* It is caused when the learner represents the entire class of subject.

iii. Alternating forms

Alternating forms error caused by the learners' vocabulary and grammar development.

e.g. *I seen her yesterday.*

The alternating error that should be: *I saw her yesterday.*

4) Misordering errors

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. It occurs systematically for both L1 and L2 learners in constructions that have already been acquired.

e.g. *I don't know what is that.*

There is misordering error that should be: *I don't know what that is.*

The research about an analysis of common grammatical errors in written paragraph was conducted by Mashsha Make Jobo and Endale Endrias Arega (2017). The purpose of the study was to analyze the common grammatical errors in the written paragraphs of the first year students of Wolaita Sodo University (WSU). The result of the study indicated that the students of WSU made different grammatical errors in the usage of adjectives and adverbs.

In line with Jobo and Arega (2017), the study done by Icy Lee (2004) analyzes the error correction in L2 secondary writing classrooms. The research was conducted in Hong Kong Baptist University. The error correction research has focused mostly on whether teachers should correct errors in student writing and how they should go about it. The study also showed that the students were reliant on teachers in error correction, and that the teachers were not much aware of the long-term significance of error

feedback. Possible implications pertaining to ways to improve current error correction practices were discussed.

The study which illustrates fundamental background studies done in the field of Error Analysis. The underlying objections of most of the study is to identify and classify errors and thus help teachers know the problematic areas of EFL learners at different levels of instruction in order to help students learn better (Haydari and Bagheri, 2012).

Furthermore, the study by Karim et al (2018) focuses on Error Analysis in EFL Writing Classroom. The study comprised a corpus of EFL learners in the secondary level to enquire the commonest errors. Along with this, a student survey was carried out to reveal the perceptions of the students regarding error correction. The common errors identified were subjected to, grammar, misinformation, misordering and overgeneralization.

Another study conducted by Kafipour and Khojasteh (2012) concerning on errors made by Persian learners of English according to comparative taxonomy which categorizes errors based on the source of errors such as interlingual, developmental, ambiguous and other errors. The results showed that the majority of the errors can be attributed to developmental, other, ambiguous and interlingual errors respectively. It proved that majority of errors were those which are common among native speakers of English and foreign learners of English. Interlingual errors constitute the lowest number of errors.

Methodology

The research was analyzed based on the surface strategy taxonomy and the comparative analysis to infer the source of the errors. The researcher was interested in error analysis of grammatical because grammar is believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that learners use to acquire a language. In analyzing the errors, the researcher used content analysis method. Krippendorff (1980) defines that content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representative of facts and a practical guide to action. It is used to analyze the content of documents or data based on the theory. The researcher described the student's grammatical errors in writing assignment, analyzed the data, and finally inferred the causes they committed those errors. The result of this research was presented in the form of words and percentage.

This research was conducted in STIE SBI by focusing on Writing Assignment for second semester students of Management Department as the research respondents. The research data were taken from three regular classes which consists of 70 students and one particular class which consists of 27 students. From totally 97 students, only 61 students who submitted the writing assignment. The researcher took 40 of 61 samples as respondents.

The instruments used in this research were the researcher herself and writing test result. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) say that 'the key instrument in qualitative research is the researcher him/herself'. The researcher conducted this research, process data collection till data analysis and interpreted by herself actively and accurately. In conducting the study, the researcher used the following instruments:

1. Documents

In this research, the researcher collected the data from writing assignment papers of the second semester students.

2. Checklist

After documenting students' writing paper, the researcher revealed the grammatical errors of writing and the source of errors by using checklist. This checklist checks mark presence, absence, or frequency of occurrences for each item.

The data needed in this research were the grammatical errors made by the second semester students in their writing assignment. The researcher collected the students' writing assignment paper to be documented and read carefully. After collecting the data, the next step was data classification and analysis. The following are steps for classifying and analyzing grammatical errors in writing:

- 1) Identify the errors which is found on every words, phrase or sentences.
- 2) Classify the data into the sub category of surface strategy taxonomy.
- 3) Interpret and describe the data which have been classified systematically.
- 4) Analyze the data to infer the causes and sources they commit errors.

The procedure of error analysis proposed by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) comprises five steps, namely collecting sample of learner language, identifying errors, describing errors, error explanation, and error evaluation.

The data of this research were analyzed by using several steps. Firstly, the researcher collected the students' writing test to be analyzed according to Dulay's theory. They were studied carefully. Secondly, the errors were classified into four subcategories of surface strategy taxonomy by selecting and identifying the errors that belong to grammatical structure in students' writing. The errors found in clauses and sentences. A sentence may contain one error or more, and then they were analyzed separately. Thirdly, the data were interpreted and described systematically according to the types of errors. The fourth was explaining the errors according to comparative taxonomy to infer the causes or sources the students committed the errors. The errors were identified and classified into the subcategories of comparative taxonomy. The last step was errors evaluation by tabulating the errors to get the percentage of each subcategory. In this step, the frequency of errors was identified and the number of errors were presented in the forms of tables. The formula of the percentage was presented as follows:

$$\% \text{ type of error} = \frac{\sum \text{students's error each category}}{\sum \text{student's error}} \times 100\%$$

Figure 1. The Formula of Percentage of the Type of Errors

The procedure was expected to show the problem of students' writing in constructing clauses and sentences in English grammar. The higher count indicated the prominent difficulties which is faced by the students in constructing clauses and sentences. The final step was making conclusion based on the research findings by describing the results of this research.

Results

This research was analyzed based on Dulay et all theory, the surface strategy taxonomy which concerns on omission, addition, misformation, and misordering errors. These errors defined as mechanics (spelling and punctuation), grammar, and word choices. The data from the students' writing are presented below.

Table 1 Surface Strategy Errors Frequency

Surface Strategy	Total of Errors	Percentage (%)
Omission	176	21.89
Addition		
a. Regularization	46	5.72
b. Double marking	24	2.99
c. Simple addition	168	20.9
Sub Total	238	29.61
Misformation		
a. Regularization	88	10.94
b. Archi-form	122	15.17
c. Alternating	168	20.89
Sub Total	378	47.01
Misordering	12	1.49
TOTAL	804	100

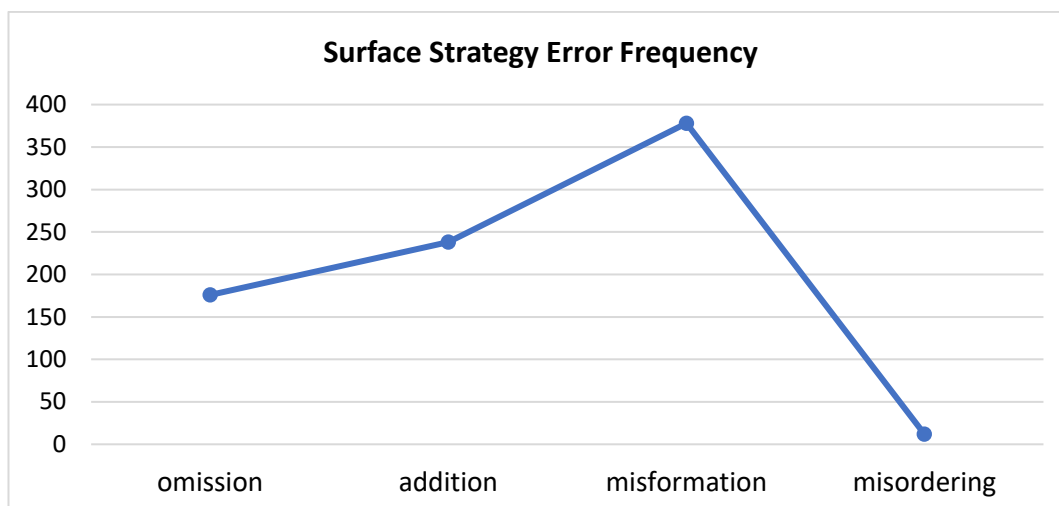


Figure 2. The Distribution of Students' Error on Surface Strategy in Taxonomy

Table 1 shows that the grammatical errors occurred were 21.89% in omission errors, 29.61% in addition, 47.01% in misformation, and 1.49% in misordering. These errors described the problems which were faced by the students in writing.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the research data, it was found that misformation had the highest percentage of students' error made in writing. The students committed errors 378 times or 47.01% out of the whole occurred errors. Misformation errors comprised the use of the wrong form of the morphemes or structure. It is occurred when the learner supplies something although it is incorrect. There are three types of misformation errors; Regularization, Archi-form, and Alternating.

The example of alternating error such as "Jogja is a city with education number one". It should be "Jogja is the best education city". The archi-form errors example such as "...my parent was die...". It should be "...my parent died...". Regularization errors covered "I don't know what must I do". It should be "I don't know what should I do".

Misformation, especially the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure, is a characteristic of making error. In this case, the students put a word, nonetheless it is faulty. When the learners' knowledge of first language do free alternation of various members of a class with each other, that learners do alternating form. In this case, the students put a word, nonetheless it is faulty. When the learners' knowledge of first language do free alternation of various members of a class with each other, that learners do alternating form.

The second highest percentage of student errors was addition error, which is committed as 238 times or 29.61% out of the whole errors. The errors were characterized by the presence of new structure of morpheme or phrases in a correct linguistic form. The addition errors are divided into three subcategories; regularization, double marking, and simple addition. The example of simple addition such as "...and make the all people...". It should be "...and make all people...". The example of regularization errors such as "...do businessman...". It should be "...do business" and double marking errors such as "Besides that, we have a goal...". It should be "Besides, we have a goal..." or "Beside that, we have a goal...".

The results indicate that the students are uncertain of the correct usage of prepositions, similar to ESL learners in other settings. In Tetreault and Chodorow's (2008) review of studies on preposition errors for the purpose of developing preposition error detection tools, they found that preposition errors account for a substantial proportion of all ESL (English as Second Language) usage errors.

The third percentage of students' error was omission. The students committed 176 errors or 21.89% on their writing. When a learner is leaving off necessary items that must emerge in a well-performed utterance, that learner is doing omission error (James, 2013). Omission is the error which is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. The errors mostly

about the deletion of correct linguistic words, morphemes, and phrases. The example found in the data is "...hopefully when I married...". It should be "...hopefully when I get married.."

The frequent omission of essential parts of utterances such as auxiliary verbs give rise to simplified structures. The errors do not fit Dulay, Burt and Krashen's (1982) surface structure taxonomy. The errors are more severe than uncertainty as to which of two forms is required, categorized as "blends" by James (1998) (cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The analysis revealed that the main types of question errors are omission of auxiliary verb and misordering rather than misinformation or addition.

The least percentage of students' error was misordering. The students only committed 12 errors or 1.49% on their writing. This error comprised the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance or writing. The example found in the data is "...to open services graphic design...". It should be "...to open graphic design services...".

In misordering, the students acquired certain simple patterns. The taxonomy is used because it is expected to give much promise to the students for identifying cognitive process that underlines the students' construction of the language. The taxonomy also makes them aware that the errors are based on logic. The students' use of interim principle to produce a new language (Dulay, et al, 1982).

From the frequencies of the type of those errors above, it was concluded that the students were still committed errors on omission, misformation, addition, and misordering errors. The errors tend to occur by some factors. To find out the factors, it needed to figure out the sources of those errors. The students tend to face difficulties in grammar because most of them use L1 in their daily utterances. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) state that there are some major sources that cause the learner's error, they are: inter lingual error, intra lingual error and context of learning.

After analyzing the data, the source of errors consists of interlingual transfer. It is caused by mother tongue interference. It is considered as the major barrier of learning a second language or foreign language. While intralingual errors occurs during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. It also dubbed as a developmental error. It was caused by the transition or transformation from one language to another. The majority of the errors can be attributed to developmental, other, ambiguous and interlingual errors respectively (Kafipour and Khojasteh, 2012). According to Richard (1974: 173), inter lingual error is caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue, they usually transfer the system of their mother tongue into foreign language. It means that, language learners use the structure of first language in target language. This case was found in student' sentence: "We are the six sat circular" which was translated from Indonesian as his native language: "Kami berenam duduk secara melingkar". The sentence should be: "The six of us sat in a circle". The error is caused by direct translation of Indonesian into English. It occurs because the student tried to apply Indonesian rule into English one.

The errors made by the students are originated from the native language of the students. That is, the differences between Indonesian and English can be the source of errors made by the students. It is similar to the results of studies done by other researchers. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) say that the research on speech and writing of adult learners who learn English as L2 had the same result which was seen in the research done on children learning English as L1.

The objective of the study is to describe the grammatical errors and infer the causes or sources of those errors in writing made by the second semester students of Management Department of STIE SBI. The researcher analyzed the data based on the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen. Based on the previous chapter, there are four categories of errors were found in the students' writing. The omission errors are committed 176 times or 21.89% out of total number of the grammatical errors. The omission had the third highest frequency of occurrence used in the writing conducted by the English students in their learning process. Meanwhile, the occurrences of misformation in students' writing are 378 times or 47.01% out of the total number of the grammatical errors. The misformation errors had the highest frequency of occurrence used in the writing conducted by the English students in their learning process. The addition errors are committed 238 times or 29.61% out of the total number of the grammatical errors. It was the second highest percentage in occurred error in students' writing. The addition errors occurred when the students present an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance or writing. The occurrences of misordering errors in writing are 12 times or 1.49% out of the total number of students' writing. The misordering errors had the lowest frequency of occurrence made by the English students.

In conclusion, the errors may be caused by some factors, namely inadequate vocabulary mastery, the students still confused in using the appropriate word choice, the students tend to use Indonesian logical thinking, and literal translation. The researcher suggests the teachers must give a good feedback to the students in order they know their mistakes and errors that they have made.

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