Erroneous Analysis in English Writing Assessments among Undergraduates in a Public University

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Abstract

A number of studies on morphological error analysis have been carried out in different settings, contexts, and levels of study to observe, analyze and describe the errors correlated to English grammar rules. Based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982), this current study focused on the investigation of the types and factors of errors in English writing assessment specifically among undergraduates in a public university in Malaysia. This current study employed a qualitative research method by using a case study. 30 samples of English writing assessment were analyzed based on the taxonomy and the framework of Sources of Errors by Richard (1974). The findings revealed that the students committed a total of 248 errors on 30 transcripts; 95 were Omission errors, 91 were Misformation errors, 54 were Addition errors and only 8 were Misordering errors. Thus, the findings highlighted that Omission was recorded as the top error committed by learners followed by Misformation, Addition and lastly, Misordering. As for the source of error, Intralingual error was marked as the most prevalent factor contributed to the errors. The outcome of the study may shed some light on emphasizing the possible interventions to assist learners in their writing as well as developing a remedial programme to help learners to master English grammar.

Keywords: *Error Analysis, Surface Strategy Taxonomy, English as Second Language, Interlingual, Intralingual*

Introduction

English as a second language (ESL) is employed to describe non-native speakers learning English as a second language including most of Malaysians. In the Malaysian bilingual education system, English language has been taught as one of the compulsory subjects starting from primary school until higher education since the eighteenth century realizing its existence as "side by side with strong indigenous languages, wide use in speaking, and intranational outstanding, sometimes official functions, as the language of politics, the media, jurisdiction, higher education, and other such domains" (Thirusanku & Melor, 2012, p. 2). In accordance with the landscape of the Malaysian pluralist society, the learners can be regarded as bilingual, trilingual or even multilingual.

Perceiving the role of English as an international language, many efforts and steps have been taken to make sure the education system is able to meet the demands. One of the efforts can be observed through the improvements in the current years by Malaysian higher education institutions to oversee and improve their visions and policies. These internalization and globalization movements are important to position themselves to be a regional education hub locally and internationally. One of the prominent efforts is by using English as a medium of instruction in most of the universities in Malaysia. In doing so, higher institutions in Malaysia will be able to improve their visibility and competitiveness against neighboring countries, thus

able to mark their own position to stand as one of the impactful and influential higher education institutions in the world. This effort is also beneficial in improving students' employability and enhancing their communications skills in different settings in both academically and professionally.

In order to realize this goal, students are encouraged and expected to master English and be able to use this language proficiently in formal and informal settings. However, few considerations should be given when it comes to mastering any language, especially for ESL and EFL learners. The demand for the switching phenomena may lead to students having difficulties adapting to the new way of learning in the university. It would be a severe issue for those who have less or no exposure to the English language at home. Some of the problems can be seen through their participation in classes, for example, difficulties in understanding technical vocabulary, comprehending lectures, conveying ideas in the proper construction of language and achieving an appropriate academic style (Masnita Misiran et al., 2018). Thus, it is important for both educators and learners to be aware of the importance of mastering and comprehending all four skills in learning English which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing and understand the difficulties faced by students. A decent number of studies have been conducted on error analysis in writing to identify types of errors as well as the factors in recent years. One of the studies was carried out at Ar-raniry State Islamic University to analyze students' grammatical errors in writing and the categories of errors by using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982) on 31 students. Miko (2018) concluded that considerable attention should be given to students with poor knowledge of grammar and suggested a few strategies for improvement. Ariffin et al. (2021) conducted an analysis on morphological errors in ESL graduating students' writing that deals with the minimal units of linguistic form and meaning based on the same taxonomy as Miko (2018). The findings indicated that the errors were prevalent in the Omission category, followed by Addition, Misformation and Misordering. It is also concluded that the outcome of the study can be a guideline in proposing any intervention initiatives to improve the student's English language proficiency.

Based on these studies, different types of errors have been identified, analyzed and described based on the inconsistencies in the standard and form of English grammar rules. However, the errors still remain and can be found in students' writings up to the present time. Besides that, there is only a limited number of studies that have been conducted on the morphological perspective on errors in English writings. The analysis and interpretation of these errors committed by students, especially in academic writing, will be a remedy for both educators and learners to understand their weaknesses in writing and be able to identify causal factors of the errors. This remedy also will help educators to propose suitable strategies and methods to enhance their teaching and learning process.

Hence, this current study was carried out to investigate the types and factors of morphological errors in academic essays among diploma students in a public university in Malaysia. The study focused on the student's performance in writing academic essays at higher education level. Therefore, the outcome of this

study is expected to shed light on the understanding of the errors as well as the causal factors in order to improve teaching and learning strategies in the context of academic writing.

Surface Structure Taxonomy

A The surface structure taxonomy is the framework proposed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). This taxonomy is basically altered by the learners that eventually cause the errors phenomena. According to this theory, four types of errors can be identified namely Omission, Addition, Misformation and Misordering.

Omission refers to the errors committed when the learners omit the essential elements of a well-formed utterance. The errors are content morpheme like *he kicks* which supposedly to be with the object as in *he kicks the ball* and grammatical morpheme such as the omission of *is* in *she *[…] sleeping*. Secondly, addition can be defined as the presence of the element that should not appear in well-formed utterance. It is also part of the errors committed by learners whereas it consists of three types namely double marking, regularization as well as simple addition errors. Double marking errors can be understood as errors occurring due to the failure to omit a particular element in linguistics formation such as in *I *didn't went there* that was supposed to be *I didn't go there.* As for regularization, it is when the learners wrongly applied the rule involving the class of exceptions including the words *sheep* and *deer.* Another type of addition which is simple addition refers to the linguistics element like third person singular *-s* as in *the students doesn't finish the homework.*

Misformation is better understood as the errors committed because of the utilization of wrong morpheme and structure in the sentence. Misformation can be sub-categorized into Regularization, Archi-forms as well as Alternating forms. As for Regularization, it occurs when a regular marker is used for irregular one such as *cutted* instead of *cut*. It is different from Archi-forms that wrongly deal with a demonstrative adjective as in *this books* that supposedly be *these books.* Another one which is alternating forms is related to Archi-forms that give way to free alternation such as in *this books* and *these book*. Fourthly, the last type of error is Misordering. This error points out the incorrect arrangement or order of the morphemes in an utterance. Instead of writing *what are you doing?,* the learners wrote *what you are doing?*.

The following table provides the framework of Surface Structure Taxonomy and some examples of errors in subcategories.

Table 1: Surface Structure Taxonomy Framework

TAXONOMY		Error	Correct Form
Omission	Content	*I buy*	*I buy a book*
	Grammatical	*She beautiful*	*She is beautiful*
Addition	Double Marking	*She doesn't eats*	*She doesn't eat*
	Regularization	*I saw many sheeps*	*I saw many sheep*
	Simple Addition	*Go at there*	*Go there*
	Regularization	*I cutted the tree*	*I cut the tree*
	Archi-forms	*These book ...*	*This book ...*
	Alternation	*He is unresponsible*	*He is irresponsible*
Misordering		*What you are doing?*	*What are you doing?*

Error Analysis

Error analysis (EA) can be defined as a type of language analysis based on the errors committed by the learners. It first appeared in the 1970s as it provides an alternative perspective towards learners' errors in contrast to contrastive analysis (CA). In general, this language analysis helps to convey important information regarding the inconsistencies of the standard and form of English grammar rules as well as the interpretation of the language acquisition process of learners. Specifically, this information can help to reduce similar errors and make the learners understand the rules of English grammar when they come across the same problem. Thus, error analysis helps to enhance the cognitive mechanisms involved in the process of learning a language.

According to Richards and Schimdt (2002), there are many factors that can cause learners' errors which are not only due to the interference of the native language but more to universal learning strategies. Through this analysis, learners' errors can be observed, identified, analyzed and described which provide a clear manifestation of the investigation of the errors and become the basis of EA. Brown (2007) emphasized that EA is completely different from CA as this type of language analysis observes learners' errors in the target language as the result of interference from their first language.

The errors in the process of learning a new language used to be described as faults to be overcome (Ali Ozkayran, 2020). In contrast, Corder (1974) viewed this matter differently as the researcher pointed out that errors were prominent indicators to ease language learning. In line with this view, Allen and Corder (1974) described errors as necessary in the language learning process as the learners can learn from the feedback as it is also the key to successful learning (Brown, 2007). Therefore, it is important for learners to learn from their mistakes and not be afraid to make errors while learning without hesitation.

Types of Errors

A series of recent studies has been conducted thoroughly in order to understand more these four types of error namely Misformation, Omission, Addition as well as Misordering committed by learners. To begin with, a number of authors have recognized that Misformation is the most prevalent error in learners' writing (Fitriani, 2020; Ozkayran & Yilmaz, 2020; Rusmiati, 2019; Yakub & Hossain, 2018; Juriah & Kusumawati, 2015; Novita, 2014). This can be proven by the finding unveiled by Ozkayran and Yilmaz (2020), whereas in their analysis of the errors committed in English writing tasks among the higher education students, they indicated that the most frequent error occurred involving Misformation with 50.39%, followed by Omission (29.66%), Addition (17.06%) and the least was Misordering with 2.89%. They highlighted the elements including copula be, articles, singular and plural forms, tenses as well as subject-verb agreement as the most problematic areas that should be accentuated by the educators.

Another great finding which is in line with the previous ones is proposed by Fitriani (2020) who conducted research on the fifth-semester students at the English Education Study Programme of IKIP Budi Utomo in order to categorize the grammatical errors committed in English translation sentences regarding syntax and morphology. The study suggested that Misformation turned out to be the highest frequency of error with 58 errors which was tantamount to 46%. Omission came after Misformation (27% with 47 errors) followed by Addition (10% with 12 errors) and the lowest was Misordering (7% with 9 errors) successively. The researcher concluded that the tenses tended to be the most common error while derivational morpheme was the lowest error committed by the students.

Moreover, another study aiming at morphological errors in recount text among students was performed by Juriah and Kusumawati (2015). In their findings, they discovered that the students committed error the most in Misformation with 51 errors particularly due to the failure to transform the present tense to past tense. As for Omission, it was the second highest with 32 errors in which the students omitted the essential elements in the sentences while for Addition, 13 errors recorded due to the addition of unnecessary items and 2 errors for Misordering because of the incorrect arrangement of the morpheme in the writing.

Apparently, a large number of existing studies have examined the area of morphological errors. However, it involves more on the respondents from another country which is Indonesia (Maolida & Hidayat, 2021; Fitriani, 2020; Rusmiati, 2019; Maulidina, Indriyani & Mardewi, 2019; Rahman,2019; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Anggraeni, 2018; Suhono, 2016; Juriah & Kusumawati, 2015; Novita, 2014). Therefore, it becomes our central interest to explore and understand more about morphological elements, particularly the types of morphological errors committed by ESL learners that regard the circumstance in Malaysia. To be exact, the emphasis of this paper is on the morphological errors committed by the students. In-depth study had been conducted to ascertain the common errors done by the learners in their academic writing.

Sources of Error

According to Brown (2007), there are two prominent sources of error in learning a new language which are Interlingual and Intralingual errors. In definition, Interlingual error occurs due to the first language's interference. In contrast, Intralingual error happens when language learners produce the language using their own creativity. This Intralingual error is also recognized as the most common type of factor.

By understanding the errors committed by the students, it is hoped that this study may provide insight for educators to address better on particular morphological errors involved in writing. There are four types of Intralingual errors as proposed and described by Richard (1974) which can be seen in the table provided below:

Table 2. Examples of Intralingual Errors by Richard (1974)

Type of Intralingual Factors	Description	Examples (Ellis, 1994)
Overgeneralization	It occurs when the students cannot use the rule of the target language correctly. Overgeneralization covers errors that are produced by learners when they try to apply a correct rule in an unsuitable situation.	*He cans sing.** *He can sing.*
Ignorance of Rule Restriction	It occurs when a rule is not used in the context where it should have been used.	*He asked me to.** *He asked me to go.*

Incomplete Application of the Rule	It occurs when the learners are unable to present some important elements in a word, phrase, or sentence.	*You like sing?** *Do you like to sing?*
False Concept Hypothesis	It occurs when the students misinterpret the target language rule which results in Misusing or Misformation of the grammatical elements.	*It was happened last Sunday.** *It was last Sunday.*

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method which was a content analysis tool to examin the e types of morphological errors committed by undergraduates of a public university in their writing and the most prevalent sources of the errors correlated. Adopting a qualitative approach, allows the researchers to scrutinize the data in detail since written texts were utilized as the source of data. (Cohen et al, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Murtiana, 2019).

30 ESL undergraduates from different courses of a public university were selected randomly as the participants for this paper whereas they were taught by the researchers. The number of participants was relatively small as this was a classroom study, thus, it represented only the entire group involved (Chaudhary & Zahrani, 2020). Furthermore, Patton (2002) claimed that no rules for sampling size are governed in qualitative study, hence, it is all about the researchers' discretion and purpose of the study. In this study, the participants were not from the English study background, however, they enrolled in one of the English subjects offered by the university. The tool applied throughout this study was content analysis. It was administered by the researchers in which errors specifically related to morphological elements were documented and classified from the scripts of students' writing.

In order to conduct the study, all of the 30 scripts of expository essay practice which was also a part of the writing assessment for Integrated Language Skill III course were gathered from October- March 2022 semester. The essay question is undeniably valid as it adhered to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard. The scripts were garnered online since all the lessons were administered online in the previous semester due to the pandemic.

For the purpose of analyzing the data, this paper employed two conceptual frameworks namely Surface Strategy Taxonomy posit by Dulay, et al (1982) to determine the most prominent morphological error

made by students as well as the theory of sources of error coined by Richard (1974) to examine the most prevalent factor that contributed to the errors.

This was accomplished by scrutinizing the errors involving morphological elements committed in each script. The frequency of morphological errors committed in each sentence of each essay was detected. Then, thematic analysis was administered by classifying the errors to particular groups. This is regarded by utilizing the framework of Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay, et al (1982) which indicated four types of morphological errors namely Omission, Addition, Misformation as well as Misordering. The errors were calculated and percentages were captured in order to recognize the most prevalent errors that occurred in writing.

Subsequently, the sources of error were ascertained by observing the types of errors analyzed before. In order to address this matter, the identification of each error in the taxonomy will be compared. In order to indicate the sources of factors linked, the work designed by Richard (1974) was utilized. He asserted that there are three major sources of errors in language learning namely the Intralingual factor, Interlingual factor and Developmental factor. Notwithstanding, this study only emphasized the two most remarkable factors namely Intralingual and Interlingual factors. The Interlingual factor deals with the interference from the mother tongue while the Intralingual factor involves the errors that come from the target language. Intralingual factors can be divided into four categories specifically Overgeneralization, Ignorance of Rule Restriction, Incomplete Application of Rules and False Concepts Hypothesis. The observation was made towards every single error from each script so that each error could be matched to its factor accordingly.

Findings and Discussion

Prominent Types of Morphological Errors among ESL Students' Writing

From the data analyzed, it indicates that all respondents of this study which were 30 tertiary students committed morphological errors in their writing. This is evident that morphological errors are accounted as common errors committed by ESL learners in their writing. For this reason, an array of linguistic studies has been conducted appertain to morphological errors (Maolida & Hidayat, 2021; Fitriani, 2020; Gayo & Widodo, 2018; Suhono, 2016; Juriah & Kusumawati, 2015; Novita, 2014). Generally, out of four types of morphological errors, the most significant error can be seen from Omission with 38.3% followed by Misformation (36.7%), Addition (21.8%) as well as Misordering (3.2%) as the least error committed by learners. Table 3 below demonstrates the number of errors that appeared in the students' scripts in accordance with Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

Table 3: Common Errors among ESL Students' Writing

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	NUMBER OF ERRORS	TOTAL
Omission	Content	15 (6.1%)	95 (38.3%)
	Grammatical	80 (32.3%)	
Misformation	Archi-forms	85 (34.3%)	91 (36.7%)
	Regularization	5 (2.0%)	
	Alternation	1 (0.4%)	
Addition	Double Marking	3 (1.2%)	54 (21.8%)
	Regularization	2 (0.8%)	
	Simple Addition	49 (19.8%)	
Misordering	-	8 (3.2%)	8 (3.2%)

From the table above, prominent errors can be noticed especially from two types of morphological errors namely Omission (38.3%) and Misformation (36.7%). Even though Omission is deemed as the most prevalent error committed by learners with Content (6.1%) and Grammatical (32.3%) subcategories, from a comparative perspective, Archi-forms subcategory of Misformation top the list of subcategories of morphological errors (34.3%). Thus, it is crucial for educators to devote more time on these errors in lessons so that students are aware of the right way to employ the morphological elements in writing. The types of morphological errors with particular examples are discussed in the tables below.

Table 4: Errors in Omission Category

Category	Subcategory	Errors
Omission	Content	a) This way can prevent ^ from free rider in a group. (Excerpt 2) b) The skills must be incorporated by all students because it can make ^ easier for them. (Excerpt 16)
	Grammatical	a) By understand^ each other better, we can reach a goal faster and perform better than before. (Excerpt 1) b) Technology play^ important role in this situation.

		(Excerpt 30)

Table 4 demonstrates the errors committed related to Omission. As for the most occurrence errors that appeared in students' writing with %, it can be seen that students tend to omit certain rules when presenting their ideas. As taken from the finding, students made errors in Content (6.1%) and 32.3% for Grammatical elements. For example, the error in content occurs in *"This way can prevent ^ from free rider in a group"*. It is regarded as an incomplete sentence as *prevent* is a transitive verb that requires the object afterwards. In addition, Grammatical is another error committed like in *"By understand^ each other better, we can reach a goal faster and perform better than before"*. This sentence is incorrect since the verb comes after preposition *by* should be with inflection *-ing*.

Table 5: Errors in Misformation Category

Category	Subcategory	Errors
Misformation	Archi-forms	a) As for students, teamwork skills are very important because most of our assignments will require**d** us to work with partner or group. (Excerpt 5) b) Technology plays **importance** role in this situation. (Excerpt 30)
	Regularization	a) They **have gotten** comfortable with each other. (Excerpt 15)
	Alternation	a) It builds high morale in students **and as well** boosts the efficiency of a team. (Excerpt 18)

Furthermore, Misformation is reported to be the second most prevalent error committed by students (36.7%). It seems that learners have many issues by applying the wrong morphemes and structures in the sentence. From the findings, surprisingly, Archi-forms category recorded as highest in rank of all subcategories of errors with 34.3%. For instance, in the sentence of *"Technology plays **importance** role in this situation"*, it is incorrect as the explanation of the *role* should be adjective (*important*) but not noun (*importance*). For the Regularization, 2% errors recorded such as in *"They **have gotten** comfortable with each other"*. It is incorrect as the past participle of *get* is *got* but not *gotten*. Another sub-category which is Alternation is an-

other error made with 0.4%. It can be seen in the sentence of *"It builds high morale in students **and as well** boosts the efficiency of a team"* in which the conjunctions *and as well as* should not come together but they can be replaced by *therefore*.

Table 6: Errors in Addition Category

Category	Subcategory	Errors
Addition	Double Marking	a) They may create **a** rules. (Excerpt 9) b) Those ways will make the teamwork becomes **more easier** to cope up with. (Excerpt 17)
	Regularization	a) In fact, we need to have basic knowledge**s** and skills to work in a group. (Excerpt 5)
	Simple Addition	a) Other way**s** for student develop teamwork skills at university is having a positive mindset. (Excerpt 7) b) The ability to communicate well and giv**ing** a clear instruction to the team members will help students to grow a teamwork skill in themselves. (Excerpt 8)

In addition, Addition ranks the third most common error made by the students with 21.8% errors whereas the students added particular elements that should not be in well-formed sentences. As for Simple Addition, it is recorded the highest for this type with 19.8%. One example is *"Other ways for students to develop teamwork skills at university is having a positive mindset"*. Inflection *-s* should not appear in *way* since only one *way* presented in the writing. Besides, another subcategory which is double marking marks 1.2% of errors such as in *"They may create **a** rules"* whereas *rules* is in plural, hence, it does not need the article *a* before it. The last subcategory which is Regularization spots 0.8% of error from the sentence as in *"In fact, we need to have basic knowledge**s** and skills to work in a group"*. This is incorrect as *knowledge* is an uncountable noun. Hence, it is considered as singular.

Table 7: Errors in Misordering Category

Category	Subcategory	Errors
Misordering		a) Students will get an overview of what **is teamwork all about.** (Excerpt 8) b) These teamwork skills are also important for the students during their **assignment group** and study. (Excerpt 19)

Out of four types of morphological errors, Misordering is recorded as the least prevalent error found in students' writing with only 3.2%. The error occured when the students wrongly arranged the morpheme in the sentence. For example, *"Students will get an overview of what **is teamwork all about",** the sentence is wrongly ordered in which the verb *is* should be located after the noun *teamwork*.

Sources of Error

The data analyzed presents the students' morphological errors which are correlated to the significant sources of error namely Intralingual as well as Interlingual errors.

a.   Intralingual Error

        This source of error occurred due to the limitation of knowledge of learners in regard to their second language. The learners creatively employed particular rules of the target language to form the words. Richard (1974) indicated four types of Intralingual errors namely Overgeneralization, Ignorance of Rule Restriction, Incomplete Application of The Rule as well as False Concept Hypothesis. Table 8 exhibits the Intralingual errors committed by the students.

Table 8: Types of Errors

TYPES OF ERRORS	ELEMENTS OF ERRORS	ERRORS
Overgeneralization	Auxiliary	Students with positive mindset will lead**s** them to have positive energy. (Excerpt 5)
	Inflection	Everyone **have** goals either it is big or small. (Excerpt 7)
		Those ways will make the teamwork becomes

Ignorance Of Rule Restriction	Derivation	**more easier** to cope up with. (Excerpt 17)
	Inflection	In fact, we need to have basic knowledge**s** and skills to work in a group. (Excerpt 5)
Incomplete Application Of The Rule	Inflection	Clarify^ their roles in a group can help students to develop their teamwork skills in university. (Excerpt 5)
	Derivation	If we ^ not communicate in the right way, we can misunderstand the information given. (Excerpt 14)
False Concept Hypothesis	Copula Be	Some of them **are** love to join a group activity in their community. (Excerpt 9)
	Auxiliary	They **have gotten** comfortable with each other. (Excerpt 15)

One of the types of Intralingual error is Overgeneralization. This error occurred when learners attempted to utilize a certain rule in an inappropriate situation. For instance, *"Students with positive mindset will leads them to have positive energy".* Even though verb of *leads* agrees with the subject of *mindset*, the usage of inflection *s* in *leads* is incorrect since the auxiliary *will* appeared in the sentence. This is because the root word should follow after auxiliary verb. In addition, another example which is *"Everyone **have** goals either it is big or small"* is also incorrect since *everyone* is singular subject, so, it requires singular verb which is *has*.

Secondly, Ignorance of Rule Restriction is another type of Intralingual error. The error committed when learners could not utilize the exception rules well in writing. In particular, *"Those ways will make the teamwork becomes **more easier** to cope up with"* conveys the degree of adjective which is used in the wrong form. This is because the comparative type of adjective *easy* is *easier* but not *more easier.* Another example which is *"In fact, we need to have basic knowledge**s** and skills to work in a group"* is wrongly formed due to the inflection *s* in *knowledge.* This is due to the fact that *knowledge* is regarded as an uncountable noun. Hence, it has to be in singular form.

Thirdly, as for Incomplete Application of The Rule, it occurred when learners were unable to manifest particular important elements of the words such as in *"If we ^ not communicate in the right way, we can misunderstand the information given".* This is because negative sentence requires auxiliary *do* before the word *not* in the sentence. Likewise, in *"**Clarify^** their roles in a group can help students to develop their*

teamwork skills in university", it is incorrect since complete sentence requires noun to start the sentence. However, in this example, it is incomplete as it starts with a verb. By adding inflection *-ing*, it turns to be a gerund that acts as a noun.

Fourth, False Concept Hypothesis is also one of the types of Intralingual errors. Learners committed errors when they misinterpreted the rules in target language that consequently led to misuse of grammatical elements in writing. For example, in *"Some of them **are** love to join a group activity in their community"*, it is incorrect as copula be *are* is not required for present tense. Likewise, *"They **have gotten** comfortable with each other"* is another incorrect sentence since learners misinterpreted that all past participles for present perfect tense should end with *-en* like in *have eaten.*

b.   Interlingual error

Another common source of error is derived from Interlingual error which is related to the interference that emerges from first language towards target language. As for this study, the learners' first language is Malay language. Thus, in order to master in target language which is English language, learners tend to literally translate the words from Malay to English. Table 9 indicates the Interlingual errors in the students' writing.

Table 9: Types of Errors

ELEMENTS OF ERRORS	ERRORS	FIRST LANGUAGE
Preposition	We can take another initiative by talking personally **with** them. (Excerpt 3)	Kita boleh ambil satu lagi inisiatif dengan bercakap secara peribadi **dengan** mereka. (Skrip 3)
Copula Be	Technology ^ also important in education. (Excerpt 24)	Teknologi juga penting dalam pendidikan. (Skrip 24)
Noun phrase	Technology will help students in many **ways possible** from doing projects to tests in the easiest way. (Excerpt 29)	Teknologi akan membantu pelajar dalam **pelbagai cara yang mungkin** bermula dengan membuat projek hinggalah ujian dengan cara paling mudah. (Skrip 29)

From the table above, it shows how mother tongue which is Malay language interferes English language as the second language of learners. In this regard, learners simply applied word – to – word translation by employing the rule from their first language. This finding is in line with the study by Gayo and Widodo (2018) who reported that Interlingual error deals with the errors involving noun phrases and prepositions. Given that circumstance, learners tend to merely translate the word without being aware about the appropriateness of each word in particular condition. For instance, *"We can take another initiative by talking personally **with** them"* is incorrect because in English, the verb *talking* specially requires the preposition *to* in order to make the sentence correct. In the same way, *"Technology ^ also important in education"* is literally translated to the target language. This is incorrect since n English, copula be is needed to make a complete sentence. Another example for this error is *"Technology will help students in many **ways possible** from doing projects to tests in the easiest way"*. In this sense, it is crucial to understand that the way noun phrase is formed for both Malay and English is distinctive whereas in English, adjective is located after a noun while it is vice versa for Malay language. Hence, it is certainly incorrect to apply the rule of first language in second language.

Throughout this study, the finding conveys that the most prevalent source of errors is correlated to Intralingual error as major errors committed by students are from this category. This finding is in line with the statement by Richard (1974) who opined that Intralingual factor acts as the most common factor contributed to the morphological errors. Therefore, it can be concluded that when learning a second language, learners might apply the limited knowledge they acquired in second language by accident without being aware that different grammatical rules may apply to different conditions.

Conclusion

This paper contends that it is common for learners to commit morphological errors in their writing. Hence, the study aimed to study the most prevalent morphological error committed in the writing as well as the most common factor contributed to the errors. The findings demonstrate Omission category to be the top out of all categories followed by Misformation, Addition and Misordering as the least prominent error committed by the undergraduates in the public university. As for the second objective, it is certified that Intralingual error acts as the major source of error in regards to the morphological elements. As English plays a pivotal role as a language of communication that is utilized by people throughout the world in a variety of field be it in education, economy, politics, business and many more, it is crucial for learners to master the language. Nevertheless, studies have proven that writing is deemed the most daunting one to be learned by learners (Kumala et al., 2018; Asni & Susanti, 2018; Ariffin et al., 2021). Hence, this study intends to shed light on this issue. As for language instructors, they may play the role to assist students by emphasizing on

utilization of morphological elements especially in writing. Particular measures and interventions may be adopted in order to attend to this issue.

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