



AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ESSAYS

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Abstract:

This study conducted an error analysis of 100 academic essays written by junior high school students at a private university in the Philippines, employing Corder's (1967) Error Analysis Framework. Essays, at least three paragraphs long and on uniform topics, were examined for lexical, morphological, and syntactic errors categorized as substitution, omission, addition, permutation, and mechanics. A total of 1,208 errors were identified, with mechanics predominant (43.46%; n=525), followed by substitution (18.38%; n=222), omission (18.21%; n=220), addition (14.73%; n=178), and permutation (5.22%; n=63). Within mechanics, punctuation errors were most frequent (40.38%), driven by comma misuse; spelling (33.33%) and capitalization (26.29%) followed. Substitution errors were evenly distributed across lexical (36.47%), syntactic (35.15%), and morphological (28.38%) levels, often involving prepositions, articles, and subject-verb agreement. Omission was primarily syntactic (65.90%), notably missing articles; addition was led by syntactic redundancy (49.44%); and permutation was exclusively syntactic (100%), reflecting word-order confusion. Findings align with interlanguage theory, attributing errors to L1 interference, overgeneralization, and insufficient grammar mastery. The study underscores the analytical value of error analysis for junior high school ESL writing and recommends targeted grammar instruction, error-specific feedback, and iterative drafting with peer review to enhance proficiency.

Keywords: error analysis, junior high school, academic essays, Corder's framework

1. Introduction

Writing is an integral part of academic life, often serving as both an output for teachers' assessment and a reflection of students' learning. In this case, teachers strive to enhance students' writing skills, particularly in the students' ability to write well-structured

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essays. However, as students advance to higher levels of education, errors in writing significantly increase as well (Al Badi, 2015). Dunn (2021) observed that, despite adequate preparation, most students continue to struggle with writing academic essays, and errors persist. It explains that most students lacked interest in writing, struggled to determine ideas, used improper vocabulary, failed to check punctuation, and lacked coherence and cohesion in their writing (Mustadi & Amalia, 2020). This not only affects their academic performance but also their social life, including interactions with others (Fitwari & Safitri, 2021).

The errors, typically rooted in grammar (Apsari, 2018), prevent students from writing high-quality academic essays effectively. A study by Sarasua (2021) identified twenty types of errors in students' academic essays on the sentential and word level, wherein it was found that the most frequent errors students commit in their writing are: incorrect subject-verb agreement, verb tense errors, and improper use of prepositions. These are often attributed to the influence of a student's first language and a lack of mastery in English, specifically in their vocabulary (Enesi & Trifoni, 2023). According to Khansir (2012), due to students' carelessness, first language interference, and translation issues, they are more likely to commit grammatical errors.

Fitwari and Safitri (2021) further observed that the interference of students' native language and teachers' lack of skill in teaching grammar rules had a significant influence on the occurrence of students committing mistakes in their academic essay compositions. Other causes, such as teachers' negative feedback, students' insufficient practice, and limited understanding of grammar rules, also substantiate students' struggles in composing an effective academic essay (Hussain, 2019).

The importance of addressing students' errors in writing essays is emphasized by these findings. Repeated mistakes hinder students' ability to communicate effectively, and without proper intervention, may negatively affect their learning and academic progress (Al-Jarf, 2020). Graham and Perin (2007) concur that addressing these challenges early will ensure that students develop a solid foundation in writing and increase their confidence in expressing ideas clearly, which is essential for their success in both academic and professional settings.

While existing studies have explored the error analysis of academic essays of students, especially in the senior high school of the University of Mindanao (Gildore *et al.*, 2023), there is an apparent lack of research at the junior high school level. This highlights the need to investigate the writing errors of junior high school students to observe further the development stage in terms of writing difficulties encountered by students progressing to formal academic writing.

This study aims to analyze the common errors junior high school students make in their essays to help identify areas that need improvement and better support from the institution, using Corder's (1967) framework on error analysis. Particularly, errors in areas such as lexical, morphological, and syntactical forms of writing were examined, specifically focusing on errors related to substitution, omission, addition, permutation, and mechanics. This study also seeks to provide insights that can guide teachers in developing more effective methods to help students improve their writing proficiency

and reduce the occurrence of these errors. Furthermore, by identifying common errors, the study contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims for quality education through the improvement of teaching strategies and student learning outcomes.

The significance of error analysis in second language learning lies in its ability to reveal the patterns in students' interlanguage development and inform targeted instructional strategies and approaches. Corder (1967) emphasized that errors represent developmental stages in learning rather than viewing them as failures. In second language writing, instruction guided by error analysis – particularly in areas such as grammatical accuracy – can lead to improvements in learner performance (Parameswari *et al.*, 2024). These affirm that error analysis, rooted in interlanguage theory, is a diagnostic and transformative framework for advancing global language education, especially in diverse language learning contexts.

2. Method

This section outlines the methodologies used to conduct the study, which includes details on the specifications of the research data, the overall research design and procedures, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis, ensuring structure and accuracy in the handling and interpretation of the data.

2.1 Research Data

The research data of the study came from 100 academic essays of junior high school students from a private university. The study utilized Simple Random Sampling as a method to ensure unbiased selection of 100 academic essays from the junior high school students. This method allows the collection of each essay to be balanced, which will reduce bias in the selection process and increase the reliability of the data analysis (Acharya *et al.*, 2013). The selection of essays was based on the following criteria: students must write on similar topics, the essays should be at least three paragraphs long, and only the first draft submission will be considered. The data collected using these criteria were the basis for analyzing the common errors students make in essay writing – the lexical, morphological, and syntactical errors, under which are the substitution, omission, addition, permutation, and mechanics.

2.2 Research Design & Procedure

This study used a descriptive qualitative design and Corder's Error Analysis Framework to analyze writing errors in junior high school students' academic essays. The design is utilized to explore the patterns and causes of errors students commit in their language learning, while the method includes written samples for data gathering and allows analysis of the types, frequency, and sources of the errors to understand the barriers of language learning. Corder's Framework involves five steps: selection – choosing the data to analyze, identification – determining the error level (syntactic, lexical, or morphological), classification – assigning the error type (mechanics, substitution, etc.),

explanation – analyzing the causes of the errors, and evaluation – assessing the errors, including the frequency – to analyze students' errors, including the frequency with which these errors are committed. Ubol (1988) further describes Corder's (1967) theory of error analysis as a 'systematic description and explanation of errors made by learners in their oral or written production of the target language', which is most suitable for studying the errors students commit in their essay writing.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

One hundred essays were collected from junior high school students at a private university. The students wrote their academic essays on topics that had been specifically selected for them, including 'Enrollment Procedures of the University' and 'Bias and Prejudice'. Once students finished their writing, we gathered and secured the data for analysis. After organizing the database on the specified topic, the written essays were transcribed to digital data, omitting the students' names and grade levels. Ethical considerations, which involve the confidentiality treatment of the data collected, were ensured.

As per Corder's (1967) theory on error analysis, the errors students commit was categorized according to type, which are: substitution – errors in using incorrect elements, omission – errors in leaving out necessary elements, addition – errors in inserting incorrect elements, permutation – errors in the arrangement of elements, and mechanics – errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. This is to identify further which specific parts students encounter lexical, morphological, and syntactic issues. Data analysis involved identifying the frequency and patterns of these errors, including possible causes such as language interference.

4. Results & Discussion

This section presents the study's results, which include the overall errors committed by junior high school students in their academic essays, the classification of these errors by type and category, and the specification of their occurrence in relation to the levels of linguistic structure – syntactic, lexical, or morphological. This section also includes a discussion of the findings, which involves contextualizing them within the current literature.

4.1 Errors in Substitution, Omission, Addition, Permutation, and Mechanics

Table 1 presents the overall results of the frequency of errors committed in the academic essays of junior high school students, arranged from the most to the least frequent errors, including the classification of specific error types. The most frequent type of error that students commit in their academic essays is found under mechanics (43.46%), with substitution (18.38%) being the second most frequent error type. This is followed by omission (18.21%), addition (14.73%), and permutation (5.22%).

Table 1: Errors in the Academic Essays of Junior High School Students

Type of Error	Count	Percentage
Mechanics	525	43.46%
Substitution	222	18.38%
Omission	220	18.21%
Addition	178	14.73%
Permutation	63	5.22%
Total	1208	100%

4.2 Errors in Mechanics

Table 2 presents the results of the frequency of errors in mechanics in the academic essays of junior high school students. The categories under mechanics, listed in order from most frequent errors to least, are Punctuation (40.38%), Spelling (33.33%), and Capitalization (26.29%).

Table 2: Error Types in Mechanics

Type of Error	Count	Percentage
Punctuation	212	40.38%
Spelling	175	33.33%
Capitalization	138	26.29%
Total	525	100%

4.2.1 Punctuation

In writing, punctuation marks play an essential role because they help separate or connect sentences, allowing the writer's ideas to flow more smoothly by indicating pauses or stops. They are also used in listing items, forming contractions, and clarifying meaning. Ultimately, these symbols are crucial for improving the readability of written work, as they strengthen the logical flow of thought in a paper. In the academic essays of junior high school students, the most frequent punctuation errors involve the use of commas. Consider the following examples:

"Enrolling at the University of Mindanao (UM) one of the largest private universities in the Philippines, offers a simple enrolment procedure that is intended for both new and returning students." (Essay#45)

"While Prejudice is judging someone by their appearance, race, cultures etc." (Essay#74)

In Essay #45, the student neglected, or perhaps simply forgot, to place a comma before the clause *"one of the largest private universities in the Philippines."* According to standard writing conventions, such nonessential clauses should be enclosed in commas to ensure clarity and proper sentence structure. In Essay #74, the error lies in the inconsistency of the list due to the absence of a comma after *"cultures,"* which should separate it from *"etc."* to maintain correct list formatting. Punctuation errors are especially problematic because they directly affect the structure of a sentence and,

consequently, the clarity of meaning. Misused or missing commas, apostrophes, and periods are among the most common issues observed in student writing.

The prevalence of punctuation errors in student writing is well-documented across multiple research contexts. Jayanti (2019) reported that 83% of students demonstrated a "fair to poor" ability in mechanics, with punctuation identified as one of the most consequential areas affecting comprehension. Similarly, Ahmed (2019) found that punctuation errors accounted for 15.31% of the total writing errors in student essays, making them one of the most frequent mechanical issues, alongside tense, spelling, and vocabulary. These findings establish punctuation as a critical area requiring focused attention in writing instruction.

Husada *et al.* (2018) provided detailed insights into specific types of punctuation errors, reporting four main categories in their analysis of 42 documented mistakes: period, comma, omission, and addition errors. Out of these errors, 11 (26%) were associated with periods, 15 (36%) with commas, 4 (10%) with additions, and 12 (28%) with omissions. Comma errors were the most frequent, making up more than one-third of the total. This pattern aligns with the study by Yuliah *et al.* (2020), who analyzed 55 student essays and found that punctuation errors (21.6%) were more common than either capitalization or spelling mistakes. More recently, Apuhin *et al.* (2023), in a study conducted at a state university in Negros Occidental, observed that punctuation accounted for the majority of errors (77.4%), followed closely by omission errors (67.7%).

The persistence of punctuation difficulties extends across different cultural and linguistic contexts among ESL/EFL learners, demonstrating the universal nature of this challenge. Alhaysony (2012) found, in her analysis of Saudi undergraduates' essays, that punctuation was one of the most problematic aspects of mechanics, with students frequently omitting commas and periods, resulting in run-on sentences. Likewise, Darus and Subramaniam (2009) emphasized, in their study of Malaysian secondary students, that punctuation misuse, particularly involving commas and semicolons, accounted for a substantial portion of mechanical errors. More recently, Rizqi and Haryudin (2020) reported that punctuation ranked as the second most frequent error category among Indonesian university students, indicating that it remains a persistent challenge in ESL/EFL writing across various contexts.

4.2.2 Spelling

Spelling is a fundamental aspect of writing because it ensures that the message of a written work is clear and easily understood. Incorrect spelling can cause confusion among readers by altering the intended meaning of a sentence. One common cause of spelling errors is the confusion between words that sound the same but differ in meaning and spelling, known as homophones (e.g., mistaking "back and forth" with "back and fourth"). Another cause arises when words are not spelt exactly as they sound, leading students to rely on phonemic approximations rather than correct orthography. Errors may also stem from limited vocabulary, insufficient reading exposure, or even carelessness, such as rushing to complete a task without careful proofreading. In the

academic essays of junior high school students, the following examples illustrate common spelling errors:

"The first, most obvios, way is to go to the University of Mindanao and enter your designated room." (Essay#21)

"Following the tips and steps insure a smooth registration for the next upcoming enrollment." (Essay#23)

The first sample contains the misspelt word "*obvios*," in which the letter "u" was likely omitted, possibly due to phonetic reliance or failure to review the text. In the second example, the error lies in the use of "*insure*" instead of "*ensure*," which reflects confusion between homophones. Because such words share similar pronunciations but differ in spelling and meaning, students often interchange them, resulting in errors that affect both accuracy and clarity.

Spelling errors are particularly common because English orthography does not always correspond directly to pronunciation, making it difficult for learners to rely solely on sound when spelling words correctly. Additionally, confusion with homophones such as "insure" and "ensure" reflects how subtle differences in meaning are often overlooked by students who focus primarily on phonetic similarities rather than semantic distinctions. This challenge is compounded by the fact that English contains numerous word pairs that sound identical but require different spellings depending on context and meaning.

Research consistently emphasizes the significance of spelling in writing mechanics and comprehension. Jayanti (2019) concluded that spelling, alongside punctuation, plays a crucial role in enabling readers to accurately comprehend a writer's ideas. Similarly, Ahmed (2019) found that spelling errors accounted for 12.94% of the total writing errors in student essays, placing them among the most frequent problems in writing mechanics. These percentages, while lower than punctuation errors, still represent a substantial portion of mechanical difficulties that students face in academic writing.

The prevalence of spelling errors extends across diverse ESL/EFL contexts, demonstrating the universal challenge that English orthography presents to second language learners. Albalawi (2016), in a study of Saudi students, reported that spelling errors were the most dominant type of error, largely due to phonological transfer and insufficient reading exposure. This finding suggests that students often apply the phonetic patterns of their first language to English spelling, creating systematic errors when the orthographic systems differ significantly. Darus and Subramaniam (2009) likewise observed that spelling accounted for a high proportion of errors in Malaysian ESL learners' writing, demonstrating its persistence across Asian contexts where students' native languages may have more regular spelling patterns. Similarly, Fitriani (2019) found that Indonesian high school students frequently committed spelling mistakes, especially in words that did not conform to phonetic rules, confirming that

English orthography poses particular difficulties for learners whose first language has more consistent sound-letter correspondences.

4.2.3 Capitalization

Capitalization is applied when referring to proper nouns, such as the names of people, places, and official titles, as well as when beginning a new sentence. Errors in capitalization often occur when students are uncertain about the rules, sometimes due to rushing, neglect, or even overapplication. These mistakes are evident in some academic essays of junior high school students, as shown in the following samples:

"It's better to prevent Biases and prejudice so we can avoid this things to happen, and so no one would be in harm." (Essay#67)

"And the Cashier now issues the official receipt of the downpayment made, then the Record Assistant issues and validates the CRM (certificate of registration and Matriculation, and then releases a copy of CRM." (Essay#18)

In Essay #67, the word "*Biases*" is incorrectly capitalized, even though it is a common noun and should follow the same treatment as the word "*prejudice*." In Essay #18, however, the opposite error occurs: the words "*certificate*" and "*registration*" should have been capitalized because they form part of the specific title "*Certificate of Registration and Matriculation*." These examples suggest that students demonstrate inconsistent understanding and application of capitalization rules.

Capitalization errors are particularly significant because they affect the formality and professionalism of a text. Overcapitalization creates visual distractions for readers, while undercapitalization of proper nouns can obscure the specificity of a term or title.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of mechanics, with attention to capitalization, in developing coherent written texts. Jayanti (2019) observed that students' overall ability in using mechanics, including capitalization, was generally in the "fair to poor" category, suggesting difficulties in consistently applying these conventions. Likewise, Ahmed (2019) found that capitalization errors accounted for 12.08% of all mistakes in student essays, ranking them among the more frequent writing issues, alongside punctuation and spelling errors. These findings confirm that capitalization, though seemingly simple, continues to challenge students and requires explicit reinforcement in writing instruction. Supporting evidence from other ESL/EFL contexts also reflects similar trends. Khansir (2012), for example, documented capitalization errors among Iranian students, particularly the overcapitalization of common nouns and the undercapitalization of proper nouns—patterns that mirror the inconsistencies observed in Philippine junior high school students. Similarly, Darus and Subramaniam (2009) reported frequent capitalization errors among Malaysian secondary students, emphasizing that these difficulties are not isolated but rather widespread across Asian ESL learners. Collectively, these studies highlight that capitalization remains a persistent

challenge in student writing, underscoring the need for systematic instruction and practice in mastering writing mechanics.

4.2.4 Substitution Errors

Table 3 presents the errors committed under substitution, with the highest frequency occurring at the lexical level (36.47%), followed closely by syntactic errors (35.15%), while the lowest frequency was observed at the morphological level (28.38%).

Table 3: Error Levels in Substitution

Type of Error	Count	Percentage
Lexical	81	36.47%
Syntactic	78	35.15%
Morphological	63	28.38%
Total	222	100%

4.2.5 Errors in Substitution on the Lexical Level

Lexical substitution errors occur when an inappropriate word or expression is used in place of another that may appear related in meaning but is contextually inaccurate. Such errors often result in vague or distorted expressions that hinder clarity and create confusion for the reader. In the academic essays of junior high school students, substitution errors at the lexical level were found to be the most frequent. Some representative examples are presented below:

"Third is to pay in the cashier inside the BE building." (Essay#34)

"Important values of awareness is that we should not be engaged on any act like that in school judging is bad and having bias is unfair." (Essay# 74)

The most common lexical substitution errors observed involve the misuse of prepositions. In Essay #34, the incorrect use of "*in*" instead of "*at*" appears when referring to the location of "*the cashier*." Similarly, in Essay #74, the preposition "*on*" is incorrectly used in the phrase "*engaged on any act*" instead of the correct form "*engaged in any act*." Prepositional errors are particularly common because their usage is highly context-dependent and not governed by strict, universal rules. Their meaning often shifts subtly depending on the surrounding words and expressions, making them difficult for learners to master. As a result, prepositions are among the most frequent sources of lexical substitution errors in student writing. This confirms the findings from previous studies.

Richards (1974) identified lexical substitution as one of the most persistent error types in second language writing. Jufrizal and Rosa (2019) found that Indonesian university students frequently substituted inappropriate prepositions in academic writing, attributing this to negative transfer from their first language and limited exposure to authentic English input. Tulabut *et al.* (2018) reported, in their analysis of the

prepositional errors of 44 Grade 9 students, that the misuse of prepositions, particularly those indicating direction and time, was among the most frequent grammatical problems. Such errors often reflect substitution mistakes influenced by the multiple functions of prepositions and structural differences between English and the students' native language. Similarly, Sharma (2018) found that prepositional errors accounted for the highest proportion of lexical errors (13.14%) among 70 essays analyzed. Ulit (2018) likewise observed that students most frequently committed substitution errors involving prepositions, ranking them first among grammatical error categories, along with tenses, verb forms, and articles. In the same vein, Amoakohene (2017) documented 584 substitution-related errors in student essays, which included the misuse of tense, prepositions, concord rules, and articles.

4.2.6 Errors in Substitution on the Syntactic Level

Syntactic substitution errors involve the replacement of grammatical structures or function words, which often results in awkward or ungrammatical sentence constructions. These errors typically arise from confusion between forms that appear similar but serve different functions, and may also stem from reliance on first-language syntactic patterns. In the academic essays of junior high school students, the following examples illustrate such errors:

"Values such as creating unity among students and individuals to create a open communication among everyone." (Essay#62)

"A student from the private and public schools of good standing may seek admission to the university provided that he/she has not been expelled from the previous school attended." (Essay#15)

In Essay #62, the error lies in the use of the article "a" before "open," a word beginning with a vowel sound. The correct article should have been "an." In Essay #15, the problem arises from the use of the definite article "the" with the phrase "private and public schools." Since the reference is general rather than specific, the appropriate construction would have been "a student from a private or public school." Here, both the article ("a") and the conjunction ("or") would more accurately reflect generalization and choice.

These types of syntactic errors in the articles and conjunctions are often caused by students' limited understanding of grammatical quantification and specificity. Because such structures frequently vary in usage across languages, learners may rely on first-language transfer, which further contributes to inaccuracies in their writing.

Previous studies have highlighted this difficulty. Khansir (2012) noted that articles and conjunctions are among the most problematic areas for ESL/EFL learners because their use depends heavily on context and convention, rather than fixed rules. Similarly, Heydari and Bagheri (2012) emphasized that article misuse is one of the most common

error categories, largely due to the absence of equivalent structures in many learners' first languages.

4.2.7 Errors in Substitution on the Morphological Level

Morphological substitution errors occur when an incorrect morpheme is used in place of the appropriate one, affecting word form. These morphemes may involve inflections, tense markers, agreement markers, or reflexive forms. In the academic essays of junior high school students, such errors can be observed in the following examples:

"The enrollee have to fill up the form or sheet in order to pay at the cashier." (Essay#22)

"It can make people feel bad about themselves and it will lose their confidence." (Essay#53)

In Essay #22, the verb "have" is incorrectly used with the singular subject "enrollee." The appropriate form should be "has." In Essay #53, the reflexive pronoun "themselves" is inaccurately used to refer to "people." The correct form is "themselves." Both examples illustrate how morphological substitution errors interfere with subject-verb agreement and pronoun accuracy.

In general, writers are often selective in their word choice to avoid redundancy; however, this tendency sometimes leads them to substitute forms inappropriately. In the case of substitution errors, students may construct sentences without carefully selecting the grammatical elements necessary for accuracy and clarity. As a result, the structure becomes unclear or distorted.

Similar findings have been documented in other ESL/EFL contexts. Putri, Sukesu, and Zahrida (2023) found that subject-verb agreement errors, particularly in verb form selection, were highly prevalent among Indonesian students, arising largely from developmental and cognitive factors. Likewise, a study at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia reported that mismatches between singular subjects and verbs, including inappropriate use of verb forms after modals, were the most common category of grammatical errors in learner writing. In Vietnam, Le (2023) observed that "wrong verb forms," often involving subject-verb agreement and tense misuse, dominated learners' errors alongside pronoun inaccuracies. Owu-Ewie (2017) also identified frequent noun-pronoun agreement errors among Ghanaian ESL learners, including the misuse of reflexive pronouns.

4.3 Omission Errors

Table 4 presents the frequency of errors committed in the academic essays of junior high school students under the omission error type, with syntactic errors accounting for the highest proportion (65.90%) and morphological errors comprising the least (34.10%).

Table 4: Error Levels in Omission

Type of Error	Count	Percentage
Syntactic	145	65.90%
Morphological	75	34.10%
Total	220	100%

4.3.1 Errors in Omission on the Syntactic Level

Syntactic omission errors refer to the absence of necessary forms or structural elements that complete a sentence. Omitting these essential elements in writing often results in fragmented sentences, leading to incomplete structures and ideas that are difficult to comprehend. In the academic essays of junior high school students, omission errors on the syntactic level were found to be the most frequent, as illustrated in the following examples:

"The Record Assistant checks and verifies the eligibility of the student based on general average of the report card." (Essay#5)

"Both Bias and Prejudice can create a negative impact to an individual or the community because those judgement often lead to false accusation and cause huge stir within the community that was involved." (Essay#57)

Both samples reveal mistakes in omitting necessary articles to complete the correct sentence structure. In Essay #5, "*general average*" is a specific, known metric, and therefore requires the definite article "*the*". Similarly, in Essay #57, the phrase "*huge stir*" is problematic without the indefinite article "*a*", since "*stir*" is a countable singular noun.

These findings are consistent with previous research. A study on tertiary ESL students' essays in Malaysia found prevalent omission errors, particularly in missing articles and auxiliary verbs, largely attributed to first language (L1) interference (Mehat & Lillianti, 2021). Escuadra (2024), in her study on Grade 10 students from Pasig City, reported that omission errors ranked as the third most frequent issue in student essays, following addition and misinformation errors. Most of these omissions involved missing articles and auxiliary verbs, reflecting gaps in construction caused by learners' L1 influence and limited grammatical awareness.

4.3.2 Errors in Omission on the Morphological Level

Morphological omission errors refer to the absence of required morphemes - tense markers, plural forms, or possessive indicators. Similar to the omission errors on the syntactic level, these errors result in incomplete structure, more specifically in word formation, causing sentences to fragment. These errors are evident in the academic essays of junior high school students, which are presented in the sentences below:

"That can make more problem and people get angry or mad." (Essay#88)

"This make sure that students and parents know what and what not to do and prepares them for the academic year." (Essay#33)

As shown in the samples, typical errors under the morphological level are the omission of the plural marker and affix for the correct verb tense. In Essay#88, the noun "problem", although being modified by "more" to signify plurality, is missing the plural marker "-s". For the second sample, the verb "make" lacks an inflectional affix to agree with the singular subject "this".

The relationship between writing and cognition is a complex and delicate matter. For developing writers, the connection between cognitive processing and translating thoughts onto paper is a challenging and inefficient task, considering the struggle of emerging writers to fully grasp fleeting thoughts while writing. Hence, in a rush to translate these fleeting ideas, writing becomes compromised, and errors of omission appear more often in the text. The study found that errors of this type are frequent under the syntactic level, with 145 error counts (65.90%), which include mistakes in omitting essential elements such as articles and prepositions. As for the errors under the morphological level (34.10%), the study observed that typical errors include verb inflections, resulting in incomplete word forms and incorrect sentence structures. These omissions often go unnoticed by students, indicating a lack of awareness of the standard sentence construction. A closer examination of their writing is necessary to identify and correct such mistakes, thereby enhancing comprehension. Additionally, the findings suggest that students struggle with parts of speech and article omissions in particular.

A study on tertiary ESL students' essays from Malaysia found prevalent errors in omissions, specifically on missing articles and auxiliary verbs. These errors were largely due to factors of L1 interference, showing a consistent pattern of omission difficulties among students with limited command of the English structure (Mehat & Lillianti, 2021). In the context of the Philippines, a study from Pasig City on Grade 10 students revealed that omission errors were the third most frequent issue encountered in the students' essays, following errors in addition and misinformation. Escuadra (2024) states that these errors typically include missing articles and auxiliary verbs, indicating gaps in construction caused by learners' first language and possibly limited grammar awareness.

4.4 Addition Errors

Table 5 presents the frequency of errors under the addition error type. The highest number of errors occurred at the Syntactic level (49.44%), followed by the Morphological level (37.53%), while the Lexical level (28.03%) recorded the fewest errors.

Table 5: Error Levels in Addition

Type of Error	Count	Percentage (%)
Syntactic	88	49.44%
Morphological	49	37.53%
Lexical	41	28.03%
Total	178	100%

4.4.1 Errors in Addition on the Syntactic Level

Syntactic addition errors refer to the unnecessary insertion of elements in a sentence, which often results in redundancy or awkward phrasing. These mistakes typically occur due to overgeneralization or a lack of awareness of concise expression in English. In the academic essays of junior high school students, syntactic addition errors were observed in the following examples:

"To an individual this may cause a social anxiety, like for example, when you are in line."
(Essay#84)

"For returning or old students, the process is much more simpler." (Essay#4)

Both samples reveal the presence of redundant or superfluous elements. In Essay #84, the phrase *"like for example"* is repetitive since either *"like"* or *"for example"* alone sufficiently introduces an illustration. In Essay #4, the use of *"more"* is unnecessary because the adjective *"simpler"* already expresses the comparative degree. The correct phrasing should be *"much simpler."*

Research also indicates that redundancy and overuse of words are common among ESL learners. Tizazu (2014), in his study on Ethiopian students' essays, noted frequent syntactic addition errors, particularly redundant modifiers and repetitive conjunctions. Similarly, Dung (2010) found that Vietnamese learners often inserted unnecessary elements in their sentences due to negative transfer from their first language, where repetition is sometimes a marker of emphasis.

4.4.2 Errors in Addition on the Morphological Level

Morphological addition errors refer to the unnecessary attachment of extra morphemes to words. These are typically observed in the irregular forms of words caused by the overapplication of regular morphological patterns. In the academic essays of junior high school students, such errors are evident in the following examples:

"For the enrollment procedure, the first step would be enrollee must proceeds to the Grade Level Adviser/Records Assistant for insurance of Approval Sheet, and submits the admission requirments." (Essay#19)

"University of Mindanao is a school with a high academic standards located here in Davao City, Philippines." (Essay#31)

Both examples illustrate how students often overgeneralize morphological rules. In Essay #19, the verbs *"proceeds"* and *"submits"* incorrectly take the singular verb form despite the subject *"enrollee"* being part of the modal construction *"must,"* which requires the base form (*"proceed"* and *"submit"*). In Essay #31, there is a mismatch between the singular article *"a"* and the plural noun *"standards."* The correct form should either be *"a high academic standard"* or simply *"high academic standards"* without the article.

Several studies have documented similar morphological addition errors. James (1998) explained that learners often commit overgeneralization errors when they apply regular grammatical rules to irregular forms, such as adding -s to verbs after modal auxiliaries. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) likewise classified addition errors, especially in verb forms and pluralization, as developmental errors common in second-language acquisition. More recently, Mansoor & Rana (2021) observed that Pakistani ESL learners frequently added unnecessary morphemes in verb and noun forms due to limited mastery of agreement rules and overreliance on rote-learned patterns.

4.4.3 Errors in Addition on the Lexical Level

Lexical addition errors refer to the insertion of unnecessary words in a sentence, typically those that are not required to convey meaning, which often results in redundancy or irregular sentence construction. Although these errors were the least frequent among the addition error types found in the academic essays of junior high school students, they are still as problematic as errors at other linguistic levels. The following examples illustrate common lexical addition errors:

"Applicants then await for the test results to determine whether they qualify." (Essay#43)

"Then the Grade Level Adviser checks the authenticity of the submitted requirements, and then they will issue the enrollment approval sheet." (Essay#26)

These sentences show typical lexical addition mistakes. In Essay #43, the preposition "*for*" is unnecessary, as the verb "*await*" is transitive and does not require it. In Essay #26, the phrase "*and then*" is redundant because the sentence already begins with "*then*". A more accurate construction would either omit the initial "*then*" and retain the phrase "*and then*", or preserve "*then*" at the start and remove the second occurrence.

The act of writing is inherently demanding, often forcing writers to either hastily translate their thoughts or overfocus on accuracy when given more time. This tension can inadvertently lead to errors, such as the insertion of unnecessary articles, words, or phrases that serve no grammatical or semantic purpose in the sentence. Unlike omission errors, which involve missing elements, addition errors at the lexical level are often the result of overgeneralization, hypercorrection, or attempts to achieve greater precision in academic writing. Richards (1971) first identified these addition errors as a common manifestation of overgeneralization, while Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) emphasized that learners frequently insert redundant words due to false concepts hypothesized about the target language. James (1998) further highlighted that redundancy at the lexical level arises from developmental and intralingual factors, where learners try to "play safe" by adding more words than necessary. More recently, Alhaysony (2012) observed that Saudi EFL students' essays showed frequent lexical additions, such as unnecessary prepositions and redundant connectives, indicating that this error type persists across ESL contexts.

More studies confirm similar trends. Nurwahida (2018), in a case study at St. Michael's College, found that students frequently inserted unnecessary articles and

auxiliary verbs due to negative transfer from their native language. Likewise, a study at Mindanao State University–Sulu revealed that students often committed addition errors, particularly the overuse of prepositions and articles, which was attributed to L1 interference and low English proficiency (Hassan, 2024). Talosa and Maguddayao (2018) further observed that redundant use of articles, conjunctions, and modifiers posed a persistent challenge among ESL students, especially those with limited writing experience.

4.5 Permutation Errors

Table 6 presents the frequency of permutation errors identified in the academic essays of junior high school students.

Table 6: Errors in Permutation

Type of Error	Count	Percentage
Syntactic	63	100%
Total	63	100%

4.5.1 Errors in Permutation on the Syntactic Level

Syntactic permutation errors refer to the disorganization in the arrangement of elements that make up a sentence. These errors may involve the incorrect placement of subject, verb, and object, as well as disorder in phrasal or sentential structures. The following are examples of syntactic permutation errors found in the academic essays of junior high school students:

“The entrance exam can help the school decide wheter they should admit the student, if the enrollee did not pass the staff assigned will report to the parents.” (Essay#13)

“In the comunity, bias can also make fight or problem.” (Essay#87)

The sentences above illustrate common permutation errors in students' essays. In Essay #13, the phrase “*staff assigned*” reflects a disordered structure that should be correctly expressed as “*assigned staff*”. The sentence also lacks proper punctuation between clauses, making it difficult to follow. Similarly, in Essay #87, the phrase “*make fight or problem*” is syntactically awkward and requires reorganization. A more appropriate construction would be “*make problems or fights*,” ensuring both grammatical accuracy and semantic clarity.

The study found a total of 63 permutation errors (100%), indicating that this error type is concentrated at the syntactic level. This consistent pattern of misordered words and phrases suggests that students lack awareness of English sentence conventions, often confusing word order and interchanging elements within their clauses. Such issues reduce writing quality and hinder the accurate use of parts of speech in academic texts.

Findings from related studies support this observation. At Van Lang University in Vietnam, Pham and Pham (2024) identified frequent errors in sentence structure,

including run-on sentences and misordered phrases, among third-year English majors. Similarly, Gayo and Widodo (2018) found that students frequently committed word order errors due to first language interference and limited English proficiency. Munder (2010) also highlighted that the complexity of English syntax, compounded by L1 transfer, often results in errors such as misplacement of words and phrasal elements. Together, these studies confirm that permutation errors are a persistent challenge in ESL writing, largely influenced by learners' native language and insufficient grammatical competence.

5. Implication and Concluding Remarks

5.1 Implication for Future Educational Practices

The results of the study revealed notable, significant gaps in students' academic essay writing, specifically in their use of English as a second language. Consistent with prior studies, the prevalence of mechanical errors – especially in punctuation – reinforces the idea that surface-level writing conventions remain a persistent challenge for learners, even at the current level. This supports earlier claims that mechanical issues are often rooted in overgeneralization and a lack of mastery of formal writing rules. Moreover, the high frequency of substitution and omission errors, especially at the lexical and syntactic levels, aligns with research suggesting that these errors are mostly influenced by the interference of students' first language and limited exposure to correct use of the English language. Additionally, the syntactic omission elements, such as articles and auxiliary verbs, for instance, reflect structural differences between English and the students' native language, a phenomenon well-documented in contrastive linguistics and interlanguage theory. The presence of addition and permutation errors, though less frequent, affirms the complexity of syntactic development in L2 learners.

These results align with previous studies that highlight the cognitive load involved in constructing grammatically coherent sentences, particularly when learners are still internalizing the target language's structures. Through systematic analysis and categorization of the distribution and nature of errors, this study reinforces the value of error analysis as a diagnostic tool for understanding learner language and informing pedagogical decisions, thereby contributing to the growing body of knowledge on error analysis in second language writing, particularly at the junior high school level. The results highlight the need for targeted instructional interventions to address the writing errors of junior high school students, specifically in mechanics and grammar, in order to improve writing proficiency. Grammar instruction should focus on the specific error type identified, ensuring that teaching addresses learners' difficulties. This may be practiced through incorporating a structured, error-specific feedback – highlighting an article omitted or a misplaced modifier – to help students recognize and self-correct writing mistakes. And finally, encouraging students to write multiple drafts and have peer reviews and revision of works may help students internalize correct structures and improve fluency throughout the learning process.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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