



**ANALYSIS ON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS USING ERROR ANALYSIS  
APPROACH IN ESL WRITING**

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Laurien Antony

## APPROVAL SHEET

This research paper attached hereto, entitled Analysis on Grammatical Errors using Error Analysis Approach in ESL Writing prepared and submitted by Laurien Antony in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) English Education is hereby accepted.

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## ABSTRACT

Grammatical errors significantly impact the quality of a piece of writing. This study aims to identify the most common types of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students and to identify the causes of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students through the study of Error Analysis (EA). It is important to identify the types of errors made to study the prevalence of grammatical errors and see where they can be improved. It is also important to identify the causes of those errors to figure out ways to reduce or eliminate grammatical errors in future writings. The results of this study are analysed through the Error Analysis approach as it is a significantly structured and well-developed approach to study the students' errors. 20 pieces of essays written by 10 Form Five students were collected and analysed. Each student wrote two essays based on the Malaysian national examination, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) format. According to the findings, the most common type of grammatical errors found in the students' ESL writing were verb tenses and articles, followed by prepositions, subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, nouns, conjunctions, quantifiers, adjectives, and adverbs in that order. Interviews were conducted to identify the causes of errors. The major causes of grammatical errors made by the students were interlingual and intralingual interference, and other minor causes are assuming the grammar used was correct, overlooking errors and confusion when reading the texts. This study concludes that most of the Form Five students have made various grammatical errors in their ESL writing, and the causes of those errors made by the students were primarily due to their interlingual and intralingual interference.

*Keywords:* Error, Error Analysis, Grammar, ESL Writing

## DECLARATION

I declare that the material being carried in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement had been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be it printed, electronic or personal.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EA	ERROR ANALYSIS
ESL	ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE
SVA	SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT
SPM	SIJIL PELAJARAN MALAYSIA

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

English is a language that is used worldwide where people all over the world use it as a main form of communication with one another (Rao, 2019). English is also a compulsory subject that is taught as a second language in both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia and incorporating this language in all levels of education is extensively pushed at all stages of schooling, up till tertiary education (Darmi & Albion, 2013). English language is a multifaceted skill that is divided into four categories which are reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Husain, 2015). They are all equally vital, however, writing skill will be the focus in this study.

Writing is one of the major skills that exists in the English language. It is also deemed to be the most difficult skill because of its complex language system (Irawati, 2015). There are a few considerations that must be taken when one wants to write and one of the most fundamental ones would be the grammatical system of writing. Grammar is vital in the English language, and it is known to be the root of the English language learning. According to Debata (2013), grammar is the study of words and how those words are constructed and structured together to produce a sentence. It is very important for the English as Second Language (ESL) learners to understand and grasp the very fundamentals of grammar as it is applied in all aspects of the language especially in writing. It is also becoming more and more crucial for students to master the ESL writing. To truly master their writing skills, students must fully understand the grammar techniques and concepts to have the ability to produce good written work without making numerous grammatical errors. Unfortunately, not all students are able to understand and master the English grammar very well and in result, making errors in their English writing

activities. In the Malaysian education system, English is a compulsory subject and writing is one of the skills that is prioritised. However, students still struggle to acquire this skill. The influence of their native language as well as a lack of understanding of grammatical rules and concepts may be some of the sources of their struggle in acquiring the writing skill (Singh et al., 2017). Although the syllabus and teachers provide the students with appropriate and sufficient exercises, students are still unsure about the grammar that is supposed to be used in their writing and continues to make errors. Thus, it is important to study and analyse the errors that are made by students.

A study by Aqsa et al. (2015) shows that Error Analysis (EA) is substantial in the ESL and EFL teaching. EA assists teachers to understand new teaching methods when providing input on students' errors. When doing so, students will be able to overcome the errors made and improve their work. Through EA, it is understandable how EA plays a huge role in the grammatical aspects of writing and how ESL learners can improve their grammatical knowledge. Thus, Error Analysis (EA) is one of the ways to identify and study the errors made by the ESL learners. A study by Dulay et al. (1982) as cited in Sermsook et al. (2017) stated that when EFL and ESL learners learn a language, error analysis is used to study the errors made by them.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

According to Khalijah et al. (2019), Malaysian students learn the English language throughout their schooling years in primary and secondary schools for 11 to 12 years, yet some still fail to grasp the ways around this language even after completing their secondary school education. Research by Pandian (2006) and Ramaiah (1997) as cited in Singh et al. (2017) states that Malaysian students' writing skills are yet to improve even after years of learning English at school. Students find writing to be the most difficult skill (Singh et al., 2017). They only have limited exposure to the language and rarely use it in everyday situations because students are not fluent in the language and lack a strong command of vocabulary and grammar (Singh et al. 2017). According to Zerin (2007) as cited in Singh et al. (2017), due to the obvious difficulties students confront in learning to write, teaching writing has become challenging. Teaching writing is one of the many challenges faced by teachers in ESL classrooms (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Students must instil a love and understanding of writing skill from an early age to ease their process of acquiring this skill in the span of their education in primary and secondary schools. To ensure this happens, teachers must introduce interesting teaching methods and strategies for their students to aid them in learning and acquiring English (Singh et al., 2017). According to Gross Davis (1993) as cited in University of Wisconsin Whitewater (n.d.), a few examples of interesting teaching methods and strategies that can be implemented in lessons to improve students' writing skills are constantly assigning writing exercises during lessons, explaining to the students about the importance of good writing, providing sufficient guidance throughout students' writing process and along with other beneficial and strategic methods and strategies.

In this proposed research, the researcher aspires to analyse the grammatical errors made in ESL students' writing using the Error Analysis (EA) approach by identifying the type and

causes of grammatical errors made. To do this, the researcher will carry out a full study with English as Second Language (ESL) students with appropriate methods.

### **1.3 Research Question(s)**

This research is carried out to answer two questions:

1. What are the most common types of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students?
2. What are the causes of the grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students through the study of Error Analysis (EA)?

### **1.4 Research Objective(s)**

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the most common types of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students.
2. To identify the causes of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students through the study of Error Analysis (EA).

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

This research aims to reveal the prevalent grammatical errors committed by ESL students in their writing and to identify the causes of those errors. The findings in this research will provide an overview on the types and causes of grammatical errors made in writing by Form Five (17-year-old) ESL secondary school students. It is a need for the types of errors made to be known to study the frequency of the type of grammatical errors made and to see where it can be improved on. Moreover, it is also vital to identify the causes of errors made to figure out ways that can be found to reduce the grammatical errors. The only thing teachers must focus on to make sure their students grasp the writing skill is ensure they are able to learn and utilise correct grammar and by doing so, they will be able

to produce amazing work in terms of their writing and they would also be able to write effectively. Curriculum and syllabus developers will find this study helpful as extra references, as it is aimed to focus on the grammatical components that should be emphasised when learning the English language. Book publishers can use this as a reference to publish their books based on the errors and causes of the errors found in this study that would aid the students to improve their writing skills.

## **1.6 Operational Definition of Terms**

### **1.6.1 Error**

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines error as a mistake. Thus, in this research error will be defined according to Botley, 2014; Corder, 1967; Nassaji, 2018 as cited in Yasmine et al. (2019) in the context of where errors are irregularities caused by a lack of linguistic knowledge that cannot be self-corrected.

### **1.6.2 Error Analysis**

The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) defines error analysis as the study and analysis of L2 learners' errors. Error analysis can be carried out to discern a learners' language learning strategies, to identify the sources of learner errors and to obtain information on common language learning difficulties (The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 1992).

### **1.6.3 Grammar**

According to The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992), the structure of a language and how linguistic components such as words and phrases are linked to form sentences in the grammar language is the true definition of grammar.

#### **1.6.4 ESL Writing**

According to Cambridge English Dictionary, ESL, also known as English as a Second Language, is when English is taught to those who speak other languages in a country where English is an official or significant language. According to Cambridge English Dictionary, writing is a skill where words are produced on a surface. Thus, ESL writing of students will be focused on as one of the fundamental parts of this study.

#### **1.7 Limitations and Scope of Study**

Limitations must be acknowledged in every study. In this study, the researcher will implement a qualitative method to collect data. This qualitative research design can constrict the researcher from having a better understanding and in-depth insights on the concepts, opinions, or experiences of the students as it will all be conducted online due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. This will cause the researcher to miss out on a larger view on this research. As a result of this, there is a significant risk of missing out valuable and vital information and data that might aid this research. Besides that, certain limitations were identified in the scope of the study regarding the grammatical errors in an ESL essay writing where the errors are only analysed based on the students' writing abilities. Moreover, only 10 Form Five students are selected to participate in this study and the rest of the students who also take the English subject will not be a part of the study.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This study is based on the factors of analysing the grammatical errors made by English as Second Language secondary level students in their writing activities. Writing skill can be considered as a challenging skill in the English language compared to the other three skills which are speaking, listening, and reading (Ahmad Zaki & Yunus, 2018). This chapter will focus on existing literature related to grammatical errors made in ESL writing and the Error Analysis approach. The main topics covered in this review are **Writing Skills, Common Grammatical Errors in ESL Writing, Causes of Errors, Stages of Learners' Errors, and Procedures of Error Analysis.**

#### 2.2 Writing Skills

English has four major skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the four skills that is a set of written symbols that represent the sounds, syllables, or words of a language using various functions like capitalization, spelling, punctuation, as well as word form and function (Satya & Rao, 2018). Writing will always play a big role in a students' life (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). According to Moses and Mohamad (2019), with a correct and good amount of exposure, students will be able to eventually fall in love with writing in the long run.

Writing has its own challenges. Every student will face some sort of challenge while learning this skill (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). According to Misbah et al. (2017) as cited in Moses and Mohamad (2019), students have struggled to develop appropriate writing abilities due to a lack of vocabulary. Vocabulary is vital in second language learning acquisition because

a restricted vocabulary knowledge in a second language will hinder a person's communication skills (Alqahtani, 2015). Thus, a good vocabulary is very important for students in order to improve any sort of communication including writing. Besides that, grammar plays an important role in writing as well (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Grammar allows readers to comprehend the meaning of a text (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). It is a framework that reveals to the readers the intention behind a writer's work.

### **2.3 Common Grammatical Errors in ESL Writing**

According to a study by Singh et al. (2017), grammatical elements such as *subject-verb agreement (SVA)*, *verb tense*, *noun*, *preposition*, *adjective*, *article*, *pronoun*, *adverb*, and *conjunction* are where students tend to make errors in their writing. Based on the data collected in that study, the most common errors that were identified were *subject-verb agreement*, *verb tense*, *noun*, *preposition*, and *adjective*. The other distinguishable errors are made in *article* and *pronoun*, followed by *adverb* and *conjunction* (Singh et al., 2017).

The data shows that the major source of error made by students in their English writing was Subject-Verb Agreement (Singh et al., 2017). According to Singh et al. (2017), students made these errors in their writing because they are unable to include the accurate SVA which led to a quandary in constructing correct sentences. Most of the students found it difficult to make the subjects and verb agree as the subject's number was uncertain and the verbs closely follow their subjects. (Singh et al., 2017). Students also mixed-up singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa (Singh et al., 2017). For instance, "*Kuala Lumpur are (is) the capital city of Malaysia.*". The participant uses 'are' instead of 'is' in this sentence. Errors were also detected when a phrase was placed in between subject and verb. For example, "*A book bring (brings) us happiness we never knew we needed.*" This sentence is incorrect because 'bring' was used instead of 'brings'. This shows that students have a lack of understanding that singular subject is followed by singular verb and plural subject is followed by plural verb

(Singh et al., 2017). Besides that, Singh et al. (2017) also stated that students made significant errors in their verb tense as the students were required to write following a prompt. Students with adequate knowledge and understanding of grammar rules and structure were able to use the correct tenses in their work (Singh et al., 2017). For example, an essay's introduction and conclusion should be in past tense as it describes past events, however, the data collected in Singh et al. (2017) shows that some students were unable to change the verbs into past tense. Moreover, students also fail to decide and understand the use of Verb to Have in their writing (Singh et al., 2017). In some circumstances, students tend to excessively modify the sentences by redundantly employing the verbs to have and some of them also have the tendency to remove those verbs in order to ease their tasks or replace them with each other (Singh et al., 2017). For instance, in the sentence '*The internet have been...*' when it is supposed to be '*The internet has been...*' (Singh et al., 2017). This clearly shows that the students find it difficult to comprehend the rules of verbs to have in their writing tasks. According to Singh et al. (2017), based on the data they collected, students also had a major issue in using nouns in their writing. Students demonstrated difficulties in distinguishing countable and uncountable nouns (Singh et al., 2017). Some of them also were unaware of the rule that the countable plural nouns must be pluralised using the suffix 's' (Singh et al., 2017). For instance, in the sentence '*Telephones are vital in our live (lives)*', the appropriate noun should be '*lives*' instead of '*live*' (Singh et al., 2017). Preposition is also another prevalent grammatical error made by students in this study (Singh et al., 2017). Students believe that prepositions have no effect on the meanings of the sentences they construct in their writing and as a result, they do not take the use of prepositions seriously (Singh et al., 2017). For example, in the sentence '*if not, they will die from (of) hunger*', the correct preposition should be '*of*' instead of '*from*' (Singh et al., 2017). Finally, adjectives are also one of the most common types of grammatical error made in ESL writing. According to Singh et al., (2017), students use adjectives incorrectly in their writing

when they do not follow the proper rules for producing the right form of adjective in sentences. For instance, in the sentence *'People prefer travelling by aeroplanes which is easy (easier) than travelling by trains*, the 'y' in 'easy' has to be changed to 'i' (Singh et al., 2017).

## 2.4 Causes of Errors

According to Shekhzadeh and Gheichi (2011), usually, the primary cause of language learners' errors was considered as transfer from the learner's native language with a strong influence of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. According to Brown (1980) as cited in Sari (2015) learners make errors in their second language acquisition because they assume that the L2 rules are indistinguishable to the mother tongue and the interference of elements in L2. A study by Richards (1974) as cited in Sermsook et al. (2017) shows that **interlingual errors** and **intralingual errors** may be the main causes for the errors made.

According to Angguni (2020), **interlingual error** is one of the major sources of error in L2 acquisition. Interlingual error occurs when the learners accidentally use their first language rules to the language they are learning (Sermsook et al., 2017). According to Sari (2015), interlingual errors are also known as interference, language transfer, and cross-linguistic interference. A study by Corder (1981) as cited in Angguni (2020) states that interlingual errors arise when learners' habits such as patterns, systems, or rules interfere or hinder them from learning the patterns and rules of the second language. According to Lado (1964) as cited in Angguni (2020), negative transfer, also known as interference, is a detrimental impact of the native language (L1) on the proficiency of the second language (L2) acquisition. Based on the various assertions from these researchers, it can be said that the influence of L1 is the main source of interlingual errors.

The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) states that **intralingual error** occurs due to faulty or incomplete target language acquisition rather than

language transfer. Besides that, it is also due to the effect of one target language item on another (The Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 1992). Oftentimes, students make errors in their L2 acquisition as learners are unfamiliar with it. According to Richards (1974) as cited in Sari (2015), intralingual errors can be classified into four categories which are overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of the rules, and false concept hypothesized. **Overgeneralization** occurs when the learners produce an irregular structure based on other forms in the target language. According to Richards (1974) as cited in Mohammad Hamad (2016), **ignorance of rule restrictions** is the difficulty to maintain the limits (borders) of current formation, particularly when applying rules to inappropriate situations. For example, a learner who has learned a new sentence form such as ‘*That is the girl who have a Ferrari*’ instead of ‘*That is the girl who has a Ferrari*’. According to Richards (1971) as cited in Kaweera (2013), **incomplete application of the rules** occurs when the irregular structure represents the degree of complexity of the rules required to create permissible utterances. Besides that, according to James (1998) as cited in Kaweera (2013), incomplete application of the rules is opposed to overgeneralisation. For instance, “‘*Nobody knew where was the dog*’ instead of ‘*Nobody knew where the dog was*’. In this sentence, the irregularity of the subject and verb ‘to be’ can be identified (Kaweera, 2013). Furthermore, intralingual errors can also result from the **hypothesis of false concepts**. Al-Tamimi (2006) as cited in Kaweera (2013) states that this form of intralingual error occurs because of the poor degree of teaching items. The learners tend to form theories about some of the grammatical concepts in the target language (Kaweera, 2013). For instance, learners will use the structure ‘was or did’ incorrectly as they think these are the indicators of past tenses, thus they produce utterances like ‘*one day it was happened*’ or ‘*she was finished the homework*’ (Richards, 1971, cited in Kaweera, 2013). The four sources of intralingual errors that was discussed above shows how all of them are interlinked to one another (Kaweera, 2013). Kaweera (2013) also states

that these four causes of intralingual errors clearly shows how intralingual errors can occur and how they might also be a result from various educational and psychological factors.

## **2.5 Stages of a Learners' Errors**

According to Brown (2007) as cited in Bandar (2019), there are four stages to learners' errors which consist pre-systematic, emergent, systematic, and post-systematic.

### **i. Pre-systematic**

Bandar (2019) states that in the first stage the learners knowingly make mistakes while disregarding the rules of the target language. In this stage, the learner has an unclear understanding that there is a certain set of rules to follow in order to construct a grammatically accurate sentence. These errors are often made in a short period of time which indicates that the learner is experimenting and making inaccurate guesses.

### **ii. Emergent**

The second stage, the learners can understand few rules but still does not have the ability to correct their errors (Bandar, 2019). In this stage, learners tend to improve their linguistic coherence (Hejazi, 2012). They begin to detect and perceive a structure and assimilate certain rules (Hejazi, 2012). Even though these rules may be incorrect according to the L2 rules, they seem to be valid in the learners' perspective (Hejazi, 2012). Learners also go through a 'relapse' in this stage where they seem to have a grasp on the rules or principle before regressing to the previous stage (Hejazi, 2012). Learners are unable to rectify the errors they make when they are pointed out and it is also frequent for them to avoid the structures and topics in this stage (Hejazi, 2013).

### iii. Systematic

In the third stage, learners have grasped the rules and are able to correct their errors, only when indicated (Bandar, 2019). In this stage, learners demonstrate a clearer consistency in producing the second language (Hejazi, 2013). Learners in the systematic stage are more internally self-consistent and accurately reflect on their errors when they are pointed out, although in this stage the rules of the target language are not completely well-formed in the learners' head (Hejazi, 2013).

### iv. Post-systematic

The fourth and final stage is where the learners can correct the errors themselves without receiving any form of feedback from others (Bandar, 2019). Learners make few errors and have grasped the rules around the target language where fluency and intended meanings are no longer an issue for them (Hejazi, 2013). The system is so thorough in this stage that learners can focus on the very few errors made, and they can easily correct it without waiting for feedback from someone else, therefore, they can also self-correct (Hejazi, 2013).

## 2.6 Procedures of Error Analysis

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) cited by Amiri & Puteh (2017), there is a four-stage procedure in the Error Analysis approach which involves **collecting the sample of learner language, identifying the learners' errors, describing the learners' errors, and explaining the learners' errors**. Based on Fatemeh and Puteh's research, each procedure plays a significant role in analysing the errors made by students. In the sense of correcting their grammatical errors, each procedure may help the learners understand the errors made and they will improve and avoid making those errors again.

### **i. Collecting the sample of learner language**

Learners' errors in their work are caused by certain vital factors (Mohammad Hamad, 2016). Ellis (1994) as cited in Mohammad Hamad (2016) stated that these factors are important because the collection of a well-defined sample of learner language allows unambiguous claims to be made regarding what sorts of errors the learners make and under what conditions. According to Ellis (1994) as cited in Mohammad Hamad (2016), some aspects to consider when collecting samples of learner language can be divided into two categories. The first being the language where factors such as medium, genre, and content should be looked upon and the second category would be learner where the level, mother tongue, and language learning experience should be considered.

### **ii. Identifying the learners' errors**

According to Mohammad Hamad (2018), there are few methods to discern the difference between an error and a mistake. When a learner makes an error, it can be identified through the regularity of their performance in L2 (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). On the other hand, a mistake can be identified when a learner applies the correct form of rule or concept at times and the incorrect one at other times, it is considered as a mistake that can be self-corrected (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). However, if they were to consistently use it incorrectly, it is an error (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). If the learners are asked to correct their erroneous utterance and they are unable to do so, they are definitely errors, and if they successfully succeed in correcting them, they are unquestionable mistakes (Mohammad Hamad, 2018).

### **iii. Describing the learners' errors**

In this stage, researchers will describe the learners' errors. There are three primary aims when it comes to describing the learners' errors (Mohammad Hamad,



2018). Firstly, an individual's instinct would be to automatically explain all that is unexplained in order to further support their instinct (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). The second aim could be to prepare for tracking the learners' errors and the final aim is to create error categories and subcategories that will help with the development of a thorough taxonomy of L2 errors (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). Based on Corder (1973) classification of Foreign Language learners' errors, there are differences between their utterance and the reconstructed version, and these errors can be categorised into four categories which are omission, selection, addition, or misordering (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). According to Ellis (1997) as cited in Mohammad Hamad (2018), omission is when a learner leaves out a required item in the sentence that they structured. For example, '*There is apple in the basket*', the learner does not include the article '*an*' which should be added before the word '*apple*'. Furthermore, selection is when the learner selects the wrong element for an utterance (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). For instance, '*My friend is oldest than me*', when it is supposed to be '*My friend is older than me*'. The third category would be addition where the learner adds unnecessary items in their utterance (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). For example, '*The Malaysia*', when '*Malaysia*' is a proper noun, and it does not require the determiner '*The*' in front of it and the final category would be misordering where the learners misplace the item or put the item in the wrong place (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). For instance, '*get upping*' instead of '*getting up*'.

#### **iv. Explaining the learners' errors**

This stage is the most vital stage for Error Analysis research because the main objective of Error Analysis theory is to explain the errors (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). Explaining learners' errors is an elemental theme of Second Language

Acquisition (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) as cited in Mohammad Hamad (2018), explaining errors include figuring out where they came from and why they happened. Ellis (1994) also explains that the psycholinguistic cause of learners' errors can be classified into errors of performance and errors of competence (Mohammad Hamad, 2018). Error of performance occurs when a learner continuously makes mistakes in their second language acquisition whereas error of competence occurs when a learner applies the wrong rules in their second language acquisition (Mohammad Hamad, 2018).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the elements involved in carrying out this research including research design, sampling technique, participants, instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and a brief conclusion of the procedure used in this study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This research is conducted to analyse the grammatical errors in writing made by ESL students using the Error Analysis (EA) approach. It is also to identify the types of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students and to identify the causes of grammatical errors made in writing by ESL students through the study of Error Analysis. This study will employ a qualitative research design as it best allows the researcher to collect the appropriate data needed in order to answer the research questions. According to Cropley (2015), qualitative research investigates how individuals make meaning of their own tangible, real-life experiences in their own thoughts and words. The researcher will be able to employ a wide range of apprehension on this analysis through a qualitative research design. In this study, the primary data collection tool instrument will be in the form of essays. Based on the errors identified in the essays, students will then be interviewed based on the detailed insights gained through the essay's analysis.

#### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

A convenience sampling, also known as availability sampling, will be employed in this study. The researcher chose to proceed with this sampling as this sampling method involves collecting participants wherever they can be found and, in most cases, wherever it is most convenient as they are accessible to the researcher (Siegle, n.d.). The reason why finding

participants for this study was chosen through the convenient sampling method because as the Covid-19 pandemic situation is still ongoing and the researcher would find it strenuous to find participants to participate in this study as they are unable to meet them in-person for the distribution of question and for the interview. The researcher must rely on carrying this research solely through liaising with them via online applications only, for the safety of the researcher and participants.

### **3.4 Participants**

The participants in this study are Form Five (17 y/o) students from a secondary school. The rationale for selecting Form Five students as participants is that English is one of the compulsory subjects for a student to learn to sit for their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination and the researcher believes that it would be fundamental practice for the students to improve their writing skills for the benefit of their examinations and for the researcher to get an in-depth insight on the study. A total of 10 Form Five students from a secondary school will be chosen to participate in the study.

### **3.5 Instruments**

To obtain data for the research, each student was given two essays and all 20 essays were collected. Interviews were conducted to find the in-depth causes of errors.

#### **3.5.1 Essay**

The participants were asked to write two essays. The first essay is a guided writing essay where the question will have guides or prompts for the student to use to write the essay. The title of the first essay is “Advantages and Disadvantages of Studying Abroad”. The essay should be written in about 125 - 150 words. The second essay is an extended writing essay. The participants will have to write an article on “How to be an A-Star Student” in about 200-250 words. The participants should write both essays based on the elements of good writing

which consists of purpose, audience, clarity, unity, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. The marking criteria for the writing includes format, content, language, grammar, and mechanics of writing. Both these essay questions were adopted from an activity book titled Superb Model Essays for SPM. The researcher will mark the students' essays based on an existing SPM marking scheme (Adopted from PPD Jasin Trial Question 2019). Both essays are based on the current SPM format.

### **3.5.2 Interview**

After reviewing each students' essay, students were interviewed to identify the cause of error. The researcher will group students' errors according to the most common type of error found in their writing according to the past studies that the researcher has studied. The researcher will interview all 10 participants to get a more in-depth insight on this study.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

**Stage 1:** Students' essays were collected and marked by the researcher based on the marking scheme. The most common type of error that was repeated by all 10 students was recorded individually.

**Stage 2:** Students were interviewed to identify the cause of errors. Researcher will analyse the interview based on the transcriptions of the interview that is collected by the researcher. After the interviews, the researcher will categorise the common errors under specific categories.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The errors made by the students were analysed according to the most common type of grammatical errors to obtain the type of error, frequency, percentage and rank of errors. After the interview with the participants, the researcher re-analysed the errors to identify the cause

of errors. The collected data will be studied correspondingly in order to answer the research questions of this study.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The researcher discussed the appropriate design and methods that will be used to conduct this study in this methodology. A qualitative research design will be implemented in this study where the students must write an essay based on the topic provided. The students will then be interviewed to gather a more in depth understanding on the source of their errors in the essay. 10 Form Five students will be recruited as participants using a convenience sampling method. The researcher will categorise the most common errors in a table and based on the data observed, the research questions of the study will be acknowledged.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The findings of this research and the method for qualitative data analysis is discussed in this chapter. The analysis of this study would use tables and detailed examples of the analysis to illustrate the obtained data. The data includes the types of grammatical errors made, selected examples of errors from each grammatical category studied, and in-depth data obtained from interviews that the researcher conducted with the participants of this study to find a detailed explanation of the causes of errors made. A total of 10 Form Five students were involved in this study and each of them will be given two essays to complete. The essays were distributed through WhatsApp, and the interviews were conducted through Zoom. The researcher received all 10 students' essays; however, only eight students participated in the interviews.

#### 4.2 Essays

The data collected from the essays for the types of grammatical errors will be presented in this chapter in tables. The first column is the types of errors containing the types of errors the researcher managed to identify. The second row is the frequency of each error made in the students' essays. The third row shows the percentage of the errors made based on each category, and finally, the fourth row shows the rank of errors from the most frequently made errors to the least.

### 4.3 Interviews

The data collected from the interviews to get in-depth insights into the causes of errors will be presented in this chapter. The researcher only managed to interview eight students to analyse further the reasons behind the errors made. The researcher asked five questions regarding the students' language background. In the second part of the interview, the researcher displayed a few sentences from the essays the students had written on the screen and proceeded to ask them to identify the errors. If the students managed to identify the error, they had to provide the correct answer, and if they could not, they should proceed to the next sentence. Once going through all the sentences, the researcher displays the correct answers and explains the errors to the students. The researcher then proceeds to ask them why they made the errors and gives them options such as “being unaware of the rules”, “assuming the grammar used was correct”, “translated from native language”, and “others” as their possible reasons. Students answer accordingly.



#### 4.4 Findings on the First Objective of the Research

After thoroughly analysing the essays written by the students, the researcher identified 11 types of errors. The errors included subject-verb agreement (SVA), verb tenses, nouns, prepositions, adjectives, articles, pronouns, adverbs, conjunctions, tenses, and quantifiers. Table 1 shows the frequency of errors made by 10 students in both essays written by them.

**Table 1**

*Frequency of Errors Made by 10 pupils in Both Essays Written by the Students*

Types of Errors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SVA	3			1	1		1	5	2	4
Verb tense	5		1	2	1	1	4	4	2	6
Noun		1				1				
Preposition	4	4		2		2	4	3	3	3
Adjective	1									
Article	4		4		10		4	2	1	1
Pronoun		3		1	1	2	1	1		
Adverb									1	
Conjunction								2		
Tense		2							1	1
Quantifier				1		1				

Based on Table 1, one student made five errors in the usage of Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA), one student made four errors, one student made three, one student made two, and two students made an error each in the usage of SVA and three students did not make any. As for verb tenses, one student made six errors; one student made five, two students made four errors each, two students made two errors each, three students made one error each in the usage of verb tenses and one student did not make any. A majority of seven students did not make any errors in the usage of nouns. Three students only made one error each when using nouns in their essays. As for the usage of prepositions, three students made four errors each when using prepositions in their essays; three students made three errors each, two students made two errors each and two students did not make any errors. Only one student made an error in their essays in the usage of adjectives, while the majority of nine students did not. One student made 10 errors in the usage of articles; three students made four, one student made two errors, two students made one error each, and three students did not make any errors. As for the usage of pronouns, only one student made three errors; one student made two errors, four students made only one error each, and four students did not make any errors at all.

Meanwhile, in the usage of adverbs, a majority of nine students did not make any errors at all. Only one student made one error when using adverbs to write their essays. As for conjunctions, only one student made two errors, while the majority of nine did not make any errors. One student made two errors in using tenses, and only two students made one error each when writing their essays, while the majority of seven students did not make any errors at all in the usage of tenses. Lastly, the majority of eight students did not make any errors in using quantifiers, and only two students only made one error each when using quantifiers in their essays.

Table 2 shows the types, frequency, percentage, and rank of errors in both essays written by the students.

**Table 2**

*Types, Frequency, Percentage, and Rank of Errors in Both Essays Written by The Students*

<b>Types of Errors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
SVA	17	14.66	4
Verb Tense	26	22.41	1
Noun	3	2.59	7
Preposition	25	21.56	3
Adjective	1	0.86	10
Article	26	22.41	1
Pronoun	9	7.76	5
Adverb	1	0.86	10
Conjunction	2	1.72	8
Tense	4	3.45	6
Quantifier	2	1.72	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	

Based on the table above, the error that was frequently made was verb tenses and articles (22.41%). Other types of errors were prepositions (21.56%), subject-verb agreement (14.66%), pronouns (7.76%), tenses (3.45%), nouns (2.59%), conjunctions and quantifiers (1.72%), and adjectives and adverbs (0.86%).

#### **4.4.1 Verb tenses**

Errors in verb tenses were most frequently committed by the students in their essays. The following examples demonstrate the errors made by students in their writings.

**Example 1:**

***Error:** Most of the time, **study** hard requires studying for hours without stopping.*

***Correct:** Most of the time, **studying** hard requires studying for hours without stopping.*

**Example 2:**

***Error:** On the other side, some people might have **feel** very uncomfortable with the alien environment as the situation abroad and at the hometown is totally different.*

***Correct:** On the other side, some people might have **felt** very uncomfortable with the alien environment as the situation abroad and at the hometown is totally different.*

Example 1 and 2 demonstrates that the student is confused with the tense usage of the verbs.

**4.4.2 Articles**

Based on the rank in Table 1, articles were also placed as the first place of the errors made by the students. The students were mainly confused on the usage of a, an, the, and zero article.

**Example 3:**

***Error:** For instance, students can do I-Think map by using different colours of pen.*

***Correct:** For instance, students can do **an** I-Think map by using different colours of pen.*

**Example 4:**

***Error:** In conclusion, student should follow above results to get good results in their exams and be an A-Star student.*

***Correct:** In conclusion, student should follow **the** above results to get good results in their exams and be an A-Star student.*

Example 3 and 4 demonstrates the omission of articles from the sentences.

**Example 5:**

***Error:** The parents or guardians have to put all their savings for **the** flight tickets.*

***Correct:** The parents or guardians have to put all their savings for flight tickets.*

Example 5 demonstrates the unnecessary addition of the article *the*.

Based on the examples above, students may have mistakenly applied the target language rule and is due to the **intralingual interference**.

#### **4.4.3 Prepositions**

Prepositions were placed as the second most frequent error found in the students' writing.

##### **Example 6:**

***Error:** In this day and age, the majority students are experiencing endless pressure due to examination.*

***Correct:** In this day and age, the majority **of** students are experiencing endless pressure due to examination.*

##### **Example 7:**

***Error:** Despite **of** its advantages, studying abroad still includes its disadvantages.*

***Correct:** Despite its advantages, studying abroad still includes its disadvantages.*

Example 6 shows the omission of the preposition and example 7 shows the addition of the preposition.

#### **4.4.4 Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA)**

Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA) was placed in third place at the rank.

##### **Example 8:**

***Error:** In conclusion, students should put more **efforts** to make sure they can be an excellent students.*

***Correct:** In conclusion, students should put more **effort** to make sure they can be an excellent students.*

##### **Example 9:**

***Error:** However, when **there's** pros **there's** definitely cons.*

***Correct:** However, when **there are** pros **there are** definitely cons.*

Example 8 and 9 clearly demonstrates the disagreement of the subject and verb in the sentences.

#### **4.4.5 Pronouns**

Pronouns were the fourth most frequent error.

##### **Example 10:**

***Error:** Many students appreciate as a gift.*

***Correct:** Many students appreciate **it** as a gift.*

##### **Example 11:**

***Error:** Not only that, students should also always focus during the exams and give thorough answers as a way to secure **your** marks.*

***Correct:** Not only that, students should also always focus during the exams and give thorough answers as a way to secure **their** marks.*

Example 10 shows the omission of the pronoun whereas example 11 shows the misuse of the pronoun.

#### **4.4.6 Tenses**

Tenses were the fifth most frequent error.

##### **Example 12:**

***Error:** First and foremost , students need to have a positive attitude that they **could** achieve their aim and they should understand the exam format for each subject .*

***Correct:** First and foremost , students need to have a positive attitude that they **can** achieve their aim and they should understand the exam format for each subject .*

The example above states the wrong usage of the tense *can* and *could*.

#### **4.4.7 Nouns**

Nouns were the sixth most frequent error.

**Example 15:**

***Error:** Hence, students should prepare themselves to be one of the best **student** in school.*

***Correct:** Hence, students should prepare themselves to be one of the best **students** in school.*

**Example 16:**

***Error:** Studying abroad has been many **students** dream.*

***Correct:** Studying abroad has been many **students'** dream.*

Examples 15 and 16 demonstrate the misuse of the nouns.

**4.4.8 Conjunctions**

Conjunctions were in the seventh place of the most frequent error.

**Example 17:**

***Error:** Though it is true that studying overseas has its advantages, **but it** also has its disadvantages.*

***Correct:** Though it is true that studying overseas has its advantages, **it** also has its disadvantages.*

Example 17 shows the wrong usage of conjunction in the sentence.

**4.4.9 Quantifiers**

Quantifiers were also in the seventh place of the most frequent error.

**Example 18:**

***Error:** At the same time, students may as well need to expand their budget as life is way expensive in certain foreign countries.*

***Correct:** At the same time, students may as well need to expand their budget as life is way **more** expensive in certain foreign countries.*

Example 18 shows that the student omitted a quantifier for the sentence.

**4.4.10 Adjectives**

Adjectives were in the eight place of the most frequent error.

### **Example 19**

**Error:** *Besides, students became more **independence** and more responsible as they aren't living with their parents.*

**Correct:** *Besides, students became more **independent** and more responsible as they aren't living with their parents.*

Example 19 shows the misuse of the adjective in the sentence.

### **4.4.11 Adverbs**

Adverbs were also in the eight place of the most frequent error.

### **Example 20**

**Error:** *Last but not least , students must focus while **thorough** answering the examinations*

**Correct:** *Last but not least , students must focus while **thoroughly** answering the examinations*

Example 20 demonstrates the omission of -ly in the verb *thorough*



## 4.5 Findings on the Second Objective of the Research

### 4.5.1 Causes of Errors

**Table 3**

*Causes of Errors Made by the Students*

<b>Causes of Errors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Interlingual Interference	6
Intralingual Interference	2
Assuming the grammar usage was correct	2
<b>Others</b>	
overlooking errors and confusion when reading the texts	1

#### 4.5.1.1 Interlingual Errors

Based on the interview conducted by the researcher, six students stated that the probability of them causing the errors in their essays was due to the interference of their native language or native language. The researcher obtained this result by displaying sentences from their essays on the screen and asking them to identify the errors in those sentences. If they could identify, the researcher asks them why they made this error and gives "translation from native language" as an option. All six students agreed that the errors made were due to the translation from their native language.

#### 4.5.1.2 Intralingual Errors

Based on the interview conducted by the researcher, five students stated that the probability of them causing the errors in their essays was due to the misuse of rules of the target language and faulty learning of the target language. The researcher obtained this result by displaying sentences from their essays on the screen and asking them to identify the errors in

those sentences. If they could identify, the researcher proceeds to ask them why they made this error and gives "unaware of rules", "assuming the grammar used was correct" as an option. A total of two students agreed that the errors were due to them being unaware of the rules; two students agreed that they assumed the grammar used was correct. One student mentioned that they made the errors because they overlooked them and got confused when reading the texts.

## **4.5.2 Stages of Learners' Errors**

### **4.5.2.1 Pre-systematic**

In this stage, learners intentionally make errors while ignoring the target language's rules (Bandar, 2019). Based on the interviews conducted, when asked if the students made the errors due to the unclear understanding of the target language rules, two students stated that they made their errors due to this reason itself.

### **4.5.2.2 Emergent**

In the second stage, students understand the fundamentals of the rules but lack the skills to correct their errors (Bandar, 2019). During the interview, most of the students managed to identify their errors and correct them themselves.

### **4.5.2.3 Systematic**

Learners can understand the rules and correct their errors when pointed out in the systematic stage (Bandar, 2019). During the interview, when students could not identify the errors, the researcher pointed out the errors and asked the students if they recognised the errors indicated, and six students agreed that they could now identify the errors.

### **4.5.2.4 Post-systematic**

The learners can now correct their errors without obtaining input from others in the final stage (Bandar, 2019). During the interview, when the researcher asked the students to identify the errors, two students managed to identify the errors and correct themselves without being guided by the researcher.

### **4.5.3 Procedures of Error Analysis**

The researcher followed the procedures of error analysis thoroughly to analyse the students' grammatical errors. The results were analysed through the four-stage procedure of the Error Analysis approach as discussed below.

#### **4.5.3.1 Collecting the sample of learner language**

There are two aspects to look at to collect samples of learners' language (Mohammad Hamad, 2016). First, the language and second the learner itself. The researcher carefully adopted two essay questions for the Form Five students. The target students' language competencies were intermediate, so the researcher ensured the essays were suitable for the students. During the interview, the researcher asked the students about their language backgrounds, such as their native language, the primary language they speak at home and the language they speak to their friends.

#### **4.5.3.2 Identifying the learners' errors**

The researcher identified the students' errors in their essays by thoroughly going through each of them and categorising them into grammatical categories. To identify whether the students made an error or mistake, the researcher asked them to identify the errors in their essays during the interview; whenever the students did not manage to correct their erroneous utterances, the researcher categorised those utterances as errors, whereas whenever they managed to correct them, they are categorised as mistakes.

#### **4.5.3.3 Describing the learners' errors**

The researcher described the learners' errors in this stage. According to Mohamad Hamad (2018), there are three objectives for describing a learners' errors as mentioned in the previous chapters. To fulfil the first objective, the researcher explained the learners' errors in the interview. To fulfil the second objective, the researcher created error categories before

analysing the essays and to fulfil the third objective, the researcher created error categories once analysing the essays and categorised the learners' errors accordingly.

#### **4.5.3.4 Explaining the learners' errors**

Moving on to the most important stage of Error Analysis, which is explaining the learners' errors. The researcher explained the learners' errors thoroughly and clearly during the interviews to ensure the students learn from them and avoid making the same errors in their future writing tasks.

#### **4.6 Summary of Findings**

The findings from the essays show that all the students made an error of some sort in their ESL writings. In terms of types of errors, the most frequently made errors were in verb tenses and articles at 22.41%. Besides that, prepositions at 21.56%, subject-verb agreement at 14.66%, pronouns at 7.76%, tenses at 3.45%, nouns at 2.59%, conjunctions and quantifiers at 1.72%, and adjectives and adverbs at 0.86%.

Regarding the causes of errors, six students claimed that the errors made were due to their native language interference when writing the essays. Thus, this is caused by interlingual interference. Two students also stated that their lack of knowledge of the target language rules, and faulty learning of the target language had led them to make those errors in their writing.

For the stages of learners' errors, the researcher carefully studied and analysed the errors made by categorising the errors into four stages, including pre-systematic, emergent, systematic, and post-systematic.

As for the error analysis procedures, the researcher followed the four-stage procedure in the Error Analysis approach.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the findings and the qualitative data analysis method of this research is discussed. The findings in this study would give answers to both research questions. The analysis of the data collected from the essays was displayed through tables. The table includes the types of errors, the frequency of the errors, the percentage of the errors and the rank of those errors from the most to the least.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

The discussion of the study, limitations, recommendations and suggestions for improvisations for future studies, and a conclusion of the research is discussed in this chapter.

#### 5.2 Discussion

The researcher believes that both objectives of this research have been successfully fulfilled based on the data collected.

##### 5.2.1 Discussion on Collected Data for Research Objective 1

To discuss the results of the first objective of this research, the most common types of grammatical errors were indeed identified. Through the analysis of the essays, it is found that the most common type of grammatical errors made by the students were verb tenses and articles at 22.41%. The frequency for both verb tenses and articles were 26. A study by Mohammad Affiq et al. (2015) on 100 Malaysian public university students showed a similar result where verb tenses were the most commonly made type of error at 39.6%. The percentage of the errors made in the usage of articles was also 22.41%. Many of the students made most of the errors here as they might have carelessly looked past it, or interference from their native language may have occurred. Based on a study by Plotnick (n.d.), articles help to clarify the meaning of a noun in sentences. Thus, it is a vital issue that students made most of the errors here.

The students' least common grammatical errors were adjectives and adverbs, at 0.86%. The frequency of these errors in the students' essays was only one. This shows that students are aware of using these grammatical components when it comes to writing their essays. Students

have an excellent grasp of the rules of adjectives and adverbs. They were clearly exposed to these grammatical components when learning.

### **5.2.2 Discussion on Collected Data for Research Objective 2**

To fulfil the second research objective, the researcher conducted interviews to identify the causes of errors and analysed the errors using the EA approach. During the interview, the researcher asked the students five main questions regarding their language background and one open-ended question regarding each student's errors.

To study interlingual interference, the first four questions were based on identifying their interlingual errors. The first question was, "what is your native language/mother tongue?". There were various answers from the students, such as Bahasa Malaysia and Tamil, and some even said their native language is English. Students could implement previous knowledge from their first language when learning a second language (Al Shahrani, 2018). Based on the interview results, only two out of eight students mentioned that English is their native language, whereas the others' native languages are either Bahasa Malaysia or Tamil. The second question of this interview is, "what is the primary language you speak at home?". Most of the students mentioned that they speak their native language at home. The language spoken at home has a major influence on its interference in their writing. The third question of the interview is "when speaking to your friends, what language do you speak?". The majority of the students in the interview stated that they speak either Bahasa Malaysia or English with their friends. The fourth question is, "when you were writing the essays, did you think of the word in your mother tongue and then translate it to English to write it down? If yes, do you do this when doing all of your writing exercises/exams?". The researcher asked this question to identify how many students translate from their native language when writing as it influences their writing in their ESL writing. The researcher followed up by asking if they do this in all their writing exercises and

exams because the researcher wants to identify how impactful their native language is on their writing.

To study the intralingual interference, the researcher asked the students the fifth question which is "when you write a sentence, do you reread that sentence to check if there are any errors?" this question was asked to study if the students recheck their sentences to see if there are any grammatical errors made using the existing grammatical knowledge and finally the open-ended question was asked where the researcher displays few sentences of each students' errors and the screen and asks them to identify the errors in the sentence and if they were able to identify, to state the reason of making those errors. The researcher gave reasons such as "being unaware of the rules", "assuming the grammar used was correct", "translated from native language", and "others". The researcher asked this question to identify which stage of the learners' errors can the students be categorised. After asking the questions, the researcher explains each of the students' errors to fulfil the final and most important stage of the Error Analysis procedure, which is explaining the learners' errors.

Upon comparing and concluding the data collected, Form Five students do make grammatical errors in their ESL writing. Most of the students made more errors in their verb tenses and articles. A lesser number of errors were made in the other grammatical components that the researcher could identify. Students' errors in the essays have several causes, but the most important ones were their interlingual and intralingual interference. Their interlingual errors were caused by the interference of their native language in their ESL writing, and intralingual errors were caused by the misuse of the rule of the target language, and for these students, it is the English language. Consequently, it is important to identify the common types of errors and the causes of those errors to improve the students' overall grammar competency.



### **5.3 Implication**

As mentioned in the previous chapters, it is very important for ESL learners to the rules of grammar. Upon conducting this study, the researcher found that the students make prominent grammar errors in their writing. The grammatical component with the most errors were verb tenses and articles, and the ones with the least were adjectives and adverbs. Based on the interview, the causes of those errors were also identified through the Error Analysis approach, with interlingual and intralingual interference being the main causes.

As grammar in the English language is important for everyone, this research would benefit from offering apprehension on how to improve students' grammar to produce excellent writing, especially for Form Five students who will sit for their SPM examinations. Besides that, this research would also help teachers or lecturers understand the causes of grammatical errors made by their students and find ways to improvise the students' capability to produce grammatically accurate writing.

This study is also beneficial for educational institutions since it will provide them with insights into the level of grammatical competence of students, and through identifying the causes, institutions can rectify their syllabus and curriculum to ensure there is an improvisation in the students' grammar usage in their writings.

### **5.4 Limitations**

Like every other study, this study has its very own limitations. The main challenge that was faced by the researcher while conducting this study would be limited samples. Limited samples have hindered the study from having more detailed and in-depth data. This is because the researcher could not find many Form Five students to volunteer. Besides that, if there are more samples, the researcher would not have enough time to analyse and interview the samples thoroughly. Thus, a limited sample has a major impact on the study results.

Besides that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the data collection for this study was conducted online. The researcher decided to carry out this study online to ensure the researcher's safety and the participants. However, there were some setbacks in this. It was difficult for the researcher to collect the data as some students were not cooperative. Suppose the researcher could carry out this study physically; students might have been more cooperative as the researcher would be able to guide them thoroughly and observe the students while conducting the research.

Moreover, another limitation of this study is the researcher only focused on limited grammatical errors. The researcher only studied grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement (SVA), verb tenses, nouns, prepositions, adjectives, articles, pronouns, adverbs, conjunctions, tenses and quantifiers. There are many more grammatical errors like punctuations, run-on sentences, comma splices and many more. Hence, due to the research on limited types of grammatical errors, the results of this research may not be fully thorough.

Finally, the researcher may have looked past other errors. Like any other human, the researcher might make mistakes and errors as well. The researcher may not have been able to identify some other grammatical errors in the students' writings, thus reducing the possibility of there being more accurate data.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Future Studies**

There are a few recommendations that would be beneficial for future studies. Firstly, future researchers should create their own essay questions for the students. The questions would be catered according to the selected students' English proficiency level and capability. The researcher could then easily analyse and study the grammatical errors made as they fully know the severity of the essay questions they have created and how it would go about once the students answer it.

Besides that, future researchers should also try to conduct face to face interview sessions instead of online. There are few reasons to this. Firstly, internet connectivity can be a major issue when it comes to conducting interviews online and because of this, certain key information from the interview can go missing or disrupted. Another reason would be online interviews can lead to a very limited verbal and visual communication whereas face to face interviews provide a higher level of engagement where the researcher could read the students' body language and probe follow up questions whenever they want to find more information to support the students' answers.

Another recommendation is for teachers or lecturers and educational institutions. Teachers or lecturers could use the data collected to develop lesson plans and activities to cater according to the students' weakness to improve their grammatical skills. Educational institutions could also use the results of the study to further improve the syllabus and curriculum and if needed, modify the syllabus and curriculum to accommodate the students' needs in improvising their grammar in their writing.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The discussions, implications, limitations, and beneficial guidance in the interest of the designated parties were discussed in this chapter.

In conclusion, grammatical components in the English language are extremely vital, and every student must have a powerful grasp on studying and applying it. Often, grammatical errors are neglected and undervalued in the English language as many tend to focus on the content of the work rather than the grammatical components. The findings of this study show that the majority of the Form Five students have made various grammatical errors in their ESL writing. The researcher was also able to identify the causes of those errors made by the students were primarily due to their interlingual and intralingual interference. The researcher managed to successfully study and analyse the errors made using the Error Analysis approach.

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## APPENDIX

### Essay Questions

(Adopted from Superb Model Essays for SPM)

#### Question 1: Guided Writing

 English SPM Part 2 – Guided Writing

**Model 15** Pros and Cons of Studying Overseas

**Model Question**

Write your answer in **125 – 150 words** in an appropriate style.  
Your class has been discussing the pros and cons of studying overseas.  
Your English language teacher has asked you to write an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad.  
In your **essay**, you should write about:

PROS AND CONS OF STUDYING ABROAD	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Experiences</li><li>• Independence/Responsibility</li><li>• More Courses</li><li>• Reputable Universities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alien Environment</li><li>• Cultural Shock : Homesickness</li><li>• Expensive</li><li>• Irrelevant Disciplines</li></ul>

Write your essay using all the information and giving reasons for your point of view.

## Question 2: Extended Writing

Model

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### Study Well and Do Well

#### Model Question

Write your answer in **200 – 250 words** in an appropriate style.

You are a student counsellor and have attended a seminar on how to be an A-Star student. Write an article on what you learnt for the school magazine.

In your **article**, include the following:

- exams – internal and public – school life – tedious and stressful
- study smart – positive attitude – understand exam format
- attentive and focussed – punctual and review
- study techniques:
  - read aloud
  - short notes
  - schedules – short bouts of study
- during exams:
  - choose – understand question
  - focus – thorough answers – keep tabs on time

Write your **article**.

## Interview Questions

1. What is your native language/mother tongue?
2. What is the primary language you speak at home?
3. When speaking to your friends, what language do you speak in?
4. When you were writing the essays, did you think of the word in your mother tongue and then translate it to English to write it down? If yes, do you do this when doing all of your writing exercises/exams?
5. When you write a sentence, do you reread that sentence to check if there are any errors?
6. Now, I am going to show you a few sentences from the essay you have written. I will then proceed to ask you questions based on those sentences.

0. Read this sentence, can you identify the error in this sentence?

Why do you think you made this error?

- assuming the grammar used was correct
- translated from native language
- others

*Interviewer explains the errors*