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A Grammatical Error Analysis in the Written Expression of Second-Level Students at the Hidayatullah Higher Institute, Batu, East Java

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates grammatical errors in the written expression of second-level students at the Hidayatullah Higher Institute in Batu, East Java. The background of the study is the negative impact of inadequate grammar instruction, which may lead to serious syntactic and semantic issues in Arabic writing. The study aims to identify the types of grammatical errors, explore their causes, and propose appropriate solutions. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from students' written texts and analyzed linguistically. The analysis revealed four main categories of recurring errors: case-ending errors (such as confusion between subject and object), agreement errors (especially adjective-noun mismatch), pronominal errors (inconsistencies between pronouns and their referents), and genitive construction errors (such as incorrect use of the definite article with the first noun or incorrect case of the second noun). The causes include students' weak understanding of grammar rules, limited writing practice, interference from the mother tongue (Indonesian), lack of proofreading skills, and insufficient application-based teaching methods. The proposed solutions emphasize simplifying grammar instruction through real-life examples and visual aids, increasing regular writing exercises, and adopting interactive and constructive feedback instead of punitive correction. These strategies aim to enhance students' grammatical accuracy and overall writing competence.

Keywords: Arabic Writing, Corrective Strategy, Language Interference

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INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language holds significant importance at religious, cultural, and historical levels. As the language of the Qur'an, Arabic is revered by Muslims around the world and serves as an essential tool for interpreting religious texts (Salida dan Zulpina 2023). Beyond its religious function, Arabic has preserved a rich literary and intellectual heritage throughout centuries, marked by contributions from renowned poets, philosophers, and scientists, particularly during the Islamic Golden Age (Wahab dan Hakki 2022). In the

modern world, Arabic remains one of the most widely spoken languages globally and is officially recognized in numerous countries, symbolizing both cultural identity and civilizational unity across the Arab and Islamic world (Bakalla 2023).

Language plays a central role in shaping human cognition, communication, and identity. In Indonesia—home to the world's largest Muslim population—Arabic assumes a particularly vital role, especially within Islamic educational institutions (Aziza dan Muliansyah 2020). Here, the study of Arabic is more than linguistic training; it is a gateway to religious understanding, cultural integration, and intellectual development (Hajar dan Qohar 2024). Arabic is taught from early levels in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to equip students with the linguistic competence necessary to access primary religious sources, including the Qur'an and Hadith. Among the key areas in Arabic pedagogy are *nahw* (syntax) and *ṣarf* (morphology), which form the foundational tools for correct reading, comprehension, and expression (Zuhriah 2018).

Despite its importance, teaching and learning Arabic grammar and morphology remain challenging. Many students, especially non-native speakers, struggle with grammatical structures and morphological transformations that result in written expression errors. For example, they might confuse grammatical cases (nominative, accusative, genitive) or improperly conjugate verbs, leading to miscommunication or even distortion of intended meanings. (2010 حمانة). This becomes particularly problematic in the context of ta 'bīr kitābī (written expression), where correct syntax and verb conjugation are crucial for clarity and coherence. Errors such as mismatching subject-verb agreement, incorrect case endings, or misused pronouns are frequently observed, indicating fundamental gaps in students' understanding of Arabic grammar (Suhardi et al. 2023).

This study investigates grammatical errors in the written expression of beginner-level students at Ma'had Hidayatullah Batu, a well-known Arabic language and Islamic institution in Indonesia. The research focuses specifically on analyzing the types and patterns of *nahwī* (syntactic) errors that occur in students' writing tasks. While there has been substantial research on second language acquisition and error analysis in general, studies focusing on syntactic errors in Arabic writing among Indonesian students remain relatively limited. A review of existing literature, including recent works in high-impact journals, reveals that while there is a growing body of research on Arabic L2 learners, few have combined in-depth linguistic analysis with actual student writing samples in Indonesian contexts (Fitria, Maliyanah, dan Sabila 2024).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on integrating error analysis with pedagogical feedback, drawing upon both classical Arabic grammar theory and modern teaching methodologies. By categorizing students' mistakes—such as nominal sentence errors, verb-subject agreement, prepositional misusage, and pronoun mismatches—and analyzing their frequency and causes, this study seeks to provide data-driven insights for curriculum improvement and teacher strategies. This combination of empirical data with pedagogical implications not only contributes to the field of Arabic language education but also supports evidence-based Arabic instruction tailored to the needs of non-native speakers in Southeast Asia (Syafei, Fauziah, dan Azizah 2022).

Therefore, this study poses the following main research question: What are the most common types and patterns of grammatical errors in the written expression of beginner Arabic learners at Ma'had Hidayatullah Batu, and how can their analysis enhance teaching strategies? In addressing this question, the study adopts a qualitative-descriptive method combined with error taxonomy adapted from linguistic error analysis frameworks. The findings are expected to contribute to curriculum design, teacher training, and improved student outcomes in Arabic writing skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze grammatical errors found in the written expression of second-year students at the Hidayatullah Islamic Institute, Batu, East Java. The research is conducted in a natural setting and focuses on identifying and categorizing various types of grammatical errors, exploring their underlying causes, and proposing relevant solutions. This approach allows for an in-depth interpretation of linguistic phenomena based on detailed observation and descriptive analysis (Sugiyono 2018).

Data sources include both primary and secondary materials. The primary data consist of student-written compositions and interviews with students, instructors, and academic supervisors involved in teaching written expression. These sources help to uncover common grammatical issues and the reasons behind them. Secondary data include textbooks, grammar references, previous studies on grammatical errors, and academic reports, which provide a comparative framework and support for the findings.

Data collection methods involve observation, interviews, and documentation. Through observation, the researcher monitors writing classes and student performance. Interviews are conducted to gather insights from teachers and students regarding grammatical challenges and teaching strategies. Documentation, such as student essays and grammar references, supports the verification and analysis of errors found (Gunawan 2013).

The research instruments include the researcher as the main tool for interpreting data, alongside student exam papers, academic records, and a structured interview guide designed to explore the causes of grammatical errors and evaluate instructional methods.

Finally, data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model: data are collected, reduced to focus on relevant findings, displayed through descriptive analysis, and interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions about the nature of students' grammatical errors and how they may be addressed in teaching.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study conducted at the Al-Hidayatullah Institute in Batu analyzed the grammatical errors found in the written expressions of second-level students. The researcher identified four major categories of recurring grammatical mistakes: errors in i' $r\bar{a}b$ (inflection), descriptive constructions (adjective-noun agreement), pronoun usage, and genitive constructions ($id\bar{a}fah$).

Firstly, $i'r\bar{a}b$ errors were prevalent, involving incorrect word endings due to misunderstanding of case roles, such as nominative, accusative, and genitive. For instance, students often failed to match verb subjects with proper gender or number and misused prepositions with the wrong case endings. These mistakes revealed a lack of contextual understanding of syntactic rules, despite memorization of grammar formulas (Hamzah dan Sapar 2022).

No.	Type of Error	Grammatical Error Example	Description of the Error
1	I'rāb (Inflection)	أَنا أُحِبُّ أَصْدِقائي ومُعَلِّمونَ	Failure to distinguish between the accusative and nominative forms of the sound masculine plural.

The table presents an example of a grammatical error found in the writing of second-level students at the Al-Hidayatullah Institute in Batu, specifically in the area of i'rāb (inflection), which concerns the correct use of grammatical case endings in Arabic. The sentence "أَنَا أُحِبُ أَصُدِقائي ومُعَلِّمون" ("I love my friends and teachers") contains an error in the word "مُعَلِّمون" (teachers), which is incorrectly in the nominative case (marked by "مُعَلِّمون") instead of the accusative case, as required by the verb "أُحِبُ (I love), which takes a direct object. The correct form should be "مُعَلِّميً" to match the accusative case used for direct objects, as seen in "أصدقائي" (my friends). This kind of tabulated grammatical analysis is valuable for identifying common error patterns among students and can help inform more targeted teaching strategies and curriculum development.

Secondly, In descriptive construction (al-tarkīb al-waṣfī) links an adjective (na 't) with a noun (man 'ūt), requiring full agreement between them in terms of definiteness or indefiniteness, number, gender, and case. Ibn Hishām stated: "The adjective must agree with the noun it describes in four aspects: i 'rāb, definiteness or indefiniteness, number (singular, dual, plural), and gender."The analysis revealed that some students fail to observe these rules. For example: "مُنوفٌ "خيرة" Here, the adjective "مُنوفٌ "غيرة" is in the accusative case, while the noun "صُنوفٌ "مُنوفٌ " is nominative. The correct form is "صُنوفٌ ".Another example: "مُنوفٌ " to ensure agreement in gender and case (Hafizh dan Ridlo 2024).

These errors indicate that students often neglect the syntactic rules governing descriptive constructions, leading to ambiguity or structural distortion in meaning.

Table 2. Grammatical Error Example Descriptive Construction (al-tarkīb al-wasfī)

No.	Type of Error	Grammatical Error Example	Description of the Error
2	Descriptive Construction	صُفوفٌ كَثيرًا	The adjective "کثیرًا" is in the accusative case and does not agree with the noun "صُفوف" in

(al-tarkīb al-	gender, number, and case. The correct form
waṣfī)	is "صُفوفٌ كثيرةٌ".

This table illustrates a common grammatical error made by second-level students at the Al-Hidayatullah Institute, specifically in descriptive constructions involving adjective-noun agreement. The example given is the incorrect phrase "مُفُوفٌ كثيرًا" ("rows many"), where the adjective "كثيرًا" is mistakenly in the accusative case and does not agree in gender, number, or case with the noun "مُنُوفٌ"," which is nominative plural feminine. According to Arabic grammar rules, adjectives must fully match the nouns they describe, so the correct form should be "مُنُوفٌ كثيرةً"." This example highlights how students often fail to apply proper agreement rules, leading to syntactic errors that affect clarity and grammatical accuracy in their writing.

Thirdly, Pronouns (damā'ir) are words that refer to the speaker, the listener, or the absent third party. They often replace a previously mentioned noun or an implied subject. 'Abbās Ḥassān defined a pronoun as: "A noun used to refer to the speaker, the addressee, or the absent, and it can be either explicit or implicit.". Students often confused detached and attached pronouns, producing grammatically incorrect phrases. An example includes using "i" (I) instead of the correct attached form "" in a subordinate clause (Darwis 2022).

Table 3. Grammatical Error Example Descriptive Construction (al-tarkīb al-waṣfī)

No.	Type of	Grammatical	Description of the Error
	Error	Error Example	
3	Pronoun Usage (damā'ir)	أُمِّي يُجَهِّزُ الفُطُورَ	The verb "يُجِيُّر" is in the masculine singular form, while the subject "أُتِي" is a feminine noun. Therefore, the verb should agree with the subject and be conjugated in the feminine form: "يُحْبِرُ".

This table presents an example of a pronoun usage error made by second-level students at the Al-Hidayatullah Institute. The first column shows the entry number, which is 3. The second column identifies the type of error as "Pronoun Usage," focusing on mistakes related to pronouns and their agreement with verbs. The third column displays the incorrect sentence written by the student: "أَتِي يُجُهِرُ الفُطُورُ" ("My mother prepares breakfast"). The error lies in the verb "يُجِهُرُ" which is conjugated in the masculine singular form, while the subject "أَتِي "(my mother) is feminine. According to Arabic grammar rules, the verb must agree in gender with its subject, so the correct form of the verb should be "يُجَوِّدُ". This example highlights a common mistake where students fail to match verb conjugations with the gender of the subject, which is crucial for grammatical accuracy and clarity in Arabic.

Lastly, *idāfah* construction errors revealed a lack of understanding in linking nouns properly. Students frequently added the definite article "al-" incorrectly or misapplied case endings. These structural errors often disrupted the intended possessive or descriptive meaning (Baharum dan Ibrahim 2020).

	Table 4. Grammatical Error Example Descriptive Construction (<i>Iḍāfah</i>)			
No.	Type of Error	Grammatical	Description of the Error	
		Error Example		
3	Genitive	أُسَاعِدُ أَبِي فِي التَّنْظِيفِ	The phrase "التنظيف الحديقة" is not a correct iḍāfah	
	Construction	الحَدِيقَةِ	(genitive) construction because "الحديقة should	
	(Iḍāfah)		be in the genitive case as the second term	
			"التَّنْظِيفِ الحَدِيقَةِ" It must be. (مضاف إليه)	

This table row highlights a grammatical error involving the genitive construction (iḍāfah) in Arabic, where two nouns are linked to express possession or specification. The example sentence "أَسَاعِدُ أَبِي فِي التَّنْظِيفِ الحَدِيقَة" contains the incorrect phrase "الحديقة" where the second noun "الحديقة" is not properly marked with the genitive case ending (majrūr) as required in an iḍāfah structure. The correct form is "الحديقة", with "التنظيفِ الحديقة" in the genitive case to correctly link it to "المتنظيف الحديقة" (cleaning), meaning "the cleaning of the garden." This error reflects a misunderstanding of Arabic syntax rules regarding noun relationships and case endings, and correcting it helps students produce grammatically accurate and natural expressions.

The causes of grammatical errors in the written expression of second-level students at Al-Hidayatullah Higher Institute Batu can be broadly divided into student-related and teacher-related factors. From interviews with an Arabic language instructor and several students, it was found that students' weak theoretical understanding of grammar rules is a primary cause. Many students memorize grammar superficially without grasping the context or application, leading to frequent mistakes like confusing case endings. Additionally, students have limited opportunities to practice writing outside class, which hinders their ability to internalize and apply grammatical concepts effectively(Agussalim et al. 2023).

Another significant student-related factor is negligence in applying diacritical marks and focusing on grammatical accuracy. Some students prioritize conveying general meaning over correct grammar, often writing hastily and without reviewing their work, especially during tests. This habit results in frequent errors despite clear communication, contradicting the Arabic language's emphasis on precision. Moreover, linguistic interference from Indonesian also affects students' Arabic writing, as they tend to translate directly from Indonesian structures into Arabic, causing errors in word order, sentence types, and the use of conjunctions .

On the teacher's side, limited instructional time dedicated to grammar hampers effective learning. Due to the few weekly sessions available, teachers must rush through material, leaving little room for detailed explanations or practical exercises. This time constraint especially affects students who need gradual and example-based learning, preventing meaningful practice such as writing exercises or presentations. Furthermore, the reliance on traditional teaching methods—mostly lectures and direct explanations without interactive activities—makes lessons less engaging and harder for students to comprehend (Nurbayan, Nurbayan, dan Falah 2020).

Finally, the curriculum's heavy emphasis on memorization and translation at the expense of free writing contributes to students' grammatical weaknesses. While memorizing rules and vocabulary is important, neglecting writing practice limits students' ability to use grammar in real communication. As noted by the instructor, the current program does not sufficiently encourage students to produce original written work, which restricts their practical application of grammatical knowledge and reduces them to passive language learners rather than active users.

Based on the analysis of grammatical errors and their causes, several practical solutions are proposed to improve the written expression of second-level students at Al-Hidayatullah Islamic Institute, Batu. First, simplifying grammar instruction by using motivational and varied teaching strategies can significantly enhance student understanding and engagement. Incorporating tools such as mind maps, visual aids, relatable examples, and grammar games helps make abstract rules more accessible and enjoyable. This approach transforms grammar from rigid rules into functional tools for communication, aligning lessons with students' cognitive abilities and daily experiences (Fadillah et al. 2024).

Second, increasing both in-class and out-of-class writing practice is essential to help students apply grammatical rules effectively. Regular writing exercises, such as journaling or assignments, enable students to identify and correct their mistakes through practice, which has shown to improve their writing skills over time. Consistent practice reinforces grammar concepts and boosts students' confidence in using Arabic accurately (Hervina dan Isman 2022).

Third, enhancing correction and feedback techniques by providing constructive and explanatory responses rather than merely pointing out errors encourages deeper learning. Feedback that involves students in understanding their mistakes and offers motivational support helps develop their self-correction abilities and maintains their interest in improving. This approach not only corrects errors but also fosters a positive learning environment where students feel supported(Fitria, Maliyanah, dan Sabila 2024).

Finally, the study's findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of addressing both student-related and teacher-related factors in reducing grammatical errors. Unlike earlier studies, this research highlights the specific influence of the mother tongue (Indonesian) on Arabic writing errors, adding a valuable linguistic perspective. The solutions call for integrated efforts involving curriculum development, diverse teaching methods, and fostering motivation, alongside modern tools and supportive environments that connect language learning to students' real-life contexts. These comprehensive efforts are vital for improving grammatical accuracy and overall writing competence.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that grammatical errors in the written expression of second-level students at Al-Hidayatullah Higher Institute, Batu, are caused not only by limited grammatical knowledge but also by educational, psychological, and contextual factors. Four main types of frequent errors were identified: case endings, descriptive mismatches, pronoun agreement, and idafa (genitive) structure mistakes. The main causes include poor

grammar comprehension, limited writing practice, lack of attention to accuracy, first-language interference, limited instructional time, and traditional teaching methods focused on memorization rather than application. To address these issues, the study recommends using real-life examples, visual aids, consistent writing practice, and constructive feedback techniques. These strategies can help students improve their grammar skills and reduce recurring errors effectively.

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