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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Surface Structure Taxonomy on Journal Texts: The Case of Filipino ESL Learners**

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**ABSTRACT**

Errors in the subject-verb agreement are the most common problems among elementary learners in an English as Second Language (ESL) class. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the types of errors committed by the twelve (12) Grade 6 pupils in Hadiyyah International School, Marawi City, Philippines, and the most prevalent errors of the participants. The study employed a descriptive research design that explored the subject-verb agreement errors in the participants' two-month written journal. Using Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy, these errors were categorized as Omission, Addition, Misordering, and Misformation. Findings show that 198 errors were found and that four types of errors were identified: Omission (12.5%), Addition (11.5%), Misordering (3%), and Misformation (73%). The study reveals that the most prevalent error committed by the participants is misformation. Moreover, the researcher discovered simpler sub-types of these errors. This study concludes that it is possible for the learners to commit multiple errors in a sentence, as reflected in the current study. These results suggest a call for language teachers to systematically diagnose their learners and revisit their teaching approach that corresponds to the learner's needs. Effective methods in teaching grammar, especially at the elementary level, should be practised by language teachers to prevent fossilization and the difficulty of un-learning the learner's prior wrong perception of the grammatical rules.

**KEYWORDS**

Error analysis, subject-verb agreement, Surface Strategy Taxonomy

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### **1. Introduction**

Learning the English language involves the four core language skills, which are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Undeniably, writing has been the weakness of second language (L2) learners considering that it is a productive skill. In fact, according to Nik, Hamzah and Hasbollah (2010), it is the most difficult skill that needs to be mastered in contrast to other language skills. This is also evident in the written performance of pupils at the intermediate level; they find it difficult to master the basics of writing, specifically grammar. In fact, achieving grammatically correct and error-free written output may be difficult for graders. It is indeed unavoidable (Yahya, Ishak, Zainal, Faghat, & Yahaya, 2012). Burt and Dulay (1982) highlighted that committing an error is the product of the deviated principle of learners on grammar rules, specifically on subject-verb agreement. Its rules have been introduced at the early education stage; however, this remains a problem among learners (Murcia & Freeman, 1983, as cited in Nayan & Jusoff, 2009).

Analyzing the agreement of subject and verb errors of the learners is important because it reveals the students' proficiency. Hence, the learners should comprehend the sensitivity of grammar (Muliati, Syarif, & Jufrizal 2017). One way is to diagnose and assess the learners' knowledge of grammar. As observed by the researcher in her own English class, the learners commit erroneous sentences, specifically the subject-verb agreement, during the writing activities. This study, as a form of evaluation, will help the pupils in improving their grammatical competence in writing compositions. Also, it will provide insights to the researcher as their teacher in selecting effective teaching strategies in teaching subject-verb agreement and grammar at large. Thus, the researcher aimed to investigate the subject-verb agreement errors of the Grade 6 pupils from their two-month journal. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the subject-verb agreement errors of the participants based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy?
2. What is the most prevalent subject-verb agreement error of the participants?

## 2. Literature Review

It is important to highlight the theoretical foundations of grammatical errors. In the classic theory of Chomsky (1965, as cited in Muliati, Syarif & Jufrizal, 2017), he categorized errors into performance error and competence error. The performance errors are caused by external causes like fatigue and carelessness of the learners, although he/she has knowledge of the grammar. Meanwhile, if the error is rooted in learners' less mastery of the grammar, this refers to competence errors. In addition, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) have different ways of categorizing these errors, which are the linguistic category, surface strategy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. This study focused on the surface strategy taxonomy. As cited by Sychandone (2016), James (1998) states that the difference between the erroneous version of learners from the presumed target version is the basis of surface strategy taxonomy. It further involves the omission of a word or the absence of an item; addition of an item that should not be present; misordering or the incorrect placement of word(s); and misformation or the incorrect form of morpheme used in a structure which makes the sentence ungrammatical. These types of errors have two general sources, which are the interference of the first language of the learners and the learned structure of the target language instilled in their minds. Specifically, some sources of errors are language transfer, intra-lingual interference (overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, semantic errors such as building false concepts/systems), and intra-lingual/development errors (Richard, 1974).

Some previous studies probed the errors in subject-verb agreement based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy which includes the study of Anantri (2017). The study analyzed the 107 erroneous sentences identified from the narrative writing of 37 students. The study reveals that the most type of error contributed is misformation. She explained that students did not get the production strategies in interpreting the rule of the sentence form. Similarly, Noori, Alshamary and Yasin (2015) investigated the frequency of subject-verb agreement errors among thirty (30) students. It was found that the verb "be" was the most contributor to the errors in which interlingual and intralingual were the main causes of such errors. In addition, Susanto (2016) explored the types of errors identified in the 47 written works of the students. It sought to find out the possible causes of these errors. Results show that omission was the most prevalent type of error committed by the students because of the following reasons: running out of time and panicking; students' lack of knowledge of grammar; too much dependence on computer's autocorrect; lack of focusing on grammar. Students focus more on the content rather than its grammar. Moreover, Chele (2015) conducted an analysis of subject-verb agreement errors in 55 scripts of the participants. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that subject-verb agreement errors are increased by linguistic environments such as; post modified subject, the relative pronoun 'which', collective noun, reversed order or 'there' + verb construction, indefinite pronoun and nouns after the verb. The paper, therefore, concludes that due to carelessness and/ or stress, students make performance errors.

## 3. Methodology

The Grade 6 pupils of Hadiyyah International School in Marawi City, Philippines, were the participants in the study. All the Grade 6 pupils in one section, which comprises twelve (12) pupils during the school year 2017-2018, were considered as the subject of the study. Furthermore, this study employed a descriptive research design. The research instruments include the two-month journal of each participant. They were instructed to write their daily entry in their journal for two months which took into consideration the use of proper grammar like subject-verb agreement.

The study followed the procedure suggested by Corder (1967) for the analysis of errors in an agreement between subject and verb. It suggests five steps which are: a collection of write-ups of language learners, identification of errors in their written outputs, description of errors, explanation of errors and evaluation of errors. Prior to the collection, the researcher, as the English teacher of the participants in the said school, required all the pupils to write a journal of their everyday activities at home, in school, or any topic they wanted to include in their journal. This journal was done for two months only. Moreover, the researcher collected their portfolio, which includes all their assessments (quizzes, assignments, examinations, and writing activities) in their English subject.

The collected data from the instruments were analyzed based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which is categorized into four: Omission, Addition, Misordering, and Misformation. All the errors of the participants are also categorized into their sub-types. Moreover, the frequency of the error type was also computed by counting all the errors in each type and then dividing it by the number of all frequencies of types of errors. Its result is multiplied by 100% to get its percentage.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The following data presents the identification of the subject-verb agreement errors of the pupils based on Dulay's Surface Strategy Taxonomy which has four categories: Omission, Addition, Misordering, and Misformation. Each category is subdivided depending on the kind of errors committed by the pupils.

Table 1. Omission Error

Omission Error	Sentences
<b>Omission of main verb</b>	1. (P1) I don't * $\emptyset$ what to do. 2. (P2) I * $\emptyset$ off the volume. 3. (P2) They * $\emptyset$ on all the lights. 4. (P2) I took my phone out and * $\emptyset$ on my wif. 5. (P2) Angad * $\emptyset$ off his phone. 6. (P2) I * $\emptyset$ off my phone and watch the kids.
<b>Omission of auxiliary verb</b>	7. (P1) They * $\emptyset$ been treating me like a garbage. 8. (P1) They * $\emptyset$ always abusing and calling me useless. 9. (P6) She * $\emptyset$ always making me laugh. 10. (P2) Our exercise will * $\emptyset$ moved next week. 11. (P7) We * $\emptyset$ reviewing. 12. (P9) My heart * $\emptyset$ been broken. 13. (P11) Teacher Aina * $\emptyset$ discussing now. 14. (P11) The pupil * $\emptyset$ praying. 15. (P11) The pupil * $\emptyset$ praying now. 16. (P11) He * $\emptyset$ going in Manila.
<b>Omission of verb</b>	17. (P1) My brother * $\emptyset$ that I was an orphan, but I didn't believe him. 18. (P1) The house * $\emptyset$ not that messy. 19. (P2) This * $\emptyset$ what I'm doing now. 20. (P4) Few of them * $\emptyset$ war freak. 21. (P7) My brother * $\emptyset$ missing. 22. (P7) Someone * $\emptyset$ in the door. 23. (P8) You * $\emptyset$ very smart and pretty/beautiful teacher.

Note: \* $\emptyset$  - refers to the omitted words in the sentence

Table 1 presents the omission error, which was categorized by the researcher into three: omission of the main verb, auxiliary verb, and verbs used in the sentences. Omission refers to the absence of a word in the sentence, which makes it ungrammatical based on the subject-verb agreement rules. Based on the table, twenty-three (23) errors were accounted for. As noticed, the P2 omits the main verb "turn" in almost sentences that have prepositions "off" and "on". It may imply that P2 assumed that these prepositions are verbs that agree with the subject. This phenomenon can be explained by the verbal language of the participant. Sometimes, Filipinos tend to code-switch using English in their own language or the other way around. Instead of uttering the complete phrasal verbs, they omit the main verb, which makes the preposition the action word in the sentence. As a result, it affects the writing competence of the learners. In P2's case, it seems that this error became fossilized because of its reoccurrence in some of the entries in her journal. According to Richard (2008), fossilized errors are permanent and stable. Lakshmann and Selinger (2001) explained that whenever learners learn a new language, they cannot prevent themselves from committing fossilized errors. It happens because of the interlanguage process.

Moreover, among the omitted auxiliary verbs, "is" and "are" are mostly omitted, especially in the sentences of P11. He may think that the main verb is enough to write an effective sentence. This also happens in the omission of the verb. Participants omit the linking verbs in the sentences. It is possibly caused by the carelessness of the learners, which according to Meilia and Ngadiso (2013), closely relates to learners' lack of motivation in writing. In addition, the omission of verbs or any auxiliary verbs may lead to misunderstanding the message of the writer.

The study of Susanto (2016) reveals that omission was the most prevalent type of error committed by the students because they run out of time and they focus more on the content rather than its grammar. Among the participants, P2 has the highest number of omission errors which reflects in sentences 1 to 6 and others.

Table 2. Addition Error

Addition Error	Sentences
<b>Addition of suffix</b>	1. (P1) Am I useless when I *cooker riced to my family? 2. (P1) My sister will *starved to death. 3. (P1) My sister will *starved to death.
<b>Addition of another verb</b>	4. (P1) Mother will *arrived tomorrow. 5. (P4) I*'m was very shocked of what she said. 6. (P4) I*'m was alone eating my lunch. 7. (P4) When I*'m was in DC, I can't forget the moment when I gave a gift to my three-year crush. 8. (P4) When I*'m was a child, I have many experiences like watching horror movies. 9. (P4) When I*'m was kinder, I don't know how to write. 10. (P4) When I*'m was Grade 1, teachers see my skills in reading and writing. 11. (P4) I*'m was the top 1 in class. 12. (P4) When I*'m was in Grade 4, I have no top because of my bad influence friends. 13. (P4) It's *was my very boring new year. 14. (P7) She's *is Imie. 15. (P7) The bus has *been come. 16. (P7) The bus *was arrive. 17. (P8) I said *was "It was good to be little." 18. (P8) Practice *is makes you perfect. 19. (P9) We *get chat.

Note: \* - refers to the added word in the sentence

Table 2 shows the second category of errors which is addition. Addition refers to any item or unit added to the sentence that makes the sentence ungrammatical based on the subject verb agreement rules. It is sub-categorized into two: addition of suffix and addition of another verb. The table presents nineteen (19) errors from adding word(s) or units in the sentences. As can be seen, it is only P1 commits error in adding units. In simple future tense, the auxiliary verb "will" should be followed by a base form of the verb, however, in P1's case, he adds "-d" which makes the sentences erroneous. This problem occurs because of ignorance of rule restriction in which learners apply rules to contexts to which they do not apply (Richards, 197).

Some participants also add another verb to the existing verb in the sentence. For example, the sentence of P8 states that "Practice is makes you perfect." From this, it can be deciphered that P8 adds linking verb to the action verb. Thus, it becomes ungrammatical. Another case is that the linking verb is added again to the linking verb that is used as a verb in the sentence. Surprisingly, P4 contributes to this addition because almost all the sentences that have an additional verb belong to her. The sentences from numbers 5 to 13 have two linking verbs in each sentence. For example, "I'm was alone eating my lunch." As noticed, the usage of "am" and "was" occurs in almost every Journal entry of P4, which makes her the highest contributor of addition error. It may imply that this error becomes fossilized.

Table 3. Misordering

Misordering	Sentence
	1. (P1) Everybody saying is that fighting to girls is bad.

As can be seen, Table 3 shows the misordering of words in the sentence that make the sentence ungrammatical. Misordering refers to the incorrect placement of words in a sentence. P1 misordered the words "is" and "saying" instead of "is saying". The reason for it can possibly be the same with what Chele (2015) claims that carelessness and lack of habitual proofreading of one's work lead to errors. Anantri's (2017) study reveals that there is no identified misordering error among the participants. It implies that second language learners minimally misordered their sentences.

Table 4 Misformation Error

Misformation Error	Sentence
Misformation of singular verb	1. (P2) Teacher <i>*talk</i> to us.
	2. (P2) Someone <i>*knock</i> .
	3. (P2) I go upstairs and ask Ate Janny if she <i>*have</i> movies.
	4. (P2) Ate Janny <i>*ask</i> "What are you going to share?"
	5. (P2) My mother <i>*knock</i> the door.
	6. (P2) My cousin <i>*open</i> it.
	7. (P2) My mother always <i>*see</i> her.
	8. (P2) When she <i>*talk</i> , they hear it.
	9. (P2) Teacher <i>*discuss</i> .
	10. (P2) She <i>*kiss</i> someone.
	11. (P2) Sir Ed <i>*knock</i> .
	12. (P2) After a minute, a high school student <i>*knock</i> .
	13. (P3) He always <i>*use</i> the right gun to kill.
	14. (P4) My friend or my bestfriend <i>*go</i> to me.
	15. (P4) The principal <i>*help</i> me.
	16. (P4) She always <i>*say</i> that "Helmia your so O.A."
	17. (P4) She <i>*help</i> me in my studies.
	18. (P4) He <i>*give</i> me a gift.
	19. (P4) He <i>*command</i> air strikes.
	20. (P4) He <i>*wreak</i> Marawi.
	21. (P4) She <i>*have</i> a braces.
	22. (P4) He <i>*have</i> a girlfriend.
	23. (P4) I don't care if he <i>*have</i> a girlfriend at least he treat me like his sister.
	24. (P4) Teacher Aina <i>*were</i> discussing.
	25. (P5) The other <i>*say</i> "they don't have lunch boxes."
	26. (P6) My best friend Laliya <i>*laugh</i> .
	27. (P6) Shanna <i>*have</i> part in our event.
	28. (P6) She <i>*hate</i> BTS.
	29. (P6) Every woman <i>*like</i> him because of his looks.
	30. (P6) She really <i>*love</i> Gray.
	31. (P6) I think Gray <i>*like</i> Lucy Heartfeallia.
	32. (P6) Farha <i>*go</i> to me and touch my forehead.
	33. (P6) She <i>*report</i> it to the teacher.
	34. (P6) Farha <i>*touch</i> my hand.
	35. (P6) Farha <i>*explain</i> what happen.
	36. (P6) The nurse <i>*get</i> a thermometer.
	37. (P6) The thermometer <i>*start</i> making some noise.
	38. (P6) Teacher Hata <i>*warn</i> us not become too close to the boys.
	39. (P6) She <i>*act</i> strict.
	40. (P6) I know that he <i>*deserve</i> it.
	41. (P6) The doctor <i>*ask</i> me if when did my fever start.
	42. (P7) He <i>*teach</i> us Arabic.
	43. (P7) She <i>*teach</i> us AP.
	44. (P7) Sis <i>*command</i> me to cook rice.
	45. (P7) The bus <i>*arrive</i> .
	46. (P7) Maam Hata <i>*tell</i> us.
	47. (P8) My mother <i>*say</i> , "Bady, don't cry."
	48. (P8) My big brother <i>*take</i> the scarf.
	49. (P8) My sister <i>*go</i> to my father.
	50. (P9) No one <i>*trust</i> me.
	51. (P9) My father <i>*punish</i> me for being late.
	52. (P9) Maam Hata <i>*text</i> me to pay and to bring my picture.
	53. (P10) He <i>*guide</i> us to the right path.

**Misformation of plural verb**

54. (P12) He *\*visit* my aunt.
55. (P1) Teacher Ainah *\*discuss* her lesson everyday.
56. (P1) All the stores *\*is* closed.
57. (P1) Powers *\*is* not real.
58. (P1) The *\*neighbors* was really annoying.
59. (P1) My mother and my father *\*is* going home.
60. (P2) We *\*was* talking about Tazeem.
61. (P2) My mother and my father *\*is* going out.
62. (P2) I and Usman *\*is* finding our other classmates.
63. (P2) My grandmother and my grandfather *\*was* walking out.
64. (P2) What a bad day because Usman and Mala *\*is* not our friends anymore.
65. (P2) Our two cousins *\*was* scared.
66. (P4) My enemies always *\*backbites* me.
67. (P4) The teachers of DC *\*is* dead.
68. (P4) The students *\*is* praying.
69. (P4) The students *\*has* prayed.
70. (P5) When Helmia arrived, she said that she and Shanna *\*was* just in the prayer room.
71. (P5) I and Shanna *\*is* the only one who ate lunch.
72. (P6) There *\*is* two persons.
73. (P6) My favorite characters in fairy tale *\*is* Natsu, Gray, Erza, Lucy, Wendy, Charles, and Happy.
74. (P7) They *\*was* shocked about my girl.
75. (P9) Me and my sister *\*is* in the tent.
76. (P10) The students *\*is* praying now.
77. (P10) The students *\*was* praying Asr the whole afternoon yesterday.

**Misformation of tense of verbs**

78. (P1) I *\*took* a bath; *\*iron* my clothes; and *\*eat* bread.
79. (P1) Today *\*was* the meeting of houses.
80. (P1) Today I *\*was* so sad.
81. (P2) Today *\*was* a good day.
82. (P5) Today *\*was* so exhausting but fun.
83. (P4) Today *\*was* nothing special.
84. (P5) We *\*painted* some boxes, *\*draw* some horse, and *\*designing* the room as much as we could.
85. (P6) I *\*was* nervous even though I'm not one of them.
86. (P6) She *\*tell* me something that I didn't understand.
87. (P9) Teacher Aina *\*discuss* English before we played a game.
88. (P11) Teacher Aina *\*discuss* yesterday.
89. (P11) Teacher Aina *\*was* discuss the whole night yesterday.

**Misformation of spelling**

90. (P11) The pupil *\*pray* yesterday.
91. (P1) I *\*wook* up around 6:00.
92. (P1) I *\*listned* some of the music.
93. (P2) She *\*right* lecture and write pointers.
94. (P2) We ran there and then we *\*stoped*.
95. (P3) I *\*mess* the past because I *\*mess* my classmate, my teachers, and my crush.
96. (P3) We *\*stade* in Iligan for 2 months.
97. (P3) We *\*staid* in MSU for almost 4 months.
98. (P3) My crush *\*stade* in Manila to learn.
99. (P3) We *\*stayd* there in one day.
100. (P3) I and my brothers are *\*craying*.
101. (P3) We *\*arraived* in the school.
102. (P3) He *\*actes* as the main character.
103. (P6) I didn't *\*wright* the paper.
104. (P6) He *\*begain* pulling me.

	105. (P6) It will <i>*grand</i> me 3 wishes.
	106. (P7) She <i>*anounts</i> the soccer players.
	107. (P7) I <i>*mess</i> him so much.
	108. (P7) I didn't <i>*aspect</i> to watch all day.
	109. (P7) We always <i>*atack</i> each other because I hate her.
	110. (P9) Farha <i>*startet</i> to talk about Tazeem.
<b>Misformation of contraction</b>	111. (P2) <i>*You'r</i> lying.
	112. (P2) <i>*Your</i> the best family in the world wide for me.
	113. (P2) <i>*Were</i> gonna pass this to teacher.
	114. (P2) I thought <i>*their</i> going to Iligan.
	115. (P2) I miss my mom and my father because <i>*their</i> going to Manila.
	116. (P3) At least my big brother <i>*know's</i> what to do.
	117. (P3) <i>*Were</i> the first to do the exam.
	118. (P4) Do I <i>*wan't</i> to die?
	119. (P4) They're not promoted because of <i>*they're</i> attitude.
	120. (P4) <i>*Your</i> very feeling.
	121. (P6) <i>*Its</i> done.
	122. (P6) <i>*Were</i> practicing volleyball.
	123. (P7) <i>*I'am</i> a player.
	124. (P7) They gave me Gatorade and <i>*its</i> fresh.
	125. (P8) <i>*Its</i> just like a sign for good teachers.
	126. (P11) <i>*Its</i> always give water.
<b>Misformation of main verb</b>	127. (P1) I didn't <i>*got</i> anything.
	128. (P1) I haven't <i>*know</i> that my friend stopped playing.
	129. (P2) We have <i>*arrive</i> to our destination.
	130. (P4) I was <i>*drop</i> in DC.
	131. (P8) I was <i>*slap</i> by my girlfriend.
<b>Misformation of term used</b>	132. (P6) They <i>*injection</i> me.
	133. (P7) What <i>*she's</i> name?
	134. (P8) My brother <i>*was</i> a tablet.

Meanwhile, there are 134 sentences that have errors based on misformation. The errors are divided into seven subcategories which include the misformation of singular verb, plural verb, tenses of verbs, spelling, contraction, main verb, and term used. As defined, subject-verb agreement means a singular subject must take with singular verb while plural subject must take plural verb (Straus, 2014). In the current study, the participants followed this general principle interchangeably as they committed 77 erroneous sentences that deal with a singular subject that take plural verb and plural subject that take a singular verb. The misformation of singular verb accounted 55 errors. The participants paired the noun with plural verb as of the case "*Teacher talk to us.*," "*The principal help me.*," etc. In the same way, subject pronouns like "she" and "he" are paired with plural verb. For instance, "*She help me in my studies.*," "*He visit my aunt.*" etc.

Few of the participants take the indefinite pronouns as plural in which they paired it with plural verbs like "*Someone knock.*" Still, it is ungrammatical based to the rules subject-verb agreement. But there are some indefinite pronouns that are singular or both singular and plural depending on how it is used in the sentence. Chele (2015) explained that indefinite pronouns are conceptually plural but grammatically singular.

Moreover, the participants were confused with compound subjects like "*My mother and my father is going home.*," "*When Helmia arrived, she said that she and Shanna was just in the prayer room.*" As the rule says, when two or more subjects joined by a conjunction "and" are considered plural and require a verb form without an "s" or a plural linking verb. However, in the case of the conjunction "or," "nor," "but", the verb must only agree with the subject closest to it. As observed in the sentence "*My friend or my bestfriend go to me.*," P4 takes the two nouns as both subjects that must agree with the verb. This is still ungrammatical.

Some sentences are unparallel which are categorized to the misformation of tense of verbs because of different tenses used in a sentence. Four (4) of the participants have the same error in terms of tense. The time expression "today" is partnered with the past form of verb while the time expression "yesterday" is paired with the present form of verb. These sentences are erroneous.

The researcher also considered the misformation of obviously misspelled verbs in each sentence. Some of the misspelled verbs are "mess" as for "miss"; "right, wright" as for "write"; "stade, stayd, staid" as for "stayed"; and others. As observed, P8 has the highest number of misspelled verbs. Other participants also are confused with the contraction of the subject and the verb like in the case of "you are", it is contracted as "you're". However, the data shows that some participants commit errors on it. For example, the "Its" in the sentence "Its done." instead of "It's done." Also, the "were" in the sentence "Were practicing volleyball" instead of "We're practicing volleyball." The P2 has the highest number of error in misformation of contraction.

Another is the misformation of main verb in which the learners commit errors in the main verb of the verb phrase. This case includes the failure to use the past participle in perfect tenses like "I haven't know that my friend stopped playing." instead of "I haven't known that my friend stopped playing." Also, it includes the failure to use the past participle in passive voice like "I was slap by my girlfriend." instead of "I was slapped by my girlfriend."

Finally, the misformation of term used refers to the usage of the wrong term in the sentence that makes the sentence ungrammatical. For example, P6's "They injection me." instead of "They inject me."; and P8's "My brother was a tablet." instead of "My brother has a tablet." The P6's wrong usage of "injection" can be explained that she may not know its function as verb by using the word "inject". Meanwhile, P8's error can be explained by Sychandone's (2016) claim that learner chose the wrong words because the characters of letters are similar.

In fact, P6 has the highest number of misformation error. These errors are caused by ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and semantic errors (Richards, 1971). Some learners may not know at all about the other subject-verb agreement rules, and some may know it but they apply it incompletely. However, the researcher who is at the same time their teacher has already discussed the rules. With this, it strongly caused by semantic errors such as building false concepts or faulty comprehension of the L2 and forgetfulness or carelessness of the application of rules. According to Chomsky (1965), carelessness is categorized as performance error. He furthered discussed that learners are careless although they have knowledge of the grammar. Meanwhile, if the error is rooted from learners' less mastery of the grammar, this refers to competence errors (Muliati, Syarif & Jufrizal, 2017).

Table 5. Multiple errors in a sentence

Types of Error	More than one error in a sentence
Omission of auxiliary verb Misformation of tense of verbs	1. (P2) I'm tired of crying but if I * <del>is</del> not cry *it's hurting my heart.
Misformation of spelling	2. (P6) They * <del>is</del> *toturing me to pass the entrance exam.
Omission of auxiliary verb	3. (P7) I *think I * <del>is</del> gonna die.
	4. (P7) We just * <del>is</del> *siting on the bus.
Addition of another verb Misformation of singular verb Misordering	5. (P1) My sister *is finally have recovered.
Misformation of spelling Addition of another verb	6. (P3) *I'm totally *mess her.
Misordering Misformation of tense of verb	7. (P1) I studied very hard because next week *is our exam.
Addition of another verb Misformation of singular verb Misordering	8. (P1) My sister *is finally have recovered.
Misordering Misformation of singular verb	9. (P2) My mother *wake up me.
Misformation of spelling Misordering	10. (P6) We *bursed our laugh out.



Misformation of spelling Misformation of singular verb	11. (P6) She always *role her eyes at me.
Misformation of contraction Misformation of spelling	12. (P6) *Lets *procide.

Surprisingly, the data shows 12 sentences that have multiple errors. Each sentence has two or more recognized errors. Three of the sentences have two same errors which are misformation of spelling and omission of auxiliary verb. One example is the sentence, "We just siting on the bus." instead of "We are just sitting on the bus." Also, the P3's sentence "I'm totally mess her." has errors misformation of spelling and addition of another verb. P3 misspelled the word "miss" into "mess" and added the linking verb "am" in the action verb.

Table 6. Frequency of errors from all the participants

Types of Error	Frequency	Total frequency	Percentage
Omission of main verb	6		
Omission of auxiliary verb	12	25	12.6 %
Omission of verb	7		
Addition of suffix	4	21	10.6 %
Addition of another verb	19		
Misordering	6	6	3 %
Misformation of singular verb	59		
Misformation of plural verb	22		
Misformation of tense of verb	15		
Misformation of spelling	25	146	73.7 %
Misformation of contraction	17		
Misformation of verb	5		
Misformation of term used	3		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>198</b>	

As can be seen, Table 6 presents the frequency of errors from all the participants. There are four types of errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. These errors are categorized by the researcher into sub-types depending on the erroneous sentences of the participants. Omission error is categorized into three: omission of main verb, auxiliary verb, and verb. Addition error has two categories namely omission of verb and suffix. Misordering has no other sub-types. While misformation has seven sub-types which are misformation of singular verb, plural verb, tense of verb, spelling, contraction, verb, and term used in the sentence. Furthermore, it shows that participants committed 12.6% of omission error; 10.6% of addition error; 3% of misordering error; and 73.7% of misformation error. It reveals that misformation error is the prevalent error among the erroneous sentences of the writing outputs of the participants. In addition, the current study has the same findings with Anantri's (2017) that misformation was the prevalent type of errors made by the participants.

## 5. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the types of errors committed by the twelve (12) Grade 6 pupils in Hadiyyah International School, Marawi City, Philippines, and the most prevalent errors of the participants. After thorough discussion and careful analysis of data, the researcher identifies 189 sentences that have subject-verb agreement errors. Some sentences have multiple errors resulting in 198 errors in totality. Thus, four types of errors are discovered which are Omission (12.6%), Addition (10.6%), Misordering (3%), and Misformation (73.7%). The researcher discovered simpler sub-types of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy which are the omission of the main verb, auxiliary verb and verb; addition of suffix and another suffix; misformation of singular verb, plural verb, tense of verb, spelling, contraction, verb, and term used. Some of its subtypes do not appear in other studies. The study reveals that the most prevalent error committed by the participants is misformation. These results suggest a call for language teachers to systematically diagnose their learners and revisit their teaching approach that corresponds to the learner's needs. Effective methods in teaching grammar especially in the elementary level, should be practiced by language teachers to prevent fossilization and the difficulty un-learning the learner's prior wrong perception of the grammatical rules. It is the role of

language teachers to provide corrective feedback to written outputs to reinforce the learning. It is even noteworthy to highlight that this grade level is considered as a crucial period of learning the basics of grammar among the ESL learners. The necessary competencies set for them should have been mastered upon entering junior high school. Future researchers should explore a more in-depth inquiry of this topic through conducting case studies with interviews and applying other taxonomies in error analysis to provide a clearer understanding of such errors.

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