

ERROR ANALYSIS IN STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXT WRITING: A STUDY OF PAPUAN EFL LEARNER

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji jenis dan sumber kesalahan dalam penulisan teks recount mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif yang didukung oleh data kuantitatif. Analisis difokuskan pada proses mengidentifikasi, mengklasifikasikan, dan menjelaskan kesalahan yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya sekitar 300 kesalahan yang dikategorikan kedalam kesalahan gramatikal (40%), sintaktis (23%), leksikal (15%), ejaan (13%), dan mekanik (9%). Kesalahan gramatikal merupakan yang paling dominan, terutama dalam penggunaan bentuk kata kerja, dan artikel. Kesalahan sintaktis berkaitan dengan struktur kalimat dan urutan kata, sedangkan kesalahan leksikal mencerminkan pemilihan kata yang kurang tepat serta pengaruh bahasa pertama. Penyebab lainnya disebabkan oleh *overgeneralization*. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pembelajaran yang lebih terfokus pada penggunaan *past tense*, struktur kalimat, dan pengayaan kosakata berbasis konteks, serta penerapan strategi revisi dan *self-editing* untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: analisis kesalahan, teks recount, linguistik terapan

Abstract

This study investigates the types and sources of errors in students' recount text writing. Using a qualitative descriptive design supported by quantitative data. The analysis focused on identifying, classifying, and explaining learners' errors. The findings reveal approximately 300 errors, categorized into grammatical (40%), syntactic (23%), lexical (15%), spelling (13%), and mechanics errors (9%). Grammatical errors were the most dominant, particularly in the misuse of verb forms, and articles. Syntactic errors involved sentence structure and word order, while lexical errors reflected inappropriate word choice and first language interference. Spelling and mechanics errors, though less frequent, still affected overall writing quality. Another caused by overgeneralization. The students should develop their linguistic competence. The study suggests the need for focused instruction on sentence structure, and contextual vocabulary, as well as the integration of revision and self-editing strategies to improve students' writing performance.

Keywords: error analysis, recount text, applied linguistics

1. Introduction

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most demanding skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, and communicative competence simultaneously. Unlike listening or speaking, writing involves generating ideas, organizing them into a coherent structure, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and applying grammatical rules accurately to communicate meaning effectively. This complexity makes writing particularly challenging for EFL learners, who must not only express their thoughts in a second language but also conform to the linguistic conventions of written English. Consequently, many learners continue to experience considerable difficulties in producing well-organized, grammatically accurate, and meaningful written texts (Yawiloeng, 2025).

Among the four language skills, writing is often regarded as the most difficult to master because it demands higher-order thinking skills, including planning, organizing, revising, and editing. Previous studies have consistently reported that EFL students encounter persistent problems in various aspects of writing, particularly grammar, sentence construction, vocabulary use, and text organization. Grammatical errors, such as incorrect verb forms, tense inconsistency, subject-verb disagreement, misuse of articles, and inappropriate prepositions, remain the most frequently occurring problems in students' written production (Mubarok & Budiono, 2022). In addition, lexical limitations, inappropriate

word choices, and literal translation from the learners' first language often reduce clarity and coherence, preventing students from communicating their intended meanings effectively (Setyowati, Benyamin, Karmina, & Sukmawan, 2025). These recurring problems indicate that many learners have not yet developed sufficient linguistic competence to produce accurate academic writing.

One of the most effective approaches to understanding these writing difficulties is Error Analysis (EA), a branch of Applied Linguistics that systematically identifies, classifies, and explains learners' language errors. Since its introduction by Corder (1967), error analysis has become an important framework for investigating second language acquisition because it provides valuable information about learners' interlanguage development. Unlike mistakes, which are temporary performance slips, errors reflect incomplete or developing knowledge of the target language. Therefore, to analyse the learners' errors allows researchers and teachers to identify specific areas of linguistic difficulty while revealing the cognitive processes involved in language learning. Recent studies have reaffirmed that error analysis not only diagnoses learners' weaknesses but also provides empirical evidence for designing more effective teaching materials, instructional strategies, and corrective feedback practices (Seddik, 2023).

Within EFL writing instruction, recount text represents one of the most fundamental genres taught at secondary schools and universities in Indonesia. A recount text requires learners to reconstruct and communicate past experiences through a chronological sequence of events while maintaining coherence and cohesion. To accomplish this task successfully, students must demonstrate mastery of the simple past tense, action verbs, temporal conjunctions, chronological sequencing, and appropriate vocabulary. Although recount writing appears relatively simple, previous research indicates that it presents considerable challenges for EFL learners. Students frequently experience difficulties in maintaining tense consistency, selecting correct verb forms, organizing events logically, and constructing grammatically accurate sentences, resulting in texts that lack clarity and coherence (Rahmani, 2023). These findings suggest that recount writing serves as an appropriate genre for investigating learners' grammatical and linguistic development.

Current research further demonstrates that learners' writing errors are systematic rather than accidental. Such errors often result from multiple sources, including first language interference, overgeneralization of target language rules, incomplete application of grammatical knowledge, false concepts hypothesized about English grammar, and limited exposure to authentic language input (Li & Han, 2025). These factors indicate that learners actively construct their own linguistic system during language acquisition. Consequently, the analysis of learners' errors should not merely focus on identifying incorrect forms but should also investigate the underlying causes of those errors to better understand learners' developmental processes and instructional needs.

Despite the growing body of literature on error analysis in EFL writing, relatively little attention has been paid to learners from geographically and linguistically diverse regions of Indonesia, particularly Papua. Papuan EFL learners often study English in multilingual environments where local indigenous languages and Bahasa Indonesia coexist as languages of daily communication. This multilingual context may influence English language acquisition differently from learners in other regions of Indonesia, especially regarding grammatical development, vocabulary selection, and sentence construction. Furthermore, educational disparities, limited access to English learning resources, varying instructional quality, and reduced opportunities for authentic English exposure may contribute to distinctive patterns of writing errors among Papuan students. Nevertheless, empirical evidence describing these characteristics remains limited.

Most previous studies on error analysis in Indonesia have concentrated on students from western and central regions of the country, while research involving Papuan university students is still scarce. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of the specific linguistic challenges experienced by Papuan EFL learners, particularly in producing recount texts. This gap limits educators' ability to develop instructional approaches that address learners' actual needs within the Papuan educational context. Investigating the error patterns produced by Papuan learners is therefore important not only for enriching the literature on error analysis but also for providing context-sensitive pedagogical implications for English language teaching in eastern Indonesia.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyse the types and sources of errors found in Papuan EFL learners' recount text writing. Specifically, the study identifies the dominant categories of writing errors and examines the underlying factors contributing to those errors. The findings are expected to contribute to the field of Applied Linguistics by extending current knowledge of learners'

interlanguage development in multilingual EFL contexts. In addition, the results are expected to provide English teachers with evidence-based insights for designing more effective writing instruction, developing targeted grammar and vocabulary interventions, and implementing appropriate feedback strategies to improve students' writing proficiency.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design supported by quantitative analysis to investigate the types and sources of errors in Papuan EFL learners' recount text writing. The qualitative approach was used to examine the nature and characteristics of the linguistic errors produced by the students, whereas the quantitative component was applied to calculate the frequency and distribution of each error category. Combining qualitative interpretation with quantitative measurement enabled a more comprehensive understanding of learners' writing performance by revealing not only the patterns of errors but also their relative occurrence. Such an approach has been widely adopted in recent error analysis studies because it provides both an in-depth description of learners' linguistic competence and empirical evidence to support pedagogical decision-making (Li & Han, 2025).

The data consisted of ten recount texts written by undergraduate EFL students. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their completion of a writing task requiring them to describe personal experiences. Recount texts were selected as the source of data because this genre requires students to employ the simple past tense, organize events chronologically, and use contextually appropriate vocabulary and cohesive devices. These linguistic characteristics make recount writing particularly suitable for identifying recurring grammatical, syntactic, lexical, and mechanical errors in students' written production (Nartiningrum, Rayuningtya, & Virgiyanti, 2021).

The data was collected through document analysis of students' written assignments. This method enabled the researchers to examine authentic examples of students' language production without influencing the writing process, thereby providing reliable evidence of learners' actual writing performance. Document analysis is widely recognized as an appropriate technique in error analysis research because it captures naturally occurring language use and allows researchers to identify systematic error patterns that reflect learners' interlanguage development. Recent studies have also confirmed that students' written texts constitute a valid and dependable source for investigating linguistic errors and second language acquisition processes.

The analysis was conducted by following a systematic error analysis framework adapted from contemporary studies in Applied Linguistics (Li & Han, 2025). Initially, all deviations from standard English usage were identified within the students' texts. Each error was subsequently classified according to its linguistic characteristics and then described to explain its form and structural features. The analysis was further extended to interpret the possible sources of the identified errors, including first language interference, overgeneralization of grammatical rules, and incomplete mastery of English language structures. Finally, the frequency of each error category was calculated to determine its relative occurrence and significance within the data set. This systematic procedure ensured that the analysis addressed not only the identification of linguistic errors but also their underlying causes and pedagogical implications.

To provide a comprehensive description of students' writing difficulties, the identified errors were classified using a linguistic taxonomy approach that categorizes errors according to their structural characteristics and communicative functions (Erviana & Kurniasih, 2024). The classification framework comprised five major categories: grammatical errors, including errors related to tense, verb forms, and articles; syntactic errors, involving sentence structure and word order; lexical errors, covering inappropriate word choice and collocation; spelling errors, referring to incorrect word formation and orthographic inaccuracies; and mechanical errors, including problems with capitalization, punctuation, and other writing conventions. This multidimensional classification framework is consistent with recent studies emphasizing that a comprehensive categorization of learner errors provides deeper insights into EFL students' writing difficulties and supports the development of more targeted instructional strategies (Latipa et al., 2026; Macías-Borrego, 2026).

3. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the error analysis conducted on the recount texts written by Papuan EFL learners. The analysis employed the Error Analysis framework to systematically identify, classify, and interpret the linguistic errors found in the students' written work. Within this framework, learner errors are regarded not merely as indicators of failure but as evidence of learners' developing interlanguage and their current level of second language proficiency. Each identified error was categorized according to its linguistic characteristics to provide a comprehensive description of the learners' writing performance and to reveal recurring patterns that characterize their use of English in recount writing.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings, the results are organized into five major categories of linguistic errors. The frequency and distribution of each error category are presented quantitatively and supported by qualitative explanations and representative examples drawn from the students' texts. A total of 300 errors were identified and classified into these five categories, with their distribution illustrated in Figure 1. This combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis enables a more in-depth examination of the learners' linguistic difficulties by demonstrating not only the prevalence of each error type but also the contexts in which the errors occurred. Consequently, the analysis offers a clearer picture of the linguistic features that continue to challenge Papuan EFL learners when composing recount texts.

Beyond describing the frequency of errors, the findings also provide valuable insights into the learners' second language development and the instructional needs that emerge from their writing performance. The dominance of particular error categories reflects the linguistic components that require greater pedagogical attention, while the overall error patterns contribute to a better understanding of learners' interlanguage development. Therefore, the results presented in this section serve not only as an empirical description of students' writing errors but also as a basis for interpreting the possible sources of these errors and discussing their implications for improving English writing instruction, particularly in teaching recount texts within EFL contexts.

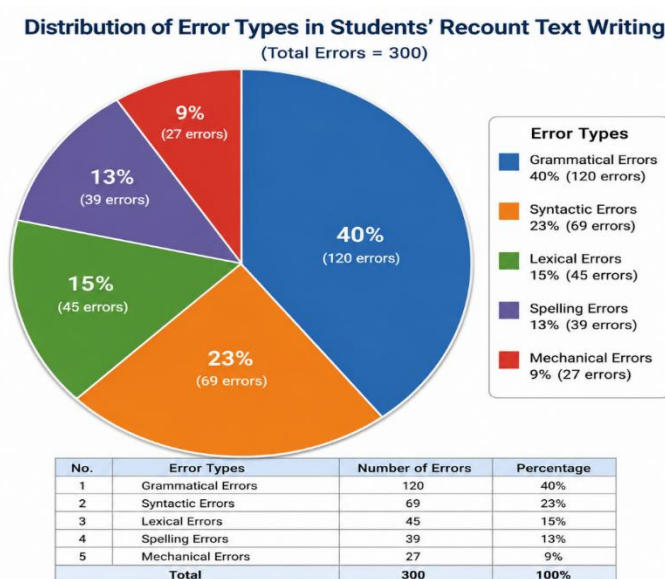


Figure 1. Distribution of Errors in Students' Writing

As shown in Figure 1, grammatical errors constitute the largest proportion of all identified errors (40%), indicating that Papuan EFL learners continue to experience substantial difficulty in mastering the fundamental grammatical structures required for effective recount writing. The predominance of grammatical errors demonstrates that students encounter persistent challenges in applying English tense systems, selecting appropriate verb forms, and using articles accurately within meaningful contexts. Since recount texts primarily describe past experiences, the accurate use of simple past tense, regular and irregular verb forms, and temporal expressions becomes essential for constructing coherent narratives. Difficulties in these linguistic features often result in inaccurate representations of chronological events and reduce the overall comprehensibility of the text. This finding is consistent with recent studies reporting that grammatical errors remain the most dominant category of errors in EFL

writing, particularly in contexts where English is acquired as a foreign language and learners have limited opportunities for authentic language exposure (Hanif, Susylowati, & Yulianti, 2025). Likewise, research involving Indonesian EFL learners found that tense usage, article selection, subject–verb agreement, and verb inflection continue to represent the most problematic grammatical features in students' written production (Annazah, Saumi, Wulandari, & Syahid, 2025). The consistency of these findings across different educational contexts suggests that grammatical mastery remains one of the greatest challenges in EFL writing instruction and deserves sustained pedagogical attention.

The second most frequent category consists of syntactic errors, accounting for 23% of the total errors identified. These errors include inaccurate word order, incomplete sentence constructions, missing sentence elements, and structurally inappropriate clauses. Although syntactic errors occur less frequently than grammatical errors, they exert a substantial influence on the overall coherence, cohesion, and readability of students' writing. Effective recount writing requires learners to organize ideas logically through well-constructed sentences that accurately express temporal relationships between events. When sentence structures are incomplete or arranged improperly, readers may experience difficulty interpreting the intended sequence of events, thereby reducing the communicative effectiveness of the text. Previous research has similarly demonstrated that syntactic complexity and sentence-level accuracy are strong predictors of writing quality because they directly influence text organization, coherence, and comprehensibility (Zhang & Ouyang, 2023). Therefore, the relatively high proportion of syntactic errors observed in this study suggests that many learners are still developing the ability to transform ideas into grammatically complete and structurally coherent written discourse.

Lexical errors represent 15% of the total errors and primarily involve inappropriate word choice, inaccurate collocations, and direct translation from the learners' first language into English. Although lexical errors occur less frequently than grammatical and syntactic errors, they remain highly significant because vocabulary knowledge plays a central role in determining the precision, clarity, and communicative effectiveness of written texts. The findings indicate that many students possess sufficient conceptual understanding of the ideas they intend to express but lack the lexical resources necessary to convey those ideas naturally in English. Consequently, learners frequently depend on literal translation strategies or select vocabulary based on semantic similarity rather than contextual appropriateness. Such tendencies often produce expressions that are grammatically acceptable but pragmatically unnatural for native or proficient English readers. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing that lexical competence contributes not only to linguistic accuracy but also to writing fluency, lexical sophistication, and overall text quality (Yang, Yap, & Ali, 2023). The results therefore highlight the importance of developing learners' productive vocabulary through contextualized instruction, collocation awareness, and extensive exposure to authentic written English.

Spelling errors (13%) and mechanics errors (9%) constitute the smallest proportions among the five identified error categories. Although these surface-level errors generally have less impact on meaning than grammatical or syntactic errors, they nevertheless influence readability, textual presentation, and adherence to academic writing conventions. Inaccurate spelling, inappropriate punctuation, inconsistent capitalization, and formatting problems may interrupt reading fluency and reduce the professional quality of students' written work. These findings suggest that many learners may prioritize idea generation over the revision process, resulting in insufficient attention to proofreading and editing before submitting their writing. Similar observations have been reported in previous EFL studies, where surface-level inaccuracies were frequently associated with limited revision strategies rather than inadequate grammatical knowledge. Consequently, strengthening students' editing skills and encouraging multiple drafting practices may substantially reduce these avoidable errors and improve the overall quality of written production.

Overall, the distribution of errors demonstrates that the linguistic difficulties experienced by Papuan EFL learners are concentrated in language components that are fundamental to successful recount writing, particularly grammatical accuracy, sentence construction, and lexical selection. The predominance of grammatical and syntactic errors indicates that learners continue to struggle not only with producing linguistically accurate forms but also with organizing ideas coherently into extended written discourse. These findings suggest that writing difficulties should not be viewed as isolated linguistic deficiencies but rather as interconnected challenges involving grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and discourse organization. From the perspective of interlanguage theory, the recurring error patterns identified in this study represent systematic and developmental characteristics of learners' evolving

language system rather than random mistakes or simple carelessness. As learners gradually construct and refine their knowledge of English, they naturally produce hypotheses about target-language rules, which are reflected in recurring error patterns during the learning process. Therefore, the identified errors should be interpreted as evidence of ongoing second language development. Understanding these developmental patterns provides valuable insights for teachers and curriculum designers in developing more targeted instructional strategies that address learners' actual linguistic needs while supporting the gradual development of writing accuracy, coherence, and communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

Grammatical Development and Persistent Difficulties

The predominance of grammatical errors indicates that Papuan EFL learners are still developing stable control over the core linguistic systems required for accurate recount writing. In particular, the frequent misuse of tense suggests that students have difficulty encoding past events through appropriate grammatical forms. This issue is especially significant because recount texts rely heavily on the accurate use of the simple past tense, verb forms, articles, and temporal sequencing to present events in a clear and logical order (Hanif, SusyLOWATI, & Yulianti, 2025). When learners fail to maintain grammatical consistency across these linguistic features, the overall effectiveness of the narrative is reduced, making it more difficult for readers to follow the sequence of events and interpret the intended meaning. The predominance of these errors also suggests that although learners may possess basic knowledge of English grammar, they continue to encounter challenges in applying grammatical rules consistently during authentic writing tasks. This finding supports previous studies reporting that grammatical competence remains one of the most persistent challenges in EFL writing because learners must simultaneously manage idea generation, sentence construction, and grammatical accuracy while composing a text (Hanif, SusyLOWATI, & Yulianti, 2025).

From an interlanguage perspective, however, such errors should not be interpreted as random failures or mere carelessness. Rather, they can be understood as systematic evidence of learners' developing linguistic competence. The grammatical inaccuracies found in this study suggest that the students are still in a transitional stage of second language development, in which partial knowledge of grammatical rules has been acquired but has not yet been fully stabilized in actual written production. Within this developmental process, learners continuously construct and refine their understanding of English grammar by testing hypotheses about the target language through language use. Consequently, recurring errors in tense, verb forms, and articles should be viewed as indicators of learners' evolving interlanguage rather than as permanent deficiencies. In this sense, grammatical errors reflect an ongoing developmental process, demonstrating that learners are actively constructing their knowledge of the target language even though their control remains incomplete (Iswati, 2025).

These findings have important pedagogical implications for EFL writing instruction. The high frequency of grammatical errors indicates that grammar teaching should move beyond isolated rule memorization toward contextualized and communicative learning activities that allow students to apply grammatical knowledge in meaningful writing tasks. Since recount texts require accurate tense control and chronological sequencing, instructional practices should integrate grammar instruction with authentic writing activities, drafting, feedback, and revision so that learners can recognize and gradually reduce recurring grammatical errors. Continuous corrective feedback and repeated opportunities to revise written work may facilitate the development of procedural grammatical knowledge, enabling learners to transfer their explicit understanding of grammar into more accurate written production. Therefore, the predominance of grammatical errors identified in this study should be viewed not only as evidence of learners' current linguistic limitations but also as valuable diagnostic information for designing instructional strategies that better support the development of grammatical competence and overall writing proficiency in EFL classrooms (Hanif, SusyLOWATI, & Yulianti, 2025; Iswati, 2025).

Syntactic Control and Text Coherence

The syntactic errors identified in this study, including incomplete sentences and inaccurate word order, indicate that Papuan EFL learners still have limited control over sentence construction in extended writing. These errors are particularly important because syntactic competence contributes not only to grammatical accuracy but also to the coherence and comprehensibility of written discourse. In recount texts, well-structured sentences are essential for presenting events in a logical chronological sequence,

enabling readers to follow the progression of the narrative without confusion. When sentence structures are incomplete or words are arranged inappropriately, the logical flow of ideas is disrupted, reducing both the clarity and effectiveness of the text. This finding is consistent with previous research demonstrating that syntactic complexity and sentence-level control are closely associated with writing proficiency, as learners with stronger syntactic competence generally produce more coherent and organized texts (Zhang & Ouyang, 2023).

Another important finding is the occurrence of redundant structures, such as repeated subjects and inappropriate sentence patterns, which may reflect the influence of learners' first language (L1) on English sentence construction. These patterns suggest that some learners continue to rely on L1-based organizational strategies when producing English texts, particularly when they have not yet fully mastered the syntactic conventions of the target language. Such language transfer is a common phenomenon in second language acquisition because learners often use familiar linguistic structures to compensate for gaps in their English proficiency. Similar findings were reported by Setiaji, Fajar, and Sulistyowati (2023), who observed that first language influence frequently contributes to syntactic inaccuracies, particularly in sentence organization and word order among Indonesian EFL learners. Therefore, the syntactic errors identified in this study should be viewed as evidence of learners' ongoing efforts to construct meaning while gradually adapting to English sentence structures.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings emphasize the importance of integrating syntactic development into writing instruction rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy. Teachers should provide learners with opportunities to practice sentence construction through guided writing, sentence-combining exercises, model text analysis, and collaborative revision activities that promote awareness of sentence organization and textual coherence. Regular corrective feedback on sentence-level errors can further help students recognize recurring syntactic problems and gradually reduce their reliance on first language structures when writing in English. Moreover, incorporating process-based writing activities that include drafting, revising, and editing may strengthen learners' ability to produce well-organized and coherent texts. By fostering greater syntactic awareness alongside grammatical competence, EFL instruction can better support learners in producing recount texts that are not only linguistically accurate but also coherent, cohesive, and communicatively effective (Zhang & Ouyang, 2023; Setiaji, Fajar, & Sulistyowati, 2023).

Lexical Competence and L1 Influence

Lexical errors found in this study indicate that vocabulary remains a significant challenge for Papuan EFL learners in recount writing. Direct translation, inappropriate word choice, and inaccurate collocations suggest that students generally understand the ideas they wish to express but still lack the lexical precision required to produce natural and contextually appropriate English expressions. As a result, learners often rely on familiar vocabulary or literal translation strategies to compensate for gaps in their English lexical knowledge. This tendency limits the clarity and naturalness of the written text because the selected words may not accurately convey the intended meaning or fit the communicative context. The findings therefore suggest that lexical competence extends beyond knowing individual word meanings to include the ability to select appropriate vocabulary according to context, collocation, and genre conventions.

The occurrence of lexical errors may also reflect the influence of learners' first language (L1), particularly when they transfer familiar conceptual and semantic patterns into English. Such language transfer is common in second language acquisition because learners frequently depend on their existing linguistic knowledge when they encounter difficulties in expressing ideas in the target language. Consequently, students may produce expressions that are grammatically acceptable but lexically unnatural due to direct translation or inappropriate collocational choices. Similar findings have been reported by Yang, Yap, and Ali (2023), who argue that lexical competence is a central component of writing quality because it influences not only linguistic accuracy but also fluency, lexical sophistication, and communicative effectiveness. Therefore, the lexical errors identified in this study demonstrate that limited vocabulary knowledge continues to constrain learners' ability to express ideas accurately and effectively in English.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of strengthening vocabulary instruction as an integral component of EFL writing classrooms. Vocabulary teaching should move beyond memorizing isolated words and instead emphasize contextual word use, collocations,

lexical chunks, and genre-specific expressions that enable learners to produce more natural written discourse. Teachers can further support lexical development by exposing students to authentic reading materials, encouraging extensive reading, and incorporating vocabulary-focused writing activities that promote meaningful language use. In addition, regular feedback on lexical choice during drafting and revision can help learners recognize inappropriate word selection and develop greater awareness of contextually appropriate expressions. Through sustained vocabulary enrichment and contextualized practice, learners are expected to expand their lexical repertoire and produce recount texts that are more accurate, fluent, and communicatively effective (Yang, Yap, & Ali, 2023).

Surface-Level Accuracy: Spelling and Mechanics

Although spelling and mechanics errors occurred less frequently than grammatical and syntactic errors, they remain important because they directly affect the readability, clarity, and overall quality of students' writing. While these errors may not always interfere with the intended meaning, inaccurate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization can reduce the professionalism and acceptability of a text, particularly in academic contexts. Recount writing requires not only accurate content and grammatical structures but also careful attention to writing conventions that ensure ideas are presented clearly and systematically. Therefore, the relatively lower frequency of these errors should not diminish their significance, as surface-level accuracy contributes to readers' overall perception of writing quality and communicative effectiveness.

The findings suggest that spelling and mechanics errors are more closely associated with limited proofreading habits and insufficient attention during the revision stage than with a lack of grammatical knowledge. In many cases, learners appear to possess the intended ideas and appropriate linguistic structures but fail to produce polished final drafts because they do not carefully review their writing before submission. Consequently, avoidable errors such as misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, and inconsistent capitalization remain in the final text. This observation is consistent with Iswati (2025), who argues that many surface-level inaccuracies result from inadequate editing practices rather than fundamental linguistic deficiencies. Therefore, these errors should be viewed as indicators of learners' developing writing process, particularly their ability to monitor and refine written production before it reaches its final form.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of integrating proofreading and revision strategies into EFL writing instruction. Teachers should encourage students to regard writing as a recursive process involving drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading rather than as a one-step activity focused solely on idea generation. Providing guided editing checklists, peer-review activities, and teacher feedback can help learners develop greater awareness of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization conventions while strengthening their self-monitoring skills. In addition, increased exposure to well-written English texts may familiarize learners with standard writing conventions and improve their ability to identify surface-level inaccuracies independently. Through consistent practice in revision and editing, students are expected to reduce spelling and mechanics errors, thereby producing recount texts that are not only grammatically accurate but also clearer, more polished, and academically appropriate (Iswati, 2025).

Sources of Errors: A Multifactorial Perspective

The findings suggest that the errors identified in this study stem from multiple interacting factors rather than from a single source. These factors likely include overgeneralization, in which learners extend grammatical rules beyond appropriate contexts; first language (L1) influence, particularly in syntactic structures and lexical choices; and incomplete rule application, which reflects learners' partial mastery of English grammatical systems. In addition, some surface-level errors may be associated with limited attention during the writing process, especially when learners focus more on generating ideas than on monitoring linguistic accuracy. The coexistence of these factors indicates that learners' writing difficulties arise from the complex interaction of cognitive, linguistic, and contextual processes rather than from isolated deficiencies. Such findings highlight the multidimensional nature of second language writing, in which learners simultaneously manage language knowledge, idea organization, and communicative goals while composing texts.

Nevertheless, these interpretations should be considered with caution because the present study is based solely on textual analysis. The proposed sources of errors cannot be confirmed directly as

definitive causes but should instead be regarded as plausible explanations inferred from the recurring error patterns observed in the students' written texts. Without complementary data, such as interviews, think-aloud protocols, or classroom observations, it is difficult to determine the precise cognitive processes underlying each error. Even so, the multifactorial interpretation presented in this study is consistent with contemporary perspectives in EFL research, which emphasize that learner errors emerge through the interaction of cognitive processing, linguistic competence, learning experiences, and contextual influences rather than from a single causal factor (Hanif, SusyLOWati, & Yulianti, 2025). Consequently, the recurring error patterns identified in this study provide valuable evidence for understanding the developmental characteristics of Papuan EFL learners' written English.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings carry important implications for improving EFL writing instruction. Grammar instruction should move beyond isolated rule memorization toward contextualized practice, particularly in recount writing where tense control and verb accuracy are essential. Likewise, writing instruction should place greater emphasis on sentence construction, syntactic awareness, vocabulary development, and appropriate collocation so that learners can produce texts that are not only grammatically accurate but also coherent and communicatively effective. Furthermore, writing pedagogy should incorporate drafting, feedback, revision, and proofreading as integral stages of the writing process because these activities can help learners reduce both global errors, such as grammar and syntax, and local errors, such as spelling and mechanics. Through sustained practice, explicit corrective feedback, and meaningful writing experiences, learners are expected to gradually develop greater linguistic accuracy, coherence, and confidence in producing recount texts, while teachers can use the identified error patterns as diagnostic information to design more targeted and responsive instructional strategies (Hanif, SusyLOWati, & Yulianti, 2025).

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study examined the types and possible sources of errors found in EFL students' recount text writing. The findings show that grammatical errors were the most dominant, followed by syntactic, lexical, spelling, and mechanics errors. The predominance of grammatical errors, particularly intense usage, verb forms, and article selection, indicates that the learners have not yet developed stable control over the core linguistic systems required for accurate recount writing. At the same time, syntactic and lexical errors suggest that students still face difficulties in organizing ideas coherently and selecting contextually appropriate expressions in extended written discourse.

These findings imply that students' errors should not be viewed merely as random mistakes, but rather as systematic and developmental features of their interlanguage. The recurring patterns identified in the texts suggest that learners' difficulties may be associated with several interacting factors, including overgeneralization, incomplete rule application, possible first language influence, and limited attention during the writing process. Therefore, the study highlights the importance of interpreting learner errors not only as indicators of weakness, but also as evidence of ongoing second language development.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study suggests that EFL writing instruction should place greater emphasis on contextualized grammar teaching, especially in the use of past tense within recount writing. In addition, students need stronger support in sentence construction, vocabulary use, collocational awareness, and writing revision practices. Integrating drafting, feedback, and guided self-editing into classroom instruction may help students improve both global aspects of writing, such as grammar and coherence, and local aspects, such as spelling and mechanics.

Although this study provides useful insights into error patterns in students' recount writing, it is limited by the small number of texts analysed and by its reliance on textual analysis only. For this reason, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than broadly generalizable. Future research is recommended to involve larger datasets, include interviews or process-based data, and explore instructional interventions that may help reduce recurring error patterns in EFL writing.

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