

Japanese Grammatical Errors Influenced by Learning Psychology at the Beginner Level

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze the types of grammatical errors made by beginner-level Japanese learners. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research examined 25 students' written works based on the standardized *Minna no Nihongo 1* curriculum. The findings revealed a total of 129 grammatical errors categorized into phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. The highest number of errors occurred in the use of particles (*joshi*) with 33.33%, followed by syllabic/kana writing errors (20.15%), special phoneme/long vowel errors (13.18%), sentence structure errors (11.62%), verb transformation and phrase structure errors (7.76%), and adjective transformation and affix usage errors (3.10%). The results indicate that these errors are mainly caused by linguistic differences between Japanese and Indonesian, such as the absence of particles in Indonesian, different writing systems, and distinct grammatical structures. Additional contributing factors include native language interference, lack of motivation and focus, limited practice opportunities, and insufficient review time. The study suggests that Japanese language instructors conduct more varied evaluations and integrate more engaging and effective teaching models to improve learners' writing accuracy and grammatical competence.

Keywords: Japanese grammar, grammatical errors, particle misuse, morphological errors, foreign language learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Japanese language learning in non-formal education outside of schools has shown significant development and has become increasingly adapted to current conditions. In the Japanese language course program at Megumi Center Indonesia, there are several classes designed according to the students' interests or goals in learning Japanese. The class divisions are as follows: the elementary class, Shokyuu 1 (beginner 1) for students interested in taking the JLPT N5 exam from the Japan Foundation, Shokyuu 2 (beginner 2) for JLPT N4, Chuukyuu 1 and 2 (intermediate 1 and 2) for JLPT N3, and Joukyuu 1 and 2 (advanced 1 and 2) for JLPT N2 and N1.

The purpose of conducting the JLPT test is to provide a standardized certification test for Japanese language proficiency, allowing learners to measure how well they have mastered the language. The test can be adjusted according to the learners' proficiency levels, ranging from beginner (N5) to advanced (N1). One of the main goals of learning any language is to communicate effectively. To achieve the four language skills, a learner must develop good skills in Japanese listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Verbal Planet; August 2025).

To achieve these learning objectives, Megumi Center Indonesia designs its curriculum to include various learning materials, one of which is writing skills. Megumi Center Indonesia develops a range of writing tests and exercises. These writing assessments are adjusted according to the students' proficiency levels. Besides serving as an evaluation tool to determine how well learners understand the material, writing tests and exercises also help boost students' confidence, provide constructive feedback, and motivate them to continue developing their Japanese writing skills.

Writing in Japanese, known as sakubun (Matsumoto, 2017), states:

「書くとは自分の考えや意見、調べたこと、やったこと などについて、

相手に説明し、理解してもらうために書くものがあります、そして、形式や内容が異なりますが、どちらも、「他の人に何かを伝えるために書く」という点で、コミュニケーションであるということができます」。

‘Writing is an activity of communication that originates from one’s thoughts, ideas, opinions, observations, or experiences, and is expressed in written form so that others or communication partners can understand it.’

Tarigan (2018, p. 3–4) states that writing is a productive and expressive activity. The book used to study Japanese writing skills is Yasashii Sakubun from the Minna no Nihongo series. This book contains everyday themes that can be expressed in simple writing for beginner Japanese learners. Errors that occur in learners’ writing can be observed, analyzed, and classified according to the type and category of error that deviates from the grammatical norms of the target language. Here lies the teacher’s role—to correct and guide learners’ writing mistakes during practice or tests.

According to James (1998), an error is a deviation made by a writer—whether intentional or unintentional—and the writer cannot correct it independently due to a lack of knowledge. The researcher considers error analysis important as an evaluation in the process of teaching and learning Japanese. This research used sample data from the written works of Shokyuu 1 students at Megumi Center Indonesia, Batch 8, as the research object. The course participants are children between seven and twelve years old. The researcher observes the types of grammatical errors and the factors causing these errors.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Language Errors

According to James (1998, p. 78), language errors can be defined as mistakes in using a language, either spoken or written, that deviate from the rules of the language. These deviations can occur in phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax, or meaning — in other words, within linguistic categories. Language errors often occur in foreign language learning and are caused by factors related to *mistakes* and *errors*. A *language error* refers to systematic and consistent deviations caused by lack of knowledge or inability, meaning that learners cannot correct these mistakes on their own. Meanwhile, a *mistake* refers to a deviation that occurs either intentionally or unintentionally and can be corrected by the learner themselves (Fairuz et al., 2022; Yaumi et al., 2024; Rahman & Weda, 2019).

Language errors made by learners are not only deviations in linguistic categories but are also influenced by various factors that cause both mistakes and errors (Weda et al., 2021; Sachiya et al., 2025). These errors can be analyzed through the following steps — *Error Taxonomies*. The following is the *error taxonomy* or classification of error types used to predict the forms of language errors based on linguistic categories according to James (1998, p. 104):

1. Linguistic Category Classification

This classification groups linguistic category errors according to components of language and structures in the linguistic hierarchy. They can be classified as follows: a) Errors in the phonological level, b) Errors in the morphological level, c) Errors in the syntactic level, d) Errors in the semantic level

B. Surface Structure Taxonomy

This taxonomy is used to predict second language learning strategies and to identify cognitive processes learners use when reconstructing the second language. The surface structure taxonomy helps researchers identify language learning errors, both spoken and written. According to James (1998, p. 106–110), there are five types of errors: a) Omission – occurs when one or more linguistic elements required in a word, phrase, or sentence are missing. b) Addition – occurs when one or more

unnecessary elements are added, creating redundancy. c) Misformation – occurs when learners use incorrect forms or constructions of words, phrases, or sentences. d) Misordering – occurs when learners arrange linguistic elements incorrectly in a phrase or sentence, violating grammatical rules. e) Blends – occur when two types of errors appear at once, and the learner is uncertain between two possible constructions. This type of error is sometimes called *contamination*.

C. Japanese Grammar

1. Japanese Phonology (音韻論)

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that studies the sound system of a language. According to Hyman (1975, p. 25), an important fact about phonological systems is the grouping of phonetic classes. In Japanese, phonology is called *on-inron* (音韻論), which studies linguistic sound symbols. When listing all the sounds in a language, it is important not to confuse orthography (the writing system) with the actual sounds (Tsujimura, 1996, p. 5). According to Kazama (in Sutedi, 2010, p. 36), the study of phonology includes *phonemes* (音素, *on-so*), *accent*, and *pitch*. A *phoneme* (音素, *onso*) is the smallest unit of sound that distinguishes meaning. One way to identify phonemes is by using *minimal pairs* (最小対, *saishoutai*). For instance, the phonemes /k/, /s/, and /t/ can be distinguished when placed at the beginning of words. Phonemes (*on-so*) in Japanese consist of four types: a) **Vowels (V)**: /a, i, u, e, o/, b) **Consonants (C)**: /k, g, s, z, t, d, c, n, h, p, b, m, r/, c) **Semi-vowels (Sv)**: /w, j/, d) **Special phonemes**: /Q, N, R/.

2. Japanese Morphology (けいたいろん; 形態論)

Morphology in Japanese is called *keitairon* (けいたいろん; 形態論), a branch of linguistics that studies words and their formation processes. The main objects of study are *words* (単語, *tango*) and *morphemes* (けいたいそ, *keitaíso*). According to Tsujimura (1996:125), Japanese morphology deals with how words are formed and their internal structures, and it also examines how morphology interacts with semantics, phonology, and syntax.

The classification of Japanese word types (*hinshi bunrui*, 品詞分類(ひんしぶんるい)) consists of six major categories. In word formation, honorific expressions can be created by adding prefixes such as *o-*/お or *go-*/ご. These prefixes, known as *settoji*, serve to express politeness and are used when referring to others or the listener (Sutedi, 2010:47–48). Japanese verbs in dictionary form (*jishokei*) are divided into three groups based on their conjugation. Verbs in *~masu* form represent polite speech, used in formal contexts when addressing superiors, elders, or people not closely acquainted. Meanwhile, verbs in dictionary form are used in informal situations.

3. Japanese Syntax (統語論)

Tjandra, Shedy N. (2013) explains that Japanese syntax, called *togoron* (統語論), literally means “the study of word combination,” and is also known as *kobunron* (構文論), meaning “the study of sentence structure.” Tjandra describes sentence formation from simple to complex sentences: a) Simple sentence (単文, *tanbun*) b) Complex sentence (複文, *fukubun*) – a sentence consisting of more than one clause.

Complex sentences in Japanese can be formed in two main ways: a. Compound sentences (並列複文, *heiretsu fukubun*) – consist of two or more clauses joined coordinatively, often using conjunctions such as *soshite* (そして = *then*) or *demo* (でも = *but*). b. Complex sentences (従属複文, *jūzoku fukubun*) – consist of clauses joined subordinately.

D. Factors Causing Language Errors

Foreign language learners often encounter difficulties or make errors in both spoken and written forms of the target language. These errors are generally caused by two main factors: *errors* and *mistakes*. According to James (1998, p. 78), an *error* occurs when a learner lacks knowledge or

ability, whereas a *mistake* occurs due to a deviation in performance, not knowledge. Similarly, Corder (1974) defines *errors* as violations of grammatical rules due to interference from a learner's existing grammatical system, leading to imperfect mastery. *Mistakes*, on the other hand, occur when a learner chooses incorrect words or expressions for a particular situation, not because of inadequate language competence.

In second language learning, linguistic errors often occur due to psychological factors. Chomsky (in Chaer, 2021, p. 222) states that language is not only complex but also full of errors and rule deviations in performance. According to Corder (1974), the factors causing language errors in second or foreign language learning include:

1. Mother Tongue Interference (Interlingual Errors): Errors caused by negative transfer from the learner's first language to the target language.
2. Intralingual Errors: Errors arising from misunderstanding or oversimplifying rules of the target language.
3. Overgeneralization: Errors occurring when learners apply a rule too broadly or in an inappropriate context.
4. Incomplete Application of Rules: Errors caused by incomplete use or understanding of grammatical rules.
5. False Concepts Hypothesized: Errors arising from misunderstanding or forming incorrect assumptions about target language rules.
6. Communication Strategy Errors: Errors occurring when learners attempt to communicate ideas without sufficient linguistic knowledge, leading them to create new words or modify existing rules.

These errors reflect the language learning process and provide valuable insight for teachers or instructors regarding areas that need improvement. Analyzing the causes of these errors is essential to enhance the effectiveness of language teaching.

III. METHODS

This study is qualitative descriptive research. It is a type of scientific research that presents findings in the form of words to understand the meaning derived from individuals or groups, without using statistical procedures. According to Creswell (2015), qualitative descriptive research explores and seeks to understand the meanings attributed by individuals or groups, and it is generally used for studies concerning community life, history, behavior, concepts, or phenomena. The steps in data analysis include preparing the data, processing or organizing it for analysis, sorting, and arranging it according to the sources of information to obtain meaningful results (Creswell, 2013).

The population in this study consists of students who are currently or have just started learning Japanese at the language course institution Megumi Center Indonesia, specifically from the 8th cohort, meaning students who studied Japanese in 2023. The students' ages range from 7 to 12 years old (Middle Childhood). The data collected consisted of writing test results from 25 students from both private and group classes, using the same materials in accordance with the curriculum implemented at Megumi Center Indonesia.

The test was conducted with students learning materials from the Japanese language beginner level (Shokyuu 1) curriculum. The book and materials used were the same as those used by other beginner-level learners, namely Minna No Nihongo 1. The data collection technique used in this research involved assigning students a writing task with the theme "Watashi no Mainichi" (My Daily Life). This was based on the standardized teaching and assessment system derived from the structured teaching materials in the Minna No Nihongo textbook. The vocabulary and grammar teaching in this

book are also synchronized with the Yasashii Sakubun writing practice book, which is part of the Minna No Nihongo learning package.

IV. RESULTS

A. Grammatical Errors

1. Errors in the Phonological Category

Errors were found in the phonological category, specifically in the writing of Japanese phonemes, which appeared in the forms of Omission, Addition, and Blends. Omission Errors: An example of omission is the omission of the long vowel い (i) in the word むずか (muzuka), which should be むずかしい (muzukashii). Addition Errors: An example of addition is the insertion of the long vowel う (u) in しゅうみ (syuumi), which should be しゅみ (syumi) meaning *hobby*. Such spelling errors can change the meaning of the sentence.

Blends Errors: Errors of the *Blends* type were also found, such as the misuse of the long vowel う (u) in words like べんきょお (benkyoo) and だいじょおぶです (daijyoo bu desu), which should be written as べんきょう (benkyou) and だいじょうぶ (daijyoubu). Although these may sound similar when spoken, the written forms clearly reveal the mistakes. There were also errors involving particle usage and adverbial changes. Another *Blends* error occurred in the word きょお (kyoo), which should be きょう (kyou), as well as in じゅんさい (jyuyon sai), which should be じゅうんさい (jyuuyon sai). There was also an incorrect use of the particle は (wa). Further examples include がっこ (gakko) and じゅぶん (jyu pun), which should be がっこう (gakkou) and じゅうぶん (jyuu pun) respectively. Additionally, the absence of the verb かかります (kakarimasu) was noted.

In another instance, べんきょお (benkyoo) was used incorrectly — the correct form is べんきょう (benkyou), which, when paired with します (shimasu), means “to study.” The word にほんこ (nihonko) contains an error in the syllable ご (go); *ko* has no meaning in this context. Other issues involved incorrect past verb forms and redundant word additions such as きょう (kyou) meaning “today.” The omission of the long vowel う (u) was also found in ちゅがくせい (chugakusei), which should be ちゅうがくせい (chuugakusei) meaning “junior high school student.” Similarly, ぎゅにゅ (gyunyuu) should be ぎゅうにゅう (gyuunyuu) meaning “milk.” Improper particle use, such as the misplacement of が (ga), was also observed.

In addition, students wrote しゅうみ (syuumi) instead of しゅみ (syumi), again showing an incorrect addition of a long vowel. There were also errors in verb use, such as かく (kaku) and かいものする (kaimono suru), and omission of particles. The word じゅさんさい (jyusan sai) should be じゅうさんさい (jyuusan sai), and there were several errors in the use of the topic particle は (wa). There were also adjective form errors, such as the misuse of the past tense adjective いたい (itai). Another *Blends* error appeared in むりお (murio), which should be むりょう (muryou) meaning “free,” and in びょおき (byooki) which should be びょうき (byouki) meaning “sick.” Additionally, there were cases of foreign loanwords that should have been written in katakana, and incorrect copula usage such as ですから (desukara) written incorrectly as でしたから (desutakara).

Syllabic Errors (Kana Errors): Errors in syllabic writing included Omission, Addition, Misordering, and Blends.

- Omission: The omission of the hiragana syllable し (shi) in わた (wata), which should be わたし (watashi) meaning “I.” The word わた (wata) alone means “cotton.” Another example is おねかいします (onekai shimasu) missing が (ga) — it should be おねがいします (onegai shimasu). Similarly, きんよび (kinyobi) should be きんようび (kinyoubi) meaning “Friday.”

- Addition: The addition of a vowel in ようじ (youji) instead of よじ (yoji) changes the meaning from “four o’clock” to “errand.”
- Misordering: Examples include はじみまして (hajimimashite) instead of はじめまして (hajimemashite) (“Nice to meet you”);
すち (suchi) instead of すき (suki) (“like”);
むいにち (muinichi) instead of まいにち (mainichi) (“every day”);
まま (Mama) written in hiragana instead of katakana (ママ) for the English loanword “mom.”

Names such as かいら (Kaira) and にさ (Nisa) should be written in katakana because they are non-Japanese names. なまい (namai) should be なまえ (namae) meaning “name.” セまらん (Semarang) should also be written in katakana (セマラン) as it is a place name. The particle が (ga) was misplaced in かすき (ka suki) instead of がすき (ga suki). ときとき (toki-toki) should be ときどき (toki-doki) meaning “sometimes.” いんどねしあ (indoneshia) should be written in katakana as インドネシア (Indonesia).

- Blends:

Examples include デぴあ (Dipia), a name that should be written as ディピア (Dipia); パチ (pachi) should be パーティー (paatii) from the English word “party”; てれび (terebi) correctly means “television,” but misuse occurred elsewhere such as きよお (kyoo) instead of きょう (kyou); omission of the particle を (o) and incorrect tense in verbs were also observed. The distinction between にほんご (nihongo) (“Japanese language”) and にほん (nihon) (“Japan”) was often confused. むずか (muzuka) should be むずかしい (muzukashii), and とい (toi) should be とい (toi) meaning “far.”

Errors in writing borrowed words like でばと (depato) should be デパート (depaato). Overuse of honorific prefixes such as お (o) in おなまえ (o namae) when referring to oneself was also found, as the prefix お (o) is used to show respect when referring to others. Additional mistakes include verb conjugation errors such as でしたから (desutakara) instead of ですから (desukara).

Overall, phonological errors in students’ Japanese writing involved a wide range of issues — omissions, additions, misorderings, blends, misuse of particles, and incorrect use of katakana for foreign names or loanwords.

2. Errors in the Morphological Category

Errors in the morphological category found in students’ writing mainly involve the incorrect use of Japanese particles (*joshi*), including omissions, misordering, and blends. The omission errors occur when essential particles such as *no*, *ka*, *o*, *mo*, *de*, *wa*, *ni*, *ga*, and *to* are not used properly in sentences. For example, students often omitted the particle *no* between two nouns like *ninensei* (“second grade”) and *chuugakusei* (“junior high school student”), even though *no* is needed to connect them. Similarly, the omission of *ka* at the end of an interrogative sentence, *o* as an object marker between a noun and a verb, and *wa* as a topic marker was frequently found. Other particles such as *mo* (“also”), *de* (“at/in”), and *ni* (“to/at”) were also omitted in several cases, leading to grammatical inaccuracies and loss of meaning in the sentences. These omissions indicate that students have not yet fully mastered how particles function syntactically in Japanese sentence structures.

Besides omission, students also made misordering errors, where one particle was used in place of another. Common examples include the use of *ga* instead of *wa* after *watashi* (“I”), *wa* instead of *ga* before adjectives like *suki* (“like”), and *wa* instead of *o* after *nihongo* (“Japanese”) in the expression *nihongo benkyou shimasu* (“study Japanese”). Other substitutions occurred with *ni*, *no*, and *wa*, as in sentences involving *kuruma* (“car”), *naka* (“inside”), and *imasu* (“exist”). Additionally,

no was incorrectly replaced by *wa* between *watashi* and *kaisha* (“company”), and *o* was used instead of *e* after *nihon* (“Japan”) and *gakkou* (“school”) where *e* should indicate direction. There were also cases where *ni* was incorrectly used instead of *o* between *mikan* (“orange”) and *tabetai* (“want to eat”), and *ga* was used instead of *ni* after *noru* (“ride”), reflecting confusion about particle functions. These misorderings demonstrate students’ struggle to distinguish the grammatical roles of particles in expressing topic, subject, object, location, and direction.

In addition, blend errors were identified, which typically resulted from confusion between particles or between words and particles. For instance, *wa* was used where a verb was missing, creating a blending issue. Other examples include using *no* instead of *wa* after *watashi*, and *ni* instead of *no* between *nihon* (“Japan”) and *gakkou* (“school”). The omission of *de* after *nihon no gakkou* (“Japanese school”) also appeared, as well as *o* between *nihongo* (“Japanese”) and *benkyou shimasu* (“study”). Moreover, several spelling and script-related errors occurred in the use of hiragana and katakana. Students often wrote borrowed words in hiragana, such as *anime* written as あにめ instead of アニメ, and used *ha* (は) instead of *ba* (ば) in *ichiban* (“the most”), resulting in *ichihan*, which changes the meaning. Errors involving *watashi no namae* (“my name”) were also found, where students used *wa* instead of *no* to express possession or added the prefix *o-* (*onamae*) inappropriately when referring to themselves. Other mistakes included writing non-Japanese names like *Achi* in hiragana rather than katakana, omitting topic markers such as *wa*, and using *imasu* (for animate subjects) instead of *arimasu* (for inanimate ones). Furthermore, *ni* was used instead of *de* before *hatarakimasu* (“work”), misrepresenting the locative meaning. Overall, these errors reveal that the learners have difficulty differentiating between grammatical particles and writing systems, suggesting a need for greater emphasis on contextual and functional understanding of Japanese morphology in instruction.

In this study, a total of ten morphological errors were found in students’ writing, particularly in the verb (動詞 *doushi*) transformation category, including Addition, Misformation, and Blends types. In the Addition category, an error occurred due to the unnecessary addition of the copula です (*desu*) at the end of a verb, which is grammatically incorrect in Japanese sentence structure. In the Misformation category, students made errors in verb conjugation. For example, the past tense verb かいしました (*kaimashita*, “bought”) was incorrectly used instead of the present tense verb かいます (*kaimasu*, “buy”) despite the use of the time adverb いつも (*itsumo*, “always”), which indicates habitual or ongoing action. Another example was the use of the present tense verb べんきょうします (*benkyou shimasu*, “study”) instead of the progressive form べんきょうしています (*benkyou shite imasu*, “is studying”), even though the sentence included the time marker いま (*ima*, “now”), showing that the action was still in progress.

Similarly, students used the past tense verb みました (*mimashita*, “saw/watched”) instead of the present tense verb みます (*mimasu*, “see/watch”), even though the sentence contained the adverb まいにち (*mainichi*, “every day”), which expresses habitual activity. In addition, some Blends errors were found, such as the omission of the particle の (*no*) used to indicate possession or information. Other blend errors included the use of hiragana instead of katakana for loanwords, such as writing まま (*mama*) instead of ママ (*mama*), and the omission of the object marker を (*o*). There was also an error in verb transformation involving つくりました (*tsukurimashita*, “made”), which should have been expressed using the *te-form* combined with the auxiliary verb もらいました (*moraimashita*), indicating that the action was received as a favor. Additional errors included the misuse of the particle の (*no*) instead of は (*wa*) to mark a topic after わたし (*watashi*, “I”), the omission of the locative particle で (*de*) after がっこう (*gakkou*, “school”), and the use of します (*shimasu*, “to do”) instead of したい (*shitai*, “want to do”), which better expresses desire.

More Blends errors included omission of the particle を (*o*) and the incorrect use of the past

tense しました (*shimashita*) instead of the progressive しています (*shite imasu*), which indicates an ongoing activity, particularly in sentences with the adverb いま (*ima*, “now”). Some students also used the particle に (*ni*, “at/in”) instead of で (*de*, “at/in”) to indicate location, and used はたらきます (*hatarakimasu*, “work”) instead of the progressive form はたらいています (*hatarai te imasu*, “is working”). Other frequent omissions involved particles such as と (*to*, “and”), を (*o*, object marker), and に (*ni*, “for/to”), which are important for indicating relationships between verbs, objects, and purposes in sentences. Errors were also found in the use of the *te kara* form (～てから), which should indicate that one action follows another.

Four morphological errors were also found in adjective (形容詞 *keiyoushi*) transformation, including Misformation and Blends. In Misformation, students used the wrong negative form of a *na*-adjective, as in すきくない (*sukikunai*, “don’t like”). The correct negative form for *na*-adjectives should be じゃありません (*ja arimasen*). Another misformation occurred when the intensifier あまり (*amari*, “not very”) was used, but the following adjective was not in the correct negative form. An additional adjective misformation involved the past tense of *i*-adjectives: students wrote たのしい (*tanoshii*, “happy” – present tense) when the context required the past form たのしかった (*tanoshikatta*, “was happy”) following くれました (*kuremashita*, “gave”). Other mistakes included omitting particles such as は (*wa*) and が (*ga*), which mark the topic and subject in a sentence.

In the use of affixes (接頭辞 *settouji*), four errors were identified under Addition and Blends. In the Addition category, the prefix お (*o*) was unnecessarily added to なまえ (*namae*, “name”), forming おなまえ (*onamae*). While *o-* is an honorific prefix used to show politeness toward others, it is inappropriate when referring to oneself. A Blend error was found in the use of the particle は (*wa*) instead of の (*no*) in possessive phrases such as わたしのなまえ (*watashi no namae*, “my name”). Further errors included writing non-Japanese names in hiragana, such as あるし (*Arushi*), which should be written in katakana アルシ (*Arushi*), and あち (*Achi*), which should be written as アチ (*Achi*). Other errors included using を (*o*) instead of へ (*e*, “to”) in directional expressions like にほんへいきます (*Nihon e ikimasu*, “go to Japan”) and the misuse of the prefix ご (*go*) in ごかぞく (*go kazoku*, “family”), which, like お (*o*), is reserved for referring respectfully to others and should not be used for one’s own family.

3. Errors in the Syntax Category

A total of ten syntactic errors were identified, particularly in phrase structure, including Misordering and Blends. In Misordering, phrases were reversed, as in くつくろい (*kutsu kuroi*, “black shoes”), which follows Indonesian word order but violates Japanese syntax. Similar errors occurred in phrases like あめおおきい (*ame ookii*, “heavy rain”), らーめんにはほん (*ramen Nihon*, “Japanese noodles”), and りょうりおいしい (*ryouri oishii*, “delicious food”). Other blend errors included incorrect use of particles, such as に (*ni*) instead of を (*o*), and misuse of verbs — for example, using ひきます (*hikimasu*) instead of はきます (*hakimasu*) for wearing lower-body clothing. Additional errors involved word order reversals like かばんもあおい (*kaban mo aoi*, “blue bag”), incorrect use of the particle も (*mo*), and misuse of もちます (*mochimasu*, “to carry”).

Another example of incorrect word order influenced by Indonesian syntax was グラスすき (*gurasu suki*, “like glass”), where the particle が (*ga*) was omitted. Other syntactic errors included missing particles は (*wa*), が (*ga*), or で (*de*), misplacement of adjectives, and confusion between similar verbs, such as こわれました (*koware mashita*, “broken”) and われました (*ware mashita*, “shattered”).

Fifteen additional syntactic errors were found in sentence structure, including Misordering and

Blends. These included misplaced subjects, objects, and time adverbs, such as ろくじぐらい (*roku ji gurai*, “around six o’clock”), which should appear at the beginning of the sentence, and missing particles like を (*o*) and へ (*e*). Other examples involved omission of verbs like します (*shimasu*) after べんきょう (*benkyou*, “study”), and errors in marking direction, such as using に (*ni*) instead of へ (*e*). The influence of Indonesian word order was evident, with objects often placed incorrectly, and some sentences showing overuse or omission of particles such as と (*to*) and が (*ga*).

4. Factors Causing Students’ Writing Errors

The grammatical errors in the students’ Japanese writing at Megumi Center Indonesia, especially those in the 8th cohort, can be attributed to several factors:

a. Phonological Errors

- Influence from the mother tongue, especially in the pronunciation and writing of long vowels *u* and *o* not found in Indonesian.
- Lack of understanding of Japanese orthographic rules (*intralingual errors*), such as confusion between hiragana and katakana.
- Mispronunciation of similar sounds, such as つ (*tsu*) and す (*su*).
- Misuse of diacritics (゛ *dakuon* and ゝ *handakuon*) in hiragana.
- Overgeneralization of writing rules from Indonesian.

b. Morphological Errors

- Influence of the first language, which does not use particles.
- Lack of understanding of particle functions.
- Intralingual confusion in verb and adjective conjugations.
- Misuse of affixes (*settouji*) due to false conceptualization.
- Modifications of grammatical rules when trying to express ideas (*communication strategy errors*).

c. Syntactic Errors

- Structural interference from the first language, especially in phrase and sentence order.
- Overgeneralization and simplification of Japanese grammatical rules.
- Incomplete understanding or partial application of sentence structures.

In addition to internal factors, external influences also contribute to students’ writing errors, including: (1) lack of study focus due to other tasks, (2) low motivation, (3) external pressure from parents, (4) insufficient practice, (5) lack of conversation partners, and (6) limited time to review or repeat lessons given by Japanese instructors.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study titled “Japanese Grammatical Errors in the Shokyuu 1 Writing Class of Megumi Center Indonesia, 8th Cohort,” a total of 129 grammatical errors were found. These errors were categorized as follows: in the phonological category, errors in writing special phonemes/long vowels (Omission, Addition, and Blends) occurred 17 times (13.18%), and errors in writing syllabic characters (Omission, Addition, Misordering, and Blends) occurred 26 times (20.15%). In the morphological category, errors included the incorrect use of particles (*joshi*) in the forms of Omission, Misordering, and Blends with 43 errors (33.33%); verb transformation (*doushi*) errors in the forms of Addition, Misformation, and Blends with 10 errors (7.76%); adjective transformation (*keiyoushi*) errors in the forms of Misformation and Blends with 4 errors (3.10%); and affix usage

(settoji) errors in the forms of Addition and Blend with 4 errors (3.10%). In the syntactic category, phrase structure errors (Misordering and Blends) totaled 10 (7.76%), while sentence structure errors (Misordering and Blends) totaled 15 (11.62%).

The highest frequency of errors occurred in the use of particles (33.33%), followed by syllabic/kana writing errors (20.15%), and special phoneme/long vowel writing errors (13.18%). The fourth most common type was sentence structure errors (11.62%), followed by verb transformation and phrase structure errors, each accounting for 7.76%, and finally, adjective transformation and affix usage errors, each with 3.10%.

From this hierarchy of errors, it can be concluded that the most significant cause of mistakes lies in the differences between Japanese and Indonesian — particularly the extensive use of particles in Japanese, which do not exist in Indonesian. Furthermore, differences in writing systems, such as the use of kana, special phonemes, and long vowels in Japanese, contribute to learners' difficulties. Variations in sentence and phrase structure, verb and adjective conjugation, and the use of affixes in Japanese also lead to frequent errors among learners. In addition, several contributing factors were identified, including the influence of students' native language structures, lack of focus and interest in learning, external motivation (parental pressure rather than intrinsic motivation), insufficient practice, lack of conversation partners to apply the language, and limited time for review or repetition of lessons taught by Japanese instructors.

Based on the findings and observations, several recommendations are proposed. For teachers, especially foreign language instructors at Megumi Center Indonesia, it is suggested that they conduct more frequent evaluations through various types of tests and exercises—particularly writing tests. Teachers are also encouraged to adopt or modify their Japanese teaching methods to make learning more engaging by applying more effective language teaching models.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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