

**RARE**

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**LEARNING GRAMMATICAL MORPHEMES IN  
ENGLISH WRITING SKILL COURSES: AN  
EXPERIMENTAL STUDY**



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June 2014

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## ABSTRACT

Learners of English as Second Language, for various reasons, feel writing is a difficult task. The students have problems in the correct application of the grammatical morphemes in English. The problem associated with this study is to find out why the students are unable to produce an error-free piece of writing at the tertiary level, at the university, though they have studied English as a second language for nearly ten to twelve years in their primary and secondary education. The purpose of the study is to identify the errors, the problems, the causes and the order of the acquisition of grammatical morphemes in English by the students of the Bachelor of Business Management of Vavuniya Campus of University of Jaffna. Seventy-two students were selected using convenience sample method. The primary data were derived from two different formal examinations as the creative writing essay in English (open-type) and the answers to the closed types of questions. Further, a questionnaire was administered among the students to obtain the personal profile. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings reveal that there are three important types of errors in the students' writing such as omission, wrong selection and addition. Errors of omission are the most problematic category where many respondents experienced more difficulties in the closed test as well. The main causes for the errors are intralingual errors associated with overgeneralization, fossilization, ignorance of rule restriction, false concept hypothesis and the order of acquisition. The students acquire certain grammatical morphemes earlier than the others. Regardless of their mother tongue, a common developmental sequence, 'natural order,' was found among the learners of the present study. There is a logical relationship between the order of acquisition and the errors students make. This study also validates the concept of a general sequence of acquisition order of grammatical morphemes but shows individual differences within the sequence. The findings of this study provides insights following the accuracy order generated from this study, learning could better be facilitated. A comparison of the results for the written and oral tests will provide evidence for any research conducted in future.

**Keywords:** acquisition order, inflectional/ grammatical morphemes, error analysis, error, second language learning