

## **Types of Errors in College Students' L2 Writing in EFL Environments**

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The purposes of this study are to examine what type of errors students make more between form-based and meaning-based errors, as well as to investigate in which error categories Korean learners frequently make errors and mistakes. In three studies, 264 essays from 42 subjects who were at a Korean university were collected. This study adopted error correction symbols by Harmer (2007) to analyze error categories simply and easily. The results indicated that form-based errors (91%) were generally reported much more than meaning-based errors (9%) by both the teacher's and students' review. In contrast, although students had different situations in three studies (e.g., a case study, two sample studies), the results were not much different: learners frequently made errors with *the article* and *grammar* categories. In English as foreign language (EFL) environments, interactions via peer-review feedback have been considered as profitable tools; however, teacher-review feedback is still required to facilitate students' second/foreign language (L2) development. These findings suggest that students will develop the quality as well as the accuracy of their writing when they recognize the most frequent error categories in their L2 writing.

**Key Words:** EFL environments, teacher-review and peer-review feedback, form/meaning-based errors, the most frequent error categories

### **1 Introduction**

Making mistakes and errors is a process of learning a second/foreign language (L2) and can provide students and English teachers with evidence of how language is learned or acquired, and what strategies or procedures are the best ways to learn. In Korea, many students' language performance may not match their potential competence. In particular, most students have a little chance to practice speaking and writing in English classes until secondary schools. In this respect, the Korean education systems' policy of English should undergo big changes: productive skills (i.e., speaking and writing) should be regarded as one of the most important factors to learn L2: hence, this study attempts to introduce the effective methods about error correction

and feedback<sup>1</sup>. If students knew their errors and mistakes in their writing, they would extend the quality and the accuracy of their writing by recognizing what kinds of errors or mistakes they made when L2 writing. That is a major consideration in why this research has been conducted.

According to Brown (1994), “it is crucial to make a different definition between *mistakes* and *errors*, technically two very different phenomena. A mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a “slip,” in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly, on the other hand, an error refers to idiosyncrasies in the interlanguage of the learner that is operating at the time in the second language speech” (Brown, 1994, p. 205). There is the difference between making mistakes and making errors (e.g., a mistake is accidental and known to the author; an error is made deliberately without them understanding it is wrong), however, it may be difficult to determine the difference between *mistakes* and *errors* in learners’ writing subjectively. For this reason, this study did not consider the difference between *errors* and *mistakes* in feedback activities. This study focuses on promoting foreign language writing through practicing form-based and meaning-based error correction and recognizing the most frequent error categories. For this study, there is a brief definition about form/meaning-based errors: form-based errors relate to using exact grammatical principles as well as other factors such as punctuation, omission, and insertion; on the other hand, meaning-based errors relate to using appropriate words for specific meaning in the sentence rather than understanding within the context of communication.

The aims of this study are to investigate whether students make more form-based errors than meaning-based ones, to explore in which error categories Korean learners frequently make errors and mistakes in three studies, and to guide English teachers and English as foreign language (EFL) learners to the best error correction strategies and corrective feedback methods.

The present study has two central research questions: first, to explore two types of errors such as form-based and meaning-based errors to verify their difference by analysis and comparison from the three studies; and second, to investigate the most frequent error categories, where errors in all categories are collected and analyzed by comparing three studies. The following questions are the focus of this study in L2 writing:

- 1) What type of errors do students make more between form-based and meaning-based errors by comparing three studies?
- 2) In which error categories do Korean learners frequently make errors/mistakes in three studies?

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<sup>1</sup> This study is based on the author (2009)’s Ph.D research that was unpublished.

## 2 Literature Review

The following discussion considers previous studies on error correction and error analysis. The literature will review not only illustrates error correction strategies, but will also describe corrective feedback methods to determine frequent error categories to help EFL learners to extend the quality and the accuracy of their writing.

### 2.1 Error analysis

Errors can be observed, analyzed, and classified to reveal something of the new system of language and to understand the process of second language acquisition (SLA). According to Gass (1989), several possible general sources can make errors: inter-lingual errors occur from the native language; intra-lingual errors arise within the target language, including psycholinguistic strategies, the sociolinguistic context of communication, or cognitive strategies, and countless affective variables always exist. A brief distinction of errors can be built between “overt” and “covert” errors (Corder, 1971). Grammatical problems at the sentence level refer to ‘overt errors’; in contrast, a grammatically well formed sentence refers to ‘covert errors’ in writing, but are not understood within the context of communication.

In this study, form-based errors are considered as grammatical principles as well as other factors such as punctuation, omission, and insertion, while meaning-based errors are regarded as not understanding within the context of communication but using proper words for specific meaning in the sentence. The author proposed ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ errors in this study to analyze two types of errors. A big distinction of errors can be created between form-based and meaning-based errors related to ‘marked and unmarked’ ones. ‘Marked errors’ are based on form-based errors related to grammatical features (see Figure 1).

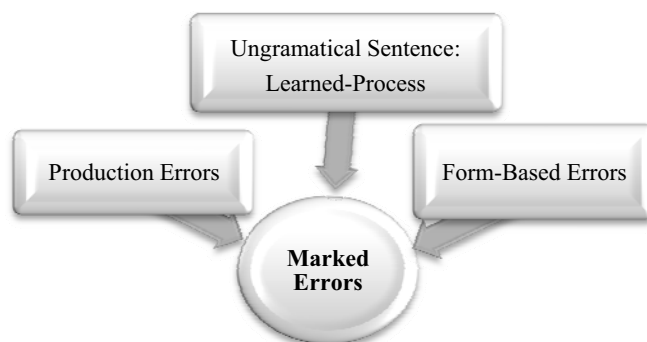


Figure 1. Form-based errors in marked errors

As Figure 1 shows, ‘marked’ errors in writing are ungrammatical at the sentence level, and relate to production errors. ‘Marked’ errors are the first step to learn L2; so it may be easy for EFL learner to recognize ‘marked’ errors since the errors are explicit ones. In this respect, ‘marked errors’ are likely to be a ‘learned’ process rather than an ‘acquired’ process in L2 learning. On the other hand, ‘unmarked’ errors relate to meaning-based errors based on using appropriate words for specific meaning, and are associated with comprehension errors (see Figure 2).

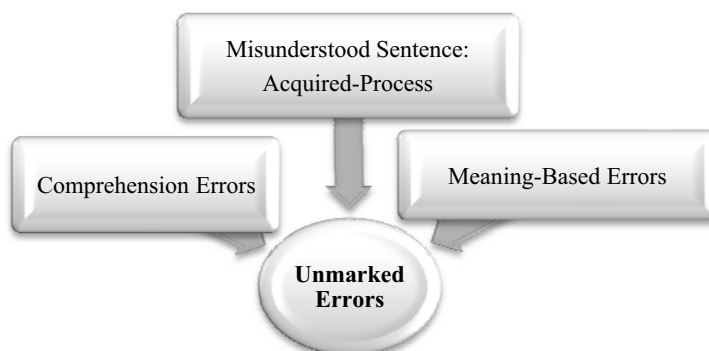


Figure 2. Meaning-based errors in unmarked errors

As Figure 2 shows, ‘unmarked’ errors are likely to be an ‘acquired’ process rather than a ‘learned’ process in L2 learning; it may not be easy for EFL learners to assess the ‘unmarked’ errors because the errors relate to implicit ones. Examining errors in learning a L2 may allow students to learn how to build a new system of language and to understand the process of L2 acquisition. Sometimes it may not be good to pay too much attention to learners’ errors; however, the reduction of errors may be a significant criterion for boosting language proficiency in order to obtain communicative fluency in L2 learning.

## 2.2 Error correction strategies

In Brown (1994)’s theory of error analysis, making mistakes or errors (i.e., generally a mistake is an error), for L2 learning is likely to be a fundamental process. Through mistakes and errors, learners can appreciate an important aspect of the process of acquiring a second or foreign language or learning language skills. The literature on error correction and feedback associated with grammatical and lexical errors helps L2 learners to find out the merits of feedback by controversies and conflicts. There are previous studies related to error correction (Diab, 2010; Kubota, 2001; Loewen et al., 2009; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Varnosfadrani & Basturkmen, 2009). Kubota (2001) investigated error correction strategies when revising Japanese students’ written work. The study explored: (1) the strategies used for self-correction; (2) the successful

and unsuccessful strategies employed by students; (3) the effects of the coding system employed by assessment; and (3) the types of code symbols that relate to successful self-correction. The study reported that it was easy for students to perceive and correct script errors; in contrast, vocabulary errors were difficult. Also, Sachs and Polio (2007) examined the effects of written error corrections versus reformulations of second language learners' writing. The study suggested two means of improving learners' grammatical accuracy based on three stages: the composition-comparison-revision task. Both above papers noted that the effectiveness of error correction is to know the stage of errors: students would find it easy to recognize their stage of L2 learning. However, the stage of errors in written contexts could be different from that of errors in the utterances in L2 learning.

More recently, Loewen et al. (2009) discussed the controversial role of grammar instruction and error correction in terms of the beliefs of L2 learners, and indicated that varied beliefs were built about grammar instruction and error correction among foreign language learners. Also, Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) presented the effects of recasts (implicit feedback) or metalinguistic explanation (explicit feedback) from reviewing previous studies of the effects of these two types of corrective feedback on second language acquisition. The results in experimental studies showed that both implicit and explicit knowledge were benefited by metalinguistic explanation including the importance of measures of both types of knowledge. Additionally, Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) indicated that explicit correction is a benefit for early developmental features, and implicit correction is better for late developmental features. The above three papers stated the role of grammar instruction, especially the comparison of implicit and explicit corrective feedback, and error correction. In the present study, particularly, many students realized their errors easily from explicit correction through peer-review and teacher-review feedbacks. Explicit error correction is, thus, a better way to learn their process of learning L2 than implicit correction. The relationship of between grammar instruction and error correction is an ongoing issue in the L2 classroom as the process of L2 learning is clearly not unlike that of the first language (L1) learning in its trial-and error nature. Inevitably, learners will make mistakes from the process of learning a L2: hence, EFL learners may have benefits in turn from various forms of feedback on those errors. On the other hand, most recently, Diab (2010) examined two groups: the comparison and the experimental groups related to the linguistic performance of only a few students. The study reported that the experimental group in revised drafts significantly reduced their rule-based errors, but not their non-rule-based errors. According to the present study, most of the students focused on form-based errors more than meaning-based errors, because most EFL learners find it difficult to use the grammatical rules of English proficiently due to the difference in structure of both languages.

### **2.3 Corrective feedback**

The effects of different types of corrective feedback have been examined over the last twenty years, but it is still impossible to make firm conclusions about which feedback is the most beneficial to EFL learners. Many previous studies relate to the effectiveness of corrective feedback in L2 learning (Ellis et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). Ellis et al. (2008) showed that corrective feedback is effective for EFL learners. The study discussed the effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback on the accuracy of Japanese university students' use of the English indefinite and definite articles in written narratives. More recently, Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) explored the capacities of two different forms of corrective feedback. Likewise, Li (2010) revealed the effectiveness of corrective feedback associated with a meta-analysis in second language acquisition. The study showed (a) that implicit feedback was better than explicit feedback for maintaining the effect of corrective feedback that was maintained over time, (b) that shorter treatments generated a larger effect size than longer treatments, (c) that lab-based studies were more effective than classroom-based studies, (d) that dissertations showed larger effects than published studies, and (f) that studies conducted in foreign language contexts were of more benefit than those in second language contexts.

Yoshida (2010) explored learners' and Japanese language teachers' perceptions of corrective feedback, emphasizing on the learners responses from the teachers' corrective feedback. The study suggested the corrections between the learners' responses to corrective feedback and teachers' and learners' perceptions of corrective feedback related to the learners' perceptions of classroom interactions. It also showed the importance of various types of corrective feedback as well as the teachers' perceptions of individual learners. The present study also focused on two different forms of corrective feedback: peer-review versus teacher-review feedbacks because both types of corrective feedback are needed to enhance L2 learners' writing skills. Thus, considering the developmental stages to learn a L2, teachers and educators should be challenged to justify their faith in written corrective feedback and its effects on subsequent writing.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Materials**

In three studies, a total of 264 written essays from 42 subjects who are Korean students at university in Seoul were collected and analyzed to find out what type of errors (e.g., form or meaning) students make most and to check what kinds of error categories students make errors in frequently.

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Table 1. The Number of Essays in Three Studies

Studies	Teacher-review	Student-Review	Total Essays
Study 1	60 essays	60 essays	120 essays
Study 2	24 essays <sup>2</sup>	24 essays	48 essays
Study 3	48 essays	48 essays	96 essays
Total Essays	132 essays	132 essays	264 essays

As Table 1 shows, 264 essays, in Study 1, 120 written essays (60 essays from teacher-review and 60 essays from student-review feedbacks); in Study 2, 48 written essays (24 essays from teacher-review and 24 essays from student-review feedbacks); and in Study 3, 96 written essays (48 essays from teacher-review and 48 essays from student-review feedbacks), were analyzed and compared to determine form or meaning-based errors as well as to demonstrate frequent error categories.

Table 2. Information of Three Studies

Information	Study 1 <sup>3</sup>	Study 2	Study 3
N <sup>4</sup>	6: Females: 4; Males: 2	12: Females: 3; Males: 9	24: Females: 9; Males: 15
Level of Proficiency	Intermediate: 6	High: 5; Intermediate: 6 Low: 1	High: 6; Intermediate: 14 Low: 4
Period	9 weeks	25 weeks	25 weeks
Class	No Class- five times a week (Email interaction)	Classes– twice a week: Tuesday and Thursday	Classes– twice a week: Tuesday and Thursday
Hour	Anytime (From Monday to Friday)	One hour for a class (Two hours a week)	One hour for a class (Two hours a week)
Essay	160 essay items	24 essay items	104 essay items
Work	Voluntary Work	Assignments	Assignments
Research	Case study	Sample study	Sample study

As Table 2 shows, the first study was conducted from a case study. Six undergraduate students (4 females and 2 males) participated in this case study during nine weeks. All participated students were intermediate level regarding the results of pre-testing, were all interested in English writing and wanted to improve their writing abilities through this research. All of them were volunteers who were tested with various writing activities.

The second and third studies were administered during the course work. In Study 2, 12 undergraduate students (3 females and 9 males); and in Study 3, 24 undergraduate students (9 females and 15 males) participated in this

2 The number of students in Study 2 is 12 (e.g. 24 essays: two essays in each student), and the number of students in Study 3 is 24 (e.g. 48 essays: two essays in each student).

3 Study 1 is based on the result of a case study from Jung (2009)'s PhD research

4 "N" refers to the number of students.

study. All students had to join the college of general English educational program (in English-lecture) as a required subject. Students participated in this study for the first and second semester during 25 weeks. According to the determined level in the course, students in Study 2 were a higher level than students in Study 3. Students in the three studies were all interested in English writing and wanted to improve their writing abilities.

### **3.2 Instruction**

In Study 1, 2 and 3, the teacher<sup>5</sup> allocated the subjects in pairs of a similar level as it can be helpful if learners have equivalent language ability and progression as their partner. At the same time, the teacher provided students with designated assessment criteria for marking when they exchanged their work with each other. When students did not bring their essays, the teacher let them send their work to their partner or the teacher via email.

#### **3.2.1 Study 1 (Case Study)**

There are three steps including pre-test, experiment stages (1-9 weeks), and post-test for these online experiments to investigate what the most frequent error categories are during the nine week period.

***What Guidelines Are Provided:*** Before starting the case study, the teacher sent three different topics to subjects via email individually. The teacher asked learners not to use a dictionary to write in pre-test in their essays because the teacher wanted to assess the learners' writing ability initially; however, during the experiment stages, the teacher let learners use a dictionary to revise their written work. Subjects did simple dialogue completion tasks and complicated essay tasks. Accordingly, writing instructions were gradually designed from the easy step to the complicated one in order to foster EFL learners' writing ability systematically.

***How Peer/Teacher-Assessment Is Conducted:*** After completing their work every day, students exchanged their work by providing feedback following given criteria. Using peer feedback also allowed students to make a plan on how to set up the format and what to write before sending an email to their partner. After finishing their writing, they sent back their work to the teacher.

#### **3.2.2 Study 2 and 3 (Classroom research: Sample studies)**

The instruction of Study 2 and 3 was the same, but students' level was different between students in Study 2 (level 2) and students in Study 3 (level 3): Level 2 is a higher level than level 3. In Study 2 and 3, the teacher let students exchange their two essays (24 essays in Study 2; 48 essays in Study

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<sup>5</sup> The teacher is the author of this study.



3).

**What Guidelines Are Provided:** Students in Study 2 and 3 were required to submit two essays as assignments to improve their composition of English during the first and second semesters. The teacher provided students with a guide on how many words they had to write in each essay.

**How Peer/Teacher-Assessment Is Conducted:** In order to decide on each student's partner, the teacher let students submit pre-essay to divide into their level regarding their writing ability. After the teacher chose each student's partner according to their level, the teacher gave students a guide on how many words they had to write in each essay. After finishing the first draft, students exchanged their work with their partner. Using peer-feedback enabled students to plan the format and content before exchanging their work. After exchanging their work each other, students resubmitted their work to the teacher, and finally after reviewing students' work, the teacher returned it to each student with comments and marks. The teacher assessed each student's work individually through the study to find out which aspects of students' writing abilities improved through the study. Students could then develop the ability to assess their own writing and to examine it critically: to learn how to correct it, and express themselves fluently, logically, and accurately. Hence, students could learn how to edit their own writing as well as their partner's work by learning to find and correct their own errors and mistakes from both the reviews and the feedback.

### 3.3 Procedures

Table 3. Procedures of this Study

Steps	Procedures of the Study
Step 1	Conducted a case study during nine months
Step 2	Analyzed error categories from the case study in Study 1
Step 3	Administered the first course work during the semester
Step 4	Analyzed error categories from the course work in Study 2
Step 5	Conducted the second course work during the semester
Step 6	Analyzed error categories from the course work in Study 3
Step 7	Compared the three studies
Step 8	All error categories were again checked by two second raters

As Table 3 shows, the teacher conducted a case study during nine months and analyzed error categories from the case study in Study 1; the teacher administered course work during the first semester and analyzed error categories in Study 2; also, the teacher conducted another course work during the second semester and analyzed error categories in Study 3; and finally, the teacher compared the three studies and all error categories were again checked by two second raters in order to ensure reliability.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The data collection techniques employed both reviews from students and the teacher. There are a number of different categories of errors found in the second/foreign language learning. According to Brown (1994), there are four stages (*the pre-systematic, emergent, systematic and stabilization stages*) which are based on observations of what the learner does in terms of errors alone. Certain errors may have become fossilized depending on the stage of learning. However, the stage of learning where errors occur in written contexts could be different from that of errors found in speech in L2 learning.

**Error Correction Symbols by Harmer:** This study adopted the error correction symbols used by Harmer (2007) to simplify the sentence and to analyze errors easily as well as to find out in which parts EFL learners frequently make errors/mistakes in three studies. As Table 4 shows, the error correction symbols by Harmer (2007) focus on form-based errors as it may be hard to generalize the error correction symbols for meaning-based errors since they are associated with implicit errors related to subjective opinions.

Table 4. Error Correction Symbols by Harmer (2007)

Symbol	Meaning	Example errors
<b>Form-Based Correction</b>		
S	A spelling error	<i>The answer is obvious.</i>
WO	A mistake in word order	<i>I <u>like very much</u> it.</i>
G	A grammar mistake	<i>I am going to buy <u>some furnitures</u>.</i>
^G	An article mistake	<i>I go <u>the</u> bed early.</i>
T	Wrong verb tense	<i>I <u>have seen</u> him yesterday.</i>
C	Concord mistake (e.g. the subject and verb agreement)	<i>People <u>is</u> angry.</i>
P	A punctuation mistake.	<i>Do you like <u>london</u>.</i>
^	Something has been left out.	<i>He told ^that he was sorry.</i>
WW	Wrong word	<i>I am interested <u>on</u> jazz music.</i>
F/I	Too formal or informal	<i><u>Hi</u> Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter.</i>
<b>Meaning-Based Correction</b>		
{}	Something is not necessary.	<i>He was not {too}strong enough.</i>
?M	The meaning is unclear.	<i>That is a <u>very excited</u> photograph.</i>

As Table 4 shows, the (^G) mark in the symbols is added to explain the error of *the article* category in detail, because most of the students make major errors with *the article* in grammar. Form-based and meaning-based errors are distinguished to check which errors students make more. Both feedbacks focused on form-based errors such as in grammatical aspects; however, students also tried to review meaning-based errors.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results of analyzing error categories

#### 4.1.1 Results of analyzing 'marked' errors: Form-based errors

The results of 'marked' errors related to form-based ones (Study 1, 2 and 3) in Table 5 are presented below.

Table 5. Results of Marked Errors (Study 1, 2 and 3)

Studies	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Form-based	S -11	S -7	WO-4
Errors	WO -16	WO -4	G-110
	G -92	G -27	^G-138
	T -73	T -22	T-64
	C -24	C -9	C-30
	^ -20	^ -12	P-115
	P -10	P -4	^-32
	^G -94	^G -27	WW-64
	WW -83	WW -16	F/1-6
Results	423 times	128 times	563 times

As Table 5 shows, several students made a few errors about the (WO) mark in the symbols. The (WO) mark refers to a mistake in word order through student-review feedback. And several students made errors about the (^) mark of the symbols. The (^) mark means that something has been left out in the sentence. Students also made many errors about wrong word (WW). Many students made a lot of errors in *the grammar and the article categories* which for most of the non-native speakers are the most difficult parts of grammar. In this study most students made many 'marked' errors related to grammatical principles as well as other factors such as punctuation, omission, and insertion: in their writing as shown through teacher-review feedback. Some students made several errors about punctuation: some felt it hard to identify the proper punctuation with peer-review feedback. Many may believe using the appropriate punctuation is not important, so students made a lot of errors with punctuation in Study 3.

Grammar in English is a coherent system of rules and principles that are constructed according to the subject, verb, and object (SVO) pattern; whereas, Korean sentences are composed according to the subject, object, and verb (SOV) pattern, so most Korean students may not be able to formulate the general principles of grammatical rules. Also, many students made *the/ a(an)* article errors more than from teacher-review feedback. Most Korean students felt it difficult to put the position of *the article* exactly because they have no internalized grammar in English. Examples in Table 6 are as follows:

Table 6. Examples of Marked Errors from Both Feedbacks

Symbol	Student-Review Feedback	Teacher-Review Feedback
WO	Normally, our body (naturally) are ( )programmed from birth to begin going to sleep as soon as we lie down ~	The (making) process of ( )this energy is based on only nuclear fission and~
G	Many youths seem to overlooked (overlook) this phenomenon~	People are looking forward to develop (developing) alternative power~
G, ^G	Now, in (the) United States and Brazil,~	Google should lead in creating (a) safe internet (Internet) websites.
T	What would happen if human race starts (started) to use bio-fuels?	People in the developing country will (be) starving because of raising the price ~
C	Our silver industry set (sets) in toddler class.	People is (are) giving a lot of attention to spiritual culture of the Orient.
P	Although, bio-fuels have been invented to reduce pollution, they have many~	In japan (Japan), over 60% of total assets are controlled by elders~
^	I have never tried to take any sleeping pills to get rid (of) insomnia.	More people are cohabitating with somebody because (of) like this, ~
WW	Anyone can enjoy much (many) things like shopping, ~	There are limited resources in the world that the earth accumulated it (them) in (for) a long time.
F/1	Our country couldn't (could not) be free from this.	Without them, our brains don't (do not) function properly.

Some students made a lot of errors about the tenses because most felt it difficult to distinguish the difference between tenses. Tense is a basic skill in learning a L2, but most Korean students found it difficult to distinguish the difference in the time of the present, past, and future: especially, most did not recognize the perfect tense exactly.

Also, some students made errors with concord mistakes (e.g., the subject and verb agreement) in their writing. Some may not recognize the subject and verb agreement because the structure of Korean language is different from that of English.

#### 4.1.2 Results of analyzing ‘unmarked’ errors: Meaning-based errors

The results of meaning-based errors (Study 1, 2 and 3) in Table 7 are presented below.

Table 7. Results of Unmarked Errors (Study 1, 2 and 3)

Studies	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Meaning-based	{ } -8	{ } -3	{ } -46
Errors	?M -38	?M -2	?M -18
Results	46 times	5 times	64 times

As Table 7 shows, students made a few errors about the ( { } ) and (?M) marks in the symbols. Making errors or mistakes influenced by a variety of factors. It may not be easy for learners to assess the ‘unmarked’ errors because the

errors relate to comprehension errors. Many students may not understand how to use the exact words for specific meaning in the sentence. Examples in Table 8 are as follows:

Table 8. Examples of 'Unmarked Errors' from Both Feedbacks

Symbol	Student-Review Feedback	Teacher-Review Feedback
{ }	They suggest that we (should) give the food to people ( <u>the poor</u> )~	Since the first development of the Internet, <u>{the} humankind</u> has enjoyed ~
?M	A government should recognize the <u>probability (possibility)</u> that alternative energy sources can supply~	<u>Other than (Comparing to)</u> petroleum, this fuel does not have limited amount.

Also, students made fewer errors about the ({ }) and (?M) marks in the symbols from both feedbacks. The ({ }) mark means that something is not necessary in the sentence and the (?M) mark means that the meaning is unclear in the sentence. Many of the students made fewer errors about meaning-based than form-based errors because most of the students expressed their thoughts somewhat fully, but most felt it more difficult to use the perfect grammar rules than to choose the appropriate words for specific meaning as well as to express their thoughts clearly in the sentence as EFL learners.

## 4.2 The total results of error categories

In order to prove Questions 1 and 2, (*What type of errors do students make more between form-based and meaning-based errors? In which error categories do Korean learners frequently make mistakes?*) the results of error categories shown in Table 9.10 and 11 were assessed.

### 4.2.1 Comparing form-based with meaning-based errors

As Table 9 shows, this study distinguishes the difference between form-based and meaning-based errors from the three studies. Students made form-based errors (1114 times) much more than meaning-based errors (115 times).

Table 9. Form/Meaning-Based Errors

Studies	Form-Based Errors	Meaning-Based Errors
Study 1	423 times	46 times
Study 2	128 times	5 times
Study 3	563 times	64 times
Total Results	1114 times	115 times

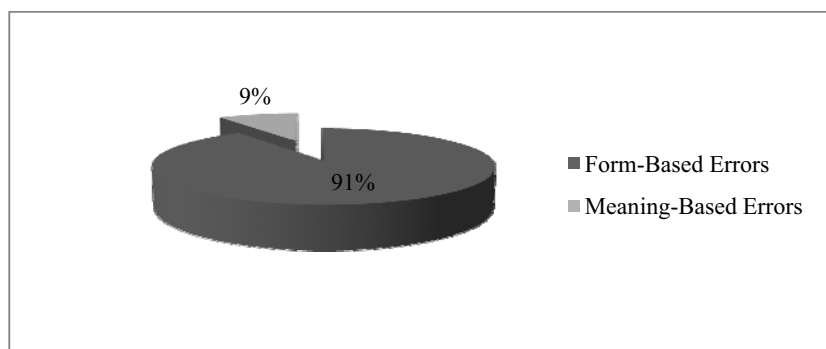


Figure 3. The results of comparing form-based with meaning-based errors

As Figure 3 shows, like ‘marked’ errors (91%) and ‘unmarked’ errors (9%), students made form-based errors much more. Most students made more errors in aspects of grammar than in aspects of meaning in the sentence. However, form-based and meaning-based feedbacks are still required to enhance the accuracy and the quality of students’ writing. Thus, it is evident that form-based errors were made much more than meaning-based errors as found from both reviews. In this respect, many Korean students find it difficult to use the exact grammar rules of English because the structure of Korean differs from that of English.

#### 4.2.2 Results of the most frequent error categories

As Table 10 shows, students in Study 1, 2 and 3 made the most frequent errors in *the article category* (Study 1: 94 times; Study 2: 27 times; Study 3: 138 times). The second most frequent error was *the grammar category* (Study 1: 92 times; Study 2: 27 times) and *the punctuation category* (Study 3: 115 times). The third most frequent error category was *the wrong word category* (Study 1: 83 times), *the tense category* (Study 2: 22 times), and *the grammar category* (Study 3: 110 times).

Table 10. The Most Frequent Error Categories in Study 1, 2 and 3

Studies	1 <sup>st</sup> Error Categories	2 <sup>nd</sup> Error Categories	3 <sup>rd</sup> Error Categories
Study 1	The article category (94 times)	The grammar category (92 times)	The wrong word category (83 times)
Study 2	The article category (27 times)	The grammar category (27 times)	The tense category (22 times)
Study 3	The article category (138 times).	The punctuation category (115 times)	The grammar category (110 times).

As Table 11 shows, the most frequent error from the three studies is *the article category* (258 times), the second most frequent error is *the grammar category* (229 times), the third most frequent error is *the wrong word*

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category (163 times) and the fourth most frequent error is *the tense category* (159 times).

Table 11. Frequent Error Categories

Error Categories	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Results
The article category	94 times	26 times	138 times	258 times
The grammar category	92 times	27 times	110 times	229 times
The wrong word category	83 times	16 times	64 times	163 times
The tense category	73 times	22 times	64 times	159 times

As Figure 4 shows, like *the article category* (32%), *the grammar category* (28%), *the wrong word category* (20%) and *the tense category* (20%), the most frequent error category is *the article*. Many students found it difficult to use the exact article and grammar rules as non-native learners. The most generalized breakdown can be made by identifying errors of addition, omission, substitution, ordering and so on. Although some students made a few errors in all parts of their writing, most of the other learners felt it difficult to realize the principals of grammar of English exactly: hence, they made several errors although they had a good ability to write English.

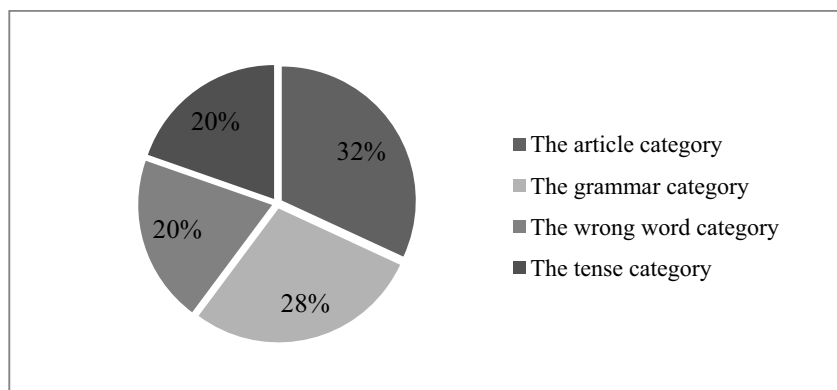


Figure 4. The results of frequent error categories

### 4.3 General discussion

#### 4.3.1 Limitations and suggestions

This study focused on analyzing error categories from teacher-review and student-review feedbacks. When EFL learners exchange their work for peer-review feedback, they need to consider the specific grammar and other

factors. There are some disadvantages and suggestions in examining the items of the written materials from both reviews. The study faced the following three main challenges: firstly, it may be difficult for learners to compare with each other because the errors occur in different categories for each student: hence, the individual difference of learners' beliefs must be considered in L2 learning. Secondly, when students receive incorrect feedback when exchanging their work, the results may be different depending on their partner's skill. Additionally, this study was limited to receiving correct peer-feedback from a fellow non-native speaker. Especially, EFL learners may not receive grammatically and structurally correct peer-feedback, even if they do give feedback to each other after finishing their work. And lastly, it may be difficult to measure students' writing ability exactly: when students exchanged peer-feedback, they focused on checking the grammatical categories except for a few items: hence it may be difficult to compare their corrective feedback to each other because they vary. In particular, many learners did not know how to give comments to their partner about the content of their partner's work, such as the format of writing and the quality of partner's work: thus, most of them focus on form-based feedback more than meaning-based feedback.

This study also contributed the following three suggestions: firstly, according to the findings of this study, English teachers and learners must know which linguistic aspects should be considered when learning and teaching L2 writing: so, this study may provide them with a guide and a model to accelerate their writing skills; secondly, on the basis of this study, teacher-review feedback for the enlargement of learner's writing skills is required in spite of the benefits from peer-review feedback; but in particular, peer-review feedback is a better way to expand learners' writing skills in a big size classroom setting. Hence, the educators need to create diverse and effective types of feedback. And lastly, using multimedia may be one of the best ways for peer-review, considering lack of time in the classroom. Yoonjung Cha (2007) suggested that computer-mediated communication can be one of the better tools for learners to find out the effect of peer-feedback in the EFL writing context. Thus, when students exchange their work through an email or the bulletin board, they may save time and stimulate their motivation easily.

Through this study, many students had positive attitudes to exchanging their work via peer-review, so it seemed that using peer-feedback helped these students' motivation and encouraged positive attitudes; but they still needed to receive teacher-review feedback to develop their L2 learning accurately. Even though some students initially had a good ability to write English, they still made several errors. For this reason, students need to receive teacher-review feedback to develop their composition of English considerably as well as to check in which parts they made errors when writing as non-native learners.



## 5 Conclusion

This study analyzed form and meaning-based errors to find out in which linguistic aspects EFL learners frequently made errors when writing to expand their skills in the composition of English. Students may make errors/mistakes in a number of categories due to lack of grammatical principles as well as other factors such as punctuation, vocabulary, omission, insertion and so on. For this reason, the learners may be unable to profit in writing due to lack of grammatical knowledge in spite of their organized process-writing. The results reported that the students had different situations in three studies (e.g., a case study, two sample studies) with the number of different students (e.g., n=6, 12, 24) with different levels, but the results were not much different. On the basis of the findings of this study, students made form-based errors (91%) much more than meaning-based errors (9%). Learners in three studies made common frequent errors, such as with the *article, grammar, wrong word and tense* of the sentence. When exchanging corrective feedback, most students focused more on form-based than meaning-based feedback. Considering EFL contexts, both corrective feedbacks are needed to help learners to assess the quality and the accuracy of their writing. Also, peer-review feedback has been considered as a beneficial tool; however, teacher-review feedback is still required to facilitate students' L2 development. In addition, when recognizing the most frequent error categories, students would extend the quality as well as the accuracy of their writing easily and effectively.

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