

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In today's global business landscape, effective communication is a critical determinant of organizational success. Among the various forms of professional communication, written correspondence plays a vital role in facilitating business transactions, maintaining client relationships, and upholding a company's professional image (Guffey & Loewy, 2018). Business correspondence, including emails, letters, memos, and reports, not only serves as a channel for information exchange but also represents a company's standards and values. In this context, grammatical accuracy is paramount.

Grammatical competence, particularly in written communication, contributes significantly to message clarity, precision, and professionalism. Errors in grammar can lead to ambiguity, misinterpretation, and reduced credibility, which may, in turn, negatively affect business outcomes (Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2003). A well-structured and grammatically correct message conveys attention to detail and respect for the recipient, both of which are crucial in fostering positive business relationships (Nickerson, 2005). Grammar serves as the structural foundation of any language, enabling the delivery of coherent and precise messages. When grammar is used correctly, the intended message is conveyed with clarity and professionalism. Conversely, grammatical errors can cause confusion, misinterpretation, and even damage the business's credibility. This is especially critical in business correspondence, where each message represents the company's

brand and level of professionalism (Choshen, Shifman, & Abend, 2022).

Clear communication also facilitates informed decision-making by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to accurate and timely information. When employees understand organizational goals and their roles within the company, they are better equipped to make decisions that align with business objectives. This alignment leads to increased productivity, as employees can work more efficiently when they comprehend expectations and receive constructive feedback. Research indicates that effective communication within teams enhances collaboration and drives better performance, ultimately contributing to improved business outcomes (Khan, 2024).

For non-native speakers of English, achieving grammatical accuracy in professional correspondence presents a distinct challenge, especially when formal instruction in business English is limited. This issue is particularly pertinent for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in non-English-speaking contexts, where employees often rely on English to engage with international customers or partners. While communicative ability may suffice in basic interactions, the lack of grammatical precision in formal writing can compromise the effectiveness of communication and the company's image (Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005).

The importance of error-free business correspondence becomes more apparent in small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as Sabu Art Shop. Sabu Art Shop, a local enterprise specializing in traditional arts and crafts, frequently engages in written correspondence with both domestic and international clients. As

the shop seeks to expand its market and professionalize its operations, the ability of its employees to produce clear, correct, and professional English correspondence becomes increasingly essential. Preliminary observations suggest that grammatical errors are prevalent in the written communication produced by the shop's staff. These errors, if unaddressed, may hinder effective communication and affect the perception of the company among its stakeholders. On top of that, a single misunderstanding caused by grammatical errors could lead to financial loss and customer dissatisfaction. Studies have shown that linguistic accuracy in business communication positively affects customer perception and trust (Khan, 2024).

Furthermore, with the increasing reliance on email, digital forms, and online messaging in business contexts, written communication has replaced many face-to-face interactions. This shift demands a higher standard of writing proficiency, where employees must be adapted not only at composing messages but also at doing so with grammatical correctness. Employees who struggle with grammar may unintentionally convey ambiguity or unprofessionalism, which can be detrimental to customer relations and internal efficiency (Brodsky, 2025).

As previously mentioned, grammatical accuracy is crucial in business correspondence. Errors in written communication can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and a loss of credibility with clients and customers. Proper grammar ensures that messages are conveyed clearly and professionally, reflecting positively on the organization's image. For instance, the misuse of possessive forms can alter the intended meaning of a sentence, leading to confusion. A correct example is: "The third driveway on the right is Kane and Abel's office," indicating

shared ownership, as opposed to the incorrect "Kane's and Abel's office," which implies separate ownership (Choshen, Shifman, & Abend, 2022).

A detailed analysis of the grammatical errors found in employees' business correspondence can provide valuable insights into the specific areas where communication skills may be lacking. Identifying common errors, such as subject-verb agreement, punctuation misuse, or incorrect tense usage, can help inform future training programs and professional development. Although grammatical error analysis has been widely investigated, most previous studies have been conducted in educational settings and have primarily focused on students' academic writing, such as descriptive, narrative, argumentative, or recount texts. As a result, limited attention has been given to grammatical errors occurring in authentic workplace communication, particularly in business correspondence involving interactions with international clients. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining grammatical errors in real business communication conducted through WhatsApp at Sabu Art Shop. Unlike previous studies that analyzed classroom-based writing tasks, this research focuses on naturally occurring language used in professional contexts. The findings are expected to contribute to the understanding of grammatical error patterns in workplace communication and provide practical recommendations for improving employees' English business writing skills.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Effective business communication is essential for organizational success, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) like Sabu Art Shop,

where written correspondence plays a critical role in daily operations. However, employees often lack formal training in business writing, which may result in the frequent occurrence of grammatical errors. These errors, while sometimes subtle, can impact message clarity, create misunderstandings, and affect the company's image in the eyes of clients and partners.

Despite the significance of error-free communication, limited research has been conducted on the specific grammatical challenges faced by employees in small retail businesses, especially in Indonesia. Sabu Art Shop, known for its artisan products and customer-centered approach, relies heavily on written communication for client interactions, inquiries, and order management. The presence of grammatical inaccuracies in such correspondences may hinder effective communication and weaken the professionalism perceived by recipients.

This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the grammatical errors found in business correspondence by Sabu Art Shop employees. By identifying the types, and potential causes of these errors, the research aims to contribute to the improvement of business communication practices in similar SME settings.

1.3 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on identifying and analyzing grammatical errors in the business correspondence produced by employees of Sabu Art Shop, a local small-medium enterprise engaged in retail and customer communication. The primary source of data is obtained from the Whatsapp messages written by staff in the course of daily business operations.

This research is limited by the accessibility and availability of business correspondence samples. This study do not examine spoken communication, nor

does it address non-grammatical aspects of correspondence such as tone, formatting, or cultural miscommunication. In addition, the scope of the analysis is restricted to grammatical errors in business correspondence written by the employees of Sabu Art Shop.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What types of grammatical error are most commonly found in the business correspondence of employees at Sabu Art Shop?
2. What are the sources of grammatical errors made by the employees of Sabu Art Shop?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

General Objective:

1. To identify the classifications of grammatical errors in written business correspondence made by the employees of Sabu Art Shop.
2. To investigate the sources of grammatical errors made in the business correspondence by the employees of Sabu Art Shop.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research may provide valuable insights into the current state of written communication within the context of a local SME. It holds significance for several key stakeholders:

- a) **For Sabu Art Shop Management:** The results will serve as a diagnostic tool to identify areas where employees may need support or training, ultimately leading to improved communication quality and customer service.
- b) **For Employees:** Awareness of common grammatical errors can help

individuals enhance their writing skills, contributing to their professional development and boosting confidence in written interactions.

c) For Business Communication Trainers and Educators: This study provides a real-world case that highlights the importance of grammar in business contexts and to inform the development of targeted training programs or materials.

d) For Researchers: The study adds to the limited body of literature concerning grammatical competence in business settings, particularly within SMEs in Indonesia or similar regions, and may serve as a reference for future research on language use in workplace communication.

