

# An Analysis of Lexical and Syntactic Errors Found in English Narrative Paragraphs Written by Thai EFL English and Non-English Major Students

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**Abstract**—This study aimed to analyze lexical and syntactic errors and to compare similarities and differences of types of lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL students. The participants in this study included 40 English and 40 non-English major students selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument was a writing test. According to the findings of the research, illustrating the first 5 ranks from the most to the least, the types of errors committed by English major students were found as follows: lexical errors: articles, spelling, prepositions, word choice, and pronouns; syntactic errors: verb tenses, punctuation, conjunctions, run-on sentences, and fragments. Moreover, regarding the errors committed by non-English major students, the results revealed types of lexical errors: spelling, prepositions, articles, word choice, and word form, and types of syntactic errors: verb tenses, punctuation, fragments, capitalization, and singular and plural. To compare the similarities and differences among error types, the findings revealed that there were 8 similar types and 2 different types of lexical errors; there were 26 similar types and 12 different types of syntactic errors. The findings of the study could significantly contribute to the development of pedagogical approaches to teaching English writing for Thai EFL students studying in both English and non-English majors.

**Index Terms**—error analysis, lexical errors, syntactic errors, Thai EFL students

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Rationale of the Study

Frequent errors found in writings serve as empirical evidence of the difficulties and complexities associated with English writing skills among EFL students at all levels, including lexical and syntactic levels (Chuenchaichon, 2022; Sermsook et al., 2017; Suraprajit, 2021). Numerous scholars assert that errors also serve as significant indicators of students' language acquisition processes and their perceptions in English language teaching and learning, thereby contributing substantially to language development (Corder, 1967; James, 1998; Sermsook et al., 2017). Consequently, error analysis (EA) is posited as a pivotal approach in second language acquisition (Brown, 2000; Chuenchaichon, 2022; Corder, 1967; Dulay et al., 1982; Hussain, 2019; James, 1998; Nuruzzaman et al., 2018; Reyes, 2025; Suraprajit, 2021). Outcomes of error analysis can elucidate language development progress, performance, and competence. These findings can help educators develop guidelines for remedial actions to address students' errors effectively and establish instructional strategies that enhance and encourage students' writing skills (Altabaa & Zulkifli, 2024; Corder, 1981; Nonkukhetkhong, 2013; Waelateh et al., 2019).

In Thailand, EFL students continue to face challenges in mastering writing skills, resulting in errors in their written assignments (Chuenchaichon, 2022; Rattanadilok Na Phuket & Othman, 2015; Sermsook et al., 2017). To my knowledge, there is no research specifically examining the error types committed by EFL English major and non-English major students, completing their written tasks under the same conditions. In this study, paragraph writing was emphasized because it is one of the fundamental units required for completing written tasks (Chuenchaichon, 2011). Additionally, a narrative paragraph was in an interesting area since it requires one to tell their own stories or events independently with a wide variety of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, which can be informative in terms of error analysis (Joven et al., 2025; Kangangi et al., 2024; Ningsi et al., 2025). These considerations underscore the rationale for the ongoing study. Consequently, there remains a significant need for further study in this area, particularly studies that address the writing skills of both English and non-English major students.

### B. Research Objectives

- (1) To explore the most frequent lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL English major students?

- (2) To explore the most frequent lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL non-English major students?
- (3) To compare the similarities and differences of the types of lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs between English major and non-English major students?

### C. Research Questions

- (1) What are the most frequent lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL English major students?
- (2) What are the most frequent lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by Thai EFL non-English major students?
- (3) What are the similarities or differences in the types of lexical and syntactic errors found in English narrative paragraphs written by English major and non-English major students?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Definition of Errors in Writing in English

Errors have been defined in different definitions and explanations from several different perspectives of scholars. Firstly, errors are defined as language features or linguistic items produced by L2 learners that have different ways used differently by native speakers (Corder, 1973; Richards & Schmidt, 2002). According to Dulay et al. (1982), errors are defined as deviations of language performance in speech and writing, occurring in different ways from the language norm of L1. Additionally, errors as a systematic deviation of correct language use occur consistently when L2 learners have not learnt correct forms of a language, and they are clueless to correct the errors (Norrish, 1983). Also, Ellis (1997) and James (1998) defined Errors as unnoticeable points that eventually occur because L2 learners lack the language competence to identify any errors and to consider whether errors are correct or incorrect. Alanazi (2017) provided more information that errors have been defined as one of the inevitable features and the empirical indicators in second language acquisition.

### B. Classification of Errors

Errors have been categorized into various categories by several scholars and researchers. Burt and Kiparsky (1972) stated that there are two categories of errors: local errors and global errors. Corder (1981) also categorized errors into two types: competence errors and performance errors. As for competence errors, interlingual and intralingual factors have been considered as two sources of EFL learners' errors. Additionally, performance errors occur because of L2 learners' stress, fatigue, or carelessness. According to the error classification proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), errors were classified into four categories: linguistic category taxonomy, surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. In the study conducted by Bussmann (1996), errors were classified based on five classificatory principles: modality, linguistic levels, form, type, and cause. According to James (1998), errors were classified into five categories: grammatical errors, substantive errors, lexical errors, syntactic errors, and semantic errors.

### C. Error Analysis (EA)

The theory of Error Analysis (EA) focuses on analyzing errors committed by ESL or EFL learners in second language acquisition. The purposes of this theory are to find out to what extent and how the learners perceive a second language, to discover difficulties in second language acquisition, and to provide assistance for both teachers and learners. The Error Analysis has been defined by several scholars and researchers as follows. Dulay et al. (1982) defined error analysis as an approach to investigate EFL and ESL learners' errors, to find out difficulties in L2 learning, and to explore learners' learning strategies. James (1998) stated that Error Analysis was defined as an investigation of the comparison of what learners have perceived with what they haven't. Brown (2000) defined Error Analysis as a process of L2 learners' errors investigation through observation, analysis, and classification so as to discover the L2 learners' learning system. According to Khansir (2012), EA is defined as "a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors students make" (p. 1029). Ulla (2014) proposed a definition of Error Analysis as "the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learners" (p. 22). Hafiz et al. (2018) defined Error Analysis as "the process of studying the appearance, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language" (p. 113).

### D. Previous Studies

#### (a). Analysis of Errors Committed by English Majors in Thailand

Nonkukhetkhong (2013) conducted his research to investigate five types of errors made by the 49 Thai first-year English major students. Also, Sermsook et al. (2017) analyzed errors in written tasks of 26 Thai second-year English major students. According to the study of Promsupa et al. (2017), it was to investigate grammatical error types found in English essays written by 34 Thai second-year English majors. Finally, Amnuai (2020) analyzed errors found in 40

research project abstracts written in English by Thai fourth-year students studying in English for International Communication.

*(b). Analysis of Errors Committed by Non-English Majors in Thailand*

Waelateh et al. (2019) examined the errors found in essays written by 15 Thai undergraduate students. In Suraprajit's (2021) study, its purpose was to investigate the errors found in sixty English essays written by Thai non-English major students. Additionally, Chuenchaichon (2022) analyzed the errors at the lexical, syntactic, and paragraph levels in expository paragraphs written by 95 Thai EFL non-English major students.

*(c). Analysis of Errors Committed by English Majors in Other Countries*

First, Khansir (2012) examined the types of errors committed by 200 students studying in the English major in Iran and India. Second, Zhan (2015) investigated the errors found in the writings of Chinese EFL students studying in the second year of the English major. Also, Sychandone (2016) analyzed and compared error types, frequency of error types, and similarities and differences of errors found in written tasks by 54 first, second, and third-year English major students in Champasack University, Laos. Finally, the study of Khatter (2019) was conducted to explore the most common errors in 120 essays written by 40 Saudi female students studying at the Department of English.

*(d). Analysis of Errors Committed by Non-English Majors in Other Countries*

Hamed (2018) investigated the types of linguistic errors and frequency of errors committed in the written tasks of 40 Libyan non-English major students. Also, Nuruzzaman et al. (2018) investigated the errors found in paragraphs written by 90 Saudi non-English major students of different English proficiency levels from three faculties. Additionally, Hussain (2019) examined the English written tasks written by 130 Saudi female students to find out the categories and the types of errors, and the frequency of errors.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

#### *A. Participants*

To examine the errors presented in English narrative paragraphs composed by Thai EFL university students, a purposive sampling method was employed to select 80 participants from Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, Thailand, during the second semester of academic year 2022. Among these participants, 40 were English majors enrolled in the Paragraph Writing course, while the remaining 40 were non-English majors enrolled in the Control and Formulaic Writing course. Despite the differences in their courses, all participants received instruction on English writing and narrative paragraph organization.

#### *B. Data Collection*

In adherence to ethical research standards, the research protocol was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and received approval, as indicated by the IRB approval number, PSRU-EC 2023/006. This ensured that the research process was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and standards. In this study, the 80 participants, comprising both English and non-English majors, were tasked with writing a narrative paragraph on the topic 'My First Day at the University.' This topic was chosen because it was relatable to all participants, thereby reducing their concern about content generation and allowing them to focus on form, including mechanics, grammar, and sentence structure. The participants were required to write a paragraph of 150-170 words by hand, without the use of dictionaries, within a one-hour timeframe. Subsequently, the written paragraphs from both groups were collected separately.

#### *C. Data Analysis*

Following data collection, the analysis adhered to the initial three steps of Corder's (1974) error analysis process: (1) collection of errors, (2) identification of errors, and (3) description of errors. Each written paragraph was meticulously examined at both lexical and syntactic levels to identify, classify, and quantify errors. Errors were categorized, and their frequencies and percentages were calculated for statistical analysis (see Table 1 and Table 2). Subsequently, the occurrence of error types in both groups was compared to identify similarities and differences (see Table 3 and Table 4).

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study are organized and demonstrated according to the three research questions (RQs) of this study, as follows:

#### *A. Research Question 1*

TABLE 1  
TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF THE LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC ERRORS COMMITTED BY ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

| No.   | Types of Errors                                   | Frequency | Percentage    | Rank    | Example  |
|---|---|-----------|---------------|---------|--|
| Lexical Errors<br>(737 out of 1,802: 40.9%)     |   |           |               |         |  |
| 1   | Articles  | 153       | 8.49 (20.76)  | 3 (1)   | On the first day in ( <b>a</b> ) classroom...                        |
| 2   | Spelling  | 149       | 8.27 (20.22)  | 4 (2)   | We <b>bolded</b> a bicycle to ride...                                |
| 3   | Prepositions                                      | 148       | 8.21 (20.08)  | 5 (3)   | ( <b>On</b> ) My first day at the university...                      |
| 4   | Word choice                                       | 129       | 7.16 (17.50)  | 6 (4)   | I woke up late because my alarm clock was <b>died</b> .              |
| 5   | Pronouns  | 82        | 4.55 (11.13)  | 7 (5)   | <b>She</b> name's Noom.  |
| 6   | Word Form   | 59        | 3.27 (8.00)   | 11 (6)  | I will <b>suggestion</b> to everyone who wants...                    |
| 7   | Nouns   | 9         | 0.50 (1.22)   | 20 (7)  | ...because of the COVID-19 ( <b>outbreak</b> ).                      |
| 8   | Adjectives  | 5         | 0.28 (0.68)   | 24 (8)  | I was <b>stronged better</b> . (stronger)                            |
| 9   | Adverbs   | 2         | 0.11 (0.27)   | 27 (9)  | I didn't remember because it began so bad( <b>ly</b> ).              |
| 10  | Transitional words                                | 1         | 0.06 (0.14)   | 28 (10) | ...many things, ( <b>for</b> ) example, Seven Eleven shop...         |
| Syntactic Errors<br>(1,065 out of 1,802: 59.1%) |   |           |               |         |  |
| 11  | Verb Tenses                                       | 309       | 17.15 (29.01) | 1 (1)   | On that day, I <b>have</b> new friends.                              |
| 12  | Punctuation                                       | 223       | 12.38 (20.94) | 2 (2)   | I liked this university, because I liked people here.                |
| 13  | Conjunctions                                      | 79        | 4.38 (7.42)   | 8 (3)   | Although my first day is not like others, <b>but</b> I am so happy.  |
| 14  | Run-on sentences                                  | 77        | 4.27 (7.23)   | 9 (4)   | I was so happy ( <b>because</b> ) I had friends.                     |
| 15  | Fragments   | 66        | 3.66 (6.20)   | 10 (5)  | When I came to the university.                                       |
| 16  | Singular / Plural                                 | 57        | 2.72 (5.35)   | 12 (6)  | I don't have friend( <b>s</b> ) here.                                |
| 17  | Capitalization                                    | 49        | 3.16 (4.60)   | 13 (7)  | someone came from Mae Sot.   |
| 18  | Comma splice                                      | 27        | 1.50 (2.54)   | 14 (8)  | I ate noodles, I liked everything in the university.                 |
| 19  | L1 Syntactic interference                         | 25        | 1.39 (2.35)   | 15 (9)  | My alarm clock was died.   |
| 20  | Omitting 'verb to be' before adjectives           | 21        | 1.17 (1.97)   | 16 (10) | I ( <b>was</b> ) excited because...                                  |
| 21  | Subject-verb agreement                            | 13        | 0.72 (1.22)   | 17 (11) | Friends <b>is</b> kind.  |
| 22  | Noun clause                                       | 13        | 0.72 (1.22)   | 17 (11) | I knew <b>that where</b> the place was.                              |
| 23  | Misordering in a sentence                         | 11        | 0.61 (1.03)   | 18 (12) | The university had food was good. (Food in the university was good.) |
| 24  | Using 'V1' after 'verb to be'                     | 10        | 0.55 (0.94)   | 19 (13) | A girl who was <b>sit</b> next to me...                              |
| 25  | Using 'V1' after prepositions                     | 10        | 0.55 (0.94)   | 19 (13) | I smiled to her for <b>make</b> friends.                             |
| 26  | Unnecessary verbs                                 | 8         | 0.44 (0.75)   | 21 (14) | I rode a motorbike <b>to come</b> to my dormitory.                   |
| 27  | Word order  | 7         | 0.39 (0.66)   | 22 (15) | I never saw my <b>face friends</b> . (friends' faces)                |
| 28  | Relative  | 7         | 0.39 (0.66)   | 22 (15) | It was a feeling <b>that it was</b> different from a high school.    |
| 29  | Using 'V2' after 'to'                             | 7         | 0.39 (0.66)   | 22 (15) | I enjoyed to <b>went</b> to the university.                          |
| 30  | Omitting the preparatory 'to' after certain verbs | 6         | 0.33 (0.56)   | 23 (16) | It has been two years to came ( <b>to</b> ) learn here.              |
| 31  | Passive voice                                     | 6         | 0.33 (0.56)   | 23 (16) | My feeling would change ( <b>would be changed</b> ).                 |
| 32  | Using 'V.ing' after 'to'                          | 5         | 0.28 (0.47)   | 24 (17) | I stayed to <b>learning</b> for a certificate.                       |
| 33  | Using 'V2' after prepositions                     | 5         | 0.28 (0.47)   | 24 (17) | I will use my power for <b>did</b> it.                               |
| 34  | Using 'V2' after 'verb to be'                     | 4         | 0.22 (0.38)   | 25 (18) | We are <b>went</b> shopping...                                       |
| 35  | Using 'V1' after 'verb to have'                   | 3         | 0.17 (0.28)   | 26 (19) | I read books that I hadn't <b>see</b> before.                        |
| 36  | Omitting 'verb to do' before 'not'                | 3         | 0.17 (0.28)   | 26 (19) | Teachers ( <b>did</b> ) not gave homework.                           |
| 37  | Using 'to + V1' instead of 'V1'                   | 3         | 0.17 (0.28)   | 26 (19) | Thing I must <b>to do</b> was to take a shower.                      |
| 38  | Using 'verb to do' before adjectives              | 3         | 0.17 (0.28)   | 26 (19) | I <b>didn't</b> sad.   |
| 39  | Omitting necessary verbs                          | 2         | 0.11 (0.19)   | 27 (20) | It was exciting ( <b>to come to</b> ) the university                 |
| 40  | Using 'V.ing' instead of 'V1'                     | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | She always <b>helping</b> me a lot.                                  |
| 41  | Unnecessary 'verb to be'                          | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | She will <b>be</b> take care...                                      |
| 42  | Using 'V2' after 'verb to do'                     | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | I don't <b>ate</b> food.   |
| 43  | Using 'V2' after modals                           | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | I can't <b>controlled</b> my life.                                   |
| 44  | Using a singular verb after modals                | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | My feeling will <b>changes</b> .                                     |
| 45  | Using 'V.ing' after modals                        | 1         | 0.06 (0.09)   | 28 (21) | I guess we will <b>getting</b> by...                                 |
| Total Errors of English major students          |   | 1,802     | 100           |         |  |

Data from Table 1 present that the total number of errors made by Thai EFL English major students was 1,802: 737 lexical errors, accounting for 40.9% and 1,065 syntactic errors, accounting for 59.1%. After analyzing the errors, 45 types of errors were found: 10 types of lexical errors and 35 types of syntactic errors. Among all types of errors, the five most frequently found errors were verb tenses (309 out of 1,802 errors or 17.15%), punctuation (223 or 12.38%), articles (153 or 8.49%), spelling (149 or 8.27%), and prepositions (148 or 8.21%). The findings of the current study were in line with the study of Khatter (2019), which analyzed the errors found in essays written by Saudi English major students. That is, the five most frequently found error types in both studies were similar; however, the ranks of the error types were different. Additionally, regarding verb tenses as the most committed errors found in this study, this finding goes parallel with the finding of Nonkukhetkhong (2013) investigating errors made by Thai English major students. A similar finding that the most frequent errors were tenses and verb forms was found in Zhan (2015), analyzing the errors found in the writings of Chinese English major students.

At the lexical level, there were 737 errors out of the total errors (1,802), and the percentage and the rank of the errors in this level are shown in parentheses in the table. Articles (153 or 20.76%) were the most frequently found errors in this level, followed by spelling (149 or 20.22%), prepositions (148 or 20.08%), word choice (129 or 17.5%), and pronouns (82 or 11.13%). As seen above, the percentage among errors of articles, spelling, and prepositions is not significantly different, so these are the main types of lexical errors. These findings are in line with the study of Sermsook et al. (2017), which analyzed errors committed by Thai English major students and found that articles and spelling were the two most frequently found errors. Moreover, in the study of Promsupa et al. (2017) investigating error types committed by Thai English majors, the frequency of errors of articles and prepositions was found in rank 2 and rank 3, respectively.

In this current study, the use of articles posed the most common difficulty at the lexical level for Thai EFL English major students. The students often omitted the indefinite article 'a/an' more frequently, as in the following sentences, 'I never (a) negative attitude to everything at the university' or 'In (a) classroom, we did (an) activity together'. Also, they used the definite article 'the' instead of the indefinite article 'a/an' as in 'I always looked at the (a) map' or 'I became the (a) new student in this university'. The reason for this error type might be because there are no articles in the Thai language (L1); therefore, most of the Thai EFL students are not familiar with and have still been confused with the use of articles in English (Sermsook et al., 2017; Suniphan, 2015; Suraprajit, 2021).

At the syntactic level, there were 1,065 errors out of the total errors (1,802), and the percentage and the rank of the errors in this level are shown in parentheses in the table. It was revealed that verb tenses (309 or 29.01%) were the most common type of errors in this level. It was followed by punctuation (223 or 20.94%), conjunctions (79 or 7.42%), run-on sentences (77 or 7.23%), and fragments (66 or 6.20%). These findings are rather similar to the previous study (Sychandone, 2016) analyzing errors found in the writings of English major students in Laos. The results presented that verb tenses were the second most frequently committed errors; however, verb tenses were found as the most frequently committed errors in this current study. Additionally, the frequency of conjunction errors was found in the same rank in both studies, namely in rank 3. However, the findings are slightly different from those found in Sermsook et al. (2017) exploring errors found in tasks by Thai second-year English majors, and the results revealed that the frequency of punctuation errors was in rank 1 but found as rank 2 in this present study. Additionally, the frequency of verb tense errors was found as rank 5, but found as rank 1 in the present study.

In this present study, verb tenses were found as the most frequently made syntactic errors by Thai EFL English major students. It might be possible that all of them, as English majors considered to have a great understanding of the rules of verb tenses, completed their written tasks with carelessness and negligence rather than a lack of L2 proficiency (Nuruzzaman et al., 2018). Therefore, students' awareness might be fostered and promoted to help the students reduce the number of errors in this error type (Sermsook et al., 2017).

## *B. Research Question 2*

TABLE 2  
TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF THE LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC ERRORS COMMITTED BY NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

| No.  | Types of Errors  | Frequency | Percentage    | Rank    | Example  |
|--|--|-----------|---------------|---------|--|
| Lexical Errors<br>(439 out of 1,070: 41.03%)   |  |           |               |         |  |
| 1  | Spelling   | 142       | 13.27 (32.35) | 2 (1)   | I thought Japanese was <i>diffical</i> .   |
| 2  | Prepositions   | 83        | 7.76 (18.91)  | 4 (2)   | <i>In</i> my first day, I felt lonely.   |
| 3  | Articles   | 75        | 7.01 (17.08)  | 5 (3)   | I didn't know anyone in <i>(the)</i> class.  |
| 4  | Word choice  | 73        | 6.82 (16.63)  | 6 (4)   | I can't think ( <i>recognize</i> ) vocabulary.   |
| 5  | Word Form  | 32        | 2.99 (7.29)   | 11 (5)  | Good <i>think</i> . (thinking)   |
| 6  | Pronouns   | 30        | 2.80 (6.83)   | 12 (6)  | <i>It</i> my first class was about Japanese.   |
| 7  | Nouns  | 3         | 0.28 (0.68)   | 19 (7)  | <i>(The thing)</i> I liked the most about the university was a view.                                   |
| 8  | Adjectives   | 1         | 0.09 (0.23)   | 21 (8)  | We are responsible for ourselves <i>more</i> in each subject.  |
| Syntactic Errors<br>(631 out of 1,070: 58.97%) |  |           |               |         |  |
| 9  | Verb Tenses  | 245       | 22.90 (38.83) | 1 (1)   | Because I <i>am</i> lazy, I <i>want</i> to sleep.  |
| 10   | Punctuation  | 99        | 9.25 (15.69)  | 3 (2)   | When I talked to her(,) I thought I was so stupid.   |
| 11   | Fragments  | 70        | 6.54 (11.09)  | 7 (3)   | My first day at the university.  |
| 12   | Capitalization   | 57        | 5.33 (9.03)   | 8 (4)   | She ate <i>Bacon</i> and <i>Juice</i> .  |
| 13   | Singular / Plural  | 38        | 3.55 (6.02)   | 9 (5)   | My friends played game(s).   |
| 14   | Omitting 'verb to be' before adjectives  | 34        | 3.18 (5.39)   | 10 (6)  | She ( <i>was</i> ) so kind.  |
| 15   | Conjunctions   | 15        | 1.40 (2.38)   | 13 (7)  | Before we had an online class, <i>and</i> I saw bad comments about me.                                 |
| 16   | Word order   | 13        | 1.21 (2.06)   | 14 (8)  | I met <i>first my friends</i> in the library.  |
| 17   | Subject-verb agreement   | 8         | 0.75 (1.27)   | 15 (9)  | They <i>likes</i> Japanese because they <i>likes</i> an animation.                                     |
| 18   | Using 'V1' after 'verb to be'  | 7         | 0.65 (1.11)   | 16 (10) | Everyday, I'm <i>studies</i> ...   |
| 19   | Run-on sentences   | 6         | 0.56 (0.95)   | 17 (11) | This place has a lotus (, <i>so</i> ) it makes me feel comfortable,                                    |
| 20   | Using 'V2' after 'to'  | 6         | 0.56 (0.95)   | 17 (11) | I was so happy to <i>met</i> them.   |
| 21   | Using 'V1' after prepositions  | 4         | 0.37 (0.63)   | 18 (12) | Before <i>studies</i> , I went to eat a meal.  |
| 22   | Omitting the preparatory 'to' after certain verbs                                  | 3         | 0.28 (0.48)   | 19 (13) | I tried ( <i>to</i> ) talk to friends.   |
| 23   | Using 'V2' after 'verb to do'  | 3         | 0.28 (0.48)   | 19 (13) | My friends don't <i>ate</i> a meal.  |
| 24   | Omitting necessary verb (It was exciting ( <del>to come to</del> ) the university) | 3         | 0.28 (0.48)   | 19 (13) | I wanted to ( <i>go to</i> ) university.   |
| 25   | Omitting 'verb to be' before 'V.ing'   | 3         | 0.28 (0.48)   | 19 (13) | We ( <i>were</i> ) going to the class.   |
| 26   | Comma splice   | 2         | 0.19 (0.32)   | 20 (14) | There were a lot of cars in the city, this was so bad,   |
| 27   | Unnecessary 'verb to be'   | 2         | 0.19 (0.32)   | 20 (14) | On my first day <del>is</del> -at 6.00, I go to the university.  |
| 28   | L1 Syntactic interference  | 2         | 0.19 (0.32)   | 20 (14) | I can drive <del>go</del> to the university  |
| 29   | Misordering in a sentence  | 2         | 0.19 (0.32)   | 20 (14) | I liked the most about the university was a view. ( <i>I liked a view in the university the most</i> ) |
| 30   | Using 'V2' after modals  | 2         | 0.19 (0.32)   | 20 (14) | They looked fun because they could <i>spoke</i> Japanese.  |
| 31   | Using 'V.ing' after 'to'   | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | I had experience to <i>learning</i> Japanese.  |
| 32   | Using 'verb to do' before adjectives   | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | I <i>don't</i> happy to study for 2 hours.   |
| 33   | Omitting necessary 'verb to be'  | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | My friends ( <i>were</i> ) so cute.  |
| 34   | Using 'V3' after prepositions  | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | After <i>drunk</i> milk, I saw my friends.   |
| 35   | Using 'V2' after prepositions  | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | I went to the university for <i>studied</i> .  |
| 36   | Passive voice  | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | My first day was great because experiences gave ( <i>were given</i> ).                                 |
| 37   | Noun clause  | 1         | 0.09 (0.16)   | 21 (15) | ( <i>What</i> ) I knew was Japanese language, but I didn't know English.                               |
| Total Errors of non-English major students     |  | 1,070     | 100           |         |  |

According to Table 2, the results reveal that 1,070 were found as a total number of errors committed by Thai EFL non-English major students: 439 lexical errors, accounting for 41.03% and 631 syntactic errors, accounting for 58.97%. There were 37 types of errors found after analyzing the data: 8 types of lexical errors and 29 types of syntactic errors. Among all error types found, the five most common error types were verb tenses (245 out of 1,070 errors or 22.90%), followed by spelling (142 or 13.37%), punctuation (99 or 9.25%), prepositions (83 or 7.76%), and articles (75 or 7.01%).

According to these findings, the five most common types of frequently committed errors are rather similar to the error types found in other studies conducted with non-English major students (Hamed, 2018; Hussain, 2019; Nuruzzaman et al., 2018; Suraprajit, 2021). Also, it is interesting to compare the five most common error types found in the previous studies and those found in the current study. Firstly, Hamed (2018) investigated the types of linguistic errors of Libyan non-English major students and found spelling as the first rank, verb tenses as the third rank, punctuation as the fourth rank, and articles as the fifth rank. As for error types found in Hussain's (2019) study conducted to examine the English written tasks of Saudi non-English major students to find out the categories, types, and frequency of the errors, spelling and punctuation were found as the most and the second most, including prepositions and articles found as the fourth and fifth most, respectively. In the study of Nuruzzaman et al. (2018), who investigated the errors found in paragraphs written by Saudi non-English major students, the first two error types found in their study relatively align with the first two error types found in this current study. That is, verb tenses and spelling were in the first two ranks of most common error types found in both studies. However, Suraprajit (2021), investigating the errors found in English essays of Thai non-English major students, found that the frequency of article errors and preposition errors was in rank 1 and rank 2, but both of them were found in rank 5 and rank 4 in this present study.

It is also valuable to discuss further the overview of the study's findings demonstrated in this study and previous studies. The top five most frequently committed error types found in each study were focused on. Firstly, spelling was the most frequently committed error type in the studies of Hamed (2018), Hussain (2019), and Nuruzzaman et al. (2018); nevertheless, it was the second most in this present study. Secondly, capitalization was found as one of the first five most frequently used errors, according to the studies of Hamed (2018), Hussain (2019), and Nuruzzaman et al. (2018); nonetheless, it did not appear in the first five ranks but in rank 8 in this current study. Finally, however, according to the findings of the present study, it was found that the first five error types committed by both groups of students are highly similar. That is, verb tenses, spelling, punctuation, prepositions, and articles, respectively, were the top five error types made by non-English major students, and those of English major students were verb tenses, punctuation, articles, spelling, and prepositions, respectively.

Interestingly, among both groups of participants in this study, verb tenses were revealed as the most frequently committed errors. As observed in the data analysis, most of the participants in both groups used a simple present tense verb form instead of a past tense verb form, as in 'On that day, I have (had) new friends and know (knew) some places in the university'. The cause of this error type might be that L1 syntactic interference occurs in L2 writing processes (Suraprajit, 2021). In the Thai language (L1), there is no equivalent of past tense verb forms or conjugation. That is, to indicate when actions take place in the time of present, past, and future, the same forms of verbs are used. Moreover, it is possible that the writing topic, which required the students to write about events in the past, caused this error type, so this type of error was highly committed (Sychandone, 2016). Additionally, it might be possible that they could not revise and edit their tasks elaborately because of a high-pressure situation and time restriction. Therefore, a greater length of time is required to help them reduce errors in their written tasks. In conclusion, it might be stated that the use of verb tenses seems to be one of the L2 learning difficulties of both English and non-English major students.

At the lexical level, 439 were found as a total number of lexical errors, out of 1,070. The percentage and the rank of the error types in this level are displayed in parentheses in the table. Among 8 types of lexical errors, spelling (142 or 32.35%) was the most frequently found error type, followed by prepositions (83 or 18.91%), articles (75 or 17.08%), word choice (73 or 16.63%), and word form (32 or 7.29%). This finding correlates with the study of Chuenchaichon (2022), analyzing the errors at the lexical levels in paragraphs of Thai EFL non-English major students. The five most frequently found errors in his study: spelling, prepositions, articles, word choice, and word form, respectively, are similar to those found in the current study. Interestingly, spelling was found as the most frequently committed error in both studies, which were conducted with Thai EFL non-English major students. Regarding errors in spelling, it might be because of the students' limited knowledge of English vocabulary and their carelessness (Sermsook et al., 2017).

At the syntactic level, the findings showed that there were 631 errors out of 1,070. The number shown in parentheses in the table illustrates the percentage and the rank of the errors in this level. According to the findings, the five most frequently committed errors were verb tenses (245 or 38.83%), punctuation (99 or 15.69%), fragments (70 or 11.09%), capitalization (57 or 9.03%), and singular/plural (38 or 6.02%). This finding aligns with the study of Chuenchaichon (2022), analyzing the errors at syntactic levels in paragraphs of Thai EFL non-English major students and found that the top four most frequently committed error types found: capitalization, punctuation, singular/plural, and fragments, respectively, were rather similar to those found in the present study. However, the most frequently committed error type in both studies was different. That is, the frequency of verb tense errors was found as the first rank in this current study; capitalization was found as the first rank in the other study. As previously mentioned, this might result from L1 syntactic interference, writing topic, and time restriction.

## C. Research Question 3

TABLE 3  
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF TYPES OF LEXICAL ERRORS COMMITTED BY ENGLISH MAJOR AND NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

| No.                  | Types of Lexical Errors | English Major Students |            | Non-English Major Students |            | Similarity | Difference |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                      |                         | Frequency              | Percentage | Frequency                  | Percentage |            |            |
| 1                    | Articles                | 153                    | 20.76      | 75                         | 17.08      | ✓          |            |
| 2                    | spelling                | 149                    | 20.22      | 142                        | 32.35      | ✓          |            |
| 3                    | Prepositions            | 148                    | 20.08      | 83                         | 18.91      | ✓          |            |
| 4                    | Word choice             | 129                    | 17.50      | 73                         | 16.63      | ✓          |            |
| 5                    | Pronouns                | 82                     | 11.13      | 30                         | 6.83       | ✓          |            |
| 6                    | Word Form               | 59                     | 8.01       | 32                         | 7.29       | ✓          |            |
| 7                    | Nouns                   | 9                      | 1.22       | 3                          | 0.68       | ✓          |            |
| 8                    | Adjectives              | 5                      | 0.68       | 1                          | 0.23       | ✓          |            |
| 9                    | Adverbs                 | 2                      | 0.27       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 10                   | Transitional words      | 1                      | 0.14       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| Total lexical errors |                         | 737                    | 100        | 439                        | 100        |            |            |

As illustrated in Table 3, there were both similarities and differences between the types of lexical errors committed by English major students and the lexical error types of non-English major students. Among total lexical errors, 10 types were found. There were 8 similar types of lexical errors: articles, spelling, prepositions, word choice, pronouns, word form, nouns, and adjectives. Both groups of students made these types of errors. On the contrary, there were only 2 different types of lexical errors: adverbs and transitional words, both of which were found as the error types made by English major students.

In terms of similarity, the percentages of both groups' lexical errors were not significantly different. That is, the percentages of non-English major students' lexical errors seem to be slightly lower than those of English major students. This might be because the total number of words written in the English major students' tasks is greatly higher than that of non-English major students. In other words, writing more will inevitably lead to more chances to make more errors. However, the percentage of spelling errors (32.35%) made by non-English major students was highly different from the percentage of English major students' spelling errors (20.22%). Despite a smaller number of the total words written in the tasks, a large number of spelling errors were found among non-English major students. Nevertheless, it could be possible to conclude that misspelling is a serious problem for both English and non-English major students.

As for differences, there were no errors of adverbs and transition words found in non-English major students' written tasks, but there were small numbers of error types of adverbs (0.27%) and transition words (0.14%) found in English major students' written tasks. According to the data analysis, both groups of students seem to scarcely use adverbs and transition words in their task, and this might lead to infrequent occurrences of these error types. The reason for the less frequent use of adverbs and transition words in written tasks written by Thai EFL students might be because they have a lack of knowledge and limited vocabulary, and some of them might be perplexed because of their function and placement. Also, L1 interference might be another influencing factor that contributes to why adverbs and transition words are scarcely used in students' writing.

TABLE 4  
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF TYPES OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS COMMITTED BY ENGLISH MAJOR AND NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

| No.                    | Types of Syntactic Errors                         | English Major Students |            | Non-English Major Students |            | Similarity | Difference |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                        |   | Frequency              | Percentage | Frequency                  | Percentage |            |            |
| 1                      | Verb Tenses                                       | 309                    | 29.01      | 245                        | 38.83      | ✓          |            |
| 2                      | Punctuation                                       | 223                    | 20.94      | 99                         | 15.69      | ✓          |            |
| 3                      | Conjunctions                                      | 79                     | 7.42       | 15                         | 2.38       | ✓          |            |
| 4                      | Run-on sentences                                  | 77                     | 7.23       | 6                          | 0.95       | ✓          |            |
| 5                      | Fragments   | 66                     | 6.20       | 70                         | 11.09      | ✓          |            |
| 6                      | Singular / Plural                                 | 57                     | 5.35       | 38                         | 6.02       | ✓          |            |
| 7                      | Capitalization                                    | 49                     | 4.60       | 57                         | 9.03       | ✓          |            |
| 8                      | Comma splice                                      | 27                     | 2.54       | 2                          | 0.32       | ✓          |            |
| 9                      | L1 Syntactic interference                         | 25                     | 2.35       | 2                          | 0.32       | ✓          |            |
| 10                     | Omitting 'verb to be' before adjectives           | 21                     | 1.97       | 34                         | 5.39       | ✓          |            |
| 11                     | Subject-verb agreement                            | 13                     | 1.22       | 8                          | 1.27       | ✓          |            |
| 12                     | Noun clause                                       | 13                     | 1.22       | 1                          | 0.16       | ✓          |            |
| 13                     | Misordering in a sentence                         | 11                     | 1.03       | 2                          | 0.32       | ✓          |            |
| 14                     | Using 'V1' after 'verb to be'                     | 10                     | 0.94       | 7                          | 1.11       | ✓          |            |
| 15                     | Using 'V1' after prepositions                     | 10                     | 0.94       | 4                          | 0.63       | ✓          |            |
| 16                     | Unnecessary verbs                                 | 8                      | 0.75       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 17                     | Word order  | 7                      | 0.66       | 13                         | 2.06       | ✓          |            |
| 18                     | Relative  | 7                      | 0.66       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 19                     | Using 'V2' after 'to'                             | 7                      | 0.66       | 6                          | 0.95       | ✓          |            |
| 20                     | Omitting the preparatory 'to' after certain verbs | 6                      | 0.56       | 3                          | 0.48       | ✓          |            |
| 21                     | Passive voice                                     | 6                      | 0.56       | 1                          | 0.16       | ✓          |            |
| 22                     | Using 'V.ing' after 'to'                          | 5                      | 0.47       | 1                          | 0.16       | ✓          |            |
| 23                     | Using 'V2' after prepositions                     | 5                      | 0.47       | 1                          | 0.16       | ✓          |            |
| 24                     | Using 'V2' after 'verb to be'                     | 4                      | 0.38       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 25                     | Using 'V1' after 'verb to have'                   | 3                      | 0.28       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 26                     | Omitting 'verb to do' before 'not'                | 3                      | 0.28       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 27                     | Using 'to + V1' instead of 'V1'                   | 3                      | 0.28       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 28                     | Using 'verb to do' before adjectives              | 3                      | 0.28       | 1                          | 0.16       | ✓          |            |
| 29                     | Omitting necessary verb                           | 2                      | 0.19       | 3                          | 0.48       | ✓          |            |
| 30                     | Using 'V.ing' instead of 'V1'                     | 1                      | 0.09       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 31                     | Unnecessary 'verb to be'                          | 1                      | 0.09       | 2                          | 0.32       | ✓          |            |
| 32                     | Using 'V2' after 'verb to do'                     | 1                      | 0.09       | 3                          | 0.48       | ✓          |            |
| 33                     | Using 'V2' after modals                           | 1                      | 0.09       | 2                          | 0.32       | ✓          |            |
| 34                     | Using a singular verb after modals                | 1                      | 0.09       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 35                     | Using 'V.ing' after modals                        | 1                      | 0.09       | 0                          | 0          |            | ✓          |
| 36                     | Omitting 'verb to be' before 'V.ing'              | 0                      | 0          | 3                          | 0.48       |            | ✓          |
| 37                     | Omitting necessary 'verb to be'                   | 0                      | 0          | 1                          | 0.16       |            | ✓          |
| 38                     | Using 'V3' after prepositions                     | 0                      | 0          | 1                          | 0.16       |            | ✓          |
| Total syntactic errors |   | 1,065                  | 100        | 631                        | 100        |            |            |

The data illustrated in Table 4 present the similarities and differences in the types of syntactic errors made by English and non-English major students. Among the total syntactic errors, they were categorized into 38 error types.

As for similarities, there were 26 error types that both groups employed. According to these similar types of errors, most of them were related to the syntax or English grammar about tenses and parts of speech (Sychandone, 2016). Interestingly, among 26 similar error types, verb tense and punctuation, respectively, were found at very high frequencies as the first two syntactic errors of both English and non-English major students. It might be stated that both verb tenses and punctuation are very serious problems for both English and non-English major students.

In terms of differences, there were 12 error types. Only English major students made errors on 9 types. However, 3 types of errors were committed by only non-English major students. Regarding these different error types, the differences in percentage of the error types between English and non-English major students were very low; therefore, it might be concluded that both groups of students were not significantly different in terms of differences in error types.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has conducted an analysis of the lexical and syntactic errors found in the narrative paragraphs of 40 Thai EFL English and 40 Thai EFL non-English major students at a Thai university. The objectives of the study were to identify the types of errors, determine their frequency, and compare the similarities and differences in error types. Regarding the errors committed by English major students, the findings indicated that, at the lexical level, the five most prevalent error types were articles, spelling, prepositions, word choice, and pronouns. At the syntactic level, the most frequent errors were verb tenses, punctuation, conjunctions, run-on sentences, and fragments. Furthermore, for non-English major students, the results revealed that the five most common lexical errors were spelling, prepositions, articles, word choice, and word form. In terms of syntactic errors, the most frequent types were verb tenses, punctuation,

fragments, capitalization, and singular/plural forms. Additionally, the results demonstrated that, concerning lexical error types explored in both groups, there were 8 similar types and 2 different types of lexical errors. As for syntactic error types, there were 26 similar types and 12 different types.

These findings suggest that the error types at both lexical and syntactic levels committed by English major students are highly similar to those found in non-English major students' writing. Consequently, these results highlight the writing challenges faced by Thai EFL students, irrespective of their major. The sources of these errors appear to include L1 interference, limited English vocabulary knowledge, insufficient understanding of English grammar and writing, student carelessness, and high-pressure situations, including time constraints. These findings have significant implications for stakeholders such as teachers, policymakers, researchers, and students themselves, as they can inform efforts to enhance students' proficiency in English writing.

Last but not least, it is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate both main error types and sub-types, with a larger and more diverse participant pool. Additionally, it would be valuable to examine the reasons for or factors contributing to weaknesses in English writing. Since this study focused on narrative paragraphs, it is also recommended to analyze errors in various types of paragraph writing, such as descriptive, persuasive, and expository writing, to compare any similar or different results.

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