

Analyzing Grammatical Errors to Improve English Writing Among Thai High School Students' Interlanguage and Vocabulary Use

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Abstract—This study examines the grammatical errors and vocabulary types in the writings of Thai high school EFL students. Employing Dulay et al.'s (1982) surface strategy taxonomy, errors were categorized into omission, misformation, addition, and misordering to identify predominant error patterns. Additionally, the study assessed the vocabulary range via the General Service List and the Academic Word List. Findings indicated a significant reliance on high-frequency words and less frequent use of AWL vocabulary, stressing gaps in readiness for academic study. The study highlights the diagnostic value of error analysis in revealing insights into learners' interlanguage development, reflecting their evolving understanding and hypothesis testing about the target language influenced by their first language. Grammatical errors, such as incorrect use of singular and plural forms, articles, and tense inconsistencies, were common, suggesting learners face structural and syntactic challenges. Omission errors emerged as the most prevalent, followed by misformation, addition, and misordering, indicating areas needing focused grammatical instruction. Vocabulary analysis revealed an 82.30% overlap of the first 1,000 GSL words in students' texts, contrasting with the minimal use of AWL words, essential for academic success. The findings advocate for enhanced instructional strategies integrating GSL and AWL vocabularies and emphasizing systematic grammatical error correction to improve language proficiency and academic readiness. Future research should include more diverse learner populations and a broader range of error types to provide insights into language acquisition challenges and solutions. This study contributes to refining teaching methodologies and curriculum development to better prepare students for future academic challenges.

Index Terms—error analysis, interlanguage, second language acquisition, GSL words, AWL vocabulary

I. INTRODUCTION

In language learning, making errors is inevitable and serves as an essential indicator of a learner's progress and the strategies they employ in acquiring a second language (L2). Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) noted, "People cannot learn a language without systematically committing error" (p. 138). These errors can hinder effective communication by complicating the interpretation of messages and indicating the learner's evolving understanding of L2. This perspective is supported by recent research, which emphasizes the diagnostic value of errors in revealing the connection between a learner's native language (L1) and L2 (Al-Busaidi, 2018; Wang, 2021).

According to Corder (1981), errors signify the state of a learner's current knowledge and elucidate the mechanisms of language learning. The distinction in error patterns between learners and native speakers often reflects structural differences between their native language and English, leading to specific error types (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Corder (1981) argues that error analysis is vital for educators, syllabus designers, and textbook authors as it pinpoints the challenging areas within the L2 learning process. He suggests targeted remedial activities to concentrate on these "troubleshooting" areas. Furthermore, Corder (1981) views errors as concrete evidence of learning. He suggests that a systematic study of these errors can provide valuable insights into how learners acquire a new language. He asserts that

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analyzing students' mistakes has direct practical benefits for teaching methodologies by informing teachers of the efficacy of their instructed technique (Barrot, 2016).

Effective writing necessitates proper grammar, punctuation, and appropriate word choice. Yule (2010) describes grammar as a way to outline the structure of phrases and sentences, ensuring grammatical consistency while excluding incorrect sequences. Without solid grammar, language becomes disorganized, which can impede communication and frequently results in writing errors. Writing in a foreign language introduces these challenges, as learners must navigate differences in grammatical structures between their L1 and L2, potentially leading to errors (Larson, 2019).

Recent studies in L2 acquisition highlight the prominence of error analysis (EA). While error correction is a fundamental aspect of teaching, its approach varies significantly among educators. Some may disregard the benefits of EA, focusing instead on immediate error correction, which can be detrimental to learner confidence and may exacerbate feelings of inadequacy. Conversely, Fitrawati and Safitri (2021) demonstrate that grammatical errors are a significant hurdle in L2 writing. This is possibly due to low motivation or fear of failure. Further studies indicated that teachers employ flexible and varied error treatment strategies tailored to specific teaching objectives, the students' linguistic capabilities, and emotional states to optimize learning outcomes (Khansir, 2012; Fang & Xue-Mei, 2007).

Research into learner speech and writing has consistently found that errors classified as interlanguage are common among students and represent the gap not only between their L1 and the target language but also as reflections of their native language's influence (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). These errors help map learners' states of language acquisition and illustrate their hypotheses regarding the rules of the target language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Error and Mistakes*

Understanding the distinction between 'mistakes' and 'errors' is crucial in the analysis of language learners' errors. Brown (2007) clarifies that these terms represent fundamentally different phenomena. A 'mistake' might be a slip or a guess that occurs during language use, often correctable by the learners themselves once noticed. Conversely, an 'error' is a more systematic failure that reflects the learner's misunderstanding of language norms and is not typically self-correctable. These errors are indicators of the learner's developmental stage in their interlanguage, which is the unique system they construct as they learn a second language.

L2 differences but on actual errors made by learners. These errors can typically be categorized into errors of overgeneralization, incomplete rule application, and false concept hypothesizing. Each category reflects different aspects of a learner's competence and varies from learner to learner. Dulay et al. (1982, p. 141) articulate that "Error analysis has significantly contributed to the theoretical consciousness-raising of applied linguistics and language practitioners," recognizing the multifaceted origins of learners' errors.

One of the key insights of EA is that errors are indicators of learners actively engaging with and processing the L2 rather than passively receiving input. This active processing involves hypothesis testing and adjustment based on feedback, which is crucial for developing their interlanguage, a term describing the transitional linguistic system learners create as they move towards fluency in L2 (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). This interlanguage includes elements that are neither present in their L1 nor in the L2 but are unique constructions by the learner.

Research in EA has shown that error analysis is both theoretically enriching and practically beneficial. For instance, Ellis (1995) notes that many linguists in the 1970s pursued error studies not just to understand L2 acquisition but to improve language teaching strategies. This pedagogical aspect is echoed in recent studies by Heryanti, Sucipto, and Makmur (2018), who used EA to inform and refine curriculum development and teaching practices by pinpointing the errors that most frequently hinder effective communication.

Moreover, error analysis has raised learners' awareness of their errors, improving their self-correction skills and overall language competence (Joan, 2016). The nature and types of errors vary widely among learners, influenced by factors such as their L1 background, proficiency level, exposure to the L2, and individual learning strategies (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021; Kampookaew, 2020; Phoocharoensil et al., 2016; Promsupa et al., 2017; Sermsook et al., 2017; Seyitkuliyev et al., 2020).

In summary, EA serves a dual role in applied linguistics, both as a tool for theoretical exploration of language acquisition processes and as a practical framework for improving language education. Educators can better understand learner needs by systematically categorizing and analyzing errors and adapting teaching methods to support more effective language learning.

B. *Error Categories*

Dulay et al. (1982, p. 146) have outlined a taxonomy to categorize errors in language learning into four principal groups: (1) linguistic category, (2) comparative analysis, (3) communicative effect, and (4) surface strategy. Each category serves a specific purpose, guiding the classification based on observable characteristics rather than inferred traits. This framework supports a systematic approach to studying learner errors, providing essential insights for both theoretical linguistics and practical language education.

(a). *Linguistic Category Taxonomy*

This taxonomy categorizes ESL learner errors across a range of contexts, identifying structural inaccuracies from basic clause construction to complex verb system issues within six categories: (1) the skeleton of English clauses, (2) the auxiliary system, (3) passive sentences, (4) temporal conjunctions, (5) sentential complements, and (6) psychological predicates.

Skeleton of English clauses involves subject-verb agreement, clause segmentation, and component placement, leading to unclear and grammatically inconsistent sentences. Errors in the auxiliary system include incorrect tense conjugation and misuse of modal verbs like “can” or “must”, often resulting in sentences that incorrectly convey time, obligation, or possibility. Passive sentence errors are seen in incorrect auxiliary verb usage or past participle placement, which can obscure the intended meaning of the sentence. Errors under temporal conjunctions involve the misuse of conjunctions that denote time (such as “when,” “while,” “before,” “after,” and “as soon as”). Misusing these conjunctions can alter the intended temporal relationships between clauses, leading to communication failures. Errors in sentential complements manifest in misstructured subordinate clauses, making the main sentence ambiguous. Psychological predicates include errors involving verbs expressing mental states or perceptions, such as “believe,” “think,” “feel,” and “see”.

This taxonomy offers a comprehensive framework for identifying and rectifying common ESL errors, enhancing the understanding of English grammar complexities and aiding educators in improving learner outcomes through targeted instructional strategies. Each category pinpoints specific learner challenges, facilitating more directed and effective teaching approaches to foster better communication skills.

(b). Comparative Taxonomy

The comparative taxonomy is essential in error analysis, comparing L2 learner productions with their L1 structures to illuminate developmental, interlingual errors and ambiguous or atypical errors that do not confirm standard categories. Developmental errors reflect natural language acquisition stages familiar to all learners, such as omitting the third-person singular “s”. They are expected to decrease with increasing proficiency, illustrating the application of universal grammatical errors. Interlingual errors arise when L1 structures interfere with L2 learning, such as when learners inappropriately transfer L1 syntax or morphology to L2, leading to errors like “I have 23 years old” instead of “I am 23 years old” (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). These highlight the need for targeted teaching strategies to address L1 to L2 translation issues. Ambiguous errors may fit multiple categories and require detailed contextual analysis to discern their origins from developmental stages, L1 interference, or unique cognitive processes. For example, the incorrect use of articles by a Russian speaker could be both developmental and interlingual errors, reflecting the complexities of language acquisition.

This taxonomy not only categorizes errors to refine instructional focus but also enhances understanding of the complex relationship between L1 and L2, which is crucial for developing effective language teaching strategies and facilitating successful language acquisition.

(c). Communicative Effect Taxonomy

The Communicative Effect Taxonomy is essential for assessing how linguistic errors impact comprehension and communication. It distinguishes between global and local errors to determine their disruptiveness on understanding. Global errors are major structural that significantly alter the sentences’ meaning, leading to severe misunderstanding. Examples include incorrect verb tenses that change the timeline, wrong noun-verb agreements, or misplaced word orders that confuse the sentence’s subject and object roles. Such errors dramatically reduce speech intelligibility and undermine the speaker’s credibility in serious contexts. Local errors, by contrast, are minor and affect limited parts of a sentence without obscuring the overall message. These include errors like misplaced modifiers or preposition misuses, which may temporarily confuse the reader but generally do not hinder the main communication.

This taxonomy helps categorize errors and guides educators in crafting effective teaching strategies. By focusing on the communicative impact of errors – whether they are global or local – teachers can prioritize error correction efforts to improve learners’ comprehension and ensure clearer, more effective communication. This approach enhances language instruction by aligning it closely with the learners’ communicative needs.

(d). Surface Strategy Taxonomy

The Surface Strategy Taxonomy is central to understanding how learners adapt and modify the surface structures of the English language, which, in turn, illuminates the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition. This taxonomy focuses on errors that are not merely slip-ups but indicative of the learners’ active, albeit interim, strategies to master English. These systematic errors are instrumental in identifying how learners process and apply new linguistic information.

Omission errors occur when learners leave out linguistic elements necessary for structurally and grammatically complete sentences. This type of error is crucial because it often points to the learner’s English syntax and morphology challenges. For instance, omitting auxiliary verbs can alter the tense of a sentence, which fundamentally changes its meaning. Research by Gass et al. (2013) emphasizes that omission errors provide insights into learners’ grasp of syntactic dependencies and the hierarchical structure of English syntax.

Addition errors involve inserting unnecessary or extraneous elements into sentences. These errors may stem from overgeneralization of syntactic rules or from L1 interference, where structures appropriate in the learner’s native language are wrongly applied in English. Such errors disrupt the natural flow of English and can complicate the listener’s or reader’s

understanding of the intended message. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) discuss how addition errors are prevalent among learners who speak agglutinative languages, where the morphological structure significantly differs from English.

Misformation errors happen when learners use incorrect word forms or grammatical structures. This includes errors in verb tenses, noun plurals, possessives, and article usage. These mistakes often reflect the learner's confusion over English morphological rules and can significantly impede communication. A study by Ionin and Zyzik (2014) found that misformation errors are often due to the transfer of grammatical patterns from the learner's first language, highlighting the need for targeted grammatical instruction in language teaching.

Misordering involves the incorrect placement of words within a sentence, which affects the sentence's readability and listener comprehension. This type of error is often influenced by the syntactic order of the learner's native language, which may differ from English's subject-verb-object (SVO) order. Misordering can lead to awkward or grammatically incoherent sentences, confusing the communicative intent. Recent findings suggest that exposure to varied syntactic structures through extensive reading and listening can help alleviate the frequency of misordering errors by familiarizing learners with the typical word order patterns of English (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021; Kampookaew, 2020; Seyitkuliyeve et al., 2020).

These errors categorized under the Surface Strategy Taxonomy are not random or careless mistakes; they indicate the learners' underlying hypotheses about English based on their current linguistic knowledge and their first language's influence. Each error type offers insights into the specific aspects of the language that learners find challenging and thus can guide educators in designing more effective instructional strategies to address these challenges. Understanding these errors in depth helps educators tailor their teaching approaches to better meet the needs of English language learners, facilitating a more directed and efficient learning process.

C. *The Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in L2 Writing*

Writing ability reflects a learner's capacity to use language effectively, a skill critical to mastering writing in a second language (L2). According to Nation (2022), developing writing skills transcends mere comprehension of language structures; it demands integrating cognitive processes that foster metacognition. This sophisticated skill set is not innate and requires deliberate, structured practice and educational guidance. Central to these skills is vocabulary selection, which significantly influences the maturity and authenticity of the learner's word choices (Lee, 2003).

In L2 writing, vocabulary mastery is indispensable for generating coherent and contextually relevant texts. Sukying (2018) stressed that the initial steps of acquiring vocabulary, which involves recognizing and reading words, are fundamental to developing a receptive understanding of vocabulary. This process entails the identification of words and the construction of meaning, bridging the gap from mere recognition to meaningful application. The progression from receptive to productive vocabulary knowledge is intricate but crucial for language mastery, underscoring the importance of precise word choice and usage in writing.

Scholarly work supports the idea that engaging with texts containing targeted vocabulary enhances writing proficiency (Webb, 2009). Moreover, direct vocabulary instruction plays a vital role in improving word retention and facilitating the functional use of words in writing contexts (Lee, 2003). This research highlights the significant influence of effective vocabulary acquisition strategies on the ability to produce written content that accurately conveys complex ideas and emotions.

The importance of vocabulary choice in L2 writing cannot be overstated. Appropriate and varied word use not only enriches a text but also enables writers to communicate more precisely and fluently. As learners shift from understanding vocabulary passively to using it actively, they gain the ability to express thoughts more clearly and effectively, thus enhancing their overall writing ability. Practicing newly learned words consolidates this knowledge and boosts learners' confidence in their writing abilities, demonstrating their linguistic competence and helping them to better articulate their perspectives.

Ultimately, the deliberate selection and application of words are critical for learners striving to enhance their L2 writing skills. This transition from receptive vocabulary knowledge to productive application is the final, pivotal phase in vocabulary development for writing. By focusing on this aspect, learners can improve both the complexity of their language use and the clarity of their communications, reflecting their growing proficiency in the second language. This meticulous approach to vocabulary not only aids in learning a new language but also in mastering the art of writing within it.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. *Research Questions*

The current study, focusing on Thai high school learners, aims to analyze errors using Dulay et al.'s (1982) surface strategy taxonomy and investigate the vocabulary types employed in their writings. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What interlanguage errors are found in the writings of Thai EFL learners?
2. What types of vocabulary occur in Thai EFL learners' writing?

This research contributes to a refined understanding of error patterns and vocabulary use among Thai EFL learners, offering implications for improving L2 teaching strategies.

B. Participants and Context of the Study

The study involved 86 high school students from Northeastern Thailand, all of whom were enrolled as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. These participants, aged between 16 and 18 years during the data collection phase, were native speakers of Thai and had been studying English for a minimum of ten years. Their course focused on essay writing, which aimed to enhance their writing skills through structured practice.

Their written work was assessed using four distinct criteria, among which they exhibited considerable challenges in lexical variety, structural type and accuracy. Specifically, while the students could generate essays with coherent and logically organized ideas, their word usage often lacked appropriateness, and numerous grammatical mistakes impaired their sentences. These issues not only compromised the lexical diversity of their texts but also impacted the grammatical integrity required for higher-quality writing.

To quantitatively evaluate their writing, all participants undertook a writing test that specifically measured their errors and the types of vocabulary used. This test was crucial for identifying the specific areas where students struggled the most, providing clear indicators of the critical aspects of writing that required further instructional focus. The errors identified in their essays predominantly related to their choice of vocabulary and sentence structure, which significantly affected the overall effectiveness and clarity of their communication.

C. Data Collection Procedure

The error analysis (EA) method, as proposed by Gass et al. (2013), involves a systematic process requiring researchers to 1) collect data, 2) identify errors, 3) categorize the errors, 4) quantify the errors, and 5) analyze the origins of these errors. Following the acquisition of permission from the school, data collection was undertaken in English language classes. All participants were informed about the purpose of data collection and the instructions for the activities they would engage in.

The primary tool used for data collection in this research was a writing test. Participants were tasked with writing a descriptive essay on the topic "My Idol". They were instructed to articulate their thoughts clearly within a composition of 100 to 150 words. This test had to be completed within one hour, and using any external aids, including digital devices and consultation with peers, was strictly prohibited.

Upon completing these essays, the writings were collected and systematically analyzed to identify and classify the errors made by the students. This analysis was crucial for understanding the specific areas of difficulty faced by the learners and quantifying and tracing the sources of these errors to better target future educational interventions.

D. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study adhered to the five-step process recommended by Gass et al. (2013). First, data were gathered from the written exams of each participant. These participants were required to complete a writing test composed of 100 – 150 words within one hour. Initially, these texts were saved in MS Word files and subsequently printed out for thorough analysis. Second, errors across all 86 texts were initially identified by a primary coder. To enhance coding accuracy, a secondary coder, an experienced Thai EFL teacher with over five years of experience at the same institution and well-versed in teaching writing and providing feedback, was enlisted to verify the errors spotted by the first coder. Discrepancies between the coders were resolved through discussions, utilizing four key references: the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the Cambridge Dictionary, the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, and the Cambridge Grammar of the English Language.

Third, once errors were identified and validated, they were categorized into different grammatical types and subtypes, drawing parallels to the classifications. For instance, errors related to tense usage were divided into six subtypes, such as the incorrect use of the Present Continuous instead of the Present Simple and the misuse of the Present Perfect in contexts requiring the Past Simple. After classification, errors were quantified according to their types defined in the surface strategy taxonomy. Subsequently, these error types were ranked from the most to the least frequent to identify prevalent error patterns among the participants.

In the final stage, errors were analyzed to determine whether they were interlingual, stemming from the interference of the Thai language (the participants' L1), or intralingual due to the complexities of English grammatical structures. This analysis helped pinpoint the source of errors, which is crucial for developing targeted instructional strategies.

Through these meticulous steps, the study not only highlighted common errors made by Thai EFL learners but also provided insights into the underlying reasons for these mistakes, thereby informing more effective teaching approaches.

IV. RESULTS

A. Categories, Percentages, and Ranks of Errors

The study analyzed the four types of errors; omission, misformation, addition and disorder, in the writings of high school EFL learners based on Dulay et al.'s (1982) errors in surface strategy taxonomy and discovered that the most error types committed were grammatical errors as illustrated see Table 1. In this section, the results gained from the error

analysis were thoroughly discussed in response to each of the two research questions proposed at the beginning of this paper. They also examined the existing EA literature.

TABLE 1
THE FREQUENCY OF ERRORS IN SURFACE STRATEGY TAXONOMY

Category	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage of occurrence	Rank
Omission	430	60.8	1
Misformation	169	23.9	2
Addition	89	12.58	3
Misordering	19	2.68	4
Total	707	100	

The errors found in this study fell into four categories (see Table 1). The total number of grammatical errors was in this category. The total number of the most common types was 430 in omission, accounting for 60.8% of all the identified errors in the analysis. The second most frequent one was 169 misformation errors (23.9%). Then, the addition type indicated 89 errors at 12.58%. Compared with the first category, the second and the third categories contained significantly lower errors. The least frequent surface strategy taxonomy types of errors were 19 at 2.68% in misordering. The result showed that students have problems with omission, misformation, addition and misordering in essay writing.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF OMISSION, MISFORMATION, ADDITION AND MISORDERING

Grammatical errors	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage of occurrence
Distribution of Omission		
Verb tense	218	15.55
Article	129	9.20
Preposition	83	5.92
Distribution of Misformation		
Adjective	61	8.62
Pronoun	52	7.35
Adverb	31	4.38
Possessive case	25	3.53
Distribution of Addition		
Singular verb	71	10.04
Plural verb	18	2.54
Distribution of Misordering		
Word order	19	2.68

Table 2 showed omission errors could be divided into three subtypes, including omission of verb tense, which indicated 218 errors at 15.55%. The omission of the article showed 129 (9.29%), and the omission of prepositions was 83, accounting for 5.92%. The misformation contained four subtypes: a) misformation of adjectives, b) misformation of pronouns, c) misformation of adverbs, and d) processive cases. The study of misformation errors showed that the misformation of adjectives was 61 or 8.62%—the misformation of pronouns (52 or 7.35%). Misformation errors of adverbs showed 31 or 4.38%, and the misformation of possessive cases (25 or 3.53%). Addition errors can be divided into two subtypes: a) addition of singular verbs and b) addition of plural verbs. The result of the study of addition errors can be seen in Table 2. It can be seen that the highest error in addition is the addition of singular verbs (71 errors or 10.04%). The lowest error is the addition of plural verbs (18 errors or 2.54%). The study of misordering errors showed that the misordering of word orders was 19 or 2.68%.

The study provided empirical evidence on the grammatical errors made by Thai high school EFL students. Based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the results indicated four categories of error: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Of those four types, omission is the most dominant type in written texts. More in-depth analysis of these errors also showed that the students struggled with using verb tenses, articles, prepositions, adjectives, pronouns, possessive cases, singular verbs, plural verbs, and word orders, respectively, based on Dulay et al.'s (1982).

B. The Most Frequent Vocabulary Found Errors and Their Sources

Most detailed descriptions showed the overlapped words' apparent size in three aspects: the 1st 1,000 GSL words, the 2nd 1,000 GSL words, and the AWL words. The total overlap is examined in Figure 1.

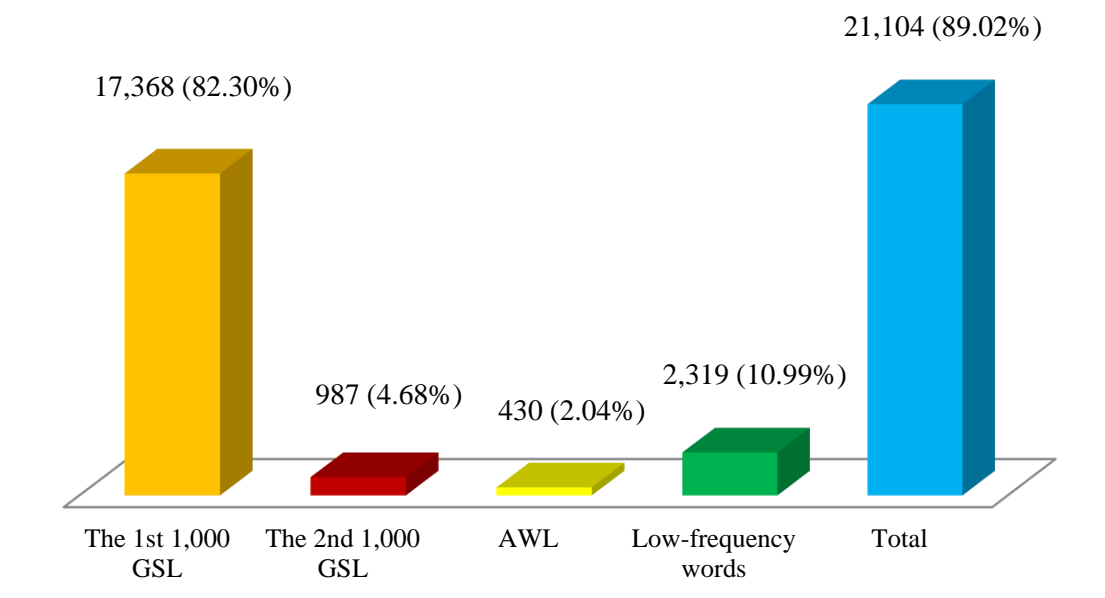


Figure 1. Words Occurred in Writing Against GSL and AWL

As can be seen, three things are shown in Figure 1: (1) the total overlap of the 1st 1,000 GSL words, (2) the total overlap of the 2nd 1,000 GSL words, and (3) the total overlap of the AWL words. There were 17,368 of the 1st 1,000 GSL words shared by the written texts, yielding an 82.30% overlap of words. This makes up a remarkable proportion of the words in the written texts. However, the total overlap of the 2nd 1,000 GSL words shared in the written texts was 987 or 4.68%, which gave a slight overlap of overlapped words. Similarly, only 430 AWL words were shared in the written texts, yielding a 2.04% overlap of words.

V. DISCUSSION

This study investigated grammatical mistakes in the writings of Thai high school EFL students and identified the types of errors these students typically make. The study found that omission errors were the most common, followed by misformation, addition, and misordering errors. These errors could be explained using the concept of interlanguage from second language acquisition theory, which posits that L2 learners develop a transitional linguistic system called interlanguage. This system integrates elements from the learners' native language (L1), the target language, and their unique linguistic modifications. Interlanguage is dynamic, continually evolving as learners interact more with the target language, refine their linguistic understanding and integrate feedback from their language experience (Mitchell et al., 2013).

This study aligns with existing research in highlighting the importance of targeted grammatical instruction that is responsive to the specific developmental needs of learners. Such an approach not only helps learners correct and overcome these errors but also supports their overall progression towards fluency in English, demonstrating the dynamic and evolving nature of interlanguage in L2 acquisition (Gass et al., 2013; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Mitchell et al., 2013).

Omission was identified as the most common error type, with learners frequently omitting verb tenses, articles, and prepositions. These omissions indicate a developmental phase in learners' interlanguage where structural and syntactical elements of English are not fully understood (Ellis, 1995). For instance, the frequent omission of verb tenses (218 instances) and articles (129 instances) emphasizes a lack of mastery over English grammatical markers denoting time and definiteness – elements often conceptualized and expressed differently in different languages, especially in the participants' native language, Thai. These omissions reflect the learners' ongoing struggles to internalize the structural rules of English, suggesting that their interlanguage, at this point, lacks specific grammatical parameters essential for accurate language use.

Misformation errors, such as incorrect forms of adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, and possessive cases, indicate the learners' inaccurate application of morphological rules. These errors, including 61 misformed adjectives, reflect the learners' attempts to apply English grammatical rules they have not fully learned, resulting in systematic but incorrect usages. Misformation errors suggest incomplete knowledge and misapplication, typical of the experimental stages within the interlanguage continuum (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Additional errors, particularly with unnecessary singular and plural verbs, indicate overgeneralization, a common feature in language learning where learners apply a rule too broadly without adhering to its specific constraints (Sukyng, 2022). The addition of 71 singular verbs where they are not required suggests that learners are actively experimenting with English structures, but their hypotheses about when these structures apply are still flawed. This type of error indicates

the experimental nature of language learning, as it reveals the learners' efforts to use newly acquired linguistic forms, albeit inaccurately.

Although less frequent, misordering errors, such as incorrect word order, provide insights into syntactic challenges faced by EFL learners. These errors are directly linked to the differences in syntactic constructions between English and the learners' native language. Misordering suggests that the learners are in the process of figuring out the correct word order of English, often transferring structures from their L1 into their L2, which leads to grammatical inaccuracies (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Such errors, particularly in word order (19 instances), highlight fundamental challenges in acquiring syntactic competence in English.

The current findings highlight the grammatical mistakes typically made by high school students in their written English texts. While these findings may not extend to all high school EFL students in Thailand, they illuminate the particular grammatical challenges that these students are likely to encounter. Specifically, the study raises three major issues that Thai high school EFL teachers deserve more attention.

Firstly, Thai high school EFL students still make grammatical errors that impair the quality of their writing. Although errors like the misuse of the singular form instead of the plural form, article errors might not interfere with the meanings students try to convey. They can undermine the quality of their writing, especially when they appear in large numbers. Teachers and readers would agree that even though writing contains clear, organized ideas and accurate vocabulary, it cannot be regarded as high-quality if it is replete with grammatical errors, as grammatical accuracy is a critical element of good writing. Teachers' attempts to keep these grammatical errors at bay or reduce their occurrences are thus crucial. Secondly, these grammatical mistakes significantly affect the student's ability to produce proficient work. Most EFL programs aim to prepare students for further academic challenges. If students persist in making these errors, it could adversely affect their future academic performance. Teachers need to make concerted efforts to help students correct these errors, ensuring better preparation for their future studies (Richards, 1971; Seyitkuliyeve et al., 2020).

Lastly, an error analysis conducted in this study showed that students still struggle with applying English grammar rules effectively, often making mistakes categorized under surface strategy taxonomy (Dulay et al., 1982). The analysis pointed out that students not only need to understand but also apply grammatical rules correctly when writing. Overgeneralization of rules and inappropriate application of learned structures to new sentences were common, leading to errors such as tense inconsistencies, which can disrupt the clarity of the message. This situation is impaired by the focus of teachers on syllabus completion over addressing ongoing grammatical issues, thereby allowing these problems to perpetuate and evolve into new errors (Gass et al., 2013).

In summary, the study emphasizes the need for Thai high school EFL teachers to dedicate more attention to grammatical accuracy in student writing, to not only improve the immediate quality of their texts but also to better prepare them for future academic endeavors (Ellis, 1995; Heryanti et al., 2018). This approach aligns with the broader goals of error analysis in applied linguistics, which seeks to refine and inform teaching practices through systematic examination of learner errors (Corder, 1967). By understanding these errors in-depth, educators can tailor their teaching approaches to better meet the needs of students, facilitating a more directed and efficient learning process. This nuanced understanding of student errors, supported by recent studies (Phoocharoensil et al., 2016; Promsupa et al., 2016), underscores the dynamic nature of language learning and the critical role of effective pedagogical strategies in developing language competence.

Regarding vocabulary use in the writing, the research on Thai EFL students' vocabulary usage provides valuable insights into the strategies needed for effective vocabulary acquisition and curriculum design, mainly through the analysis of the first and second 1,000 words of the General Service List (GSL) and the Academic Word List (AWL). These findings underscore the critical importance of mastering high-frequency words to enhance the quality of texts written by L2 learners and to improve their writing skills.

The results revealed that the first 1,000 GSL words were predominantly used in the English writings of Thai EFL students, accounting for an 82.30% overlap in their texts. This high utilization indicates a strong reliance on these words, which form a fundamental base for basic readability and comprehension and are essential for developing broader vocabulary skills (Nation, 2022). In contrast, despite being high-frequency words, the second set of 1,000 GSL words was much less frequently used, appearing in only 4.68% of the students' texts. This marked decrease suggests that learners are not as familiar with these words, which may hinder their ability to articulate more complex ideas that demand a wider vocabulary range (Webb, 2009).

Furthermore, AWL words, crucial for academic writing, were present in a mere 2.04% of the texts. This scant usage points to a significant readiness gap among the students in handling complex academic materials. This gap is essential to bridge as they progress in their academic and professional journeys (Coxhead, 2000). This finding highlights the need for focused instructional strategies that integrate AWL vocabulary to effectively boost the students' proficiency in academic language, particularly for Thai EFL learners.

In conclusion, this study illustrates a notable imbalance in the use of GSL and AWL vocabulary in the writings of Thai high school EFL students. The findings suggest an overdependence on high-frequency words and a pressing need for a greater emphasis on academic vocabulary to adequately prepare learners for higher education challenges. This emphasizes the necessity for targeted vocabulary instruction that enhances both general and academic language use among learners.

VI. CONCLUSION

The current study has provided empirical evidence on the grammatical errors made by Thai high school EFL students. The analysis of the writings of Thai EFL learners revealed four types of interlanguage errors, categorized mainly into omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. More in-depth analysis of these errors also showed that the students struggled with using verb tenses, articles, prepositions, adjectives, pronouns, possessive cases, singular verbs, plural verbs, and word orders, respectively, based on Dulay et al.'s (1982). These errors illustrate the complex connection between the learners' native language (Thai) and their L2 (English), highlighting the developmental stages and cognitive strategies employed during language acquisition.

The study also provided insights into the types of vocabulary that Thai EFL learners use in their writing, focusing on the General Service List (GSL) words and the Academic Word List (AWL) words. The study illustrates an overreliance on fundamental English vocabulary among Thai EFL learners and a critical need for broader and more in-depth vocabulary instruction, especially concerning academic words. Enhancing curriculum designs and teaching methodologies is essential to better prepare learners for advanced educational challenges and professional communication. These should aim not only to expand learners' knowledge of high-frequency GSL words but also to deepen their understanding of AWL vocabulary, ensuring a balanced development of language skills that cater to both general and academic uses of English. This approach will equip Thai EFL learners with the necessary tools for successful communication in various contexts, significantly improving their language proficiency and academic performance.

The study on Thai high school EFL students' grammatical errors provides essential insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers aimed at enhancing English language teaching strategies. Key implications suggest the necessity for targeted grammatical instruction, which includes the correction of frequent errors like incorrect singular and plural forms, article use, and tense inconsistencies through customized lessons and specific feedback sessions. Professional development for teachers is crucial, focusing on error analysis and effective corrective strategies to improve grammatical competence systematically. This training should be supported by peer review groups and regular workshops to share best practices and maintain teaching quality.

Technology integration into education, mainly through grammar-focused language learning apps, offers supplementary benefits that enhance traditional learning methods. These technologies can provide instant feedback and support dynamic assessments that help students correct their mistakes in real time. Furthermore, it is vital to consider the interference of students' first language (L1) in learning English. Educators should implement strategies to help students overcome these challenges and design lessons that contextualize grammatical rules, making learning more relevant and effective.

The study also highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to vocabulary instruction. Educators are encouraged to simultaneously teach high-frequency General Service List (GSL) words and Academic Word List (AWL) vocabulary to prepare students for everyday and academic English uses. Context-rich teaching strategies will improve word retention and usage, facilitating better language comprehension and proficiency. Regular integration of enhanced reading materials and writing exercises can further reinforce vocabulary knowledge, preparing learners for more complex communications and academic challenges.

While this study provides valuable insights into grammatical errors among Thai high school EFL students, it has limitations due to its focus on a small and homogeneous group. This specificity may limit the generalizability of the findings across different demographic and proficiency levels. Future research should include more diverse populations and explore various educational settings to enhance the robustness and applicability of the results.

The research primarily addressed grammatical errors, omitting a detailed analysis of lexical, syntactic, or pragmatic errors, which are crucial for a holistic view of language proficiency. Moreover, it concentrated only on written texts, potentially overlooking spoken language proficiency. The study also focused mainly on General Service List (GSL) and Academic Word List (AWL) vocabularies, possibly neglecting other vital vocabulary sets essential for specialized fields or professions.

Future studies should broaden the scope of error analysis to include lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic errors and employ longitudinal designs to track vocabulary development over time, providing deeper insights into the effectiveness of different teaching strategies. Additionally, experimental research exploring the impact of specific vocabulary instruction methods would significantly benefit educational practices. There is also a promising avenue in utilizing technology, such as educational apps and online platforms, to enhance vocabulary teaching and retention. Implementing such tools can offer innovative strategies that improve learners' language acquisition and proficiency, equipping them with the linguistic demands of everyday interactions and professional or academic environments.

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