

Error Analysis in First-Year AB English Language Students' Written Compositions

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Abstract. This study addresses the gap in understanding grammatical errors in English compositions among first-year ABEL (Bachelor of Arts in English Language) students at Pangasinan State University – Urdaneta City Campus during the academic year 2022-2023. The objectives include identifying the demographic profile of the students regarding their mother tongue and attitudes toward English grammar and writing, analyzing the most common grammatical errors using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, exploring the relationship between errors and profile variables, and determining the causes of these errors. A mixed-method research design was employed, with data collected through a researcher-made questionnaire administered via Google Forms and face-to-face writing compositions about students' experiences during the pandemic. Findings revealed that the majority of respondents (60%) spoke Tagalog as their mother tongue, demonstrating a highly favorable attitude toward English grammar learning (mean score of 3.40) and a moderately favorable attitude toward English writing (mean score of 3.00). The most frequent grammatical error identified was misformation (40.69%), followed by omission (32.19%), addition (25.86%), and misordering (1.27%). Results showed no significant relationship between the errors and demographic profile variables. Semi-structured interviews with ten participants confirmed interlingual interference as a significant factor influencing errors, highlighting challenges transitioning from the student's mother tongue to English. The findings emphasize the need for targeted grammar instruction to enhance independent learning and student outcomes. Practical recommendations include integrating interactive grammar activities, personalized feedback mechanisms, and mother tongue awareness strategies into ESL instruction to address persistent error patterns effectively.

Keywords: English written compositions; Error analysis; Grammatical errors; Interlingual interference; Surface strategy taxonomy

1.0 Introduction

Mastering English grammar poses ongoing challenges for ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, particularly in multilingual contexts like the Philippines. Grammatical accuracy in writing is crucial, as errors reflect students' linguistic development and specific areas requiring improvement, according to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), as cited in Meunier (2006). This study aims to investigate the types and causes of grammatical errors committed by first-year ABEL (Bachelor of Arts in English Language) students at Pangasinan State University, Urdaneta City Campus, focusing on the influence of interlingual interference from students' native languages, such as Tagalog, as well as their attitudes toward learning English grammar and writing.

Corder (1967) emphasizes that errors are natural components of language learning, providing opportunities for educators to diagnose and address learner difficulties. Bialystok et al. (1983) offer a practical framework for analyzing these errors through their Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which categorizes errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. This taxonomy is particularly suited to this study's objectives as it systematically classifies error patterns, enabling a deeper understanding of interlingual and intralingual influences on writing proficiency.

The increasing reliance on digital tools like Grammarly has introduced another dimension to grammatical mastery. While these tools offer convenience and immediate correction, Javier (2022) highlights concerns about their potential to foster overdependence, which may hinder students' independent learning and grammatical development. This study builds on such observations by examining whether similar tendencies are evident among the target population, thereby linking technological reliance to broader grammatical challenges.

Previous research provides valuable context for understanding error patterns in ESL learners. Al-Dubib (2013) identified subject-verb agreement difficulties among Saudi students, while Mendoza (2016) explored interlingual and intralingual errors among Filipino learners, emphasizing native language interference. Similarly, Ramos (2019) highlighted recurring issues in sentence construction and verb usage among Filipino students, stressing the need for targeted grammar instruction. These studies underscore the global relevance of error analysis while offering insights into the specific challenges ESL learners face in different settings. However, the focus on first-year ABEL students and their unique linguistic and attitudinal profiles remains underexplored, representing a critical gap this study seeks to address.

The study adopts a conceptual framework that examines the relationship between students' demographic profiles—such as mother tongue and attitudes toward grammar learning—and the frequency and types of grammatical errors they commit. By integrating Bialystok et al.'s taxonomy, this approach systematically categorizes errors and investigates the role of interlingual interference in shaping writing outcomes. This framework aligns closely with the study's goal of identifying actionable insights to enhance ESL instructional strategies, such as developing more focused grammar lessons and fostering greater student learning independence. By bridging these gaps, the study improves English grammar instruction for first-year ABEL students, offering evidence-based recommendations for educators to address persistent error patterns effectively.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method design, combining descriptive-correlational analysis with qualitative interviews. This approach was chosen because it allowed for a comprehensive examination of quantitative patterns (e.g., error types and correlations) and qualitative insights into the causes of these errors, providing a more holistic understanding of the research problem. Quantitative data were collected through demographic profiles, including participants' mother tongues, attitudes toward English grammar learning and writing, an error analysis of essays, and the correlation between their errors and profile variables. Meanwhile, the interviews provided insights into the causes of grammatical errors.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted at Pangasinan State University, Urdaneta City Campus, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, during the first semester of the academic year 2022–2023.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants consisted of thirty-five (35) first-year ABEL students, representing half of the total enrolled population, who were selected randomly. Random selection was done by assigning a unique identifier to each student in the population and then using a random number generator to ensure impartiality. Additionally, ten (10) students participated in semi-structured interviews to identify the causes of their grammatical errors. These interview participants were selected based on their diverse language profiles and error patterns to ensure a variety of perspectives. Data saturation was reached when recurring themes emerged, confirming that no new information would be gained through further interviews.

2.4 Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire divided into two parts. The first section gathered data on the respondents' profiles, including a) mother tongue, b) attitudes toward English grammar learning, and c) attitudes toward English writing. This section contained ten indicators for each attitude area, reflecting the respondents' perspectives. The second section involved an essay writing task, where respondents were asked to write about "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on My Life as a Student." These written essays served as the basis for error analysis, conducted using Bialystok et al.'s (1983) Surface Strategy Taxonomy, focusing on errors of omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering.

For the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked open-ended questions such as, "What challenges do you experience when writing in English?" and "How does your mother tongue affect your English grammar?" Follow-up questions varied depending on the participants' responses, ensuring a detailed exploration of their experiences.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers obtained approval from concerned university officials, including the campus executive director, college dean, program chair, and the respondents' instructor. Consent was secured from the respondents through the efforts of the class mayors. Data collection involved administering questionnaires online via Google Forms for the demographic profiles, while essay writing was conducted face-to-face.

The semi-structured interviews with ten students were held through Microsoft Teams. While online platforms facilitated accessibility, minor challenges such as scheduling conflicts and intermittent internet connectivity were addressed by allowing participants to reschedule sessions and use alternative devices if needed. During the interviews, follow-up questions were asked as needed to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and contributing factors.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to established ethical guidelines by obtaining approval from university authorities, including the campus executive director, college dean, program chair, and the respondents' instructor. All participants were informed and consented to ensure they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and rights. Measures were implemented to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality, including using code numbers for responses and secure storage of all data throughout the research process.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents (60%) speak Tagalog, followed by Iloco (31.4%) and Pangasinan (8.6%). This linguistic distribution suggests that the predominance of Tagalog may influence students' grammatical errors through interlingual interference. As Mendoza (2016) highlighted, learners often apply rules and structures from their native languages to English, resulting in errors such as misusing prepositions, articles, and word order.

Table 1. *Mother tongue distribution of respondents*

Mother Tongue	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tagalog	21	60.0
Iloco	11	31.4
Pangasinan	3	8.60
Others	0	0.00

For example, Tagalog's verb-initial sentence structure (V-S-O) contrasts with English's subject-verb-object (S-V-O) order, potentially leading to misordering errors (Garcia et al., 2018). Similarly, Pangasinan and Iloco speakers might experience interference due to their languages' unique morphosyntactic features, affecting word formation and grammar. This aligns with Malana's (2018) findings that the L1 of Filipino learners significantly affects their English proficiency, particularly in grammar and pronunciation. Addressing these influences through explicit instruction in English syntax and grammatical structures is critical for reducing errors linked to mother tongue interference.

3.2 Attitude towards English Grammar Learning

The respondents demonstrate a generally favorable attitude toward learning English grammar, with an overall mean score of 3.40 (see Table 2). This aligns with Kholik et al.'s (n.d.) observation that a positive attitude toward grammar learning correlates with better writing performance. Notably, the highest mean score (3.71) reflects enthusiasm for discovering new grammar concepts, suggesting that interactive and engaging teaching methods could further enhance learning outcomes.

Table 2. *Attitude toward English grammar learning*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1 I encourage myself to study English grammar, although it makes me uncomfortable because there are numerous rules to follow.	3.2	Moderately Favorable
2 I pay more attention to learning English grammar since it helps me improve my ability to use English and perform better in class.	3.57	Highly Favorable
3 I feel fulfilled whenever I have a chance to apply what I have learned in English grammar to tasks that require the use of English.	3.54	Highly Favorable
4 I am delighted and proud that English grammar has helped me improve my communication skills in English.	3.57	Highly Favorable
5 I feel happy and fulfilled whenever I learn something new about English grammar.	3.71	Highly Favorable
6 I enjoy learning English grammar because it develops my reading, listening, writing, and speaking abilities.	3.63	Highly Favorable
7 I enjoy learning English grammar, especially through engaging and enjoyable activities such as games, stories, songs, role plays, videos, and problem-solving activities, because they help me reduce my anxiety.	3.37	Highly Favorable
8 I am more confident in understanding spoken and written English contexts now that I have learned the fundamentals or basics of English grammar.	3.14	Moderately Favorable
9 I am more inclined to express myself in English now that I understand the fundamentals or basics of English grammar.	3.23	Moderately Favorable
10 I avoid using grammar checker applications like Grammarly because, more often than not, such applications only make learners dependent on them.	3.03	Moderately Favorable
Overall Mean	3.40	Highly Favorable

Ramos (2019) emphasized the importance of innovative teaching approaches, such as games and role-playing, in sustaining students' interest and reducing anxiety. Respondents' preference for such methods supports this notion and highlights the need to incorporate interactive activities into grammar instruction. However, moderate scores in confidence-related indicators (e.g., using grammar independently without tools like Grammarly, mean = 3.03) suggest an opportunity for educators to foster greater learner autonomy.

Respondents exhibit a moderately favorable attitude toward English writing, with an overall mean score of 3.00 (see Table 3). While the highest mean score (3.29) reflects the belief that understanding writing principles aids focus, lower scores in confidence-related indicators (e.g., sharing written work, mean = 2.71) suggest lingering anxiety and hesitation.

Table 3. *Attitude toward English writing*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1 I take confidence that developing English writing will be a significant skill, although it is the most challenging area of language learning.	3.23	Moderately Favorable
2 I keep myself focused whenever I write in English because I believe I have sufficient knowledge of English writing principles.	3.29	Highly Favorable
3 I always find ways to broaden my English vocabulary because it is essential in English writing.	3.26	Highly Favorable
4 I usually consult writing assistant software like Grammarly only after writing English compositions.	2.91	Moderately Favorable
5 I feel confident when someone reads my English-written compositions.	2.71	Moderately Favorable
6 I also try to develop my love for reading because I believe it is one way to make me a good writer.	3.26	Highly Favorable
7 I usually write my thoughts using my first language and then translate them into English before writing.	2.71	Moderately Favorable
8 I keep a diary of my own as a part of self-training, in which I write about my daily activities, unforgettable experiences, and the like using English.	2.71	Moderately Favorable
9 I am passionate about developing my English writing skills to help me become a good writer.	3.23	Moderately Favorable
10 I envision myself joining an English writing contest or organization requiring English writing, such as a school paper, because I have been working on developing my English writing skills.	2.66	Moderately Favorable
Overall Mean	3.00	Moderately Favorable

These findings align with Ramos' (2019) observation that learners often struggle with confidence in writing due to fear of making errors or being judged. Furthermore, Kholik et al. (n.d.) noted that self-esteem plays a significant role in writing performance, suggesting that building students' confidence through supportive environments and constructive feedback is essential. Interactive strategies, such as peer reviews and scaffolded writing exercises, could help address these challenges by allowing learners to improve incrementally.

3.3 Grammatical Errors Identified

As shown in Table 4, the analysis revealed four types of grammatical errors, with misformation errors being the most prevalent (40.69%), followed by omission errors (32.19%) and addition errors (25.86%). Misordering errors were the least frequent, accounting for only 1.27% of the total. These results align with Mendoza's (2016) findings, which identified intralingual and interlingual interference as significant contributors to errors in English writing. Similarly, Bialystok et al. (1983) state that surface strategy taxonomy categorizes errors as reflective of learners' developmental stages and challenges in adapting to the grammatical structures of the target language.

Table 4. *Frequency of grammatical errors*

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Misformation	225	40.6
Omission	178	32.2
Addition	143	25.8
Misordering	7	1.27

Misformation errors, the most frequent type (40.69% of all errors), are particularly prevalent in misusing prepositions, verb forms, and tenses. Table 5 shows that preposition errors account for 16.46% of all errors, making them the most common type of misformation. This finding reflects the complexity and subtlety of preposition usage in English, a challenge frequently highlighted in second-language learning research (Bialystok et al., 1983; Harun & Sufian, 2018).

Table 5. *Misformation errors*

Misformation Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Misformation of Preposition	91	16.4
Misformation of Verb Form	48	8.68
Misformation of Tense	30	5.42
Misformation of Grammatical Number	19	3.44
Misformation of Pronoun	16	2.89
Misformation of Conjunction	8	1.45
Misformation of Article	6	1.08
Misformation of Noun Instead of Adjective	2	0.36
Misformation of Determiner Instead of Adverb	2	0.36
Misformation of Verb Instead of Adjective	1	0.18
Misformation of Adjective Instead of Adverb	1	0.18
Misformation of Adjective Instead of Noun	1	0.18

The high incidence of misformation errors indicates difficulties in applying the correct forms of lexical or grammatical elements. For instance, errors in verb forms and tenses suggest an incomplete understanding of English conjugation rules, consistent with Royani and Sadiyah's (2019) findings on learners' struggles with mastering verb usage. Furthermore, L1 interference plays a significant role, particularly in misusing prepositions. Filipino language structures often omit or substitute prepositions in ways that are not directly transferable to English, leading to errors (Garcia et al., 2018). Addressing these challenges requires targeted instruction focusing on prepositions and verb usage, emphasizing contextual understanding and practice.

Omission errors, comprising 32.19% of the total, were most commonly associated with missing articles and prepositions (see Table 6). These omissions often stem from students' reliance on simpler sentence structures and their tendency to overlook grammatical nuances, a pattern frequently observed in the early stages of second-language acquisition (Meunier, 2006).

Table 6. Omission Errors

Omission errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Omission of article	74	13.3
Omission of preposition	31	5.61
Omission of -s/es noun inflection in plural form	29	5.24
Omission of conjunction	17	3.07
Omission of -s/es verb inflection	7	1.27
Omission of linking verb	5	0.90
Omission of auxiliary verb	5	0.90
Omission of -ing verb inflection after preposition	2	0.36
Omission of pronoun	2	0.36
Omission of -ing verb inflection after adverb	1	0.18
Omission of -ing verb inflection after noun	1	0.18
Omission of -ing verb inflection after adjective	1	0.18
Omission of -ing verb inflection after conjunction	1	0.18
Omission of subject	1	0.18
Omission of noun	1	0.18

Such errors highlight learners' grammatical knowledge gaps, particularly regarding functional elements like articles and prepositions. Mendoza (2016) attributed this issue to intralingual interference, where learners simplify structures or fail to apply grammatical rules fully. For instance, the absence of articles often reflects L1 transfer, as articles are not obligatory in Tagalog sentence structures (FilipinoPod101, 2020). These findings underscore the developmental nature of omission errors, where learners' efforts to internalize target language rules result in simplifications. Addressing these gaps requires instruction reinforcing the importance of functional words in sentence construction, providing ample practice and corrective feedback to improve learners' proficiency.

Addition errors, accounting for 25.86% of the total, often involve the unnecessary inclusion of prepositions and articles (see Table 7). These errors suggest overgeneralizing language rules, where learners apply grammatical patterns beyond appropriate contexts or direct translation from their native language.

Table 7. Addition errors

Addition errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Addition of preposition	44	7.96
Addition of article	42	7.59
Addition of -s/es noun inflection in singular form	10	1.81
Addition of conjunction	9	1.63
Addition of auxiliary verb	7	1.27
Addition of -s/es verb inflection	4	0.72
Addition of personal possessive pronoun	4	0.72
Addition of subjective personal pronoun	3	0.54
Addition of personal pronoun	3	0.54
Addition of particle	3	0.54
Addition of objective personal pronoun	2	0.36
Addition of interrogative pronoun	2	0.36
Addition of linking verb	2	0.36
Addition of modal auxiliary verb	2	0.36
Addition of reflexive pronoun	1	0.18
Addition of generic personal pronoun	1	0.18
Addition of demonstrative pronoun	1	0.18
Addition of irregular verb	1	0.18
Addition of -ly adverbial derivation marker	1	0.18
Addition of -ing verb inflection	1	0.18

Such errors reflect learners' attempts to replicate English patterns they have memorized without fully understanding their application, as Heydari and Bagheri (2012) observed. James (1998) also highlighted overgeneralization as a common developmental issue among second-language learners. For example, adding redundant prepositions or articles may arise from learners misinterpreting Filipino sentence structures, where such elements are either used differently or are optional (Garcia et al., 2018). Addressing these challenges requires explicit instruction on English sentence structures and targeted practice to identify and correct overgeneralization tendencies. By focusing on these pitfalls, learners can better understand when grammatical elements are necessary.

Misordering errors, the least frequent type at 1.27% of the total, primarily involved the misplacement of adverbs and prepositions (see Table 8). Although rare, these errors can significantly impact sentence clarity, underscoring the need for targeted practice in sentence structure.

Table 8. *Misordering errors*

Misordering errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Misplacement of adverb	3	0.54
Misplacement of preposition	2	0.36
Misplacement of verb	2	0.36

These errors often stem from L1 interference, as Filipino sentences commonly follow a verb-subject-object (V-S-O) order, in contrast to the subject-verb-object (S-V-O) structure of English (Garcia et al., 2018). Learners unfamiliar with English syntax may misplace elements, confusing and disrupting sentence flow. The Surface Strategy Taxonomy (Bialystok et al., 1983) identifies misordering as a reflection of learners' difficulty adapting to the syntactic rules of the target language. To address this, educators should prioritize sentence construction exercises emphasizing English word order and provide consistent feedback to help learners internalize correct structures.

3.4 Relationship Between Profile and Errors

Statistical analysis revealed no significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles (mother tongue, attitude toward grammar, and attitude toward writing) and their error rates in writing. The p-values for all tested variables exceeded 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Although slight trends were observed—such as a modest correlation between Tagalog speakers and misinformation errors—these were not statistically significant (see Table 9).

Table 9. *Correlation between demographic profile and errors*

Variables			Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering	Total
Mother Tongue	Iloco	Point-Biserial Correlation	-0.234	-0.060	-0.268	-0.118	-0.277
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.176	0.733	0.120	0.498	0.108
	Tagalog	Point-Biserial Correlation	0.258	-0.015	0.334	0.168	0.295
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.135	0.930	0.0499	0.334	0.085
	Pangasinan	Point-Biserial Correlation	-0.063	0.126	-0.140	-0.098	-0.058
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.720	0.470	0.421	0.574	0.741
Attitude toward English Grammar Learning	Pearson Correlation		-0.010	0.043	0.267	-0.098	0.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.957	0.804	0.121	0.574	0.433
Attitude toward English Writing	Pearson Correlation		0.052	0.101	0.169	0.014	0.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.768	0.564	0.331	0.936	0.393

This lack of significant correlation suggests that demographic factors like mother tongue and attitudes alone may not directly influence the frequency of grammatical errors. Similar findings were reported by Malana (2018), who observed that Ilocano, Ibanag, and Itawes students showed no significant differences in written proficiency despite their varying linguistic backgrounds. This reinforces the idea that interlanguage factors and individual learner experiences may have a more substantial impact than demographic variables. Additionally, the results align with Mendoza's (2016) assertion that while L1 interference can contribute to errors, intralingual factors, such as insufficient mastery of grammatical rules, play a more dominant role. The lack of correlation between attitudes and error rates may also reflect findings by Kholik et al. (n.d.), who emphasized the interplay of motivation, self-esteem, and external influences on language performance, suggesting that attitudes alone may not guarantee improved proficiency.

The findings further support Ramos' (2019) recommendation for a holistic approach to grammar instruction. Individual factors like exposure to English, access to quality teaching methods, and personalized learning experiences could be more significant determinants of writing proficiency. For instance, Mendoza's (2016) research underscores the importance of addressing intralingual errors through targeted instruction that builds grammatical competency. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2018) highlighted the role of consistent voice marking and morphosyntactic reinforcement in language acquisition.

These findings suggest that future studies should explore other potential factors affecting writing proficiency, such as teaching strategies, learning environments, and individual learner characteristics, to develop more comprehensive and effective interventions in grammar instruction.

3.5 Causes of Grammatical Errors

The causes of grammatical errors can be categorized into interlingual and intralingual interference, internal factors, and external influences (see Table 10).

Table 10. *Common causes of the respondents' grammatical errors*

Themes	Subthemes	Responses
Interlingual Interference	Non-Native Speaker	R10: Well, I am not a native. That is one.
	Difficulty in interlingual translation	R8: There are words and phrases that I can't translate in English minsan and it frustrates me kasi ang gaganda ng terms sa tagalog pero hindi mo pwede itranslate sa English. Katulad nung word na "nakakapanibago" pero walang word para dun..."refreshing," parang hindi ko feel na yun yung tamang term.
	Incorporation of slang terms in second language acquisition	R1: Yes, because sometimes I tend to use Ilocano slang words like "kwan," "ganun," and "garud" in Tagalog, and even in the English language, I tend to mix it up. My friends get confused about the meaning of these experiences.
	Incorporation of first language pronunciation into second language acquisition	R10: In speaking, yes. Since I am Tagalog and we also practice Ilocano, sometimes I have problems with my short "i" and long "i" sounds.
Intralingual Interference	Unconscious Code-Switching	R2: Kapag nagsasalita minsan po straight in English po ako nag-eexplain kay teacher tapos bigla po akong madudulas into Ilocano.
	Dominance of First Language in the Environment	R2: Kasi po Ilocano po ang both parents ko po. In our household, they usually command using Ilocano. My mother tongue interferes with my speaking and writing in English.
	Poor Grammar	R2: At the start po, especially po learning English, I mean lahat po kung magle-learn po tayo ng language yun po (grammar) yung unang-una pong difficulty natin.
	Unfamiliarity with Subject-Verb Agreement	R2: Remind me po kung ano ang SVA.
Internal Factors Affecting Writing	Word Formation Errors	R1: Maybe what words should I use in the proper structure of the sentence that should be formal, or should it appear formal or casual?
	Lack of Vocabulary	R4: Yes. Lack of knowledge. When I am writing an essay, I am only using light words. It is really hard for me.
	Reading Laziness	R4: I do not read books every day. It is a lack of knowledge, and I think I need to study more to learn everything when I study. That is hard for me because I am lazy at reading.
	Lack of Motivation to Study	R5: The lack of motivation to learn more about the subject.
External Factors Affecting Writing	Lack of Self-Expression in Writing	R3: Sometimes, when I'm writing something that I feel, I cannot express it, and sometimes it turns out so ugly, you know, like when I want to express something but don't know how to write it.
	Mood Dictates Writing	R10: the problem with writing is that it comes in my mood. Sometimes, you do not have that creative juice, right?
	Negative Effect of Perfectionism on Writing	R3: I always want perfection, so I don't want bad grammar, so I always check it, and it's difficult when you're a perfectionist.
	Peer Bullying	R8: I think there is a stigma that follows writing if you cannot speak English fluently or express yourself fluently, you will be made fun of by your peers.

Interlingual Interference

Interlingual interference emerges as a primary source of grammatical errors, driven by the influence of students' native languages (Tagalog, Iloco, and Pangasinan) on their English writing. Challenges in translating culturally specific words, such as nakakapanibago (loosely translated as "refreshing"), illustrate how linguistic gaps between languages complicate the learning process. Additionally, errors related to slang incorporation, code-switching, and pronunciation issues further underscore the impact of first-language interference. This aligns with Mendoza's (2016) findings, which identified interlingual interference as a significant contributor to grammatical errors, mainly when learners directly apply L1 rules to English. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2018) highlighted that Tagalog's flexible word order and unique morphosyntactic markers often lead to misalignment with English grammatical structures, increasing the likelihood of errors.

Intralingual Interference

Intralingual interference stems from learners' incomplete understanding of English grammar rules, particularly in subject-verb agreement, verb conjugation, and word formation. Respondents in the study noted difficulties with vocabulary, which compounded their challenges in constructing grammatically correct sentences. These findings resonate with Heydari and Bagheri's (2012) observation that limited exposure to and practice in formal English writing often results in overgeneralization and partial application of rules. Royani and Sadiah (2019) also highlighted intralingual factors as key contributors to verb agreement and sentence structure errors, emphasizing the need for sustained grammar instruction to help learners internalize rules effectively. These findings suggest that while interlingual interference accounts for some errors, intralingual factors play an equally critical role in students' grammatical challenges.

Internal and External Factors

Internal factors, such as lack of motivation, difficulty with self-expression, and emotional dependence on mood, further exacerbate writing difficulties. Respondents shared that these factors often affect the quality and clarity of their output, echoing Kholik et al.'s (n.d.) assertion that motivation and self-esteem significantly influence writing performance. Similarly, Ramos (2019) identified perfectionism and fear of making mistakes as barriers to effective learning, leading to heightened anxiety and reduced willingness to take risks in writing. External factors, including peer bullying and societal stigma surrounding non-fluent English speakers, negatively impact learners' confidence and motivation. Malana (2018) observed that such external pressures can discourage students from fully engaging in writing activities, further limiting their progress. These findings align with Taylor's (2019) emphasis on the influence of perceptions on performance, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive environment to counteract these negative influences. The causes of grammatical errors are multifaceted, involving interlingual and intralingual interference and internal and external factors. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including targeted grammar instruction, vocabulary-building exercises, and supportive learning environments that foster motivation and self-confidence. Future efforts should consider integrating these strategies into curricula to mitigate these challenges and enhance students' writing proficiency.

4.0 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the grammatical performance of ABEL freshmen, particularly among Tagalog-speaking students. It highlights the prevalence of Tagalog as the mother tongue and reveals that students generally exhibit positive attitudes toward English grammar learning and writing. Students recognize the significance of grammar in improving communication and academic performance, demonstrating enthusiasm for interactive and engaging learning methods like role-playing and games. However, some areas, such as confidence in applying grammar basics, require additional instructional support to strengthen their learning experience. Students show a moderately favorable attitude in terms of writing, valuing the importance of foundational writing principles and vocabulary development. However, challenges such as low confidence in sharing written work highlight the need for interventions to build their self-assurance and reduce writing-related anxiety.

The study identifies frequent grammatical errors, including misformation, omission, and addition, which point to specific areas for targeted instructional focus. Interestingly, the findings reveal that demographic factors, such as mother tongue and attitudes, do not significantly influence writing performance, challenging common assumptions about their role in language acquisition. Interlingual interference emerges as a key contributor to grammatical errors, underscoring the importance of addressing these influences in language instruction. Future research could explore specific aspects of language interference, such as syntactic or phonological patterns, to provide deeper insights. Expanding the study to include students from diverse linguistic backgrounds could further illuminate the complex interplay between language interference and writing performance. These findings emphasize the need for targeted, confidence-building strategies and engaging teaching methods to support students in overcoming challenges and enhancing their English proficiency.

5.0 Contributions of Author

Michael B. Garcia: Managed every step of the research process, from conceptualizing the topic and collecting data to analyzing results and ensuring ethical compliance. Executed the manuscript, made revisions and final adjustments for submission, and demonstrated a commitment to producing quality academic work.

Ruby F. Amado, M.A.Ed.: Served as the thesis adviser and co-author, providing guidance throughout the research process, overseeing the manuscript's development, inspecting for errors, and suggesting adjustments to enhance the quality of the work.

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7.0 Conflict of Interest

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