

## Common syntactic errors in the writing skills of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students at Van Lang University

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** syntax, error, sentence structure, argumentative essay

This study aimed to analyze common syntactic errors found in the argumentative essays of third-year English major students at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Van Lang University, Vietnam. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain data in this study. The quantitative approach involved counting and calculating the frequency, percentage, and ranking of syntactic errors, while the qualitative method was adopted to explain these errors. The instrument for collecting data was argumentative essays written by 37 third-year English majors enrolling in Writing-5 at Van Lang University. Microsoft Word was used to collect and analyze syntactic errors and sentence structures, while Microsoft Excel was employed to calculate the frequency and rank of these errors and structures. The results found that the five most frequent errors in their essays were at the noun phrase and sentence levels. These errors included run-on sentences, preposition errors, article errors, sentence fragments, and pronoun errors. Through error analysis, it was indicated that the majority of errors made by students were due to the negative transfer from their first language and the literal translation. Based on the findings, language teachers and syllabus designers could use these results as guidance to design appropriate teaching methods and materials.

### Introduction

In today's social context, English has been known as a “global language” (Rao, 2019, p.67). It plays an important role in various fields of life, including engineering, education, medicine, etc. (Ilyosovna, 2020). English is a helpful tool in education that opens doors of opportunity for learners' future career prospects. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are the four basic criteria for assessing English language proficiency. Especially, writing skill is considered a complicated production compared to the other skills. It not only requires learners to practice regularly but also requires a lot of criteria to produce a proficient writing piece. According to

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Wee et al. (2009, cited in Phuket & Othman, 2015), no matter how long it takes to learn English, errors are frequently made by most EFL learners in their writing abilities. Learners face various difficulties in their written texts, including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, word choice, punctuation, etc. (Bryne, 1988, as cited in Pratiwi, 2016).

According to Nguyen (2009), problems in teaching and learning to write EFL can be addressed by a variety of methods such as psycholinguistics, syntax, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and SLA. It is undeniable that readers need to combine various criteria in students' writing pieces. However, it will be tough for readers to evaluate effectively if grammatical errors, especially syntactic errors, are frequently found in students' writing. Tahaineh (2010) states that the theme and structure of writing will be negatively affected in their entirety by the incorrect use of syntactic elements, such as verbs, prepositions, articles, relative clauses, etc. Therefore, syntax criteria should be taken into consideration as they are one of the top requirements for evaluating an effective writing piece.

Writing effectively does not root in innate ability but rather in the process of accumulating knowledge and practice. According to Hadley (1993, cited in Andrian, 2015), practice and learning through experience are essential to writing skills. However, learners' writing ability will not improve by simply practicing without detecting deficiencies and drawing experience from these shortcomings. Therefore, Error Analysis (EA) is created to detect, classify, and evaluate learners' errors more effectively. This facilitates students' learning from their errors and avoiding the same ones. According to Khansir et al. (2013), the reduction of errors is a positive sign of progress in the person's capacity. Moreover, EA also provides reliable feedback for the remedial training methods created to address those shortcomings (Weireesh, 1991, cited in Khumpee, 2015). As a result, teachers will rely on those errors to be able to design lessons and take appropriate measures to improve learners' competence.

In nations where English is widely recognized as a foreign language and in Vietnam in particular, mastering English writing skills is a challenging and complex task. In fact, learners' writing abilities will improve if they spend more time practicing (Tuan, 2010; Purnamasari et al., 2021). However, despite making long-term efforts to learn English, Vietnamese students' English proficiency, especially writing skills, are still significantly below expectations (Tran, 2021). Furthermore, regardless of the importance of writing skills, Vietnamese students tend to focus on developing their other skills rather than on them (Tran, 2001). As a consequence, various errors are frequently found in learners' writing, which partially reflects their ineffectiveness in mastering their writing skills. In the study by Dang et al. (2020), it is indicated that the biggest difficulty faced by learners in their essays involves linguistic competence, including aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, and coherence.

It is undeniable that many previous studies have been undertaken to explore errors in learners' writing skills (Emmaryana, 2010; Karahan, 2011; Hamzah, 2012; Ho et al., 2015; Singh, 2017; Nasser, 2018; Khatter, 2019). However, there is a noticeable absence of studies focusing specifically on syntactic errors in written English by these learners. Therefore, it is necessary for the researcher to fill this gap by examining common syntactic errors in students' writing skills to be able to identify their main difficulties in this area.

Furthermore, this study is limited to third-year students in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University. They were selected as subjects in this study because the majority of them have completed previous basic writing courses before enrolling in Academic Writing. Therefore, their writing abilities would be assessed more objectively as they had accumulated sufficient knowledge by that time. Additionally, effective writing is crucial for third-year students as it is a useful tool for the thorough preparation of their graduation thesis.

Based on the above background, the researcher finds that it is very essential to conduct a study on syntax errors in the writing pieces of juniors at VLU.

This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of English teaching and learning. This result can be utilized as a useful resource for learners who encounter difficulties with syntax in their writing skills. Based on the study's findings, they can be aware of these errors and better understand how to correct them. Besides, the findings can be beneficial for teachers and syllabus designers in identifying learners' problems so that teaching methods and materials can be adjusted accordingly.

## Literature Review

### *Previous studies on written error analysis in other countries*

Much previous research on syntax errors has been undertaken in Arab countries. For instance, Zughoul (2002) conducted a study in seven different Arab countries to find interlanguage syntax errors at the noun phrase level. The sample of this study was 25 learners from different Arab countries learning English. She discovered that noun phrase errors (32.8%) were the second most frequent errors ranked after verb phrase errors in the total number of errors made by learners. Particularly, errors in the use of articles accounted for 38% at the noun phrase level and 12.5% of the total syntax errors found.

Another investigation was conducted by Khan & Khan (2016) to discover common errors produced in students' paragraphs at Jazan University. A total of 120 Saudi student passages (60 male and 60 female) were used for the analysis. According to the research findings, it was observed that the most prevalent errors were spelling errors. However, the results also showed that subject-verb agreement errors produced by male students occurred the most frequently of the total number of errors they made (26.32%). Moreover, the study also indicated that intralingual transfer was the main source of most errors found, followed by interlingual transfer.

Similarly, Hafiz et al. (2018) also conducted a case study of pre-university students at Jazan University to explore the syntax errors that students made. The results showed that the common errors made were subject-verb agreement, tense, sentence structure, article, etc. Likewise, they believed that these errors were caused by the first language transfer as well as the learners' lack of practice.

In a recent study, Khatter (2019) examined written errors made by female third-year students at Majmaah University. The results showed that punctuation, spelling, articles, tenses, etc. errors were common in students' writing. In addition, punctuation errors were the most frequently made by female students in their writing, accounting for 29.69% of the total errors. They were more likely to use commas incorrectly to join two independent sentences together instead of using conjunctions or punctuation marks. The production of run-on sentences resulted from

confusion in the use of periods and commas at the end of sentences.

Tati (2016) conducted a study in Malaysia to detect and analyze errors made by 50 ESL students in their descriptive essays. One year later, another study was carried out by Singh (2017) to analyze errors in 140 essays written by 140 tertiary students aged 18 to 20 from random schools in Malaysia. Although both studies were aimed at Malaysian learners, there was a difference in error classification between them. Particularly, Tati (2016) separated errors into three major levels: words, phrases, and sentences, based on Ngangbam's (2016) model. Singh (2017), on the other hand, only classified errors at the word level. Despite with two distinct approaches to error classification, both studies found that learners struggled most frequently with tenses and subject-verb agreement in their writing abilities. However, the two researchers had slightly different explanations for the reasons behind these errors. Specifically, Tati (2016) concluded that learners' errors stem from both interference from their first language and inadequate command of knowledge. In contrast, the weak mastery of the English language of learners was the primary cause drawn from the conclusion of Singh (2017).

In the context of Indonesia, many previous studies have been carried out using various approaches to explore errors made by learners in their writing skills. For example, an investigation was conducted by Emmaryana (2010) of the SMA Negeri 1 Cigudeg first-year students to identify their common errors. Errors were categorized into five types: sentence pattern, tenses, pronouns, prepositions, and spelling and punctuation. The results showed that tenses were the most frequent errors, with 88 errors out of a total of 199 errors in the students' writing. In contrast, only seven errors in pronoun usage were detected, which accounted for the lowest error rate.

In another study, Jumriana (2014) adopted another method designed by Politzer & Ramirez (1973) to investigate syntax errors in essays written by students at Alauddin Islamic State University of Makassar. Based on this model, errors were categorized into four main types including noun phrases, verbs, verb construction, and transformation. The study's findings showed that the predominant errors in students' essays were related to aspects at the noun phrase level, including pronouns, numbers, determiners, and prepositions. While the above two studies utilized two different methods of error classification, they both stemmed from the linguistic category taxonomy that examined errors based on word functions.

On the other hand, Mamun (2016) employed the surface strategy taxonomy developed by Dulay et al. (1982) in a recent study to categorize errors based on the surface of words. This method classified errors into four types: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. The study found that errors of misinformation accounted for the highest percentage (43%) of the total errors identified. While this method allows for detailed error analysis through word surface examination, it may be challenging for lecturers to implement appropriate lesson plans to help learners address these specific errors.

A study was conducted at Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand by Iamsiu (2014) to discover the grammatical errors in students' writing pieces. A total of 20 sophomore English minor students participating in Basic Writing were used as a sample for this survey. The results of the study indicated that word choice was the error with the highest rate (41.13%). Then, the sentence structure was the second most common error, with a frequency of 102 times (36.17%), while the error with the lowest rate was the word order error (0.35%).

Similarly, Sermsook et al. (2017) also investigated to identify the writing errors of English-majored sophomores at a university in Thailand. 104 texts from 24 females and 2 males were collected as instruments for this study. A total of 17 types of errors were detected based on word

and sentence-level classification. The results indicated that punctuation errors were the most frequent errors (14.19%), followed by article errors (13.18%), concord errors (11.82%) and spelling errors (9.8%), respectively. Interlingual transfer, intralingual interference, insufficient knowledge, and carelessness were the main causes of errors in students' writing pieces.

#### *Previous studies on written error analysis in Vietnam*

Not many previous studies have been conducted to find Vietnamese students' errors in writing skills. Ho et al. (2015) conducted a study at HCMC Open University to explore common errors of students majoring in English in writing journals. The findings revealed that first-year English majors frequently made both syntactic and lexical errors. In particular, tense errors were the most frequent type of error, with a total of 6587 tense errors made, corresponding to approximately 57 errors in each student's writing. His findings also indicated that students tended to compose their journal articles by translating their Vietnamese thoughts into English. As a result, this was the reason why they often committed errors in using tenses corresponding to different timelines.

Another study conducted by Chi (2020) also investigated errors in the compositions and paragraphs of Vietnamese students. The results showed that the most prevalent types of errors produced by students were spelling (25.6%), concord (21.4%), and verb tense and form (17%). It is clear that this finding's study was in line with the findings of Ho et al. (2015). However, in Chi's (2020) study, the frequency of occurrence between the three types of errors is not significantly different, which shows that learners faced with the most difficulties in writing skills are similar. In contrast, tenses are an urgent issue for students in Ho et al.'s study as their frequency is more than twice that of the second most common error, spelling.

In the same year, Nguyen (2020) conducted a study to investigate errors in writing paragraphs made by 2nd-year IT students at Hanoi University of Industry. For the purpose of the study, a total of 125 student paragraphs were randomly selected as samples. The findings indicated that the four most prevalent types of errors in students' paragraphs related to verb tense, sentence structures, verb form, and subject-verb agreement. Furthermore, the results from two survey questionnaires from 7 teachers and 667 students indicated that interference from the first language was the primary source of errors in writing paragraphs.

#### *Summary*

Overall, the above studies were conducted in different national contexts to explore the problems faced by students in writing. Based on the results of previous studies, it could be concluded that the main errors in previous studies were related to tenses, articles, prepositions, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, etc. However, most of the research tended to focus on common errors or grammatical errors in countries where English has been used as a second language. Besides, research on syntax errors, especially at the sentence level, has not been widely explored in nations where English has been considered a foreign language or a lingua franca, except for Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the majority of the research targeted freshmen, sophomores, and pre-university students. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing the syntax errors of third-year English majors. Furthermore, the study will not divide students into female or male groups as the main purpose of this study is to examine common syntactic errors in their essays, not to compare errors between these two groups.

### *Research Questions*

The researcher fulfills the objectives of the study by answering two research questions:

1. What are the common syntactic errors in the argumentative essays committed by the 3rd-year English majored students at VLU?
2. How many types of sentence structures do students normally use in their essays?

### **Methods**

#### *Pedagogical Setting & Participants*

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at VLU in District 1, HCMC. The Faculty of Foreign Languages currently includes two majors: English Language and Chinese Language. The population of this study consists of 37 argumentative essays produced by 37 3rd-year English-majored students attending Writing 5 in the academic years 2021-2022, at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Van Lang University.

#### *Design of the Study*

The study included a group of third-year English majors at Van Lang University who submitted their assignments for Writing 5-Academic Writing. Participants in the study were asked to write an argumentative essay of 400-500 words in length and use at least 5 different resources to support their writing on one of the following topics in their assignments: “Adults should be required to pass a test before they can become parents.”, “All students should complete at least one course abroad.”, or “The consequences of co-habitation”.

Out of a total of 131 available essays, 37 original essays from students were randomly selected. After collecting the essays, the research data would be collected by classifying sentence structures, checking for syntax errors, classifying, quantifying, and then correcting them. Each element in the essay that does not follow the syntax rules of English will be marked as an error. Furthermore, the collection and analysis of errors and sentence structure would be done in Microsoft Word, while Microsoft Excel was used to count the frequency, calculate the percentage, and rank each type of error.

The researcher adopted quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain data related to the research problem. The quantitative analysis was used to explore syntactic errors and sentence structures found in learners' essays. The results were presented in tables with numerical data, including each identified type's frequency, percentage, and ranking. By employing the quantitative method design, the results would be presented in numbers so that readers could have a general overview of common syntactic errors found. However, explaining each type of error through numbers is abstract and confusing for readers to have a comprehensive picture of errors detected. Therefore, the qualitative method was employed to analyze and explain errors in detail in terms of content. Each type of error will be designed with specific examples, explanations of why errors are formed, and how to correct them.

### *Data collection & analysis*

The instrument employed in this study was argumentative essays written by 37 3rd-year students majoring in English Language at VLU. Also, the data would be analyzed by using the theory of Gass et al. (2008). This method involves six steps, including collecting data, identifying, classifying, quantifying, analyzing, and remediating errors. This theory includes specific steps in error analysis that can assist researchers in identifying each detailed task to be performed and avoiding confusion in processing detected errors. However, there would be some changes in the steps that would be appropriate to the objectives of the current research. The classification of sentence structures would be added after the data collection step to detect the categories of sentence structures used in the students' argumentative essays. Furthermore, this study would focus on correcting errors instead of investigating the sources behind them in the last step.

**Collecting data:** Based on the error analysis theory of Gass et al. (2008), the first step to be taken is to collect samples. Her supervisor provided the researcher with essays from 131 students attending his Writing 5 course in the academic years 2021-2022. The researcher selected at random 37 essays to use as data for analysis without any consideration of the identities of the participants or the contents of their essays. They were required to submit 2 versions of the essays including the original version and the revised version after receiving feedback from group members. Therefore, the researcher just collected the original versions for analysis and omitted references to make it easier to summarize the samples. Next, she downloaded 37 essays, gathered them into a Word Document, and copied one version to analyze the sentence structures. Each type of sentence structure would be analyzed using different highlighters in Microsoft Word. To secure the personal information of the participants, their essays were coded as S1 to S37.

**Classifying sentence structures:** After obtaining data for analysis, the researcher would use the version copy to classify the sentence structures into four basic types: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. Besides, global errors in sentence construction, including run-on sentences and sentence fragments, will also be examined in this step to answer the second research question. She used different highlighters to highlight each type of sentence structure. It should be noted that each type would be marked with a different color and not duplicated. Highlighting different sentence structures in different colors would help the researcher avoid confusion and make the summary easier during analysis.

**Example:** However, I completely agree with the above point because studying abroad will bring some benefits to students.

The above sentence is a complex sentence because it includes one dependent clause or subordinating clause which cannot stand alone (*because studying abroad will bring some benefits to students*) and one main clause/independent clause (*I completely agree with the above point*).

The table of the coding schemes in Appendix A was used to analyze errors of the students (see Appendix A).

**Identifying errors:** Then, the researcher read and observed each sentence in detail and carefully

to find syntax errors. The researcher observed and compared each sentence produced by the participants against the standard rules of English syntax. If there was one syntactic element in the student's writing that was not in accordance with the standard syntax rules in the target language, it was marked as one error. In this step, the researcher would use the text highlighter to mark errors.

**Example:** Secondly, participating a class before becoming parents will help to communicate with their children effectively.

In the above example, a total of two syntax errors were found. The first error was in the use of prepositions, and the other error was in using pronouns.

**Classifying errors:** The researcher observed highlighted parts and began to classify these errors. If the errors could be subdivided, she would divide them into subcategories based on the theory of Ellis (1997) to be able to have a profound insight into the syntax errors found. These subcategories include omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering. For example, if a student made an error relating to using the incorrect preposition, the researcher would use the comment feature and note it as Preposition - misinformation.

**Example:** Secondly, participating a class before becoming parents will help to communicate with their children effectively.

The first error was related to the use of prepositions, namely the omission of the necessary preposition "in". The other error was related to pronoun error, namely the omission of the personal pronoun "them". Then, the researcher would use the comment feature and note them as Preposition - omission and Pronoun - omission respectively.

**Quantifying errors:** After collecting and classifying, the researcher would aggregate the occurrence frequency of each error type by inputting the number of errors detected for each essay into the pre-designed Excel worksheet. Next, after recording the errors in all 37 writing samples, the researcher would calculate the percentage of each category of error based on the following formula:

$$\% \text{ of each type of error} = \frac{\text{frequency of each type of error}}{\text{Total number of errors found}} \times 100\%$$

**Example:** Secondly, participating a class before becoming parents will help to communicate with their children effectively.

In the above example, there were two syntactic errors, including Preposition - omission and Pronoun - omission. Therefore, the researcher would record the number of errors by entering the number 1 in the Preposition - omission section and the number 1 in the Pronoun - omission field in the Excel worksheet.

**Correcting errors:** In the last step, the researcher would correct the types of errors found previously. This was done in order to give the research's findings a more in-depth look at frequent errors and remedies, allowing us to comprehend why these errors are incorrect and why they need to be fixed.

**Example:** Secondly, participating a class before becoming parents will help to communicate



with their children effectively.

**Correct:** Secondly, *participating in a class* before becoming parents will *help them to communicate* with their children effectively.

### *Inter-rater*

In order to ensure the reliability of the study's findings, the researcher provided original writing samples to seven peers and one English teacher. Along with the samples, a blank Excel sheet for error classification and examples of error classification were given to them. Their task was to read the essays and record the number of errors in the provided Excel spreadsheet. After receiving their error statistics, the researcher would compare them with her results. If there were any errors or differences in the results obtained, the researcher would consult her supervisor for explanations and correct answers.

## Results/Findings

*What are the common syntactic errors in the argumentative essays committed by the 3<sup>rd</sup>- year English majored students at VLU?*

A total of 37 essays were collected as data to answer this question. After analysis, it was discovered that there were 12 different categories of syntactic errors. The coding schemes for these errors were included in Appendix A. For error items of negligible number, the researcher would classify them as "Other". Table 1 provides a summary of each error type's name, frequency, percentage, and rank. However, in order to identify the most prevalent problematic issues, the researcher would focus on evaluating the five most frequent categories of syntactic errors.

Table 1

Syntactic errors were made by 37 students in their argumentative essays: A summary of types, frequency, and rank

No.	Types of errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1	Run-on sentences	92	20.58%	1
2	Sentence fragments	48	10.74%	4
3	Preposition	64	14.32%	2
4	Article	57	12.75%	3
5	Tense	26	5.82%	9
6	Infinitive/Gerund	27	6.04%	8
7	S-V agreement	35	7.83%	6
8	Pronoun	37	8.28%	5
9	Voice	6	1.34%	12
10	Word order	14	3.13%	10
11	Sentence-Initial coordinating conjunction	29	6.49%	7
12	Other	12	2.68%	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>447</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

As shown in Table 1, there were 447 syntactic errors produced by 37 third-year students in their argumentative essays. These errors were divided into 11 main categories, and “other section” was for errors of negligible number. Particularly, the five most common syntactic types identified in students' argumentative essays were run-on sentences, preposition errors, article errors, sentence fragments, and pronoun errors, while errors in the use of voice were identified at least. To have more detailed information, Appendix B would provide specific data regarding twelve errors. For the 5 most common types of error, the error name, frequency, and rank would be presented separately in Table 2 for analysis.

Table 2

A summary of types, frequency, and rank of the five most common types of syntactic error

No.	Types of errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1	Run-on sentences	92	20.58%	1
2	Preposition	64	14.32%	2
3	Article	57	12.75%	3
4	Sentence fragments	48	10.74%	4
5	Pronoun	37	8.28%	5
TOTAL		298	66.67%	

As presented in Table 2, run-on sentences were detected to be the most prevalent type of error, with a frequency of 92 times (20.58%). The second most frequent syntactic error found was in using prepositions, which occurred 64 times (14.32% of all errors). Then, article errors were the third most common category of error, with a frequency of 57 times (12.75%). Then, it was followed by 48 errors in sentence fragments (10.74%) and 37 pronoun errors (8.28%), respectively. In order to obtain an in-depth examination of such errors at the phrase level, the researcher would analyse them by categorizing them into sub-types of errors based on Ellis's theory (1997). Furthermore, in terms of incorrect sentence structures, they would be discussed, given examples, and explained more intensively in research question 2.

#### *Run-on sentences*

As indicated in Table 2, run-on sentences were detected to be the most frequent type of error in students' essays. They accounted for 20.58% of the total and ranked first in the total number of errors detected. There were three main errors related to run-on sentences, including comma splices, fused sentences, and polysyndetons. As these errors were at the sentence level, they would be further discussed through detailed examples in research question 2.

#### *Sub-categories of errors in prepositions*

The second highest rate of syntactic error type identified was in the use of prepositions, which accounted for 14.32% of all errors found. Specifically, Table 4 would present the frequency, percentage, and rank of sub-categories of errors in the use of prepositions that students encountered.

Table 3  
Types, frequency, and rank of sub-categories of errors in prepositions

No.	Sub-categories of errors	Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering
1	Frequency	24	9	31	0
2	Percentage (%)	37.50%	14.06%	48.44%	0%
3	Rank	2	3	1	4

As shown in Table 3, there were a total of 3 sub-categories related to errors in prepositional usage. Preposition misinformation was the biggest problem faced by students, with a frequency of 31 times (48.48%). Then, it was followed by 24 errors in preposition omission (37.50%), and 9 in preposition addition (14.06%) respectively. There were no errors relating to misordering in the prepositional errors. Some examples related to these sub-types of errors will be shown below.

**Sub-category:** Preposition misinformation

**Example:** The data are... *for* 1970 to 2015. (S20)

The above example shows that the writer made a syntactic error regarding the use of prepositions. According to the rules of English, to indicate two dates, people will use "from...to..." to express instead of "for...to". In this example, it can be seen that the writer was influenced by the mother tongue when translating word-by-word, leading to the wrong use of prepositions for the above sentence. In Vietnam, people have various ways of expressing distance; for example, people can say "từ 5 đến 7 ngày" to show certainty in a statement, or they can also say "khoảng 5 đến 7 ngày" to indicate conjecture, not certainty.

**Correct:** The data... *from* 1970 *to* 2015. (S20)

**Sub-category:** Preposition omission

**Example:** Secondly, participating a class before becoming parents will help to communicate with their children effectively. (S2)

As shown in the above example, an error in the preposition usage was found. Specifically, the writer omitted necessary preposition "in" after "participating".

**Correct:** Secondly, *participating in* a class before becoming parents will help *them* to communicate with their children effectively.

**Sub-category:** Preposition addition

**Example:** But there are also cases of getting married *about* quarrels, adultery and leading to this divorce. (S21)

In the example above, the writer made a syntax error regarding the use of prepositions. Particularly, the writer added the preposition unnecessarily because he or she tended to think in Vietnamese and then translated that thought into English. In Vietnamese, the writer translated from the sentence " *Nhưng cũng có một số trường hợp lấy nhau về (getting married about) rồi cãi vã, ngoại tình và dẫn đến ly hôn.*". The word-by-word translation from "rồi" to "about" makes it difficult for readers to clearly understand the message the writer would like to express.

**Correct:** *However*, there are also cases of people *getting married and then having quarrels or adultery*, leading to this divorce.

### Sub-categories of errors in articles

As aforementioned, article errors ranked the third most common category of syntactic error, with a frequency of 57 times (12.75%). Particularly, more detailed information will be presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Types, frequency, and rank of sub-categories of errors in articles

No.	Sub-categories of errors	Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering
1	Frequency	29	23	5	0
2	Percentage (%)	50.88%	40.35%	8.77%	0%
3	Rank	1	2	3	4

There were a total of 3 sub-categories related to errors in using articles found, as shown in Table 4. The highest proportion of errors in articles committed by students was article omission, with 29 times (50.88%). Then, it was followed by 23 errors in article addition (40.35%), and 5 errors in preposition addition (8.77%), respectively.

**Sub-category:** Article omission

**Example:** There are variety of disadvantage people live together. (S27)

In the above example, the writer omitted the article "a", leading to the syntax error related to the article usage. The article "a" is required in the above sentence to create the phrase "a variety of...".

**Correct:** There are *a* variety of *disadvantages to* people *living* together. (S27)

**Sub-category:** Article addition

**Example:** If you take the advantage of this opportunity, you could even establish lasting friendships with people in many different countries. (S6)

In the above example, the writer used the phrase "take advantage of" to mean make use of something well; however, the noun "advantage" here is neither defined nor mentioned in the previous sentences, so the article "the" cannot be used for the above phrase.

**Correct:** If you *take advantage* of this opportunity, you could even establish lasting friendships with people in many different countries. (S6)

**Sub-category:** Article misinformation

**Example 3:** Completing at least one course of study abroad is a most beneficial experience for all students. (S30)

In the above example, the writer used the superlative comparison with the article "a" instead of "the". He or she seems to have made a mistake in using the article in the example sentence above. Therefore, it does not correspond to the syntactic rule regarding the use of articles in the superlative structure.

**Correct:** Completing at least one course of study abroad is *the* most beneficial experience for all students. (S30)

*Errors are related to the construction of fragment sentences*

Out of all the errors identified, fragment sentences accounted for the third highest percentage (10.74%). There were various cases related to this type of error; therefore, the researcher would provide some of the detailed instances to have more deep insights in the research question 2 relating to sentence structures.

*Sub-categories of errors in the use of pronouns*

Pronoun errors, with 37 errors, or 8.28%, were discovered to be the fifth most frequent errors committed by the students. Table 6 presents the detailed data on the sub-categories of pronoun errors faced by students.

Table 5

A summary of types, frequency, and rank of sub-categories of errors in pronouns

No.	Sub-categories of errors	Omission	Addition	Misinformation	Misordering
1	Frequency	17	4	16	0
2	Percentage (%)	45.95%	10.81%	43.24%	0%
3	Rank	1	3	2	4

As presented in Table 5, a total of three sub-categories related to errors in the use of pronouns were identified. Pronoun omission accounted for the highest rate, with 17 times (49.95%). Then, it was followed by 16 errors in the misuse of pronouns (43.24%) and 4 errors in pronoun addition (10.81%), respectively.

**Sub-category:** Pronoun omission

**Example:** First and foremost, cohabitation will cause couples to have many conflicts in daily life. (S36)

In the above example, since the writer mentioned "*couples*", the noun phrase "*daily life*" is for "*couples*". Therefore, possessive pronouns are necessary to show the complete meaning of the sentence.

**Correct:** First and foremost, cohabitation will cause couples to have many conflicts in *their* daily lives. (S36)

**Sub-category:** Pronoun misinformation

**Example 3:** Even some students who live in their relative's house, independence is a must in your every action, challenging you to be your own individuals. (S6)

In the example sentence above, the clause "*even some...relative's house*" is an dependent clause; therefore, the following clause is the independent clause to complete the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, the main clause must have a connection with the meaning of the subordinate clause. However, the confusion in using personal and possessive pronouns made the two clauses of the above sentence not identical in meaning.

**Correct:** Even *for* some students who live in their relatives' houses, independence is a must in *their* every action, challenging *them* to be *their* own individuals. (S6)

**Sub-category:** Pronoun addition

**Example 2:** However, studying abroad is an optimal solution to help students step out of their comfort zone and mingle themselves in a new environment.

In the above example, the writer unnecessarily inserted the reflexive pronoun "themselves" into the sentence. In fact, he or she tended to translate word-by-word from "hòa mình vào một môi trường mới" to "mingle themselves in a new environment". However, the verb "mingle" itself means "hòa mình" and does not need a reflexive pronoun to accompany it.

**Correct:** However, studying abroad is an optimal solution to help students step out of their comfort zone and mingle in a new environment.

*Research question 2: How many types of sentence structures do students normally use in their essays?*

In order to respond this research question, the researcher divided the types of sentences used in 37 argumentative essays by 37 third-year English majors at Van Lang University. As described in the Methodology section, the researcher would classify sentence types into four basic categories to obtain the results. Furthermore, run-on sentences and sentence fragments would also be included in this research question to be analyzed. The purpose was to be able to draw conclusions about the number of students who succeed and fail in producing sentences. However, in terms of ranking, the researcher would separate four basic types of sentences and two types of errors in sentence construction to analyze. Table 6 shows the frequencies, percentages, and ranks of the four types of structures used and the errors in their production. To have more detailed statistics, they were included in Appendix C.

Table 6

Types of sentence structures in students' argumentative essays

COMPLETE SENTENCES					Run-on sentences	Sentence fragments	Total
Type	Simple sentences	Compound sentences	Complex sentences	Compound-complex sentences			
Frequency	377	54	353	34	92	48	958
Percentage	39.35%	5.64%	36.85%	3.55%	9.60%	5.01%	100.00%
Rank	1	3	2	4	1	2	
Total	818 (85.39%)				140 (14.61%)		

As seen in Table 6, the majority of students correctly produced English sentence structures (85.39%). A total of 818 sentence structures, including simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, were correctly produced by 37 students in their argumentative essays.

Particularly, simple sentences were the most prevalent ones made by learners, with 377 times,

or 39.35%. Students might prefer simple sentences as they are considered to be the least complicated sentences, allowing them to produce these structures readily.

Complex sentences were the second most commonly used sentence structure in students' essays, with a frequency of 353 times and accounting for 36.85% of the total sentence structures found. Students seemed to be fairly proficient at using various subordinating conjunctions (because, since, although, in order that, if,...), relative clauses, etc. to produce complex sentences.

Compound sentences, which represented an insignificant percentage of writing pieces (5.64%), were ranked third in sentence structure frequency used. In fact, students made efforts to produce compound sentences; however, combining sentences without linking words or commas "," caused students to fail in completing compound sentences.

Compound-complex sentences were the least common of all the structures found, with 34 times, or 3.55%. These are considered the most complicated types of sentences because they require learners to master the rules of all three remaining types of sentences when producing them.

Table 7

Two types of incorrect sentence structures in students' argumentative essays

Types	Run-on sentences	Sentence fragments	Total
Frequency	92	48	140
Percentage (%)	9.60%	5.01%	14.61%
Rank	1	2	

As indicated in Table 7, a total of 140 sentences, or 14.61% were incorrectly produced by students. Run-on sentences, with a frequency of 92 times, or 9.06% were considered the most frequent errors at the sentence level while sentence fragments were the second most common errors. Several cases and examples related to these two types of errors would be discussed in detail below.

**Run-on sentences:** consist of at least two main or independent clauses that are not combined by a conjunction or divided by a punctuation mark (Zheng et al., 2018).

### *Comma splices*

A comma splice is the use of a comma without a conjunction between two or more separate sentences (Lunsford, 2016, as cited in Sullivan, 2021).

**Example:** Raising children is difficult, raising children skillfully is even more difficult. (S32)

It can be seen that in the above example, the writer produced a run-on sentence. According to the rules of English, two independent clauses should have coordinating conjunctions or a semicolon ";" in some cases when combined. However, he or she combined two simple sentences by placing a comma between them without any coordinating conjunction, which made the above sentence syntactically incorrect.

There are several ways to correct the syntax error in the above sentence. Instead of using comma "s", the writer should use the semicolon ";" to combine two simple sentences to make a compound sentence, using the conjunction "but" or the linking word "however" to combine

these clauses.

**Correct:** Raising children is difficult, *but* raising children skillfully is even more difficult.

**Fused sentences:** occur when two sentences are combined together without using any punctuation (Lamb, 1977).

**Example:** Furthermore is Khorshidi's research has backed up the idea that studying abroad helps students improve their foreign language skills while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)

In the example above, the writer tended to be negatively influenced by his or her first language when translating his or her thoughts from “*Hơn nữa là cuộc nghiên cứu của Khoshidi đã ủng hộ...*” into English. In Vietnamese, the word “*là*” is often used to separate the adverbial part from the main part in spoken text. Therefore, this led to a redundancy of the copula verb “*is*” making the sentence a run-on sentence. The way to fix this error is to separate “*furthermore*” as a connecting word and cross out the copula verb “*is*”.

**Correct: *Furthermore*,** Khorshidi's research has backed up the idea that studying abroad helps students improve their foreign language skills while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)

### ***Polysyndetons***

According to Sebesta and Haynes (2010, as cited in Hamzaa et al., 2020), polysyndeton occurs when writers use a lot of conjunctions to connect various words in a sentence. Particularly, polysyndeton is the use of conjunctions when they are not grammatically required (Fisk, 1844, as cited in Hamzaa et al., 2020).

**Example:** First, cohabitation will affect the girl's reputation, ..., there are a lot... be intact, if that girl chooses to live together but as a result can't marry that man, it will be very difficult for her to marry someone else, because if she meets someone who doesn't care about virginity, it is okay, but if she accidentally meets a patriarch who values virginity, this girl will probably not be happy. (S21)

The above example shows that the writer produced a very lengthy sentence by combining coordinating and subordinating conjunctions between sentences. Too-long sentences are not only syntactically inaccurate, but readers also find them tough to comprehend what the writer was attempting to convey.

**Correct:** First, cohabitation will affect the girl's reputation. In fact, there are a lot of men who want their wives to be intact. Therefore, if that girl chooses to live with a man without getting married, it will be very difficult for her to marry someone else. The reason is that if she meets someone who doesn't care about virginity, it is okay. However, if she accidentally meets a patriarch who values virginity, this girl will probably not be happy. (S21)

**Sentence fragments:** incomplete sentences, phrases, or dependent clauses related to the preceding sentence are considered sentence fragments (Jean, 2002, cited in Sriyatni, 2019). They are considered incomplete sentences regardless of whether they start with a capital letter and stop with punctuation (Sriyatni, 2019).



### *No separation between the adverbial part and the main clause of the sentence*

**Example:** Especially students who live far from home or really love someone, they will live together. (S15)

In the sentence above, the student constructed an incomplete sentence, namely the sentence fragment. Putting a comma (,) in the wrong place made this sentence syntactically incorrect in English. Students tended to separate them into two separate sections; however, the first clause before the comma is a dependent clause. However, a dependent clause cannot stand alone; a main clause is needed to build a complete meaning for the sentence. Therefore, it is necessary to have a main verb to complete the meaning of the sentence and not stand alone.

The method to correct this sentence is to separate "*especially*" as an adverb part of the sentence and place a comma directly after this part. Then, the researcher will remove the remaining comma and omit the pronoun "*they*" which functions as the subject of the sentence.

**Correct:** *Especially*, students who live far from home or really love someone *will live* together.

### *Use phrases instead of sentences*

**Example:** In the event of an unplanned pregnancy. (S21)

In the above example, the writer produced a prepositional phrase with "in" as the preposition and the noun phrase "the event of an unplanned pregnancy". In this sentence, there is no main subject or verb to form the sentence. The way to correct this example is to separate this prepositional phrase as an adverbial component and add a main clause to form a complete sentence.

**Correct:** In the event of unplanned pregnancies, *most young people often feel anxious, which leads to making some wrong decisions*. (S21)

### *Subject omission*

**Example:** According to Allyn Fives (2017), examines the legality of parental licenses as well as parental supervision and training. (S8)

In the above example, it can be seen that the comma (,) is the sign of division between the adverbial element and the main clause in the sentence. In the main clause, the form of "*examines*" is a verb and is in the singular verb form. Therefore, in this case, the writer omitted the necessary subject of the sentence, making the above sentence an incomplete sentence.

**Correct:** According to Allyn Fives (2017), *the local authority should examine* the legality of parental licenses as well as parental supervision and training. (S8)

### *Main verb omission*

**Example:** This problem due to the decreasing of economic effect following some studies.

In the above example, it can be seen that "*this problem*" is a noun phrase that functions as the subject of the sentence, and "due" here is an adjective. Therefore, it is necessary to insert a copula verb "*is*" before the adjective to make the sentence complete.

**Correct:** This problem *is* due to the decreasing economic effect following some studies.

### *Summary*

Overall, the results showed that there were a total of 5 most common syntactic error types out of 12 error types found. These errors included the use of run-on sentences (20.58%), prepositions (14.32%), articles (12.75%), sentence fragments (10.74%), and pronouns (8.28%), respectively. In addition, the findings also revealed that the majority of learners effectively produced various types of sentence patterns (85.39%). However, it can be inferred that errors at the sentence level and noun phrase level are the most challenging aspects for learners in terms of their writing abilities.

### **Discussion**

Based on the findings, errors involving the use of prepositions, articles, and pronouns do not significantly affect the quality of writing. However, errors at the sentence level, such as run-on sentences and sentence fragments, profoundly negatively impact on the overall quality of argumentative essays. In this type of writing, the writers are required to persuade readers to agree with their points of view by providing reasons and arguments. Therefore, it is essential for writers to effectively construct sentences that convey their ideas logically and rigorously. Moreover, readers may be confused by the messages the writers attempt to convey if run-on sentences are present. Additionally, disorganized ideas due to sentence fragments can make it difficult for readers to comprehend the writers' intended messages fully.

The findings of the present study are in agreement with those of Jumriana (2014), who found that the most frequent types of syntactic errors were at the noun phrase level. These errors included the use of determiners, pronouns, prepositions, etc. These findings, however, are contradictory to most of the previous studies undertaken in the context of Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam (Tati, 2016; Suwangard, 2014; Phoocharoensil et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2015; Chi, 2020; Nguyen, 2020; Le, 2023). The majority of these studies concluded that errors related to verbs are the most problematic areas for learners to master writing skills. For instance, Le (2023) found that pre-intermediate students mainly committed errors with verb forms and subject-verb agreement, with fewer errors in tense usage. Additionally, both Le's study and the current study identified similar types of errors in sentence structures, but there was a notable difference in the findings. In Le's study, students struggled the most with sentence fragments, followed by run-on sentences, whereas the current study showed the opposite result.

Furthermore, the current result is also consistent with those detected by Currie et al. (2019), who found that errors with the use of prepositions were the second difficulty faced by students. However, this present study's findings contradict those of Mireku-Gyimah, who determined that the majority of final-year students at the University of Mines and Technology were proficient in using articles. He found that the figure for these errors was negligible, at 1.39% of all errors identified.

Furthermore, the results of the present study are similar to those of Nasser (2018), who identified challenges encountered by students in the English department at the University of Baghdad, Iraq. The researcher concluded that learners primarily struggle with constructing sentence structures. Similarly, Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008) in the Thai context

also found that run-on sentences were also considered one of the problematic areas for students, with 69.40% of them committing these errors in their paragraphs.

More specifically, these findings are also in line with previous studies by Yu (2009) and Promsupa et al. (2017), which identified that the two most problematic issues for students at the sentence level were the production of run-on sentences and sentence fragments. Similarly, the present study's findings are also consistent with those of Sultan (2015), who examined the writing of 88 first-year students enrolling in Academic Writing. The taxonomy of syntactic errors was used to categorize errors into two levels: phrase and clause. The analysis found that the most prevalent errors at the clause level were run-on errors. These results, however, are in contrast to Krismanti's study (2014), in which he revealed that sentence fragments were the most problematic issues, followed by run-on sentences.

However, the results of this study are in contrast with those of Izzo (2000), who examined issues related to sentence structure in the writings of 172 Japanese students from three different universities. The findings revealed that beginning sentences with coordinating conjunctions was the most frequent error while run-on sentences were the least prevalent of the errors found. In contrast, the results of this study suggest that run-on sentences are the most common errors while sentence-initial coordinating conjunctions have the lowest rate of sentence structures, ranking the eighth total of the twelve categories of errors detected (see Table 1).

Overall, the results of this study discovered that there were five common types of syntactic errors. They included run-on sentences (20.58%), prepositional errors (14.32%), article errors (12.75%), sentence fragments (10.74%) and pronoun errors (8.28%), respectively. Specifically, there were two common errors at the sentence level, run-on sentences and sentence fragments. The remaining three common types of errors at the noun phrase level included preposition errors, article errors and pronoun errors, respectively. Moreover, through the process of analysis, the researcher found that the influence of the mother tongue primarily caused these errors. Furthermore, these errors also originated from the literal translation when learners attempted to translate their Vietnamese thoughts into English.

## Conclusion

The present study provided a general overview of the syntactic errors that thirty-seven students made in their argumentative essays. Furthermore, different types of sentence structures were also performed to measure how proficient students were in the production of sentence structures.

The results showed that there were a total of 12 types of syntax errors made by students. Particularly, the five most frequent types of errors in their essays were at the noun phrase level and the sentence level. Particularly, they included run-on sentences, preposition errors, article errors, sentence fragments, and pronoun errors, respectively. Furthermore, it was indicated that the majority of students effectively produced various types of sentence patterns. However, there were still several sentences that were not precisely created. Through the examples analyzed in the Result section, it can be seen that the errors committed by learners were mainly influenced by their mother tongue when students applied the rules of Vietnamese to English. In addition,

the literal translation was also a significant contributor to the syntactic errors detected.

Through the errors presented by the students, it can be inferred that the majority of students effectively produced different types of sentences in their essays. However, the syntactic errors they made accounted for a significant proportion of the essays. No matter how many sentences there were, run-on sentences and sentence fragments significantly negatively affected students' writing quality. In fact, students must employ arguments in their essays in order to bolster and defend their points of view. However, it would be tough for the readers to comprehend the complete message the writer would like to express if the sentences produced were run-on sentences or sentence fragments. Therefore, although the syntactic component is not the most important factor determining the quality of the article, it will be the element that helps writers convey their messages more effectively.

The findings are expected to be beneficial for learning and teaching English. By providing detailed explanations and corrections for errors, learners would be aware of why these errors are formed and how to correct them. As a result, they can take advantage of this resource to compare their writings, which enables them to minimize the same ones committed in subsequent writings and ultimately improve their writing skills. Furthermore, these findings could be utilized as valuable resources to assist lecturers in detecting the main difficulties in learners' writing abilities. This enables lecturers and syllabus designers to create appropriate lessons and teaching methods, enhancing learners' performance. In addition, integrating syntax instruction into writing skills should be taken into consideration to assist learners in effectively using syntactic elements in their writing. Namely, teachers can design more exercises that focus on identifying errors and rewriting correct sentences or rewriting sentences without changing their meaning. This can enhance students' understanding of common syntactic errors and structural differences between English and Vietnamese.

However, there are still several limitations in this research. The scope of this study is limited to a small scale as it is accessible to major students enrolling in Writing 5 at the VLU Foreign Language Faculty. Therefore, it is recommended that the prospective researchers expand the scale to apply to a wider area and more participants to enhance the reliability of the results obtained. Moreover, to ensure accuracy in assessing students' abilities, future researchers need to collect samples under standardized conditions, such as supervision and within a set time frame. Additionally, it is advised that future studies should consider exploring different genres of writing beyond argumentative essays to uncover new insights.

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### Biodata

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## APPENDIXES

## Appendix A: Coding schemes of each type of syntactic error

	Example	Correct	Categories
1	Raising children is difficult, raising children skillfully is even more difficult. (S32)	Raising children is difficult, <b>but</b> raising children skillfully is even more difficult. (S32)	Run-on sentence - comma splice (1)
	Furthermore <b>is</b> Khorshidi's research has backed up...while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)	Furthermore, Khorshidi's research has backed up...while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)	Run-on sentence - fused sentence (1)
	First, cohabitation will affect the girl's reputation,... there are a lot of men who want their wife to be intact, <i>if</i> that girl ... <i>but</i> as a result can't marry that man..else. (S21)	First, cohabitation will affect the girl's reputation. There are a lot of men who want their wives to be intact. If that girl chooses to live with a man without getting married, it will be very difficult for her to marry someone else. (S21)	Run-on sentences - Polysyndetons(1)
	Furthermore <i>is</i> Khorshidi's research has backed up...while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)	Furthermore, Khorshidi's research has backed up...while also improving their pragmatic mindset. (S14)	Run-on sentence - fused sentence (1)
2	Especially students who live far from home or really love someone, they will live together. (S15)	Especially, students who live far from home or really love someone will decide to cohabit. (S15)	Sentence fragment -no separation between SC and MC (1)
	In the event of an unplanned pregnancy. (S21)	In the event of unplanned pregnancies, <b>most young people often feel anxious, which leads to making some wrong decisions.</b> (S21)	Sentence fragment - Using phrases instead of sentences
	According to Allyn Fives (2017), examines the legality of parental licenses as well as parental supervision and training. (S8)	According to Allyn Fives (2017), <b>the local authority should examine</b> the legality of parental licenses as well as parental supervision and training. (S8)	Sentence fragment - Subject omission (1)
	This problem due to the decreasing of economic effect following some studies.	This problem <b>is</b> due to the decreasing economic effect following some studies.	Sentence fragment - Main verb omission
3	Secondly, <i>participating a class</i> before becoming parents <i>will help to communicate</i> with their children effectively. (S2)	Secondly, <b>participating in a class</b> before becoming parents <b>will help them to communicate</b> with their children effectively. (S2)	Preposition - omission + Pronoun (2)
3	<i>But</i> there are also cases of getting married <i>about</i> quarrels, adultery and leading to this divorce. (S21)	<b>However</b> , there are also cases of <b>people getting married and then having quarrels</b> , adultery, and leading to this divorce. (S21)	Preposition - addition
	The data are... <i>for</i> 1970 to 2015. (S20)	The data are... <b>from</b> 1970 to 2015. (S20)	Preposition - mis-information
	There are <i>variety</i> of disadvantage people live together. (S27)	There are <b>a</b> variety of <b>disadvantages to</b> people <b>living</b> together. (S27)	Article - omission (1)

4	If you <i>take the advantage of</i> this opportunity, you could even establish lasting friendships with people in many different countries. (S6)	If you <i>take advantage of</i> this opportunity, you could even establish lasting friendships with people in many different countries. (S6)	Article - addition (1)
	Completing at least one course of <i>study</i> abroad is <i>a</i> most beneficial experience for all students. (S30)	Completing at least one course of <i>studying</i> abroad is <i>the</i> most beneficial experience for all students. (S30)	Article - misinformation
5	However, <i>researches shown</i> that cohabitation has a negative impact on the quality and durability of marriages (Bennett et al., 1987). (S4)	However, <i>research has shown</i> that cohabitation has a negative impact on the quality and durability of marriages (Bennett et al., 1987). (S4)	Tenses (1)
6	Firstly, <i>study</i> abroad can improve your language skill and social skill. (S6)	Firstly, <i>studying</i> abroad can improve your language skill and social skill. (S6)	Gerund/Infinitive
6	On the contrary, there are many controversial ideas that every students should complete at least one course abroad before <i>they can officially graduated</i> due to some obstacles. (S16)	On the contrary, there are many controversial ideas that every student should complete at least one course abroad before <i>they can officially graduate</i> due to some obstacles. (S16)	Gerund/ Infinitive
	This is due to the fact that studying overseas is the shortest route <i>to enhancing</i> knowledge of the major that students tend to pursue ( Dwyer, et al., 2004). (S35)	This is due to the fact that studying overseas is the shortest route <i>to enhance</i> knowledge of the major that students tend to pursue ( Dwyer, et al., 2004). (S35)	Gerund/ Infinitive
7	Today, <i>life skills</i> is a term that is no longer unfamiliar to Vietnamese people...(S31)	Today, <i>“life skills”</i> is a term that is no longer unfamiliar to Vietnamese people...(S31)	Subject - Verb agreement (1)
8	First and foremost, cohabitation will cause couples to have many conflicts <i>in daily life</i> . (S36)	First and foremost, cohabitation will cause couples to have many conflicts <i>in their daily life</i> . (S36)	Pronoun - omission (1)
	However, studying abroad is an optimal solution to help students step out of their comfort zone and mingle <i>themselves</i> in a new environment.	However, studying abroad is an optimal solution to help students step out of their comfort zone and <i>mingle</i> in a new environment.	Pronoun - addition (1)
	Even <i>some students</i> who live in <i>their</i> relative’s house, independence is a must in <i>your</i> every action, challenging <i>you</i> to be <i>your</i> own individuals. (S6)	Even <i>for</i> some students who live in <i>their</i> relative’s houses, independence is a must in <i>their</i> every action, challenging them to be <i>their</i> own individuals. (S6)	Pronoun - misinformation + fragment sentence (2)
9	<i>The study</i> is notable because <i>they</i> followed a large data set for nearly 40 years, longer than many studies <i>have ever conducted</i> . (S20)	<i>The study</i> is notable because <i>it</i> followed a large data set for nearly 40 years which is longer than many studies <i>had ever been conducted before</i> . (S20)	Pronoun - misinformation + tense + voice (3)
10	<i>But</i> some people adore being neat, <i>who</i> slightly see clothing lying about disorderly everywhere, feel uncomfortable. (S23)	<i>However</i> , some people <i>who</i> adore being neat feel uncomfortable when slightly seeing clothing lying about disorderly everywhere. (S23)	Initial- Coordinating conjunction + Word order (2)
11	In conclusion, <i>even though</i> many people think that living together before marriage is good, <i>but</i> it has a number of drawbacks. (S5)	In conclusion, <i>even though</i> many people think that living together before marriage is good, it has a number of drawbacks. (S5)	Conjunction redundancy (1- Other)

12	<i>But</i> there has raised some several serious questions about the mental health of student who studies abroad. (S14)	However, there have been raised some several serious questions about the mental health of student who studies abroad. (S14)	Initial- Coordinating conjunction (1)
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