GRAMMAR ERRORS IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ESL STUDENTS: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Writing is a crucial skill for English as a second language (ESL) learners as it allows them to effectively communicate their ideas and feelings in varying contexts and purposes. In the Philippines' current basic education curriculum, Grade 10 learners are expected to write different types of texts including argumentative, persuasive, and other forms of academic writing. However, most teachers observed that learners find writing a difficult task as evident in their turned in written outputs which often contain grammar errors. With this, the researcher is compelled to explore the grammar errors in argumentative writing committed by selected Grade 10 ESL learners in a secondary school in Pasig City to identify instructional, curriculum, and research implications. Using the descriptive qualitative method, 20 argumentative essays which have 350 to 500 words were examined through basic content analysis. The errors were categorized based on the Surface Structure Taxonomy framework. The findings reveal that addition is the most prominent error committed by the students followed by misformation, omission, misordering and blending respectively. The other types of errors identified are capitalization errors, misspelling, punctuation, run-on sentences, and parallel construction. Teachers can reflect on the most frequent errors committed by students to help them design activities and materials that are appropriate to the learners' needs. Curriculum designers and implementers can develop a program focusing on grammar and writing to enhance their grammatical and discourse competence. A multi-phase study is recommended to analyze grammar errors of second language learners and explore the underlying reasons and factors that possibly affect ESL learners' grammatical competence.

Keywords: *Argumentative Writing, Error Analysis, Grammar Errors, Surface Structure Taxonomy*

INTRODUCTION

Writing, as a macro-skill in English, requires both grammatical and discourse competence. It is essential for English as second language (ESL) learners to devel-

op their writing skills so that they would be able to communicate their ideas clearly. It helps them to convey their ideas using words in an organized manner. The message of a writer could be clearly transmitted to the readers when the words in sentences are arranged appropriately. Thus, the learners need to depend on their linguistic system to produce a well-written text. When ESL learners fail to develop grammar skills, they will be having difficulty in producing meaningful sentences and paragraphs. Rusmiati (2019) stressed that learners' grammatical knowledge influences the quality of learners' writing outputs. Students' grammatical awareness and other rules governing grammar guide them to produce well-constructed and meaningful sentences. Rusmiati (2019) further emphasized that grammar plays a key role in the production of excellent writing.

Challenges Encountered by Students in Writing

ESL students find writing a difficult area to develop in second language learning. Al-Shujairi and Tan (2017) shared how Arab students who start learning English as early as nine years old still encounter difficulties in writing in the target language. They have a tendency to structure their sentences incorrectly and overlook the grammar rules in English. One underlying reason is the variation of the writing systems of the Arabic and English language. In a study conducted among Senior High School learners in a province in the Philippines, Pablo and Lasaten (2018) found out that students have problems on organization, vocabulary, word choice, sentence structures, formality and objectivity, and proper referencing when writing academic paper. Pablo and Lasaten (2018) also described the quality of students' outputs as poor to fair.

During high school, students learn and practice writing to become acquainted with the grammar of a language (Javed et al., 2013). Despite being taught the essential skills in writing in the primary and secondary schools, tertiary students in Malaysia still make grammatical errors, specifically in subject-verb agreement and verb tense (Singh et al., 2017). This implies that students' grammar skills are not fully mastered during elementary and high school.

Further, Mohammadi and Mustafa (2020) reported that students in the nearby countries of Afghanistan commonly commit errors on mechanics such as spelling, punctuations, and the use of grammar structures like articles, prepositions, and diction. Anis (2013) revealed that students seem to overgeneralize the use of verb tense when writing a narrative text. This means that students tend to think that the same

grammatical rules could be applied in all cases. Rivera (2022) also discovered that senior high school students in the Philippines have poor to fair writing skills and the results revealed that verb tenses, prepositions, and pronouns are the usual grammatical errors committed by the ESL learners. Using the six classifications of grammatical errors by Wati and Nursyaebah (2017), Royani and Sadiah (2019) showed that students mainly commit errors in subject-verb agreement and pronoun when writing descriptive text. These are followed by errors in usage, sentence pattern, spelling, and capitalization, respectively.

Using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982), Daryanto (2013) discovered that omission are the primary errors committed by Indonesian students, followed by misformation, blend and addition errors. In another study involving Indonesian students, Kumala et al. (2018) reported that learners commit most errors in omission, next is addition, followed by misformation, and misordering. Rusmiati (2019) revealed that most of the errors committed by foreign language students fall under misinformation, followed by omission, and addition.

Making Sense of Students' Grammar Errors

Maolida and Hidayat (2021) discussed how teachers could make sense of the errors committed by students emphasizing that students' errors could provide data for teachers to assess their writing skills. Errors would also help teachers to find solutions to the challenges faced by students in writing. It was also emphasized that errors serve as a lens that reflects how students learn a language and the processes that go with it. Teachers use written assignments to assess how students can express their ideas on a given topic. However, most students find writing a difficult task. Few students show interest in writing as evident in class discussions about a lesson on writing and the number of turned in written assignments. This poses a challenge to teachers' pedagogical approach when giving writing tasks to students.

Argumentative Writing in the Grade 10 Curriculum

Composing an argumentative essay is part of the Grade 10 most essential learning competencies (MELCs) during the third quarter of the school year. Prior to this topic, the students are tasked to formulate statements of opinions, assertions, and claims. Out of the 23 MELCs in the division budget of work (DBOW) intended to be covered for one school year, 9 of them target writing compe-

tencies, which were distributed from the second to fourth quarters.

The study was conducted during the third quarter during which the learning competency writing an argumentative essay was tackled. During the previous quarters, Grade 10 teachers in the research locale observed that most of their students' submissions were marked by significantly high number of grammatical errors despite the fact they are already expected to have reached a certain level of linguistic ability. This sparked the attention of the researcher to investigate on the grammar errors committed by Grade 10 ESL learners.

Several studies have been conducted about the identification of grammar errors in students' written exercises. However, the researcher did not find proposed materials or intervention that may be used to address students' grammatical errors. This study looked into the instructional, curriculum, and research implications of the findings to propose a program relevant to the enhancement of the Grade 10 ESL students' writing skills.

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to investigate on the grammar errors committed in argumentative writing by the Grade 10 ESL students in a secondary school in Pasig City during the school year 2021-2022.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions.

1.What are the grammar errors committed by Grade 10 ESL students in argumentative writing, specifically on the following aspects:

1.1   omission;
1.2   addition;
1.3   misformation;
1.4   misordering; and
1.5   blending?

2.What can be proposed to address the common grammatical errors committed by the Grade 10 ESL students?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study serve as preliminary data to come up with supplementary materials on grammar to support students' writing problems. Through this study, the Junior high school teachers are guided as to how they are going to deal with the grammatical errors of the students through a proposed supplementary material on grammar. The findings of the study can also help ESL students to be aware of their grammatical errors, which encourage them to use strategies that improve their grammatical knowledge and writing skills.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The study used the Surface Structure Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) and James (1998) as a framework in identifying grammatical errors. This theory classified grammatical errors into five categories such as omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and blending. Omission refers to the error committed by learners when they tend to miss to include grammatical morphemes such as the inflections, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. Addition indicates that there are some structures of the word or sentence which should not be present in the utterance. Misformation is a type of grammar error that is made when the wrong form of morphemes or word structure is used like neglecting the rules on affixation, pluralization, and tense transformation. Blending is committed when a structure is combined with another alternative structure that produces ungrammatical blend.

Argumentative writing has sociocultural, cognitive, and linguistic underpinnings Ferretti and Graham (2019). From a sociocultural perspective, writing, in general, is viewed as a tool for mediating communication and social relationships. It influences the meaning construction based on the writer's cultural and historical background. This implies that students' backgrounds also affect how they construct ideas from a given topic. From a cognitive view, argumentative writing is a problem-solving process that depends on the writer's self-regulation and cognitive resources. On one hand, novices or beginning writers demonstrate less proficiency and fluency in these three aspects of argumentative writing. Moreover, students' linguistic knowledge which includes the use of connectives (Taylor et al., 2018), grammatical collocations (Sari & Gulö, 2019), word choice, syntactic structures (Ferretti & Graham, 2019), and discourse knowledge (Ferretti & Lewis, 2018; Valero Haro et al., 2022) play significant roles in writing and interpreting a text. It is essential that students know how to apply their knowledge to different contexts and need opportunities to further develop their topic knowledge and competence in reasoning (Valero Haro et al., 2022).

In the study, the researcher identified the grammar errors of the ESL students which primarily focused on the types of errors categorized by Dulay et al. (1982) and James (1998). The Surface Taxonomy Structure helped the researcher in the categorizing the learners' grammatical errors. The steps in Error Analysis also provided an insight on how the grammatical errors of the ESL learners in the context of the present study should be approached.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This paper utilized the mixed methods research design, descriptive qualitative approach and quantitative method. Descriptive qualitative approach aimed to describe the errors and the types of errors in students' writing (Kumala et al., 2018; Maolida & Hidayat, 2021; Rusmiati, 2019). The frequency of these errors on learners' written assignments were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentage. The mixed method research design was deemed suitable to the present study since the researcher's primary goal is to identify grammatical errors that learners commit in argumentative writing and present numerical data to support the findings of the study.

Data Collection

The data for this study were gathered from 20 argumentative essays, which were written by Grade 10 ESL students as the first performance assessment during the third quarter to target the most essential learning competency 'compose an argumentative essay'. Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher sought the informed consent form the learners' parents or guardians. Assent forms were also given to the learners. Likewise, the researcher sought the approval of the Department Head in English to have an access of the learners' argumentative essays which were turned in on their Google classroom during the third quarter.

The essays were selected through purposive sampling based on the following selection criteria. First, the submitted essay is composed of 350 to 500 words or more. Second, the essay was turned in on time via Google classroom. The students were instructed to choose from three given debatable issues like abortion, death penalty, and vaccination of minors as themes for their argumentative essay. They also had an option to think of their own debatable issue and make a stand on it. Students' outputs were scored based on an adopted rubric from the study of Ozfidan and Mitchell (2022), which includes organization, integrating academic sources, writing counterclaims, finding evidence, mechanics including grammar usage and punctuation.

The content analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from the students' writing. Parveen and Showkat (2017) describe content analysis as an unobtrusive method of collecting data from materials from various types of texts such as documents, essays, and books. The data to be analyzed are not directly from people but from the materials produced by them. This is deemed ap-

propriate to be used in the study as it seeks to analyze students' grammatical errors in their written outputs.

The researcher underwent the following steps on content analysis by Parveen and Showkat (2017). The research questions were first identified. The study has two research questions focusing on the five categories of errors by Dulay et al. (1982) and James (1998) such as omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and blending. The second research question calls for a proposed intervention to address the problems on learners' grammatical errors. The selection of sample followed. The sample was composed of 20 argumentative essays which were purposively chosen. The third step was to skim the empirical materials to be used in the study and to list the main themes to analyze. The researcher read the argumentative essays submitted by the students for 2 to 3 times to ensure that the errors were properly recorded and identified. The Surface Structure Taxonomy framework became the basis for the main themes of the identified errors. Then, preparation of the coding system or plan based on the main themes was done next. The grammatical errors that were identified were coded on Microsoft Excel document. The fifth step was to make sure that the categories did not overlap. Next was to classify the content based on the

categories or themes – omission, addition, misformation, misordering, and blending. The seventh step undertaken was to make new categories for errors that did not fall on the five types of errors in the Surface Structure Taxonomy. Finally, after the qualitative analysis, the researcher presented numerical data into frequencies and percentages to support the findings of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured the anonymity of data used in the study. No students' names nor identity were revealed in any part of this paper. Fairness was considered ensuring that the students' grades were not affected by the findings of the study. The truthfulness of the findings was validated by three intercoders who assisted the researchers in the coding process.

Findings

After the analysis of the data, the researcher describes the findings based on the grammatical errors in argumentative writing committed by the students using Surface Structure Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) and James (1998). Based on the framework, errors are categorized into five namely addition, omission, misformation, misordering, and blending. The fol-

lowing codes are used in the study.

L   : Learner's Work
AE   : Addition Error
OE   : Omission Error
ME   : Misformation Error
MO   : Misordering Error
BE   : Blending Error
O   : Other Error
S   : Sentence
C   : Correction

Addition Errors

Errors on addition had the most frequent occurrences in the submitted argumentative writing. Out of 133 grammatical errors identified using the Surface Structure Taxonomy, addition errors appeared 55 times in the students' writing. This is contrary to the findings of Anjarani and Indawati (2019) where addition errors were found to be the least frequent errors in students' narrative writing. It can be inferred that the type of texts that students write can be accounted for with the variation of grammar errors. Anjarani and Indawati (2019) assigned narrative writing, which focused on the use of the simple past tense while the present study used argumentative writing as the basis for the identification of errors without boxing them to a particular tense of the verb.

The following table shows some sample of addition errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Table 1. Sample Addition Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentence	Error Analysis	Correction
L1-AE	Second, Everyone <u>can be benefit</u> with the death penalty.	Simple Addition The addition of the word "be" made the sentence ungrammatical.	Second, everyone <u>can benefit</u> from death penalty.
L3-AE	<u>Roman Catholic Church is</u> opposed the death penalty simply because it's a sin.	Simple Addition The addition of the linking verb "is" made the sentence ungrammatical.	<u>The Roman Catholic church opposed</u> death penalty simply because it's a sin.
L5-AE	It is believed that death penalty is anti-poor as most of the executed inmates is part of the inmates who <u>did not reached</u> college.	Double-marking The word "did" is already in the past tense "reached" is also in the past. The rule on regularization of verb do in the past is violated.	It is believed that death penalty is anti-poor as most of the executed inmates is part of the inmates <u>who did not reach</u> college.

L6-AE	I'm opposed to the death penalty it is against Catholic teachings…	Simple Addition The addition of the contracted "am" made the sentence ungrammatical.	I opposed death penalty because it is against Catholic teachings…
L8-AE	Mistakes always happens…	Simple Addition	Mistakes always happen …
		This is a case of subject-verb agreement.	
L13-AE	As a male students, we should let the womens choose whether they want to still carry the child in their womb or not.	Simple Addition The addition of the inflection -s in the noun "students" made the sentence ungrammatical. The word "womens" is an error on double-marking. "Women" is already plural. The addition of inflection -s made it an error.	As a male student, we should let the women choose whether they want to still carry the child in their womb or not.

Table 1 shows that addition of morphemes in words can alter the meaning of the sentence which eventually result to its ungrammaticality. Simple addition and double markings are the prominent errors under this error category. Simple addition of the article "the", the verb "be" in its different forms (am, be, is) and addition of the inflections -ed, and -s in nouns and verbs are notable in the students' writing. These errors imply that the students may have low level of second language proficiency, which may be caused by morphological fossilization, a type of fossilization that happens in the layer of grammatical morpheme. Like the findings of the study, Wei (2008) identified articles and inflectional morphemes as the main problems among Chinese students. He further explained that there are no Chinese expressions that correspond to the articles in English. Though in Filipino, there are words that correspond to the articles in English like "ang" which may refer to either "the", "an", "a".

Misformation Errors

Misformation appeared to be the second most committed er-

rors by the students with 39 occurrences in the argumentative writing. Aspia (2021) found out that misformation occurred most frequently in the thesis introduction of English students in Indonesia. This error happens when students the wrong grammatical morpheme or structure. Misformation errors are categorized into alternating, regularization, and archi-form.The following table shows some sample of misformation errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Table 2. Sample Misformation Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
L1-ME	Even tough…the punishment for heinous murders is not strong.	Misformation of adverb "'even though'"	Even though, … the punishment for heinous murders is not strong.
L2-ME	No one makes death penalty their first thought…	Archi-form, use of "their" instead of "his/her"	No one makes death penalty his or her first thought…
L2-ME	The result will be determined on their choice.	Alternating errors, the use of "with" instead of "to"	The result will be determined by their choice.
L4-ME	Death penalty might be the only solution to end all of this but it doesn't really helpful.	Misselection of verb do instead of be	Death penalty might be the only solution to end all of this, but it isn't really helpful.
L5-ME	With controversies like this, …	Archi-form, use of "this" instead of "these"	With controversies like these, …
L7-ME	…many people whom are innocent and poor who are framed up for the crimes that they	Alternating errors, the use of "whom" instead of "who"	…many people who are innocent and poor who are framed up for

	haven't done can't defend theirselves for they don't have money and can be sentenced to death.	Archi-form, use of "theirselves" instead of "themselves"	the crimes that they haven't done can't defend themselves for they don't have money and can be sentenced to death.
L8-ME	Woman's especially the young ones always seek pleasure.	Archi-form, use of "woman's" instead of "women"	Women, especially the young ones, always seek pleasure.
L9-ME	Bullying are not good…	Regularization error, use of "are" for the singular subject bullying instead of "is"	Bullying is not good…
	… instead be there friends in that way we can be happy.	Archi-form, use of "there" instead of "their"	… instead be their friends in that way we can be happy.
L10-ME	Pro's might agree with this…	Alternating errors, the use of possessive case "pro's" instead of nominative case "pros"	Pros might agree with this…

Based on the data, students commit multiple errors in one sentence structure as manifested in the sample sentence: "Even tough, … the punishment for heinous murders is not strong.". The first error is found on the phrase "Even tough", which should be "Even though". This may be an error of neglect as the student may not notice the wrong form of the word "though". among the most common errors committed by the students in argumentative writing. The errors appeared 31 times out of the total errors. Maolida and Hidayat (2021) explained that this type of error occurs when an important morpheme is missing in the word of sentence structure.

The following table shows some sample of omission errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Omission Errors

Omission errors ranked third

Table 3. Sample Omission Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
L2-OE	It never crosses <u>the people mind.</u>	Omission of 's for possessive noun	It never crosses <u>people's mind.</u>
L9-OE	As far as we know bullying is <u>one of our problem</u> …	Omission of noun inflection -s and other function words like conjunctions and preposition	As far as we know, bullying is <u>one of the problems</u> …
L9-OE	<u>Bullying include</u> action such as physically, verbally and emotionally attacking the victims.	Omission of verb inflection -s Error on subject-verb agreement	<u>Bullying includes</u> action such as physically, verbally and emotionally attacking the victims.
L19-OE	If I <u>were to be ask</u> if I am agreeing about aborting a baby, I'll say that it always <u>depend</u> on the situation.	Omission of verb inflection -ed for past participle form of the main verb "ask" and the omission of the inflection -s on the verb "depend", a case of S-V agreement error.	If I <u>were to be asked</u> if I am agreeing about aborting a baby, I'll say that it always <u>depends</u> on the situation.

Al-Shujairi and Tan (2017) reported that omission of 's in possessive nouns and omission of inflection -s in plural nouns occurred frequently among Iraqi students' academic writing. Similarly, the findings of this study also revealed that the students commit errors on the omission of 's in possessive noun such as in the phrase "the people mind", which is supposed to written as "people's mind". Possessive case doesn't have a direct counterpart in Filipino language. There are some function words which need to be used to generate possessive case in Filipino language. To express possession in Filipino language, one will need to use the words "kanya", "kanila", "ni", and "nina". Another prominent omission errors appear on inflection -s in verbs. This denotes problems on subject-verb agreement such as in the sentence "Bullying include action such as physically, verbally and emotionally attacking the victims.", which is supposed to be "Bullying includes action such as physically, verbally and emotionally attacking the victims.". Omission

error on the inflection -ed also appeared on the students' writing such as in the sentence "If I were to be ask if I am agreeing about aborting a baby, I'll say that it always depend on the situation". The error occurred with the wrong form of the main verb "ask" which is supposed to be written in the past participle with the auxiliary verb "were".

Blend Errors

Blend errors occurred most frequently in the recount text writing of Indonesian ESL learners. Apriyani et al. (2018) assumed that this kind of error is affected by the differences between Indonesian and English language. Students tend to overgeneralize the linguistic structures of their first language and the target language. Students' limited vocabulary, difficulty in choosing and organizing words to be used in a sentence are some other causes of blend errors.

Errors on addition had the least occurrences in the submitted argumentative writing. Out of 134 grammatical errors identified using the Surface Structure Taxonomy, blend errors only appeared 3 times in the students' writing.

The following table shows some sample of blend errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Table 4. Sample Blend Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
L8-BE	They choose this procedure as it helps them to erase their bad memories and the trauma that is cause to them, the anxiety that it might <u>repeat again,</u> and questioning oneself on how they can face the world with a scar of a lifetime that will never be erased.	The words "repeat" and "again" are similar. It made the phrase "repeat again" redundant. The sentence has wordy construction.	They choose this procedure to overcome the trauma and anxiety caused by the circumstance that left them a scar which could never be erased.
L11-BE	<u>A death sentence is a sentence</u> that directs a criminal to be punished in this manner.	The word "sentence" appeared twice in statement.	<u>A death sentence</u> directs criminals to be punished in a certain manner.
L20-BE	<u>But if we think what is the right the word abortion is doesn't have mention in bible.</u>	The use of "is", "doesn't", "have" produces ungrammatical blend.	<u>But if we come to think about it, abortion is not mentioned in the bible.</u>

Based on the finding, blend errors were committed by students when they used two words in one sentence which mean the same which makes the sentence vague. This could be further improved by using simple, clear, and straightforward language. Oftentimes, blend errors occur when linguistic system of the students' first language interferes with the target language.

Misordering Errors

Misordering ranked the second least committed errors of the students. It appeared 5 times in their argumentative writing. Pandapatan (2022) also found minimal error among Grade 6 students' journal writing. This type of error occurs when words are incorrectly placed in a sentence. Pandapatan (2022) cited the work of Chele (2015) who claimed that learners' carelessness and the absence of proofreading of their work cause misordering errors.

The following table shows some sample of misordering errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Table 5. Sample Misordering Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
L2-MO	Also, the government will decrease criminal's rate and the country will become in a safe country.	Incorrect placement of the phrase "criminal rate".	Also, the criminal rate will decrease and the country will be a safe place.
L7-MO	Because of this system of ours many people whom are innocent and poor who are framed up for the crimes that they haven't done can't defend theirselves for they don't have money and can be sentenced to death.	Incorrect placement of "our". Incorrect placement of "people" Wordy construction The phrase "framed up" already suggests that a person is not guilty of doing the crime. The phrase "for the crimes that they haven't done" is not needed.	Because of our system, many innocent and poor people who are framed up and who can't defend themselves can be sentenced to death.
L10-MO	We can't make anything change that.	Incorrect placement of "change"	That can't change anything.
L15-MO	Our country is one of the most polluted due to overpopulation	Incorrect placement of the phrase "due to overpopulation".	Due to overpopulation, Philippines has become one of the

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
		Wrong choice of words for the clause "Our country is one of the most polluted".	most polluted country.
L20-MO	Some of the people who are willing to have abortion is some teenagers.	Wordy construction The phrase "Some people" refers to "some teenagers". It is not needed.	Some teenagers are willing to have abortion.

Based on the findings, it can be noted that students tend to misplace the structures of the sentence such as in the sentence "Some of the people who are willing to have abortion is some teenagers.". With this structure, the sentence is unclear. The meaning could be clearer by rewriting it this way: "Some teenagers are willing to have abortion.". This shows how word order affects the meaning of a sentence.

Other Errors

Following the seventh step of content analysis by Parveen and Showkat, the researcher made new categories for errors that did not fall on the five types of errors in the Surface Structure Taxonomy. Table 6 shows some sample of other errors in the students' argumentative writing.

Table 6. Other Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Code	Sentences	Error Analysis	Correction
L2-O	the death penalty has cost out Millions.	Capitalization error on the words on the article "the" which starts the sentence and the common noun "Millions"	The death penalty has cost out millions.
L7-O	Bringing back the death penalty here in the Philippines …	Capitalization error on the proper noun "philippines".	Bringing back the death penalty here in the Philippines…

L7-O	Without the death penalty, the criminals become careless and bolder …	Parallel construction error on the phrase "become careless and bolder". The word "careless" is at its positive degree while the word "bolder" is at its comparative degree. The sentence does not intend to compare one thing to another so the positive degree shall be maintained.	Without the death penalty, the criminals become careless and bold …
L8-O	They choose this procedure as it helps them to erase their bad memories and the trauma that is cause to them, the anxiety that it might repeat again, and questioning oneself …	Parallel construction error The sentence has wordy construction.	They choose this procedure as it helps them to erase the bad memories, trauma, anxiety and self-doubts …
L8-O	Woman's especially the young ones always seek pleasure.	Punctuation error There is no comma before and after the modifier "especially the young ones".	Women, especially the young ones, always seek pleasure.
L18-O	Woman believe in the social political and economic equality of the sexes.	Punctuation error There are no commas after "social" and "political".	Women believe in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.
L13-O	In modern days, women empowerment is bombing the whole world, which whill greatly affect their power in terms of abortion.	Misspelling The word "whill" should be "will".	In modern days, women empowerment is bombing the whole world, which will greatly affect their power in terms of abortion.
L19-O	I am not aginst aborption.	Misspelling The words "aginst" should be "against" and "aborption" should be "abortion".	I am not against abortion.
L6-O	I'm opposed to the death penalty it is against Catholic teachings.	Run on sentence	I opposed death penalty because it is against Catholic teachings.

Based on the data, students made errors on capitalization, spelling, punctuation, run on sentence, and parallel construction. Capitalization errors occurred the most frequent times with 36 appearances in the students' outputs. It was identified that errors happened in writing common noun such as in the sentence "the death penalty has cost out Millions.", and in proper noun such as in the phrase "here in the philippines". Students also tend to neglect the capitalization of the first letter of the first word of a sentence such as shown in the previous sentence. One common capitalization error that the students made was writing the pronoun "I" in small letter such as "i". Students also committed errors in spelling. This error may be caused by students' neglect. However, the teacher should find ways on determining whether the words are misspelled because of neglect or the students do not really know the spelling of the words.

Frequency of Error Types Categorization

The following table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of grammatical errors committed by the students in writing their argumentative essay based on Surface Structure Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) and James (1998).

Table 7. Frequency of Error Types Categorization		
Errors Category (Subtypes)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Addition	**55**	**41**
Addition of article (the, a, an)	26	
Addition of -s in noun	3	
Addition of preposition (of, in, about, to)	4	
Addition of be verb	5	
Addition of possessive 's	2	
Addition of -s in verb	3	
Addition of -d/-ed, -ing	3	
Addition of infinitive to	2	
double marking	7	
Misformation	**39**	**29**
Misformation of verbs	25	
Misformation of adjective	1	
Archi-form	3	
Misformation of pronoun	5	
Misformation of noun	3	
Misformation of has/have	2	
Omission	**31**	**23**
Omission of infinitive to	1	
Omission of -s in noun	4	
Omission of preposition (of, on, about)	3	
Omission of 's in possessive case	2	

Omission of article (the, a, an)	3	
Omission of be	2	
Omission of -s/-es in verb	9	
Omission of does	1	
Omission of -d/-ed in verb	5	
Omission of and	1	
Misordering	**5**	**4**
Blending	**4**	**3**
Total Errors	**134**	**100**

It shows that students frequently commit errors on addition with 55 appearances on their argumentative writing; misformation errors ranked next with 39 occurrences; omission errors ranked third with 31 occurrences; misordering errors ranked fourth with 5 appearances; and blending errors ranked last with 4 appearances.

Frequency of Other Errors

Table 8 shows the other types of errors committed by the students which did not fall under the categories in Surface Structure Taxonomy.

Table 6. Other Errors from Students' Argumentative Writing

Error Category	Frequency	Percentage
Other Errors		
Capitalization	36	61
Misspelling	14	24
Punctuation	3	5
Run on sentence	3	5
Parallel Construction	3	5
Total	**59**	**100**

The data presents that capitalization is the most frequent error made by the students with 36 occurrences; misspelling errors ranked the second under other errors with 14 appearances; punctuation, run on sentence, and parallel construction appeared 3 times, respectively.

Discussion

The findings of the study show that out of the 133 identified errors in the students' argumentative writing, addition is the most prominent error committed by the students with 55 or 41% occurrences, misformation with 39 or 29% occurrences, omission with 31 or 23% occurrences, misordering with 5 or 4% occurrences, and blending with 4 or 3% occurrences. The other types of errors identified are capitalization errors with 39 or 29% occurrences,

misspelling with 14 or 11% occurrences, punctuation, run-on sentences, and parallel construction with 3 or 2% occurrences, respectively.

As presented in the data, students often commit errors in addition such as the articles the, a, and an. The study by Han et al. (2006) revealed that non-native speakers of English such as Chinese, Japanese, and Russian made errors in the use of articles once in every three sentences. Though there are Filipino articles, high school students still find it difficult to use English articles appropriately. These errors can be linked to the interference of the student's first language, also known as inter-lingual errors. Interlanguage errors occur due to the interplay of the students' first language and the second language. It is observed that students resort to their first language when conceptualizing their ideas in the second language. However, the differences between the Filipino and English languages affect the students' construction of ideas when they write or speak. Therefore, it is crucial to expose children to a second language as early as possible to avoid inter-lingual errors (Manirakiza et al., 2021).

Misformation of verbs is another frequently committed grammar error in the students' argumentative writing. This error is attributed to the lack of knowledge of the rules of the target language or otherwise known as intra-lingual error. One of the students wrote "Bullying are not good.", when the sentence should have been written," Bullying is not good.". Another student wrote "My beliefs is…" when it should be written, "My beliefs are…". This manifests the learner's misuse of the grammar rules in English. It is evident that students commit errors in the use of the copula be-verb which is supported by the findings of Wee et al., (2010). The researchers recommended that the errors in verb form should be identified to equip the learners with the fundamental skills to produce an error-free text.

Errors help teachers to understand how ESL students learn a language. Through errors, students can gauge their progress in second language learning as writing necessitates one's knowledge of the language system and syntactic rules in the second language. These errors will help language teachers to draw insights for the betterment of the ESL classroom.

Instructional Implications of the Identified Grammar Errors

Teachers can reflect on the most frequent grammar errors committed by students. These errors will help them design activities and materials that are appropriate to the learners' needs. Language teachers are responsible to deal with errors

efficiently. Therefore, it is important that they provide more language learning opportunities in the ESL classroom for students to practice speaking or writing. Fitrawati and Safitri (2021) recommended strategies that promote the grammar and writing skills of students which include conferences, peer writing and evaluation, and mini lessons in grammar. Aside from these strategies, teachers can also provide authentic materials for language learning, integrate the use of ICT in teaching and learning the target language, give feedback on students' errors, and increase learners' motivation are also vital in addressing the occurrences of their grammar errors (Manirakiza et al., 2021).

Implications to Curriculum Designing

The findings of the study revealed that the most common errors committed by the students are addition, misformation, and omission. The least frequent errors are misordeing and blending. Moreover, capitalization and misspelling are identified as the two most frequent errors found in the students' writing. Other errors fall under punctuation, run on sentence, and parallel construction.

With reference to the common errors made by students, it is proposed that Grammar and Writing Enhancement Program (GWEP),

content of which should focus on the word classes and their functions. Intervention materials about capitalization, punctuations, and sentence structures can also be developed to help students review the concepts of these topics. A teacher-writer should be assigned as the facilitator in the GWEP. This is to ensure that the teacher who holds the program is expert in writing. The said program is intended to develop the students' communicative competence, specifically their grammatical and discourse competence.

Implications to Research

The study provides future researchers potential subjects to explore on grammar errors of second language learners. A meta-analysis of existing studies on grammar errors may be undertaken to have a deeper understanding and context of the phenomenon. A multi-phase study may be conducted to analyze grammar errors of second language learners and explore the underlying reasons and factors that may possibly affect ESL learners' grammatical competence. Moreover, a study may be done to investigate whether these errors influence the intelligibility of the learners' ideas or arguments in their writing output.

Conclusion

Identifying students' gram-

matical errors in writing is essential for teachers and students. Errors help teachers understand how ESL students learn the target language. Students, through their errors, can gauge their progress in second language learning. The challenge then for teachers is to give feedback on students' errors. Feedbacks are necessary so that students can be aware of their errors, and they can be references for further improvement. With these types of errors present in the writing outputs of ESL students, the next crucial concern is the type of pedagogical approach that would best develop students' communicative competence with an emphasis on grammatical and discourse competence.

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