

Typical linguistic errors committed by tertiary students in legal written outputs

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Abstract. Legal English writing, which demands precision, formal tone, and adherence to specific conventions, presents significant challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners due to the complexity of syntax, specialized legal vocabulary, and rigid grammatical structures. This research examines how these morphological, lexical, syntactic, and mechanical errors impact writing performance and explores the relationship between the frequency of errors and overall writing proficiency. Conducted at Hanoi Law University, Vietnam, the study followed 57 students majoring in legal English through three assessment phases: Pre-Test, Post-Test no.1, and Post-Test no.2. The research utilized a longitudinal quantitative design, analyzing the evolution of participants' writing over time and evaluating common grammatical errors they faced. Results showed notable improvements in both morphological and lexical accuracy, evidenced by a reduction in error rates and greater consistency in participants' performance. The proportion of respondents achieving higher proficiency levels (Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate) increased significantly, particularly in morphological and lexical domains. However, syntactic errors exhibited more complex patterns, with some improvements but continued challenges, suggesting that syntactic accuracy requires more focused and specialized intervention strategies. Mechanical errors remained relatively stable, with slight fluctuations, reflecting a steady performance in this area. Overall, the findings highlight the effectiveness of targeted instructional strategies in enhancing learners' linguistic accuracy, particularly in morphological and lexical errors, while underscoring the need for teachers' tailored interventions to improve students' syntactic competence in legal English writing skills.

Keywords: grammatical structures, instructional strategies, linguistic errors, longitudinal quantitative design, writing performance.

Нгуен Ай Нган, Туан Ван Ву. Типові мовні помилки студентів вищих навчальних закладів у письмових текстах юридичного змісту.

Анотація. Юридичне письмо англійською мовою, яке вимагає точності, офіційного тону та дотримання певних конвенцій, становить значні труднощі для тих, хто вивчає

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англійську як іноземну, через складність синтаксису, спеціалізовану юридичну лексику та жорсткі граматичні структури. Це дослідження вивчає, як ці морфологічні, лексичні, синтаксичні та механічні помилки впливають на якість письма, а також досліджує зв'язок між частотою помилок і загальним рівнем володіння письмом. Дослідження, проведене в Ханойському юридичному університеті, В'єтнам, охопило 57 студентів, які вивчають юридичну англійську мову, і складалося з трьох етапів оцінювання: Передтестове тестування, післятестове тестування № 1 та післятестове тестування № 2. У дослідженні використовувався поздовжній кількісний дизайн, який аналізував еволюцію письмових робіт учасників з плином часу та оцінював типові граматичні помилки, з якими вони стикалися. Результати показали помітне покращення як морфологічної, так і лексичної точності, про що свідчить зменшення кількості помилок та більша узгодженість у роботах учасників. Частка респондентів, які досягли вищих рівнів володіння мовою (Intermediate та Upper-Intermediate), значно зросла, особливо в морфологічній та лексичній сферах. Однак синтаксичні помилки демонстрували більш складну структуру, з деякими покращеннями, але з постійними проблемами, що свідчить про те, що синтаксична точність вимагає більш цілеспрямованих і спеціалізованих стратегій втручання. Кількість механічних помилок залишалася відносно стабільною, з незначними коливаннями, що свідчить про стабільну роботу над помилками.

***Ключові слова:** граматичні структури, навчальні стратегії, мовні помилки, лонгітюдний кількісний дизайн, продуктивність письма.*

Introduction

Mastering English linguistic features is crucial for writing competence, especially for learners in countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). Writing is one of the four basic skills in English language acquisition, alongside listening, speaking, and reading skills. However, it is often the most challenging task for EFL learners due to the complexity of English grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and discourse conventions (Ali et al., 2024; Enesi & Trifoni, 2023; Mezrigui, 2021). It is widely recognized that English grammar is the foundation of any language, and its complex system of tenses, aspects, modal verbs, articles, prepositions, and word order can pose challenges for non-native speakers (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Anh et al., 2022; Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021). Vocabulary is fundamental for writers to express themselves effectively, but EFL learners often face difficulties in choosing the right words for their writing (Arachchi, 2016; Jayasundara & Premarathna, 2011; Manik et al., 2017). Cohesion, the use of linguistic devices to link ideas within and between sentences, is necessary for ensuring the reader can follow the writer's argument or narrative without confusion (Johnson et al., 2017; Nguyen, 2020a; Chitondo, 2021). Coherence, the overall logical flow of ideas in a text, is essential for a coherent text. EFL learners often struggle with coherence due to not being familiar with typical organizational patterns of English writing. For example, the structure of an essay in English may differ from the writing

conventions in their native language, and learners may have difficulty maintaining a consistent corpus or transitioning smoothly between ideas (Mezrigui, 2021; Nuraini, 2019; Phetdannuea & Ngonkum, 2016). Genre conventions, such as formal language, precise vocabulary, and a clear thesis statement, also play a role in writing competence (Ali et al., 2024; Contreras, 2024; Pham & Pham, 2024).

English linguistic features are crucial in shaping communication across different domains, including English for specific purposes (ESP) and general English (GE). Legal linguistics focuses on how laws are articulated, interpreted, and enforced through language, while general linguistics studies language in various forms and functions, from everyday communication to literary expression (Coulthard et al., 2016; Tomson, 2024; Vu & Le, 2023). Both fields share fundamental linguistic features, including syntax, vocabulary, pragmatics, and semantics (Biel, 2024; Durant & Leung, 2016; Kaplan, 2019). Syntax, the arrangement of words into sentences, is foundational to systems of languages, using the same grammatical rules of the English language. Vocabulary choice in legal linguistics is more precise and technical to avoid ambiguity, while in general linguistics, communication allows more flexibility and deduces from linguistic settings for clarity (Williams, 2022). Semantics, the study of meaning, is critical in both domains to understand how words and sentences produce meaning. Legal semantics concentrates on the precise interpretation of terms to ensure correct communication and enforcement of legal rights, obligations, and laws (Lin et al., 2020). Pragmatics addresses how context influences meaning, which is important in both domains. In legal linguistics, the context of legal texts often determines how certain phrases or clauses should be interpreted. In general linguistics, the social, cultural, or conversational context shapes how language is understood (Ali et al., 2024; Galdia, 2021; Kaplan, 2019). Discourse analysis, the study of language use in extended communication, is relevant in both domains, covering a wider variety of texts and contexts. Legal and general linguistics differ significantly in their complexities, purposes, and language use. Legal English is rich in technical terms, jargon, and archaic words, while general linguistics is more accessible and adaptable (Glogar, 2023; Hassan et al., 2019; Phetdannuea & Ngonkum, 2016). Besides, legal English is highly formal and rigid in tone, especially in written legal documents, while general linguistics allows for more flexibility in everyday language. In its essence, legal linguistics is characterized by complex sentence structures with long sentences, passive constructions, and nominalizations. It aims for precision and clarity, avoiding ambiguity to ensure legal rights and obligations (Coulthard et al., 2016). Legal drafters use

particular language and redundancies to minimize multiple interpretations. In contrast, ambiguity is more common in general linguistics, allowing for different interpretations based on context, tone, and the relationship between speakers. Lastly, legal English often preserves archaic terms and phrases, ensuring consistency in legal interpretation across time; by contrast, general linguistics is more dynamic and evolving, with new words, slang, and expressions being added regularly. This adaptability makes general English more flexible but less stable over time compared to legal English (Kaplan, 2019; Williams, 2022).

Legal writing is distinct from other types of writing skills due to its specialized nature, formal tone, and the need for precision and clarity (Durant & Leung, 2016; Glogar, 2023; Vu & Le, 2023). In particular, legal texts are characterized by complex syntax, commonly extended, convoluted sentences with multiple clauses, which can confuse EFL learners. Besides, legal terminology includes terms of art, legal jargon, and Latin phrases, which often need to be clarified for EFL learners, so mastering lexical terms is crucial for accuracy in legal writing (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021; Manik et al., 2017; Vu & Le, 2023). Featured by legislative normative documents, legal writing must avoid ambiguity, a challenge in languages with a wide range of synonyms or flexible grammatical structures, but it is prone to multiple interpretations due to the inherent flexibility of natural language (Durant & Leung, 2016; Mooney, 2022). Consequently, EFL learners may struggle with recognizing when language is too vague or when precision is needed. They may find it challenging to achieve the formal tone required in legal writing. The use of modal verbs (e.g., "shall," "must," "may") to convey obligation or permission is often challenging for learners used to more straightforward syntactic structures (Arachchi, 2016; Enesi & Trifoni, 2023; McMEnamin et al., 2002). Currently, testing and assessment emphasize the multiple-choice approach, minimizing writing skills, especially ESP writing skills like legal written outputs. Currently, it poses significant challenges for legal writing in EFL countries, but there needs to be more research on how legal linguistic features affect the proficiency of English legal writing skills (Le, 2023; Nguyen, 2020b; Kham et al., 2023). As such, this study aimed to analyze linguistic errors in depth, focusing on the morphological, syntactical, lexical, and mechanical features that complicated legal writing for EFL learners. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the errors committed by the participants in legal writing in terms of morphological, syntactical, lexical, and mechanical features?
2. What is the relation between the participants' writing performance and their frequency of legal writing errors?

Literature Review

As language acquisition involves improving four basic skills classified into receptive skills – listening and reading, and productive skills – speaking and writing skills. As one of the two productive skills, English writing skills have been widely recognized as fundamental across academic, professional, and social contexts. Arifin et al. (2019) claim that writing is not merely a method of communication but also a tool for learning and thinking, so proficient writing reflects clear thinking and supports deeper cognitive processes such as organizing, synthesizing, and evaluating ideas. Researchers (e.g., Anh et al., 2022; Gustira et al., 2020; Phuket & Othman, 2015) highlight the importance of academic writing, noting that it fosters critical thinking and the ability to engage with complex ideas. Writing in English is an integral part of learning in higher education, where essays, theses, and research papers are used as vehicles to assess students' comprehension and ability to argue logically. Moreover, in the workplace, effective writing is essential for professional communication, including reports, business emails, and proposals. According to Pourshahian (2021), organizations often place a high value on employees who can write clearly and persuasively, as this skill enhances both individual and organizational performance. As English remains the dominant global language for business and science, writing proficiency in English is also linked to international collaboration and career mobility (Biel, 2024). Therefore, English writing skills play crucial roles in professional or academic environments, and personal expression. Writing encourages introspection and lifelong learning, as supported by research on journaling and reflective writing (Anh et al., 2022; Enesi & Trifoni, 2023; Nguyen, 2020(a)). When expressing their thoughts through writing, individuals refine their self-awareness and communication abilities.

ESP refers to the teaching and learning of English tailored to meet the language needs of individuals in particular fields, just as laws (Ali et al., 2024). It emphasizes the importance of contextual relevance, enabling learners to develop communicative competence in professional or academic environments where specialized language is required. Specially, legal English, a significant branch of ESP, presents unique challenges due to the complexity and precision required in legal contexts. More specifically, legal English writing is a specialized skill within ESP that requires precision, clarity, and adherence to specific conventions. It holds particular importance for legal practitioners, academics, and policymakers who operate in English-speaking or internationally-oriented legal contexts. In legal contexts, precision is crucial because ambiguity

in contracts, statutes, or court documents can result in misunderstandings, disputes, and legal liabilities (Garner, 2023). Legal English requires writers to use precise terms, structured syntax, and logical reasoning to ensure that the intended meaning is clear. In addition, mastering legal writing allows professionals to express complex ideas succinctly and avoid potential litigation risks caused by unclear language. Legal English follows strict conventions and formatting guidelines that distinguish it from general academic or professional writing (Gustira et al, 2020). These conventions include specific terminologies, such as “hereby,” “aforesaid,” and Latin expressions like *pro bono* or *amicus curiae*. Legal writing also involves organizing documents logically, adhering to citation styles (e.g., Bluebook or OSCOLA), and structuring arguments in ways accepted within the legal community. Legal English writing demands more than just linguistic proficiency – it also requires critical thinking, argumentation, and analytical skills (Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021). Legal professionals must construct persuasive arguments, evaluate precedents, and draw logical conclusions based on evidence. Mastery of legal writing enhances the writer’s ability to craft coherent, well-supported arguments, which is essential for success in legal practice. As English is the predominant language of international law, fluency in legal English provides professionals with access to global legal systems, enhances credibility, and enables participation in cross-border litigation or arbitration (Mooney, 2022). Many law firms, multinational corporations, and international organizations seek professionals with strong legal English skills to navigate complex transactions and ensure compliance with international regulations.

The distinction between mistakes and errors in language writing is somewhat confused. They are often used interchangeably but are not the same. Mistakes are slips or lapses that can be self-corrected, such as misspellings or incorrect punctuation, and they do not specify a lack of understanding of language rules. Whereas errors pose a deeper issue with grammar, syntax, vocabulary, or language rules, and they occur consistently because the writer still needs to understand the correct form or usage. Errors can be classified as treatable or global errors, interfering with the comprehensibility of a text, or untreatable or local errors not impeding understanding (Corder, 1981). In Ferris’ (2011) classification, syntactic errors are considered global, while mechanical and lexical mistakes are local. Specifically, morphological errors, concerning mistakes in the form and structure of words, are a significant emphasis in English language learning, particularly in writing skills. These errors often arise from the complexities of English inflectional and derivational morphology, with learners often misapplying rules due to limited exposure or

inadequate instruction (Ali et al., 2024; Enesi, & Trifoni, 2023). Interference from the first language (L1) is a major factor, as learners from languages that lack inflectional morphology tend to omit suffixes, leading to errors like leaving out past tense markers (Biel, 2024). Lexical errors, involving word choice and usage mistakes, are widely recognized as a common challenge in English language writing. These errors include mis-selection, misuse, and mis-formation of words, which can obscure meaning and impact overall writing clarity (Contreras, 2024; Johnson et al., 2017; Phetdannuea, & Ngonkum, 2016). Researchers (e.g., Anh et al., 2022; Fitrawati & Safitri, 2021; Singh et al., 2017) have identified various causes and types of lexical errors, emphasizing their importance in language learning and assessment. One primary source of lexical errors is negative language transfer, where learners apply vocabulary rules or assumptions from their L1 to English. Syntactic errors, such as mistakes in sentence structure and grammatical arrangement, are a prevalent issue in English language writing, particularly among non-native speakers. These errors range from incorrect word order and sentence fragments to issues with subject-verb agreement and clause structure. Syntactic errors can significantly affect the readability and coherence of writing, making them an essential focus for language instructors and researchers (Ngaiza, 2023; Pham, & Pham, 2024; Xu & Casal, 2023). Studies (e.g., Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020; Chitondo, 2021; Jasim & Tan, 2017) suggest that explicit instruction, regular practice, and corrective feedback are effective methods to address these errors. Teaching approaches that emphasize parsing sentence structures, analyzing syntax, and practicing cohesive writing have been shown to reduce syntactic errors, thereby improving overall writing quality. Mechanical errors, referring to mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, are frequently observed in English language writing. Moreover, mechanical accuracy is essential for readability and helps convey a polished and professional tone, so mechanical errors may result from several sources, such as learners' limited exposure to English orthographic rules or inconsistent practice (Jasim & Tan, 2017; Nguyen, 2020b; Widyasari et al., 2022). Teaching strategies including dictation exercises, spelling games, and punctuation drills have been effective in reducing mechanical errors. Encouraging students to proofread and self-edit their work helps develop a more meticulous approach to writing, which can minimize these errors. Overall, correcting mechanical errors is fundamental for language learners, as it contributes to the clarity, accuracy, and professionalism of written English, making the text more comprehensible and credible for readers.

Method

Research Design

The descriptive research was conducted at the Faculty of Legal Foreign Languages, Hanoi Law University, Vietnam, with 57 students majoring in Legal English during the first term of the 2024-2025 academic year. This study employed a longitudinal quantitative approach to get a comprehensive insight into students' tendencies to commit linguistic errors, especially morphological, lexical, and mechanical errors in writing legal correspondence. The participants took three written legal correspondences: a Pre-Test, a Post-Test no.1, and another Post-Test no.2 at periodic term periods. Based on the results from the three tests, some conclusions were made to identify the common grammatical features affecting the participants' progress in improving their legal writing skills.

Participants

The participants came from the faculty of legal English major students at Hanoi Law University, Vietnam. They were junior students studying a basic legal English subject in a three-credit module during the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year. Among 57 participants, the study included 46 female students, accounting for 80.7 %, and 11 male ones, equivalent to 19.3 %. Regarding their place of residence, the majority of them came from rural areas ($n = 37$; equal to 64.9 %), and 16 students, making up 28.1 %, were from urban areas. The lowest number was those whose hometowns were in mountainous areas ($n = 4$; same as 7.0 %). On questioning the participants' language exposure, 42 students (constituting 73.7 %) usually used English to communicate with foreigners, and eight participants, taking up 14.0 %, stated that they sometimes needed to use English at their part-time jobs. Only seven students, representing 12.3 %, asserted that they always communicated in English at work. Regarding students' part-time jobs, most students ($n = 49$; equivalent to 85.9 %) claimed to have a part-time job relating to their major with the purpose of practising their English ability, and four participants contributing 7.01 %, did not want to have a part-time job.

Research Instruments and Procedure

The participants were asked to write three letters relating to the client's legal advice correspondence at different periods of time, which were named a Pre-

Test, a Post-Test no.1, and a Post-Test no.2. The themes for writing tasks were the same with a free-writing style in which the participants were assigned to write a letter to a client to advise them on a legal matter. These writing tasks were conducted during three months, namely the Pre-Test implementing the early three-week subject, the Post-Test no.1 in the middle of the subject, and the Post-Test no.2 at the end of the subject. The students' writing papers were carefully marked and classified into four groups according to the errors they committed in their writing performance. The results were collected, scrutinized, and used the computing applications IBM SPSS v.27 to analyze to get reliable outcomes.

Statistical Tools

The data had gone through the data screening process before using IBM SPSS v.27. Frequency counts, and percentages were used to describe the profile variables and errors committed by the respondents. In addition, ANCOVA was employed to evaluate the common grammatical errors the participants committed in these three writing assignments. Based on the outcomes, the conclusion would be made to show the common linguistic features in students' legal written correspondence.

Results and Discussion

Table 1, which details participants' linguistic errors in written outputs across three assessment phases: Pre-Test, Post-Test no.1, and Post-Test no.2 (see Appendix A) reveals a significant and positive trend in the reduction of morphological errors among the 57 participants. Initially, in the Pre-Test, a majority of participants (52.6 %) fell within the Low Intermediate level, committing between 7 to 9 morphological errors, while 40.3 % were in the Intermediate category with 4 to 6 errors. A smaller segment of 3.5 % was categorized as Upper-Intermediate (1-3 errors), and another 3.5 % were at the Pre-Intermediate level (10-12 errors), with no participants in the Basic category. The mean number of errors at this stage was 7.34, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.32, indicating a moderate level of variability in performance. Following the first intervention phase, Post-Test no.1 shows a marked improvement: the Intermediate category expanded to encompass 61.4 % of participants, while the Low Intermediate category dramatically decreased to 22.8 %. Concurrently, the proportion of participants in the Upper-Intermediate level rose to 15.7 %, and the Pre-Intermediate level was entirely eliminated. The

mean number of errors declined to 6.14, and the standard deviation reduced to 1.16, suggesting not only a decrease in average errors but also a slight increase in consistency among participants' performances. Considering Post-Test no. 2, the improvements became even more pronounced since the Intermediate category surged to 73.6 %, and the Upper-Intermediate level increased further to 22.8 %, while the Low Intermediate category plummeted to a mere 3.5 %. Notably, no participants remained in the Pre-Intermediate or Basic categories, indicating that all participants had achieved a higher level of morphological accuracy. The mean number of errors continued to decrease to 5.0, and the standard deviation sharply declined to .09, highlighting a high level of consistency and minimal variability in error rates across participants. Overall, the data clearly demonstrate that the interventions implemented between the Pre-Test and the subsequent Post-Tests were highly effective in reducing morphological errors. The consistent decrease in mean errors, coupled with the reduction in standard deviation, underscores not only an overall improvement in linguistic accuracy but also a homogenization of performance levels among participants. The shift of participants from higher error categories to the Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate levels further signifies enhanced morphological competence. These findings signify that the instructional strategies employed were successful in fostering greater linguistic precision and consistency, thereby improving the written outputs of the participants over time.

Concerning the participants' lexical errors in written outputs, the results from Table 1 specify that initially, in the Pre-Test phase, a significant majority of participants (61.4 %) fell within the Intermediate level, committing between 4 to 6 lexical errors. This was closely followed by the Upper-Intermediate category, where 21.0% of participants made only 1 to 3 errors, and a smaller portion (17.5 %) were in the Low Intermediate category with 7 to 9 errors. Notably, no participants were categorized in the Pre-Intermediate (10–12 errors) or Basic (13–15 errors) levels, indicating that lexical error rates were relatively contained even before any intervention. The mean number of lexical errors at this stage was 5.38, with a standard deviation of 1.09, denoting a moderate level of consistency in participants' performance. Following the first intervention phase, Post-Test no.1 demonstrates a slight improvement in lexical accuracy. The Intermediate category saw a marginal increase to 63.1 %, indicating that more participants maintained their error rates within this range. Concurrently, the Upper-Intermediate category grew to 28.0 %, reflecting an increase in the proportion of participants committing fewer errors (1–3), which is a positive indicator of enhanced lexical proficiency. Meanwhile, the Low Intermediate

category decreased substantially to 8.7 %, showcasing a reduction in the number of participants making higher numbers of lexical errors (7–9). Importantly, the Pre-Intermediate and Basic categories remained unpopulated, consistent with the Pre-Test results. The mean number of lexical errors slightly declined to 5.29, and the standard deviation decreased to 0.95, suggesting not only a minor reduction in average errors but also increased consistency in participants' performance post-intervention. According to Post-Test no. 2, the data show a continued and more pronounced improvement in lexical accuracy. The Intermediate category further expanded to 71.9 %, solidifying the trend of participants maintaining lower error rates. The Upper-Intermediate category remained stable at 28.0 %, indicating sustained improvement among participants with initially lower error rates. Notably, the Low Intermediate category was entirely eliminated, with no participants committing 7 to 9 lexical errors, signifying a successful reduction in higher error rates. The mean number of lexical errors decreased to 5.00, and the standard deviation sharply declined to 0.68, highlighting a significant enhancement in both the average lexical accuracy and the uniformity of performance across participants. Overall, the data from Table 1 demonstrate that the interventions implemented between the Pre-Test and the Post-Tests were effective in reducing lexical errors among participants. The consistent decrease in mean lexical errors from 5.38 in the Pre-Test to 5.00 in Post-Test no. 2, alongside the reduction in standard deviation from 1.09 to .68, underscores not only an improvement in average performance but also a greater consistency in lexical accuracy across the participant group. The increase in the proportion of participants within the Upper-Intermediate and Intermediate categories, coupled with the elimination of the Low Intermediate category by Post-Test no.2, underlines that more participants achieved higher levels of lexical competence. These findings connote that the instructional strategies employed were successful in enhancing participants' lexical precision and reducing variability in error rates, thereby improving the overall quality of their written outputs. Future research could further explore the specific elements of the interventions that most effectively contributed to lexical error reduction and assess the long-term sustainability of these improvements through additional follow-up assessments.

The participants' syntactic errors reveal a more nuanced and less uniformly positive trend compared to the previously examined morphological and lexical errors. In the Pre-Test, out of 57 participants, a substantial majority (50.8 %) was within the Low Intermediate category, committing between 7 to 9 syntactic errors. This was followed by 28.0 % of participants in the Pre-

Intermediate level (10–12 errors), 15.7 % in the Intermediate category (4–6 errors), and a small fraction of 3.5 % each in the Upper-Intermediate (1–3 errors) and Basic (13–15 errors) categories. The mean number of syntactic errors was 9.43 with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.82, indicating a relatively high average error rate with considerable variability among participants. Upon examining Post-Test no.1, there is a slight decrease in the mean number of syntactic errors to 8.83 and a reduction in the standard deviation to 1.50, illustrating marginal improvement and increased consistency in participants' performance. However, the distribution of errors presents a mixed picture. The Low Intermediate category saw an increase from 50.8 % to 61.7 %, indicating that a larger proportion of participants remained or moved into this higher error bracket. Conversely, the Pre-Intermediate category experienced a significant decline from 28.0 % to 22.8 %, demonstrating that some participants improved their syntactic accuracy to avoid the higher error range. The Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate categories remained stable at 15.7 % and 3.5 %, respectively, while the Basic category was eliminated, advocating that the single participant who initially fell into this extreme error range no longer did so post-intervention. By Post-Test no.2, the mean number of syntactic errors slightly increased to 8.89, with the standard deviation marginally decreasing to 1.43. The Low Intermediate category decreased from 61.7 % in Post-Test no.1 to 57.8 %, indicating a minor reduction in the proportion of participants with higher error rates. The Pre-Intermediate category stabilized at 22.8 %, maintaining the reduced percentage observed in Post-Test no.1. The Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate categories remained unchanged at 15.7 % and 3.5 %, respectively, and the Basic category continued to have no participants. This stability proves that while some participants maintained lower error rates, the overall improvement in syntactic accuracy was limited. Comparatively, unlike the morphological and lexical error categories, which demonstrated clear and consistent reductions in error rates and increases in higher proficiency levels, the syntactic errors exhibited a more complex pattern. The initial decrease in mean errors from the Pre-Test to Post-Test no.1 represent some level of improvement; however, the subsequent slight increase in Post-Test no.2 articulates that this progress was not fully sustained or that other factors may have influenced syntactic accuracy differently. The persistent high percentage of participants in the Low Intermediate category, despite some improvements, points to syntactic errors being more resistant to the interventions applied or possibly requiring more targeted strategies to achieve significant reduction. The standard deviation's gradual decrease from 1.82 in the Pre-Test to 1.43 in Post-Test no.2 reflects a slight increase in consistency among participants'

performances, though not as pronounced as seen in the morphological and lexical error categories. This asserts that while there was some convergence in syntactic error rates, a wide range of proficiency levels remained, preventing a more uniform improvement across the participant group. Hence, the data from Table 1 mention that the interventions implemented were somewhat effective in reducing syntactic errors, as evidenced by the decrease in mean errors and the reduction of participants in the Pre-Intermediate and Basic categories. However, the substantial proportion of participants remaining in the Low Intermediate category highlights the need for more specialized or intensive strategies to address syntactic accuracy. The relative stability in error distribution from Post-Test no.1 to Post-Test no.2 further underscores the challenges in achieving sustained and significant improvements in syntactic proficiency. Future instructional approaches might benefit from focusing specifically on syntactic structures and providing more targeted feedback to facilitate deeper understanding and long-term retention of syntactic rules, thereby enhancing overall linguistic competence in written outputs.

Table 1 provides a detailed examination of participants' mechanical errors in their written outputs. As glimpsed from Table 1, it shows that during the Pre-Test, a significant portion of the 57 participants (52.6 %) fell within the Intermediate level, committing between 4 to 6 mechanical errors, while 35.0 % were in the Upper-Intermediate category with only 1 to 3 errors. Notably, no participants were recorded in the higher error categories (Low Intermediate, Pre-Intermediate, or Basic), signifying that mechanical errors were relatively minimal and well-managed before any interventions. The mean number of mechanical errors at this stage was 4.74, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.65, showing a moderate level of consistency among participants' performances. Following the first intervention, Post-Test no.1 showed a slight improvement, with the mean number of errors decreasing to 4.44 and the standard deviation marginally reducing to 0.62. This phase also saw an increase in the Intermediate category to 64.9 %, while the Upper-Intermediate category remained stable at 35.0%, reflecting a minor shift towards maintaining lower error rates. By Post-Test no.2, the mean number of errors experienced a slight uptick to 4.60, although the standard deviation continued to decrease to 0.55, indicating enhanced consistency in performance. Additionally, the proportion of participants in the Upper-Intermediate category increased to 38.5 %, while those in the Intermediate category slightly declined to 61.4 %. Throughout all assessment phases, the absence of participants in the higher error categories underscores the effectiveness of the interventions in maintaining low mechanical error rates. Overall, the data from Table 4 mean that while there

was a modest reduction in mean mechanical errors from Pre-Test to Post-Test no.1, this improvement was largely sustained through Post-Test no. 2, with increased consistency as evidenced by the decreasing standard deviation. The slight increase in the Upper-Intermediate category by Post-Test no. 2 indicates that some participants continued to enhance their mechanical accuracy, contributing to the overall stability and effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed. These findings highlight the success of the interventions in fostering mechanical precision and consistency in participants' written outputs, ensuring that mechanical errors remained low and manageable throughout the study period.

Table 1
Participants' Linguistic Errors in Written Outputs

Level of Errors	Pre-Test (N=57)		Post-Test no.1 (N=57)		Post-Test no.2 (N=57)	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Morphological Errors						
Upper-Intermediate (1-3)	2	3.5	9	15.7	13	22.8
Intermediate (4-6)	23	40.3	35	61.4	42	73.6
Low Intermediate (7-9)	30	52.6	13	22.8	2	3.5
Pre-Intermediate (10-12)	2	3.5	-	-	-	-
Basic (13-15)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mean = 7.34; SD = 1.32		Mean = 6.14; SD = 1.16		Mean = 5.0; SD = .09	
Lexical Errors						
Upper- Intermediate (1-3)	12	21.0	16	28.0	16	28.0
Intermediate (4-6)	35	61.4	36	63.1	41	71.9
Low Intermediate (7-9)	10	17.5	5	8.7	-	-
Pre-Intermediate (10-12)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Basic (13-15)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mean = 5.38; SD = 1.09		Mean = 5.29; SD = .95		Mean = 5.00; SD = .68	
Syntactic Errors						
Upper-Intermediate (1-3)	2	3.5	2	3.5	2	3.5
Intermediate (4-6)	9	15.7	9	15.7	9	15.7
Low Intermediate (7-9)	29	50.8	35	61.7	33	57.8

Pre-Intermediate (10-12)	16	28.0	13	22.8	13	22.8
Basic (13-15)	1	1.75	-	-	-	-
	Mean = 9.43; SD = 1.82		Mean = 8.83; SD = 1.50		Mean = 8.89; SD = 1.43	
Mechanical Errors						
Upper- Intermediate (1-3)	20	35.0	20	35.0	22	38.5
Intermediate (4-6)	30	52.6	37	64.9	35	61.4
Low Intermediate (7-9)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pre-Intermediate (10-12)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Basic (13-15)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mean = 4.74; SD = .65		Mean = 4.44; SD = .62		Mean = 4.60; SD = .55	

Table 2 provides a summary of the mean scores, standard deviations, and sample sizes (N) for three time points: overall pretest, overall Post-Test no.1, and overall Post-Test no. 2. The mean score for the overall pretest of students' linguistic errors in written outputs is 23.7018 with a standard deviation of 5.88268, indicating the initial level of the measured variable at the pretest stage. Moving to the overall Post-Test no.1, the mean drops to 21.5439 with a slightly reduced standard deviation of 5.25449, signaling a decline in scores from the pretest to the first Post-Test, along with a minor reduction in variability among participants. This downward trend continues in the overall Post-Test no. 2, where the mean score decreases further to 20.4035, and the standard deviation decreases to 4.64012, the lowest of the three time points. The consistent reduction in both the mean score and standard deviation over time highlights that there may be an overall decline in the measured variable across these stages, with the scores becoming more consistent among participants by the second Post-Test. This pattern of results aligns with the previous ANCOVA findings, where significant differences were observed across the three time points, implying that meaningful changes occur from pretest to Post-Tests. The reduction in mean scores reflects that the intervention or condition introduced between these time points may have had an effect, leading to a gradual decrease in the measured outcome. Additionally, the decrease in standard deviations implies less variability among participants' responses over time, which could mark a convergence in behavior or responses due to the effect of the intervention or time itself. These observations emphasize that the intervention may have consistently influenced the participants across the measured phases, so the participants are likely to commit fewer linguistics errors over the time span.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Longitudinal Tests

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Overall Pretest	23.7018	5.88268	57
Overall Post-Test no.1	21.5439	5.25449	57
Overall Post-Test no.2	20.4035	4.64012	57

Table 3 reveals a comprehensive view of the significance, effect size, and robustness of a within-subjects factor's impact on the participants' improvement in reducing linguistic errors in written outputs. The "Overall" effect shows a Type III Sum of Squares of 319.871, which represents the total variance in the students' linguistic errors attributed to the within-subjects factor across different conditions (likely pretest, Post-Test no.1, and Post-Test no. 2). Table 3 presents various sphericity corrections (Sphericity Assumed, Greenhouse-Geisser, Huynh-Feldt, and Lower-bound) to account for potential violations of sphericity, a common assumption in repeated-measures ANOVA that requires equal variances of the differences between conditions. Degrees of freedom (*df*) vary depending on the correction applied, ranging from 2 (Sphericity Assumed) to as low as 1.000 (Lower-bound), which reflect progressively more conservative adjustments. Despite these adjustments, the Mean Square for the Overall effect varies only slightly (from 159.936 to 319.871), and the F value remains consistent at 122.026 across all corrections. This stability in the F value, along with the p-value of .000, underscores the robustness of the effect, suggesting that the differences across conditions in the respondents' linguistic errors are statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance, even if the assumption of sphericity is violated. Besides, the Partial Eta Squared value of .685 indicates a large effect size, meaning that approximately 68.5 % of the variance in the students' linguistic errors can be attributed to the within-subjects factor. This is a substantial proportion, highlighting that the changes across conditions have a strong and meaningful impact on the students' linguistic errors. The error term, shown in the "Error (Overall)" section, has a Type III Sum of Squares of 146.795 and Mean Square values that range from 1.311 (Sphericity Assumed) to 2.621 (Lower-bound) depending on the *df* adjustments. The relatively low Mean Square values for the error term, compared to the Mean Square values for the Overall effect, reinforce the strength and significance of the observed effect. The consistent significance across all sphericity corrections proposes that the observed differences across conditions are not only statistically significant but also robust, and any

intervention or time-based changes reflected in the students' linguistic errors are meaningful and consistent across participants. This analysis suggests that the within-subjects factor, possibly representing the progression from pretest to posttests, has a significant impact on the students' linguistic errors, supported by both statistical significance and a large effect size, indicating practical relevance.

Table 3
Differences in the Periodic Tests

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Overall	Sphericity Assumed	319.871	2	159.936	122.026	.000	.685
	Greenhouse-Geisser	319.871	1.609	198.826	122.026	.000	.685
	Huynh-Feldt	319.871	1.649	193.957	122.026	.000	.685
	Lower-bound	319.871	1.000	319.871	122.026	.000	.685
Error (Overall)	Sphericity Assumed	146.795	112	1.311			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	146.795	90.093	1.629			
	Huynh-Feldt	146.795	92.355	1.589			
	Lower-bound	146.795	56.000	2.621			

Conclusion

The study demonstrates the significant impact of interventions on participants' linguistic performance, particularly in morphological, lexical, syntactic, and mechanical accuracy. The consistent improvements observed across all linguistic categories, from the reduction of morphological and lexical errors to the more modest yet notable changes in syntactic and mechanical errors, demonstrate the effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed. Morphological errors constituted a clear and sustained improvement from Pre-Test to Post-Test no.2, with a noticeable shift in participants' error categories. This denotes that the intervention provided effective training in morphological competence, allowing participants to refine their linguistic precision and consistently reduce errors over time. The steady increase in the proportion of

participants at the Upper-Intermediate and Intermediate categories highlights the success of the intervention in elevating participants' morphological accuracy. Similarly, the reduction in lexical errors mirrored the trends seen in the morphological errors, with a steady decline in the mean number of lexical errors from Pre-Test to Post-Test no.2, coupled with a decrease in variability among participants. The increase in the proportion of participants at the Upper-Intermediate and Intermediate levels further demonstrates that the interventions led to improved lexical proficiency. This improvement in lexical accuracy, along with the removal of participants from the Low Intermediate category by Post-Test no.2, emphasizes the success of the instructional strategies in enhancing participants' lexical precision and overall written output quality. However, the changes in syntactic errors present a more complex pattern. While there was some improvement in syntactic accuracy following the interventions, the progress was less consistent. The persistence of a substantial proportion of participants in the Low Intermediate category denotes that syntactic errors may require more targeted or specialized approaches to address them effectively. Future studies could consider focusing more specifically on syntactic structures and incorporating strategies that target deeper understanding and retention of these rules. Mechanical errors showed a more stable trend across the three assessment phases. The mean number of mechanical errors slightly fluctuated between Post-Test no.1 and Post-Test no. 2, but the overall reduction in standard deviation indicates improved consistency in mechanical accuracy across the participants. The instructional strategies employed in this study were largely successful in fostering improvements in participants' written output, particularly in reducing morphological and lexical errors, areas where participants demonstrated the most significant progress. However, the more complex nature of syntactic accuracy points out that additional interventions or more focused strategies might be necessary to achieve further improvements in this area. Thus, the study highlights the importance of targeted instructional strategies in addressing different linguistic error categories and offers valuable insights into the impact of such interventions on language learning. Further research could delve deeper into the specific elements of the instructional strategies that contributed most effectively to error reduction, particularly in syntactic accuracy, and explore ways to sustain these improvements over time.

Disclosure Statement

The authors reported no potential conflict of interests.

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Appendix A

CHECKLIST IN ANALYZING ERRORS

1. MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Errors in the use of verb

MO1: Wrong verb tense

MO2: Singular verb with plural verb and vice versa

MO3: Incorrect form of verb phrase

Errors in the use of pronoun

MO4: Wrong use of pronoun

MO5: Confusion of its and it's

Errors in the use of noun and article

MO6: Wrong use of singular noun for plural and vice versa

MO7: Omission of article

MO8: Wrong use of article

Errors in the use of preposition

MO9: Omission of preposition

MO10: Wrong use of preposition

2. LEXICAL ANALYSIS

Adjective error

LEX1: Omission of adjective

LEX2: Wrong choice of adjective

Noun error

LEX3: Omission of noun

LEX4: Wrong choice of noun

Verb error

LEX5: Insertion of verb

LEX6: Omission of auxiliary verb

LEX7: Omission of linking verb

LEX8: Omission of main verb

LEX9: Wrong choice of verb

3. SYNTACTICAL ANALYSIS

Incompleteness

SA1: Subordinate clause for sentence

SA2: Phrase for sentence

SA3: Missing words, subject and verb

Arrangement of Parts

SA4: Wrong word order

SA5: Dangling modifier

Wordiness and ambiguity

SA6: Run-on sentences

SA7: Redundancy

SA8: Ambiguous reference

Parallel structure

PS9: Different parts of speech in series

PS10: Lack of unity

4. MECHANICAL ANALYSIS

Errors in punctuation

MA1: Omission or improper use of period

MA2: Omission or wrong use of comma

MA3: Omission or wrong use of apostrophe

Errors in capitalization

MA4: At the beginning of the sentence

MA5: In the title

MA6: In the proper noun and pronoun

Errors in spelling

MA7: Wrong vowel

MA8: Missing letters

MA9: Confusion of similar words

MA10: Incorrect repeated consonants